¿URBAN VOIDS?
BUENOS AIRES - HAMBURG

Report of the international workshop in Buenos Aires, March 2017
Ingrid Breckner, Alicia Gerscovich, Judith Lehner, Timothy Pape [eds.]

IMPRINT

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CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS DEL HÁBITAT y LA VIVIENDA CEHyV - FADU - UBA

HCU | HafenCity Universität Hamburg

in collaboration with

ISU Instituto Superior de Urbanismo Territorio y Ambiente

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Rio de la Plata

Province of Buenos Aires

Autonomous City of Buenos Aires

N

1km

Urban agglomeration of Buenos Aires (section).

Prof. Dr. Ingrid Breckner,
Urban and Regional Sociology
HafenCity Universität (HCU)
Hamburg, Germany

Prof. Esp. Alicia Gerscovich, Arq.
Centro de Estudios del Hábitat y
la Vivienda, Facultad the Arqui-
tectura, Diseño y Urbanismo,
Universidad de Buenos Aires
(FADU-UBA), Argentina

FOREWORD by Ingrid Breckner & Alicia Gerscovich

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO START A SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION BETWEEN EUROPE AND LATIN AMERICA ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT ISSUES?

There is no doubt that societies all over the world are confronted with a growing concentration of people in urban areas. Different scientists use the term "reurbanisation" for movements from rural or suburban areas to cities (Panebianco & Kiehl 2003; Brake & Herfert 2012). In Latin America, in particular in Argentina, immigrants from neighbouring countries searching for easier everyday life conditions produced additional growth of already large cities, especially in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires. In this case, the term "re-urbanización" refers to building construction processes and consolidating informal settlements in new neighbourhoods within the city.

Scenarios of prospective developments in the 21st century expect approximately 70% of the world's population to live in cities. Reasons for this are ecological damage, human exploitation and political irresponsibility in the agrarian territories, leading people to seek easier income opportunities elsewhere. Global developments in the "Urban Age" are under continuous observation by scientists collaborating at the "LSE Cities" international centre of the London School of Economics and Political Science, supported by Deutsche Bank (LSE Cities 2017). This centre "explores how people and cities interact in a rapidly urbanising world, focussing on how the design of cities impacts society, culture and the environment. Through research, conferences, educational programmes and public lectures, the centre aims to shape new thinking and practice regarding how to make cities fairer and more sustainable for the next generation of urban dwellers." (ibid. p. 2) Such large-scale activities with a global perspective need to be complemented by continuous collaborative work of interdisciplinary groups focussing on multilateral exchange with regard to scientific approaches, methodologies and intervention opportunities in the transformation of specific urban areas.

The workshop ¿Urban Voids? – gratefully funded by the German Science Association (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft – DFG) – was initiated with this kind of scientific cooperation between two universities in Hamburg and Buenos Aires. The main objective is to explore urban areas in each city considered as 'voids' from the different perspectives of the actors involved, such as civil society, governments or the real estate sector, leading to different interest-related activities aimed at filling them, mostly without regard for the long term effects of such infills on the surrounding urban context and the resulting public costs. In March 2017 seven participants from each country, with expertise in architecture,

urban planning, geography, law, sociology, economy and ethnography, supported by two experts from Sao Paulo, Brazil and Milan, Italy, explored two different types of urban voids in Buenos Aires and started to develop concepts concerning how to better intervene in the ongoing urban transformations, as well as new perspectives, scientific questions and methodologies related to the transdisciplinary and transcultural aspects of the project.

These initial experiences of an interdisciplinary professional cooperation are documented and reflected in this report. Of greatest importance was the hands-on experience in a real physical, social, political and economic urban context, where we struggled for intercultural understanding, innovative scientific methodologies and their relevance in the practical field of urban transformation. It was obvious to everybody that professional routines in Europe cannot simply be transferred to Latin America and vice versa. Academic participants from both countries recognised that it is essential to have the chance to work together for a certain time on concrete urban areas, but this needs to be practised in a mutual manner. As long as scholars from Buenos Aires have no chance to see, feel and understand the societal and local contexts of their European colleagues, there will remain risks of misunderstandings and predominance instead of innovative cooperation at eye level. Therefore we hope very much to find the necessary funding very soon, to continue with a workshop in Hamburg in order to develop joint research projects and long-term cooperation with multilateral perspectives and interdisciplinary approaches.

Our thanks go to those who made this first workshop in Buenos Aires possible: local experts and government officials in the city of Buenos Aires; legislators, residents and representatives from the neighbourhoods, professionals committed to inclusive development and social actors involved in the processes of production and transformation of the city.
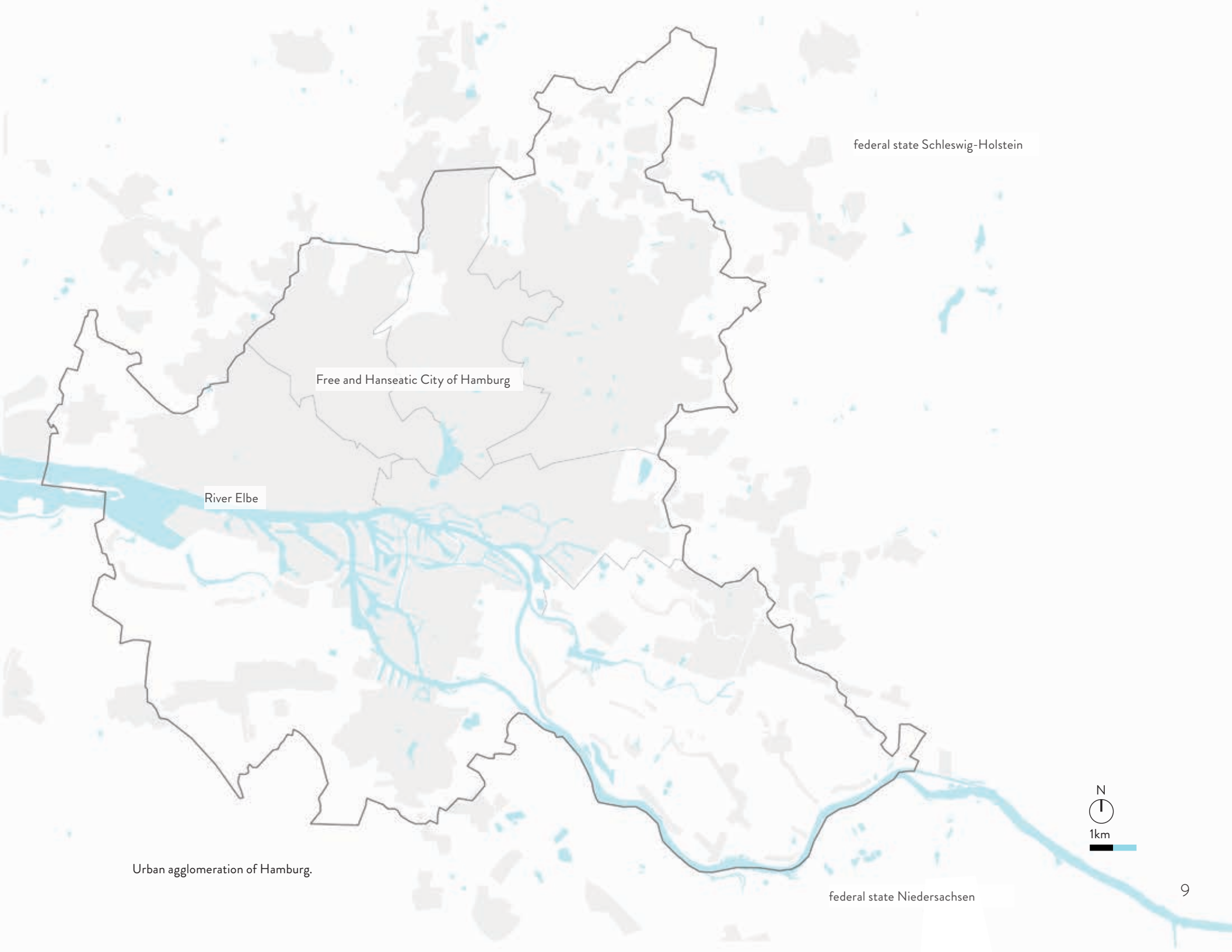
federal state Schleswig-Holstein

Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg

River Elbe

Urban agglomeration of Hamburg.

federal state Niedersachsen

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¿URBAN VOIDS?
INTRODUCTION

As its overall objective, the ¿Urban Voids? project focuses on the parallel processes in the cities of Hamburg and Buenos Aires, with their local specifics, against the background of societal and urban regional transformation. 'Urban voids', as discontinuous ruptures in urban transformation processes, are seen by various disciplines as having the potential to create new perspectives, research questions and approaches. Therefore, the ¿Urban Voids? project proposes a multi-disciplinary academic exchange on research methodologies of urban dynamics of transformation in the agglomerations of Hamburg and Buenos Aires.

El objetivo general del proyecto ¿Vacíos Urbanos? focaliza su interés en los procesos paralelos que se producen en las ciudades de Hamburgo y Buenos Aires con sus especificidades locales, en el contexto de sus transformaciones sociales y urbanas. Los vacíos urbanos, entendidos como rupturas discontinuas en los procesos de transformación urbana, son considerados por diversas disciplinas como espacios potenciales para crear nuevas perspectivas, interrogantes y abordajes de investigación. Por ello, el proyecto ¿Vacíos Urbanos? propone un intercambio académico multidisciplinario en las metodologías de investigación sobre dinámicas urbanas en las aglomeraciones de Hamburgo y Buenos Aires.

The ¿Urban Voids? project is a multi-disciplinary academic exchange for the development of research methodologies on current dynamics of urban transformation in European and Latin American agglomerations. It is an attempt to reflect critically on the thesis that the labile equilibrium of dynamic and complex spatial environments in urban societies cannot be adequately captured by linear-causal, monodisciplinary and mono-cultural research approaches. Therefore, the project is based on a transdisciplinary and culturally multilateral research approach, in which we examine the dynamics of urban transformation on selected sites of two different regions – Latin America and Europe. Using the example of urban voids as a phenomenon of discontinuity in transformation processes helps to collect and exchange cultural and disciplinary perspectives for the development of research questions and methodological approaches in the transdisciplinary and transcultural research contexts of urban and societal transformative research.

Based on the cooperation between the Centro de Estudios del Hábitat y la Vivienda (FADU-UBA) and the HafenCity University Hamburg (HCU), the project is developed in two ten-day workshops: one in Buenos Aires and one in Hamburg. Workshop participants – Latin American and European researchers in equal number – work together with local actors on relevant theoretical and practical perspectives on the topic of urban voids.

As its overall objective, the ¿Urban Voids? project focuses on the parallel processes in the cities of Hamburg and Buenos Aires, with their local specifics, against the background of societal and urban regional change in order to visualise different developments, especially in the context of self-organisation, urban policies, (in)formality, control and democratic legitimation. By comparing the different cultural regions of Europe and Latin America, the project emphasises the importance of the local framework in understanding urban transformation processes.

A special concern of the ¿Urban Voids? project is to establish a multidisciplinary scientific network of scientists on urban transformative research between Latin America and Europe.

This network intends to encourage international contact between scientists of both countries in the area of transformative urban developments. A further aim is the long-term establishment of an academic collaboration between the Centro de Estudios del Hábitat y la Vivienda and the HafenCity University Hamburg through joint research and support for young researchers.

Complex spatial environments cannot be adequately captured by linear-causal, monodisciplinary and mono-cultural research approaches.

This report documents the first workshop within the ¿Urban Voids? project, carried out in Buenos Aires in March 2017. It contains an introduction to the general topic of urban voids and to the urban context of the cities of Hamburg and Buenos Aires. The documentation of the workshop in Buenos Aires reflects the intensive exchange with local actors related to the two selected example sites of urban voids. Also, the report presents the insights on current urban transformation processes in Buenos Aires gained during the workshop and describes the reflections on the transdisciplinary and transcultural approach of the project by the participating researchers.

¿URBAN VOIDS?
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

As highly complex structures, cities are subject to permanent production and discontinuous transformation as a result of socioeconomic, political, cultural, and technical developments. At the same time, urban transformations are a point of departure for new concepts and practices to deal with today's societal challenges. Urban 'voids', as discontinuous ruptures in urban transformation processes, are seen by various disciplines as having the potential to create new and future-oriented perspectives, research questions and approaches.

Different disciplinary perspectives on the discontinuous ruptures of urban transformation processes open up a broad

spectrum of readings of urban voids and the future possibilities of urban development processes. Often, voids are considered a visible symptom of global structural change (Dissmann 2011: 30). Therefore, urban voids are the result of a development process at a given time. However, their conceptualisation is only possible through the perception of an urban situation from a particular (disciplinary) perspective. In this context, the intrinsic dynamic and constitutive interrelations of urban voids are often neglected.

From an urban planning perspective, urban voids in the city fabric are usually defined as brownfields, which are the result of disruptions in urban renewal processes, especially under conditions of crisis (Dissmann 2011: 73). For example, this might include the impact of economic crises on the urban real estate market, where buildings or entire urban areas are excluded from the exploitation cycle. Another example of a transformation process involving the increased appearance of brownfields is the change from the industrial to the knowledge society, during which areas of former industrial production have to be opened up for new uses. In Latin America, researchers describe the emergence of brownfields through phases of economic instability or crisis, unclear property titles, little or no regulation of land distribution by state institutions, as well as the inner logic of locating production (Fausto & Rábago 2001).

TRANSCULTURAL APPROACHES TO URBAN VOIDS

Urban voids as ruptures in urban transformation processes contain the potential for new, alternative strategies of appropriation in cities. The potential of urban voids is discussed in recent publications, with descriptions including "recycling of places in urban transformation processes" (Ziehl et.al. 2012), "recycling as a resource of sustainable urban development" (Baum & Christiaanse 2012) or "uncovering the immanent potential of urban spaces" (Eisinger & Seifert 2012). This shows that urban voids are a counterpart to the permanence and seclusion of the constructed city. They are buffer zones for the unknown, the unexpected, for the experimental and also for failure (Rem Koolhass in: Dissmann 2011: 31). Angelus Eisinger (2008) recognises the

potential of urban voids, not only from an economic perspective, but also from the urbanistic and urban planning point of view. In the book 'City as Loft', Martina Baum (2012: 9) describes urban voids such as derelict industrial buildings as "dynamic-stable structures" and calls them spaces of potential for new ideas and uses.

The aforementioned publications all have in common the engagement with a similar form of urban voids; yet, at the same time, they differ in terms of their dynamic dimensions and methodological approach. Scientific concepts like 'Urban Assemblage' (McFarlane 2011) also address the emergence of complex, dynamic urban realities, which stand in contrast to the spatially and temporally-determined phenomenon of urbanization. The contextualisation of this urban phenomenon, under the influence of Latour's Actor-Network-Theory or the neo-Deleuzian concept of 'assemblage', opens up new ways for dealing with materiality (documents, buildings, infrastructure, material conditions of poverty, inequality, etc.) through the integration of human and non-human forms of activity and impact (Latour 2005, Deleuze & Guattari 1992). Detailed ethnographic and empirical investigations of urban assemblages also allow new perspectives on urban transformation and a better understanding of the interrelationships, which are concealed by structuralist criteria of traditional urban research (Brenner et.al. 2011).

There is a lack of investigation of urban voids beyond northern theory with regard to the local specifics (see Baum et. al. 2012, Eisinger et.al. 2012). Despite this, comparative and locally specific transcultural research is capable of uncovering the inherent complexity in the dynamics of discontinuous phenomena and opens up the potential for new scientific perspectives in urban research.

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THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The ¿Urban Voids? project follows the format of a dynamic work process in the form of two ten-day workshops, one in Buenos Aires and one in Hamburg, in which the workshop participants – Latin American and European researchers in equal number – work together with local actors on relevant theoretical and practical perspectives on the topic of ¿Urban Voids? The project's methodological framework aims to develop new perspectives, research questions and avenues of investigation with respect to the project's transdisciplinary and transcultural context.

El proyecto ¿Vacíos Urbanos? se desarrolla en procesos de trabajo dinámico bajo la forma de dos talleres, uno en Buenos Aires y el otro en Hamburgo durante diez días respectivamente, en los que los participantes del taller - investigadores latinoamericanos y europeos - trabajan en forma conjunta con actores locales a partir de perspectivas teóricas y prácticas relevantes referidas a la temática de los vacíos urbanos. El marco metodológico propuesto aspira al desarrollo de nuevas perspectivas, interrogantes y abordajes de investigación relacionados con el contexto transdisciplinar y transcultural del proyecto.

At the heart of the ¿Urban Voids? project is an attempt to reflect critically on complex urban and societal transformation processes that cannot be adequately captured by linear-causal, monodisciplinary and mono-cultural research approaches. Therefore, our methodological choice is aimed at the development of new perspectives, research questions and avenues of investigation with respect to the project's transdisciplinary[1] and transcultural[2] context. By focusing on urban voids, the transdisciplinary aspect of the project is fostered by the development of a topic-specific dialogue and transdisciplinary interaction of different types of knowledge (Bergmann et al. 2010, Scholz 2011) in which current scientific findings and methodological approaches on the subject are exchanged and further developed. "The clearer the outlines of individual disciplines are, the more interesting is the assemblage of their perspectives on an object, which only unfolds its wide range of aspects in the variety of different professional approaches" (Hauser and Weber 2015: 12). Through the transcultural exploration of different European and Latin American (disciplinary) perspectives on urban voids, our project critically reflects on the local framework as a self-evident context and highlights the importance of local specificity for the understanding of urban processes.

The research is set in the cities of Hamburg and Buenos Aires with their long history as port-cities and along their continuous changes in urban infrastructure, morphology, living and labour conditions, etc. The two cities serve as starting points for empirical exploration of the parallel urban transformation processes with their local specificities against the background of societal and regional change. During the course of one workshop in each city, the participating researchers work on selected sites of current urban transformation and, through these sites, explore the different disciplinary and cultural perspectives on the topic. The collaboration between HafenCity University in Hamburg and the Centro de Estudios del Hábitat y la Vivienda at the Universidad de Buenos Aires, with a research focus on in-situ transformation processes, facilitates the access to knowledge about current sites of transformation and to interaction with local actors, institutions and practitioners.

Expected results of the ¿Urban Voids? project are, on the one hand, the methodological development of new perspectives, research questions and approaches on urban transformation processes in a transdisciplinary context. On the other hand, the project aims to gain knowledge on how to contribute actively to processes of "initiating, steering and increasing reflexivity in societal transformations" (cf. Schneidewind et.al. 2016: 8). By focusing on 'ruptures' in complex urban transformation processes, the research goes beyond the descriptive and observatory mode of transformation research and towards a transformative research approach. In the sense of transformative research, the ¿Urban Voids? project focuses "explicitly on societal impact (rather than academic observation) and on societal deliberation processes between scientists and non-academic stakeholders (...)" (Schneidewind 2016: 8). As a long-term perspective, the establishment of real-world labs[3] (cf. Schneidewind et.al. 2016) in the cities of Buenos Aires and Hamburg should lead not only to a better understanding of dynamic interrelations in transformation processes, but should also produce active knowledge regarding the design of change for local actors. Another particular concern of the ¿Urban Voids? project is the establishment of a multidisciplinary scientific network on urban transformation research between Latin America and Europe. This network is designed to enable young scientists to develop international contacts in the area of transformative research.

HOW TO EXPLORE URBAN VOIDS

The ¿Urban Voids? project follows the format of a dynamic work process in the form of workshops in Buenos Aires and Hamburg, which enables a result-oriented exchange between researchers in cooperation with practitioners, decision-makers and activists during the on-site workshop and beyond. The workshop functions as a learning area where open questions are addressed in relation to the research field in particular and to transcultural and transdisciplinary research in general.

In order to serve the transcultural aspect, the composition of participants is based not only on scientific excellence, but also on the international balance between researchers from Europe and Latin America. In the case of the workshop in Buenos Aires, the team

1. PREPARATORY PHASE

Selection of participants based on scientific excellence and the international balance between researchers from Europe and Latin America

with two guest critics from Europe (Italy) and Latin America (Brazil).

Selection of two concrete examples in Buenos Aires and Hamburg and preparation of working material on the cities and case studies.

Identification of relevant actors and institutions in Buenos Aires / Hamburg, state institutions and organizations of civil society.

urban voids
disciplinary views

2. WORKSHOP PHASE

Academic excursions, lectures, working group sessions, plenary discussions...

in multidisciplinary, international working groups.

Opening up views on the phenomenon of discontinuous transformation

on two concrete sites in Buenos Aires and Hamburg.

The results of the working groups are evaluated in a final presentation with an interactive discussion with invited guests.

urban voids
disciplinary exchange

3. EXCHANGE PHASE

Exchange on disciplinary perspectives with regard to future urban research, university teaching and urban practice.

Methodological development of new perspectives, research approaches on urban transformation processes.

Knowledge on how to contribute actively to processes of initiating reflexivity in societal transformations.

Establishment of multidisciplinary scientific network between Latin America and Europe.

urban voids
new perspectives

Process of the ¿Urban Voids? project

consists of 14 researchers from Argentinian and German academic institutions. In such a transcultural exchange of knowledge between two continents, a cultural reflection within the continents is also of decisive importance. In this sense, two additional researchers from Europe (Italy) and Latin America (Brazil) contributed as guest critics to the workshop and added critical and constructive perspectives.

The transdisciplinary aspect of the project is taken into account through the selection of participants from multiple disciplines such as architecture, the arts, ethnography, geography, landscape design, law, sociology, and urban planning. Moreover, the exchange between the local and international researchers with actors of state institutions and civil society organisations during the workshop allows participants to cross the boundaries between theoretical and practical knowledge (Jahn 2008). The workshops relate two specific

sites, characterised by local actors as urban voids, to the relevant stakeholders and institutions in Buenos Aires / Hamburg in order to explore the specific urban routines of space production in the city and to find possible starting points for the development of transformative capacities on site (Schneidewind et.al. 2016).

During the workshop, a broad spectrum of voids is explored by opening up and correlating disciplinary views on the phenomenon of discontinuous transformation in multidisciplinary, international working groups. The working groups trace the process structures in the emergence of urban voids on the two concrete sites in Buenos Aires and Hamburg. The results of the working groups are finally evaluated from different disciplinary perspectives in plenary discussions with regard to their relevance for future urban research, university teaching and urban practice.

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In this context, the combination of different formats used during the workshop is briefly outlined below. The aim of the combination of formats is the promotion of a practice-oriented scientific thinking in the transdisciplinary and transcultural context.

- **Excursions:** Excursions in the urban areas of Buenos Aires and Hamburg ensure the urban and cultural embedding of the concrete examples of urban voids and related topics. Moreover, further excursions to the specific examples of urban voids take place in close cooperation with local actors. In one-to-one encounters with local experts, stakeholders and decision-makers, the local discourses, appropriation processes and potential conflicts are explored.

- **Lectures**: Input lectures by local experts such as scientists and practitioners are embedded in moderated discussions.

- **Discourse working sessions:** This format is used to integrate and reflect input lectures, contributions from practitioners and interim results in the dynamic discourse of the workshop. In accordance with their relevance to the research topic, these sessions develop a discursive interplay between panel discussions, scientific working groups of researchers with external experts and all workshop participants.

- **Working group sessions:** Thematic working sessions with discussions in interdisciplinary / intercultural working groups, who meet daily and work in a practice-oriented manner. Their results are an essential part of the workshop and are presented on the last day of the event.

- **Final presentation:** The proposals of the working groups on research questions, methodological approaches and practical transformative perspectives of urban voids are presented in a public event on the last day of the workshop. In a subsequent panel discussion, researchers from different cultural and disciplinary backgrounds, local experts and stakeholders reflect the results in a joint and interactive discussion with the audience.

WORKSHOP ON URBAN VOIDS IN BUENOS AIRES

The first workshop of the ¿Urban Voids? project took place in Buenos Aires from 12-19 March 2017. During the preparation phase, a survey of all current transformation projects in the City of Buenos Aires was made by the Argentinian partner institution, Centro de Estudios del Hábitat y la Vivienda, with the project coordinator Alicia Gerscovich. In various consultation sessions with the partners at HafenCity University, two examples of urban voids in Buenos Aires were selected and served as research sites during the workshop.

The workshop functions as a learning area where open questions are addressed in relation to the research field and to transcultural and transdisciplinary research.

One selected example was the inactive railway yard close to the Chacarita transport hub and the 'Villa Fraga – Playón Chacarita' settlement[4] in the north of the city. The other example was a (supposedly) underused area within the City Park (Parque de la Ciudad) next to the informal 'Villa 20' settlement in the south: this is currently transformed into athletes' housing for the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) 2018 and has therefore been named 'Villa Olímpica'[5]. The criteria for the selection were, on the one hand, based on the comparability with similar transformation processes in Hamburg and, on the other hand, on the issue of reflecting the social and morphological diversity of Buenos Aires. Also, for organisational reasons, the selection of two sites allowed an in-depth exploration through site visits and interviews within the given workshop time.

In the further preparation process, all Argentinian participants broke into two multidisciplinary working groups and prepared detailed working materials for the sites under investigation. These took the form of texts, maps, historical timelines, aerial photos, urban project plans, transcripts of parliamentary sessions on the draft bills for urban development of the sites, results of architectural and urban design competitions, feasibility studies, and socio-demographic data. The gathered material was translated into English,

organised in a working-material folder and distributed digitally among all participants and guest critics, and was also handed out on paper at the beginning of the workshop. In addition, the project partners prepared a literature list on the topic of urban voids in general and urban development in Buenos Aires in particular. Furthermore, the Argentinian partners identified key local actors involved in the transformation processes of the two example sites from state institutions, civil society, the neighbourhood, and academic institutions. The variety of workshop participants from different academic institutions and their widespread connections to civil and state institutions facilitated access to a broad range of key actors, such as city government officials and staff of the planning department, architects and urban planners, neighbours and inhabitants of the informal settlements, members of civil organisations, members of the city's legislature, and urban researchers.

At the start of the workshop on Sunday 12 March 2017 at the Casa Cultural Rodolfo Walsh, all participants from Latin America and Europe introduced themselves with their research background, current investigations and expectations of the workshop. This was followed by a presentation on the workshop topic and methodology as well as the aim and programme for the week by the workshop organisers. As part of the introduction, it was important to introduce both the local urban context of Buenos Aires as well as the origin of German participants with a presentation on the urban development in Hamburg.

The two research sites, Villa Olímpica / Parque de la Ciudad – Villa 20 and Villa Fraga – Playón Chacarita, were introduced in the form of presentations; this was enriched the next day with an excursion for all participants to the two locations. The walk in the surroundings and on the site of the railway yard and the Fraga settlement was guided by the architect and coordinator of the urbanisation process of the Fraga settlement, Juan Pablo Negro (city government), and elected representatives of the settlement council of the inhabitants. The excursion to the Parque de la Ciudad - Villa Olímpica was divided into two parts: firstly, a guided walk through the adjacent Villa 20 settlement with the

Workshop day 1: Introduction to the workshop topic.

Site visit on workshop day 2 in Buenos Aires.

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4

Arrival of participants from Europe

Excursion to Playón Chacarita - Villa Fraga
- Arq. Juan Pablo Negro (Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aries GCBA, Ex Coordinator of Urbanización Playón Chacarita - Villa Fraga), Peti and Luis (Representatives Villa Fraga)

Workshop day at Ciudad Universitaria, FADU – Instituto Superior de Urbanismo ISU

Collective reflection on excursion and aim for the week

Work in interdisciplinary and international working groups for each project site

Site visit meetings at Playón Chacarita, Federico Arce (El Galpón) (for Villa Fraga working group)

Input lecture by Arq. Graciela Brandariz (Specialist in Metropolitan Environmental Management) (for Villa Olímpica working group)

Introduction to the ¿Urban Voids? project and workshop at Casa Cultural Rodolfo Walsh

- Presentation of participants' professional background
- Presentation of Hamburg
- Discussion of current urban development challenges in the City of Buenos Aires
- Presentation of project sites
- Presentation of methodology and aim of workshop

Excursion to Parque de la Ciudad
- Arq. Martín Motta (GCBA, Coordinator of Urbanización Villa 20)
- Arq. Florencia Piñedo (GCBA, Project coordinator Villa Olímpica)
- Lic. Enrique Aubeyzón (Managing Director Parque de la Ciudad), Arq. Carlos Colombo (GCBA, 'Subsecretario' of Planning), Arq. Mariano Orlando (GCBA, Managing Director of Urban Planning)

Discourse working session: Collective discussion of working groups' progress of the day and definition of aim ('consigna') for the next workshop day

Discourse working session

Meeting with Arq. Nestor Jeifetz (Main coordinator of the Interdisciplinary Professional Team of the social organization MOI) and site visit of cooperative housing projects

Meeting with Javier Gentilini (Deputy of the Legislatura Ciudad de Buenos Aires)

Joint dinner

Input lecture by Arq. Liliana Carbajal (Specialist in social and urban territorial conflicts)

Programme of the workshop ¿Urban Voids? in Buenos Aires 2017

DAY 5

Work in working groups at
Ciudad Universitaria,
FADU – ISU

Inputs by practitioners and other
interested staff of the faculty

DAY 6

Work in working groups at
Ciudad Universitaria,
FADU – ISU

DAY 7

Preparation of presentation in
the working groups

DAY 8

Workshop review and discussion
of future prospects for a work-
shop in Hamburg with project
organizers

Discourse working session

Excursion in the city center:
Introduction to important events
and issues in Argentinian history
by Regula Nigg

Discourse working session

Collective discussion of working
groups' progress of the day and
exchange on ideas for the
presentation

Final presentation of working
groups and joint discussion at
Casa Cultural Rodolfo Walsh

Comments from external guests

Departure of participants to
Europe

Evening: Informal gathering with
guests and dinner

Joint workshop closure dinner

architect Martín Motta (coordinator of the urbanisation process, city government) and a resident; and secondly, a tour through the construction site of the housing for athletes at Villa Olímpica by the project coordinator María Florencia Piñero Villar (Unidad de proyectos especiales Villa Olímpica, city government).

From Tuesday onwards, the working group sessions took place at the Instituto Superior de Urbanismo, Territorio y Ambiente, Faculty of Architecture, Design and Urbanism of the Universidad de Buenos Aires. The two working groups were formed on a multidisciplinary and international basis to work on one of the example sites. The working group for Villa Fraga – Playón Chacarita consisted of Ingrid Breckner, Mariana Cavalieri, Mariela Paula Diaz, Alicia Gerscovich, Judith Lehner, María Silvia López Coda, and Friederike Schröder. The working group for Villa Olímpica was composed of Gabriela Eda Campari, Daniel Kozak, Timothy Pape, Joachim Thiel, Olga Wainstein de Krasuk, Martin Wickel, Kathrin Wildner and María Cecilia Zapata. The two guest critics, Ana Paula Koury from Sao Paolo and Massimo Bricocoli from Milan, alternately joined the two working groups.

In order to orientate the working group sessions towards the outcome of the workshop, the colleagues from HafenCity University introduced a tool for the development of urban projects in the form of a 'call for tender'[6], in order to sell public land based on the best quality instead of the best price. The template 'call for tender' was taken from the large-scale 'Hafencity' urban development project in Hamburg[7] and served as a discussion guideline on the topic of land use, actors, access and finance of land, urban design, social functions, urban policies etc.

At the end of each day, the two working groups joined to reflect on the current status of their work progress and results in so-called discourse sessions. During the course of the week, input lectures were presented by Liliana Carbajal, a specialist on social and urban territorial conflicts, on the urbanisation of the Fraga settlement, and by Graciela Brandariz, specialist in Metropolitan Environmental Management, on the Villa Olímpica case. Moreover, the Argentinian

partners organised an academic excursion to a cooperative housing project, El Molino, created by the social organisation Movement of Occupiers and Tenants (Movimiento de Ocupantes e Inquilinos, MOI). Nestor Jeifetz, the main coordinator of the Interdisciplinary Professional Team of the MOI, presented the movement's approach to the workshop participants and gave an insight into the local housing deficit issue and corresponding alternative solutions. Another meeting with the political scientist and Deputy of the Buenos Aires City Legislature, Javier Gentilini, had a similar aim of providing insights into the political aspect and urban policies. Furthermore, a guided tour through the city centre of Buenos Aires explained to the European participants and guest critics the main events and important figures of the Argentinian past and present, as well as the political and societal context related to the urban setting of the tour.

In order to strengthen the academic cooperation between the two partner institutions, meetings took place with the Head of Research Guillermo Rodríguez, Secretario de Investigaciones (Secretaría de Investigaciones, FADU-UBA) and the visiting professor Markus Vogl, Walter Gropius Chair (Universidad Torcuato Di Tella Escuela de Arquitectura y Estudios Urbanos, Buenos Aires).

The workshop's final presentation took place on Saturday afternoon at the Casa Cultural Rodolfo Walsh with invited guests from related research fields and practice. These guests included Pablo Vitale of the civil association Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia (ACIJ) and coordinator of the area of Right to the City; Andrés Borthagaray, architect and Director of the Institut pour la Ville en Mouvement – IVM; María Jesús Huarte of the artistic collective metaphorarq, as well as the visiting professor Markus Vogl (Walter Gropius Chair - DAAD), among others. Each working group prepared a presentation and posters followed by panel discussions with comments from invited guests, the two guest critics and the workshop participants.

On the last day, the project organisers discussed and reflected on organisational and content-related aspects of the workshop. The main discussion points were the methodological approach

of the ¿Urban Voids? project, its application during the workshop, possible implementation of the knowledge generated during the workshop for local stakeholders in terms of the transformation process of the two example sites, as well as future prospects for a research workshop in Hamburg. At the end, all participants were asked to write a report on their experiences of the workshop in terms of the research content, their disciplinary perspective and the transcultural aspect of the workshop process.

NOTES

1 "Transdisciplinary research is reflexive, integrative, method driven research with a focus on solving societal problems as well as scientific questions. Different types of scientific and non-academic knowledge are distinguished and methods are being developed for integrating these different types of knowledge." (Schneidewind 2016: 9) See also Bergmann et al. 2010; Lang et al. 2012; Jahn et al.2012; Defila and DiGiulio 1999.

2 For a definition of the term 'transculturality' as a concept going beyond the static understanding of single cultures, see Welsch 1999.

3 Real-world labs as a form of transformative research provide "contexts for real-world experiments, which aim at an improved understanding of transformation processes and actively facilitate them" (Schneidewind 2016: 10). See also Schneidewind 2014; De Flander et al. 2014; Schäpke et al. 2015.

4 Fraga is the name of nearby street, whereas Playón means railway yard in Spanish.

5 Comment on the meaning of the term 'villa' in each example: In 'Villa Olímpica' the term refers to a building ensemble planned on a vacant plot with specific characteristics and all infrastructure services necessary, similar to the concept of Italian 'villa'. In the case of 'Villa 20', the term indicates a settlement of spontaneous growth by inserting in an interstice / void of the city, generally lacking in services on the premises.

6 This cooperative instrument leaves significant elements of the project design to the contractors. Nonetheless, the city decides in a tender procedure on basis of the quality and price on the presented project.

7 The Hafencity as a large-scale urban transformation project of the old harbour in Hamburg is comparable to the Puerto Madero urban development project in Buenos Aires. For more information see the section on Hamburg in the chapter 'Urban Context', p. 28ff.

Mirrored waterfronts of Buenos Aires and Hamburg.

3

URBAN CONTEXT
BUENOS AIRES & HAMBURG

The urban dynamics of historic port cities such as Hamburg and Buenos Aires produce urban voids in emblematic areas: the port areas and its extensive infrastructure. The city of Hamburg and its specific urban dynamics are introduced by presenting two key projects of urban development – the HafenCity waterfront redevelopment and the International Building Exhibition (IBA). A more extensive presentation on the current urban developments in Buenos Aires gives insights into the city's challenges and the corresponding urban policies.

La dinámica urbana de ciudades históricas portuarias, como Hamburgo y Buenos Aires, produce vacíos urbanos en áreas emblemáticas: en las zonas portuarias y en sus importantes infraestructuras. La dinámica urbana de la ciudad de Hamburgo se aborda a través de dos proyectos claves de desarrollo urbano: el área portuaria reconvertida en HafenCity y la Exhibición Internacional de Construcciones – IBA. A su vez Buenos Aires se comprende en forma más detallada en su desarrollo urbano actual, a partir de los desafíos planteados desde la ciudad y las correspondientes políticas territoriales.

BUENOS AIRES – HAMBURG: PORT CITIES IN TRANSFORMATION

Hamburg and Buenos Aires have a long historical relationship that has evolved from their long-established function as port cities.[1] Along with this, industrial structures are found in both cities, which manifest themselves in infrastructure, buildings, work practices or mentalities, and determine the urban dynamics on a material, economic and social level to this day. Due to the change from an industrial to a service society, 'ruptures' occurred in both Buenos Aires and Hamburg and necessitated reorganisations of port functions and the related extensive infrastructure, as well as transformations of port areas in urban structures. In the course of such transformative processes, (partially) abandoned port areas emerged, which have been converted into large-scale urban development projects in both Hamburg (HafenCity) and Buenos Aires (Puerto Madero). Likewise, infrastructure such as rail yards and freight terminals have become obsolete in both cities in the light of new economic dynamics. Such large vacant areas are currently being reconceived in Hamburg (Neue Mitte Altona) and in Buenos Aires (Estación Palermo, Liniers and Chacarita among others).

In both cities, the construction of urban highways based on the modern paradigm of the car-friendly city produced 'ruptures' in and separations of the urban structure that are increasingly perceived as unsatisfactory and disturbing. There are plans for capping and relocating traffic routes, such as the 'Hamburger Deckel' projects for the A7 highway and Wilhelmsburger Reichsstraße in Hamburg, which may result in new, still undefined urban areas becoming 'voids'. At the same time, the urban voids left in the urban structure of Buenos Aires by the never completed AU3 highway in the 1970s have been converted into the 'Barrio Parque Donado Holmberg' real estate project. Transformation processes also affect urban areas closely linked to the exchange of goods, such as slaughterhouses, warehouses and markets. The area of the Mercado Nacional de Hacienda (national cattle market) in Buenos Aires is now largely unused because activities relating to the sale and slaughter of cattle have shifted towards the urban periphery. The concurrent importance of the market for the Mataderos (EN: slaughterhouses) neighbourhood and the ubiquitous Gaucho culture aggravate the physical void that has emerged from the functional change. In Hamburg, there has been a controversial discussion for decades about the possible uses of the transforming meat market and the impact on the Schanzenviertel neighbourhood, which is affected by gentrification. This can be observed in the conversion of the former Rindermarkthalle (cattle market hall) in St. Pauli, the establishment of publicly funded spaces for start-ups in the knowledge economy, as well as the extensive renewal measures in relation to housing stock and commercial infrastructure. Strategic measures to activate vacant or sub-used land are considered by planning departments and politicians in Hamburg and Buenos Aires as a means to activate or "improve" neighbourhoods. Such events include the International Building Exhibition Hamburg (Internationale Bauausstellung Hamburg, IBA) from 2007-2013 or the Youth Olympic Games in 2018 in Buenos Aires. Urban land considered by the institutions as vacant is thereby strategically "filled" with activities and new uses in relation with these events. Observations of these events' development processes show that actors emerge with proper claims on these seemingly vacant spaces that had not been considered by authorities previously.

All of these projects visualise the complexity of urban voids through the contentious negotiation processes between urban citizens, politicians, and business actors. Functional programs for the 'void' area rarely take into account its abundance of material, social, symbolic and formable qualities. In Buenos Aires, many diverse, heterogeneous citizens' initiatives (asambleas populares), formed in associations, cooperatives and NGOs, are currently shaping an active debate and action culture, such as the "right to the city" (Biesa 2002, Colectivo Situaciones 2011). Hamburg has its own "right to the city" initiative, which combines numerous heterogeneous associations and social movements. There, conflicts between different stakeholders about central urban areas play an important role (Grube 2012, Ziehl 2012). In this context, urban voids function as key spaces that point to new possibilities of use which go beyond regulated urban development policies and real estate projects.

Image of Buenos Aires seen from Rio de la Plata (above) and a view on Hamburg from River Elbe (below).

A REFLECTION ON HAMBURG'S RECENT URBAN DEVELOPMENT   by Joachim Thiel

With around 1.8 million inhabitants, Hamburg is Germany's second biggest city after Berlin (3.5 million). This population, though, only amounts to 2.3% of the total German population. One needs to have in mind that the city is part of a very equilibrated, decentralised national urban system. Unlike, for instance, in Argentina, no single centre dominates the country economically, politically as well as culturally. In Germany, there are various metropolitan spaces of more or less importance, partly conurbations of a handful of medium sized cities, partly mono-central urban hubs. Along with Berlin and Munich, Hamburg is one of these hubs: a huge urban core in the middle of a rural hinterland, with close functional interconnections between the two.

Two important features essentially influence Hamburg's urban development; the first relates precisely to the core-hinterland structure. The city's sphere of influence reaches far beyond its administrative borders. This functional nexus is all the more noteworthy as these borders do more than simply limit a local government area. Hamburg, on top of being a municipality, is a state within the German federal system. Administratively, the core-hinterland relations are represented by a loose and largely informal administrative body, the so-called "metropolitan region". It covers an area within four states, with a 200 km perimeter and a population of 5.3 million inhabitants.

The city's second specific characteristic relates to its port: Although located 100 km away from the coast, Hamburg has the third biggest sea port in Europe. What is more, the port is located adjacent to the central business district. As a consequence, urban development issues and port development issues are, on the one hand, closely connected. On the other hand, when it comes to their administration, the port and the city are disconnected. The port area, which covers about 10 per cent of the whole city, is governed by a separate port development law: that is to say, it is not subject to German planning legislation. Governance of port development is the responsibility of a separate "port authority" (Lieber 2017).

I seek here to give a short introduction to the ways in which Hamburg's urban policy has developed over the last decades. After a brief presentation of a strategic change that has happened since 2001, we shall focus on two key urban development projects: HafenCity – a waterfront redevelopment close to the city centre, and the IBA – a large scale regeneration project in a deprived neighbourhood in the southern part of the city.

THE GENERAL URBAN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Traditionally, the port-city connection was considered the key driver of Hamburg's urban development. The mantra "what is good for the port is also good for the city" epitomises how the city's leaders in business, media and politics interpreted this connection in the post war period. The developments that took place after German reunification seemed to corroborate the rationale of using the port as decisive urban growth machine. Through the opening of the East European borders, Hamburg both regained a huge part of its traditional hinterland and managed to reposition its port as a hub for the Baltic Sea region. In the course of the 1990s, however, an idea increasingly gained acceptance: namely, that this port-induced growth of traditional activities could not be taken for granted forever. The city would need to look for alternative vehicles of development.

When the Social Democratic Party was voted out of office in 2001 for the first time since World War II, the elected conservative city government presented a new comprehensive urban development strategy, called "the growing city" (Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg 2002; see also Altrock/Schubert 2004). They identified new sources of growth and presented strategies as to how these should be developed. On the one hand, this programme reflected some of the standard tools of that time: e.g. a concentration of economic development policies on promising clusters; the need to attract the qualified new service (or creative) class in particular as a human capital base for a post-industrial future, or the idea of achieving social cohesion by enhancing competitiveness. In addition, its origin was simply fiscal – a calculation of how

much tax income the Senate would lose with every inhabitant who left the city (e.g. to the surrounding suburban districts). On the other hand, however, the growing city also included some innovative aspects, particularly when it came to blurring sectoral policy boundaries. That idea that economic development not only implied investing in port infrastructures but that urban regeneration and education strategies could also underpin economic development was a new policy direction the city had not experienced before.

Several changes of government have occurred since then, each adding new flavours to the philosophy of the growing city. The overarching rationale, however, has survived. This is particularly due to the implementation of the overall programme being strongly moved forward by large-scale development and regeneration projects, two of which I shall concentrate on in the following sections.

HAFENCITY HAMBURG – THE FLAGSHIP

At present, HafenCity is one of the biggest inner city redevelopment projects in Europe. It comprises a 127 ha part of the previous port area next to the city centre, which means an extension of the latter by around 40 per cent. In its final state, the HafenCity is envisaged to have capacity for 40,000 jobs and 14,000 inhabitants. The latter figure means almost a doubling of the inner city population of Hamburg. These quantities – and particularly the important role of housing – demonstrate the degree of ambition linked to the project. HafenCity is not simply about redeveloping vacant port land. It is conceived as "a model for the development of inner cities in the 21st century"[2], including, for instance, a fine-grained functional and social mix and a sustainable building certification scheme. The realisation of this ambition is based chiefly on two interconnected pillars:

1. 100% public land ownership, which helps the city to control the quality of development through sale contracts. Land development is carried out by a publicly owned development corporation – the HafenCity Hamburg Limited – that sells lots to private developers and builds public spaces and infrastructures from the revenue it generates through the sales.

2. a land sales strategy not based on best price. When deciding about the future landowner and developer of a specific site, the price only accounts for 30%. The remaining 70% depends on the quality of the developer's plan for this site. The development corporation sets up a call for tender for each lot in which it defines the objectives and the criteria against which the achievement of objectives is assessed, and interested investors attempt to respond to these.

To fully understand HafenCity, however, one has to know that this degree of ambition has not existed from the beginning. The plans for building a new part of the city on port land became public in 1997, that is, five years before the growing city strategy. And, at that time, HafenCity was conceived less as a strategic urban development project than as a political tool that helped to overcome a blockade between the interests of port development and urban development (Lelong 2015). The port businesses, given the increasing trans-shipment rates after German unification, needed investment in new container-handling facilities that exceeded

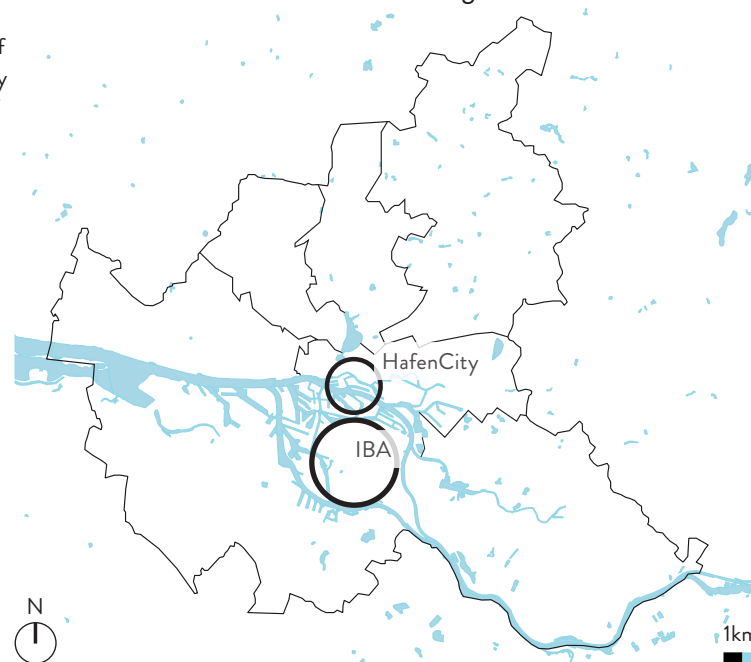Location of the two key projects of urban development in Hamburg.

Image of housing in the HafenCity in Hamburg.

the capacities of its own cash flow and the regular city budget. Selling port land as a funding source for port extension seemed a suitable way to solve this impasse. At the same time, this idea convinced the port lobby to open the port area up for other purposes. In other words, the plans for HafenCity helped to establish a compromise between port interests and urban development interests. This compromise was achieved in secret backroom negotiations initiated by the then mayor. The first design patterns and cost calculations also proved that the main rationale was a financial one. The prime objective here was to back the compromise.

While this approach was successful in setting the ball rolling for the HafenCity, it produced two serious pitfalls: For one thing, the almost pure concentration on generating money for the port extension weakened the quality aspirations. This lack of ambition, combined with naïve assumptions about development costs outlined in the first plans, caused a severe critique, particularly within professional and academic circles (e.g. Läpple 1998). For another, the backroom decision process implied that public participation relating to the future urban area had to follow belatedly. This was all the more relevant as the HafenCity development would transform an area that

had been off the radar of urban society for more than 100 years. The difficulties of re-opening it to the city involved, besides the obvious physical connections, particularly mental and social aspects. The lack of openness in strategy development, given the secrecy of the back-room deal, therefore aggravated the key challenges of the project.

Still, the first HafenCity master plan produced in 2000 sustained the underlying lack of ambition. Public transport was to be organised with buses and one new (isolated) tram line (which would be the starting point for the development of a larger tram network in the city). The need for social infrastructures, master planners thought, could be satisfied by facilities in nearby neighbourhoods. The main motivation, it seemed, was to contain public investment as much as possible. The master planning process also did not attempt to compensate for the lack of public discussions; it was organised as an ordinary urban design competition and continued to remain limited to the professional milieu.

The move towards more quality only started with the new city government's decision to build an underground line in 2003 (Krüger 2009) and with the appearance of two new key actors: the new Chief Building Officer in the city administration in 1999, and the new Chief Executive of HafenCity Hamburg in 2003. Both – albeit with different priorities – placed a strong emphasis on urban development in a comprehensive sense, while the new – more committed – public transport plans increased the confidence of private investors in the new area. As a result, positive feedback dynamics started between success and ambition (Bruns-Berentelg 2012), in the wake of which planners and managers became more and more courageous in relation to innovative experiments, such as the sustainable buildings certification scheme.

There have, of course, been other important conditions that supported this dynamic development, e.g. the realisation that building a new part of the city would also be a matter of public investment in social infrastructures (e.g. Thiel et al. 2010). A first primary school opened in 2009, while a second one as well a high school will follow in 2020/21. Meanwhile, there are four nursery schools and five higher education institutions in the area that, together with diverse cultural facilities, positively contribute to an active social and cultural life[3].

However, this is not to say that the HafenCity is without its problems and challenges. Indeed, the necessary public investments entail a critical political risk: that the general public will perceive the new area as developing at the cost of other parts of the city. The HafenCity development was originally conceived as a cash cow for port extension. With the growing ambitions, it has necessarily become less and less able to accomplish this task. What is more, the cash flow of the development corporation cannot afford the additional public infrastructure (e.g. the underground, schools, universities, cultural institutions), for obvious reasons. Every public investment, hence, needs an extra justification. Also, the public-private make up ties urban development to the cyclical nature of real estate markets. In the past, the management has been able to react to downturns by adapting the speed of development and switching between office and housing investments. Whether this is always possible remains an open question.

IBA – COHESION THROUGH IMAGE CHANGE

While the HafenCity project reflects above all the external orientation of urban development – it serves to enhance Hamburg's global visibility – the International Building Exhibition on the Wilhelmsburg river island with more than 55,000 inhabitants well represents the internal challenge of creating social cohesion within the city. For as long as urban development has taken place on the island, which is located between two branches of the river Elbe south of the city centre, the area has experienced deprivation. It has been providing the space e.g. for the city's dirty industries, most of the port facilities, the transport corridors to the south, and cheap working class housing: in other words, all the land uses the prosperous milieus of Hamburg north of the river do not like to have next door. As a consequence, social problems have culminated in Wilhelmsburg. The island exhibits the highest unemployment rates in Hamburg, high shares of ethnic minorities, and a per capita income of less than 60 per cent of the city's average. What is more, the river island south

of the city centre has not been part of the mental map of Hamburg. Traditionally, city maps end at the northern river bank. They display the southern bank only in order to show that there is port area.

Over previous decades, there had been various efforts to tackle these problems, but without resounding success. It was in the wake of the growing city strategy that Wilhelmsburg reappeared on the radar of urban decision makers. Given the growth agenda, the island was seen as an area with available space that combined suburban qualities with proximity to the city centre. Yet, for this function as a middle class land reserve, it had an image problem. Without a serious intervention, the population targeted by the city administration through its growth strategy would never go there. A strategy for Wilhelmsburg, hence, would have to address this image problem.

In 2004, Hamburg's city council decided on an overarching strategy for the whole area south of the river, conceived as an integral part of the growing city agenda. It was called "Leap over the Elbe" (Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg 2005) and included the plan to realise an International Building Exhibition (IBA) on the Elbe island. IBAs constitute a loose format of irregular exhibitions at changing places. They have substantially changed their nature since their origins in the 1920s, when they were in fact conceived as an exhibition that should display the virtues of modernist architecture (e.g. Meyer-Künzel 2001; Durth 2010). Since the 1980s, IBAs have increasingly adopted a function as vehicles of urban or even regional regeneration and have thereby largely lost their character as exhibitions. In addition, they have grown in number: While between 1900 and 1987 only four exhibitions had taken place, another eight have been realised since then. IBA Hamburg started in 2007 and ended in 2013, and was explicitly conceived as a vehicle to transform the Elbe island. The temporary intervention sought both to change the problematic image by opening up the area for middle class housing, and to develop paths of regeneration for the existing local community. This was a tricky double objective, as too strong a focus on opening the area up would run the risk of gentrification, while too strong a focus on the local community would hinder an opening of the area.

The key instrument of IBA Hamburg was a huge marketing campaign through which the city administration intended to redefine the main features of the island and turn them into assets. When it comes to its location, the IBA strategy stressed particularly the interesting combination of centrality and suburban character. As to the concentration of migrant population the campaign designated the area as pioneer of internationalised urban societies of the 21st century. In addition, the island should provide space for experimental projects that showed pioneer solutions for the challenges of climate change. Besides the marketing efforts, there were also tangible construction projects in the area, e.g. a new public administration centre that literally took the leap over the river, a new school centre and an energy-efficient refurbishment of a social housing neighbourhood. Finally, IBA brought events into the area: particularly an international garden exhibition in the final year 2013, but also smaller cultural and neighbourhood oriented happenings. The Dockville Festival, for instance, started in 2007 and has since then developed into one of the most popular Music and Arts festivals in Northern Germany.

The key challenges for IBA, besides the need to carefully balance its two objectives, arise out of its temporary character. The exhibition period has ended in 2013 – it was, incidentally, three years shorter than most of the previous IBAs – and, while the IBA agency still exists as a public project development company, it no longer has the coordinating role that it had until 2013. The area still carries lots of hard socio-economic burdens, and it is uncertain whether a temporary soft policy approach has been able to unleash enduring momentum towards a more prosperous future.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

When looking at the population growth rates, one could hold that the growing city agenda has been successful. However, as the growth of big metropolitan spaces is currently affecting all comparable German cities, it seems likely that a similar change would also have happened without a political stimulus. What is more, population growth produces undesired side-effects, in particular rising housing costs. The sale prices for housing units, for instance, have doubled within ten years. The city administration intends to mitigate this

explosion by establishing an "alliance for housing" embracing all relevant players from the public and the private sector, and seeking to build as many new housing units as possible. The target for the first period, from 2011 to 2015, was 6,000 units per year. Since 2016, it has been increased to 10,000. This total will be broken down evenly into owner-occupied housing, rented housing and social housing.

This enormous quantity of new buildings can be realised in part in small urban voids: vacant sites within the existing urban fabric. Yet, it will also require completely new developments, on both greenfield and brownfield sites. Additionally, there is an ongoing master planning process for a new project of the same size as HafenCity – Oberbillwerder – at the eastern fringe of the city. For large-scale brownfield developments, the only available land is in the port area, where the same institutional rigidities as in the run-up to the HafenCity development are still at work. The only politically accepted way to cut slices out of the port for urban development uses was for hosting the Summer Olympics in Hamburg. However, the majority of the population disapproved the city's bid for 2024 in a public referendum, meaning that the regeneration plans for the southern riverbank opposite the HafenCity also failed.

Interestingly, the experience of undertaking large-scale urban development that professional and political players in Hamburg have accumulated over the last decades also functions as a driver for large-scale developments. The HafenCity development corporation was strongly involved in the regeneration plans for the 2024 bid, and the IBA agency is coordinating the master plans for Oberbillwerder. That means that it is not only urban policies that have changed with the new millennium. In addition, new players have appeared who have not only implemented strategies but also set their own priorities.

CONCLUSION

Hamburg is one of the few cities in Germany that has followed a strategic agenda over the last few decades. While this agenda has, of course, taken up some of the fashionable features of neoliberal urban policies that were prevalent at that time, it has also introduced substantial innovations in urban development.

Image of IBA-Hamburg with 'case-study houses' and the 'Department for Urban Development and the Environment'.

When looking at the urban development process more closely, however, one can see that it is less governed by a coherent agenda. Many of the strategic and innovative projects have become what they are today rather by historical coincidence. We can see this most clearly in the transformation of HafenCity from a cash generator to a central element of strategic urban development. However, what is also obvious here is the important role of the port. It seems that Hamburg's 850 years history as port city will continue to be both an asset and a burden for the city's future.

BUENOS AIRES: URBAN TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES AND PROJECTS

The urban agglomeration of Greater Buenos Aires, with its approximately 13.5 million inhabitants, is the second-largest agglomeration in South America. The rising number of inhabitants throughout the 20th century went hand in hand with its development as the dominant centre of Argentina in economic, political as well as cultural terms, leaving behind other Argentinian cities such as Córdoba, Rosario, Mendoza and San Míguel de Tucumán by approximately 10 million inhabitants.

The extensive urban fabric of Greater Buenos Aires and/or the AMBA (Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires) spreads over two administrative entities: the Province of Buenos Aires and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (CABA). Within the institutional system, the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, with a total population of approx. 2.9 million[4], plays a preponderant role: in addition to being almost a provincial jurisdiction like the rest of the Argentine provinces, it is the seat of the federal government and consequently the capital of the country. This feature leaves some particularities imprinted on the city.

While surrounded to the south, west and north by the province of Buenos Aires, it is the Rio de la Plata river in the east that historically fostered the development of Buenos Aires. The port of Buenos Aires was the reason for the formation of the city in the 16th century (Kozak 2008). Similar to Hamburg, the port has been of fundamental significance to the historical development of Buenos Aires, and is closely linked to the configuration of the railway network, designed to converge on the port (ibid.).

## OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION AND SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BUENOS AIRES

For the Argentinian architect Alberto Varas (2008), the relationships between the river and the city as well as the city's public spaces are elements for reading the evolution of Buenos Aires. The architect identifies four historical stages of the evolution until the second half of the 20th century, where the first stage (1536-1776)

is marked by the fort as an important piece of infrastructure on the coast and an initial orthogonal grid behind the fort according to the colonial Leyes de Indias (Laws of the Indies). In the second stage (1776-1850), a central public space, later called Plaza de Mayo, was conceived as a decisive element of the urban grid. A very important third phase took place between 1850-1900, with the consolidation of the European-style centennial city and the expansion towards the southern Riachuelo, as well as barracks and industry and towards the North, where large areas were still vacant rural or leisure land. In this period, the elite abandoned their residences south of Plaza de Mayo as a result of epidemics such as yellow fever and cholera, and moved towards the northern neighbourhoods of Barrio Norte and Palermo. The abandoned buildings were still occupied mainly by the poor and migrants, who lived in precarious conditions of overcrowding and lacking sanitary infrastructure. In the fourth stage, around the turn of the century until the 1930s, important projects were carried out, such as the construction of diagonals in the central city grid following Hausmann's operation in Paris. At the time, the population grew rapidly due to successive waves of immigration from Europe. In addition, the construction of the Puerto Madero port – soon abandoned because it became prematurely outdated – became one of the first projects on the metropolitan level involving a large-scale transformation of infrastructure. Other important infrastructure works include the rail stations, designed as infrastructure palaces. The incorporation of these buildings into a complex structure was based on a transport system of railways and trams. Rising urban mobility went hand in hand with the transformation of the city into a growing metropolis. The spatial configuration of the city is seen by some researchers as a product of the rail system, urban land speculation, and the growth of local industry (Sargent 1974); others highlight the actions of the public authorities, who set new administrative limits for the municipality (Avenida General Paz), and also designed a new public plan of a square-based uniform grid and a system of parks distributed between the northern and southern city limits (Gorelik 2005). To this day, the spatial configuration set in this period underlies the urban agglomeration and the main urban axes.

DATA BUENOS AIRES

The population of the City of Buenos Aires (CABA) has not increased substantially since 1947 to this day. Focusing on the last decade, 2001-2010, the increase in population was approx. 114 000 people - a growth of 4.1% . This is in large part due to the population increase in informal settlements ("villas de emergencia") in the city. In the same period, the municipalities of Greater Buenos Aires grew by 14.18%.

FOREIGN POPULATION

13.2% foreign population
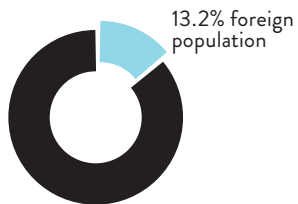
There is a significant decrease of foreign population in the last decades. Migrants from neighboring countries represent 54.5% of the total foreign population, in 2001 it was 46.4%.

INFORMAL SETTLEMENT POPULATION

6% living in informal settlements
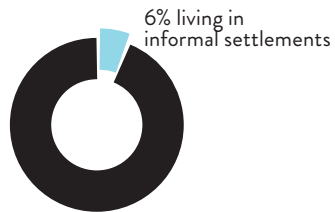
In the last decade the population of informal settlements ("villas de emergencia") grew by 56,165 new inhabitants, or 52% (reaching a total of 163,587 people in 2010), while the population of the rest of the city grew only by 2.1%. This means that much of the new population of the last decade lives in precarious conditions.

HOUSING TENURE

12% irregular ownership

30% tenants
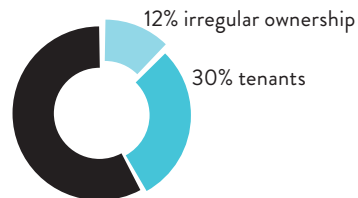
As for the housing conditions of the city, according to the latest census, 6.2% of porteños reside in precarious homes (70,317 homes). The number of households in poor housing situation has increased by an average of 7,000 households per year in the last ten years.

Statistical Data about the City of Buenos Aires (Census 2010, INDEC 2012).

RIO DE LA PLATA

COMMUNE 15

PUERTO MADERO

COMMUNE 8   RIACHUELO

N

1km

—————————— Limits of Autonomous City of Buenos Aires
----------------------------------- Limits of Communes

The City of Buenos Aires is divided into 15 communes ("comunas"). The limits of the communes in their current form where established in 2008. The communes contain 48 neighbourhoods ("barrios") that go back to the parishes established in the 19th century.

"Throughout these periods the primacy of the historic centre remained unchallenged. Unlike most Latin-American cities, this is still today the main financial, commercial and administrative centre of the metropolis and country. The radial-concentric and strongly monocentric structure delineated in the first metropolitan cycle was reinforced (...), in which centres and subcentres were densified along the railway system. (...) The pattern of urbanisation in the second half of the twentieth century (...) departed from the railway axes. Supported by an extended network of bus and coach services, the metropolis expanded to the interstices between the previously consolidated urban corridors. This new expansion did not create new centralities". (Kozak 2008: 157)

While this expansion was not able to create new centralities, urban phenomena that began to occur in the second half of the 20th century, such as the construction of gated communities, shopping malls and business parks, along with a privatised and expanded network of highways, produced new centralities in the peripheries of Buenos Aires (cf. Welch Guerra 2005, Janoschka 2002). These islands of wealth in the periphery go hand in hand with adjacent informal settlements as well as the growing number of "villas de emergencia" and situations of overcrowding in the consolidated city during the 1990s. Especially in the dawn of the social, economic and political crisis of 2001, the aggravating unequal distribution of wealth manifested itself in the social fragmentation of the city (Gorelik 2004, Welch Guerra 2005).

In relation to the historical processes above, Daniel Kozak (2008) identified three socio-spatial characteristics in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires. Firstly, a division between the centre and the periphery, where the centre has better infrastructure equipment and is predominantly richer; secondly, a clear distinction between the main axes of urbanisation along the transportation lines and the deprived interstitial spaces; and thirdly, a north-south division in which the south lacks infrastructure and is significantly poorer.

CURRENT URBAN DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN THE CABA
The urban characteristics of centre-periphery, main axes-interstices and north-south divide reappear when looking at the current urban development policies of the public authorities of the City of Buenos Aires. Apart from recent specific policies – which, for instance, aim to solve the critical housing deficit (e.g. Urbanisation of Informal Settlements) and improve the infrastructure of the south (Plans for the Commune 8) – there exist general urban development plans such as the Environmental Urban Plan (Plan Urbano Ambiental 2008[5]) and the Territorial Model (Modelo territorial 2010-2060[6]).

With the most recent Plan de Acción (action plan), the government of the City of Buenos Aires and its mayor Horacio Rodríguez Larreta has formulated an action plan for the years 2017-2019. The objective of this plan is to design public policies that respond to the needs of the inhabitants of Buenos Aires, and at the same time "contribute to the development of the City interpreted as a space for coexistence of millions of Argentinians"; and ensure that "Buenos Aires is a city to enjoy, that guarantees the integration of the most vulnerable and where, based on creativity and innovation, we can all develop our potential" (Plan de Acción 2016: n.p.). The action plan features four key points, which are named "enjoy", "human scale", "social integration", and "creativity and innovation". Behind the term "enjoy", the government aims, among other aspects, "to organise the best Youth Olympic Games in history, to enhance the further development of the South, to position Buenos Aires internationally and to transmit the values of the City Government" (Plan de Acción 2016: n.p.).

The strategic guidelines of the "social integration" aspect are strengthening the south "as the focus of economic growth of the city, ensuring quality of public services to all residents of this zone, transforming the 'villas' into neighbourhoods as integrated parts of the city and that all the inhabitants of the city own a home". Finally, the key topic of "creativity and innovation" refers to citizens as active participants in a co-creation process while Buenos Aires becomes the capital of innovation and entrepreneurship in Latin America. The action plan also aims at strengthening public-private partnerships

1. Social Housing PROCREAR
   - Palermo,
   - Liniers,
   - Caballito,
   - Estación Buenos Aires y Sola
2. Barrio Parque Donado-Holmberg (Ex AU3)
3. Paseo del Bajo – Catalinas Norte (road underpass)
4. AU Illia: new highway lane
5. Urbanization of informal settlements (villas de emergencia):
   - 31 (next to new AU Illia),
   - Rodrigo Bueno (next to the project Santa María – Ex-City of Sport Boca)
   - 20 (next to Villa Olímpica)
   - Playón Chacarita (in connexion with the extension of Av. Triunvirato)
6. Ciudad de la Innovación (ex Tiro Federal)
7. Autódromo
8. Villa Olímpica – Parque de la Ciudad

6. Ex Tiro Federal
2. Barrio Parque
1. Palermo
4. AU Illia
5. Playón Chacarita
5. Villa 31
3. Paseo del Bajo
1. Caballito
5. Rodrigo Bueno
1. Liniers
1. Estación Buenos Aires y Sola
8. Villa Olímpica
5. Villa 20
7. Autódromo
1km

Current urban development projects in the city of Buenos Aires.

and a policy of "districts" to "revitalise and empower specific areas of the city". The action plan of the government reflects future planned interventions as well as projects conceived in recent years in the City of Buenos Aires, calling to mind that a large number of projects are situated in areas characterised by the government as "void" or vacant. The map shows the focus on the urbanisation of certain informal settlements (villas de emergencia or asentamientos), as well as the focus on real estate and highway projects such as Barrio Parque Donado-Holmberg on an area by the AU3 highway and AU Illia that has long been vacant and is close to the city's port area. The social housing financed by the national PROCREAR programme is situated on formerly disused national railway yards.

There are three urban planning measures that relate directly to the two example sites studied during the ¿Urban Voids? workshop in Buenos Aires: a) the urbanisation of villas de emergencia, b) the master plan for Commune 8 and c) the establishment of economic districts.
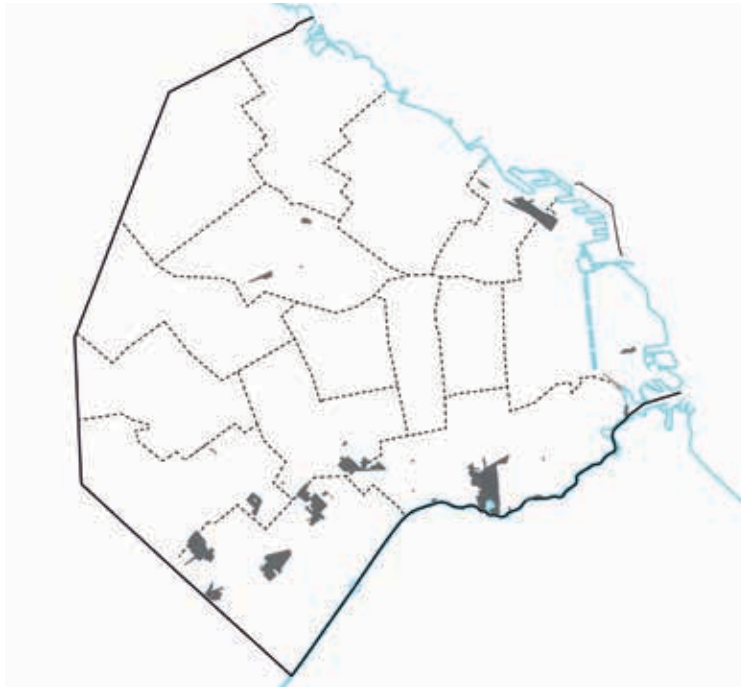
Informal settlements in the city of Buenos Aires.

a) The urbanisation of informal settlements in the City of Buenos Aires

The following subchapter tries to unfold what "urbanisation of villas" means for the current local government. In the City of Buenos Aires in 2016, the 'Techo' programme revealed 48 informal settlements – villas, asentamientos and informal neighbourhoods as they are called in Argentina – in which 82,585 families[7] live (Programa Techo 2016).

The processes of Redevelopment and Socio-Urban Integration implemented in some informal settlements in the city[8] are one of the central strategies of the current government of the City of Buenos Aires. The selected informal settlements are particularly situated in strategic locations or are part of larger development projects in areas or economic districts considered by the local government as harbouring potential. Each of these processes carried out by the Housing Institute of the City[9] (Instituto de Vivienda de la Ciudad, IVC) has specific regulations that give substance and support to the interventions. Each of the selected villas is adjacent to land considered "vacant" by the administration to carry out the redevelopment, associated with an infrastructure project or added value appropriated by the market.

In general, the processes have one aim: "redevelopment, zoning and social and urban integration" (Law 5705 – Villa 20). Later, for the settlements of Rodrigo Bueno and Playón Chacarita, there are aims of "cultural, environmental and urban [integration], based on the principles of equality, spatial justice, anti-discrimination, and the Right to the City, through the implementation of measures to overcome the social vulnerability of the inhabitants of these neighbourhoods in order to achieve full and permanent social inclusion" (Law 5798 – Rodrigo Bueno and Law 5799 – Barrio Playón Chacarita).

The 'Participative Management Working Group' (Mesa de Gestión Participativa) is the chosen format to guarantee and implement the participation of the settlement inhabitants in all stages of the redevelopment process. It is made up of representatives of the settlement, residents, and public agencies for defence and control. Decisions will be taken by consensus. Representatives of

View of the South of Buenos Aires seen from the Torre Espacial in Parque de la Ciudad.

residents of the commune have not been invited through their communal representatives – a situation which generates differences between those "in the villa" and those "outside". This participatory process, which includes confrontation, negotiation and consensus among the various actors in each defined moment, comprises the constitution and formation of the working group and its own rules of operation. Concurrently, a technical working group will be established to give account of the process and urban architectural project. These are the main issues among others, which might also evolve as the process of redevelopment progresses.

The established Project of Redevelopment and Socio-Urban Integration consists of various stages: the socio-spatial diagnosis and survey of the existing population and dwellings; the elaboration, execution, control, monitoring and evaluation of the construction of new housing, facilities and infrastructure in neighbouring areas; the renovation, rearrangement and consolidation of the existing building stock and surrounding road infrastructure, and the definition of criteria for the awarding of new housing to future inhabitants.

All registered households who own a house or are renting in the informal settlements are beneficiaries of a home.

For those who want to relocate outside the neighbourhood, the local government promotes access to loans with favourable conditions through programmes aimed at providing a definitive housing solution. During the implementation of each redevelopment law, forced evictions cannot be carried out.

The city's government must have an annual budget for the development of the Integral Project as required by the execution stages without deadlines for the completion of the process. However, for the implementation of ongoing urbanisation projects, external financing has been used, either through loans or by sale of public land. In order to guarantee the sustainability of the urbanisation process, it is essential to secure genuine funds according to the costs of the planned works and to the professional teams that allow the process to be carried out in a given time. For the construction of housing, each law establishes the urban parameters for each new 'neighbourhood'.

The final objective of each law is to certify ownership of the new homes and of the existing improved houses, with all infrastructure services (water, electricity and sewage) formalised and operating correctly. In order to obtain ownership certification, households have access to loan conditions suited to their specific economic capacities.

In summary, there is no global policy visible to urbanise settlements with permanent homes and improve existing housing, as long as the laws do not prohibit the sale of the houses on the market, and guarantee the control of the housing conditions and security in the existing homes. This all is set in a context where the representation and participation of the neighbourhood is disputed not only between those "in the villa" and those "outside", but where conflicts also occur within the informal settlement and within the surrounding neighbourhood.

The challenge is to include all inhabitants of the city and to overcome the aforementioned conflicts with inclusive public policies that not only consist of an apartment but rather an integral idea of habitat. It would require contributions from different disciplines and the active participation of all parties, recognising the rights of citizens to live in a fairer and more inclusive city.
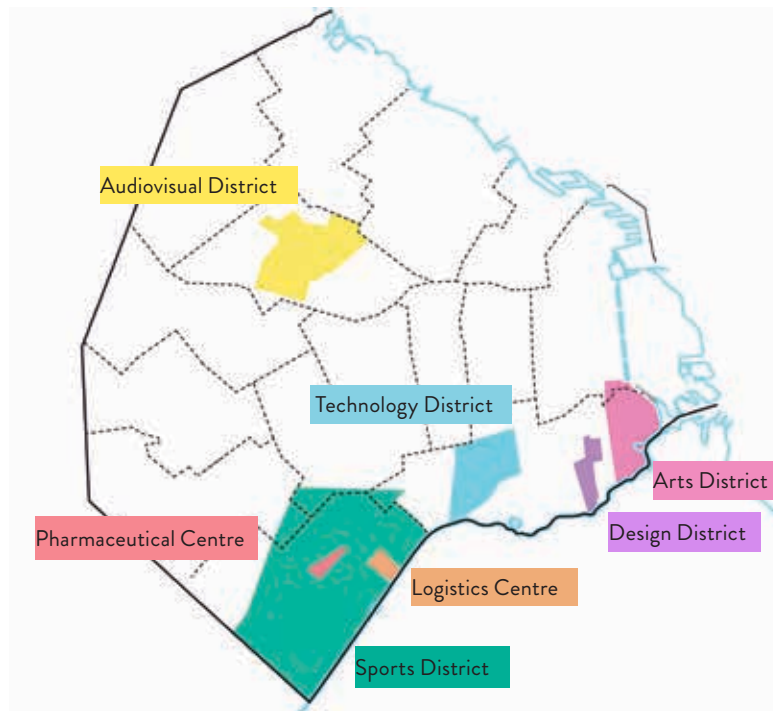
b) Focusing on the city's south: Master Plan for Commune 8
The Master Plan for Commune 8 (Plan Maestro para la Comuna 8, 2014) is based on the criteria and guidelines of the Environmental Urban Plan and the Territorial Model of the CABA, and aims at a general plan for the development of Commune 8 in the south of the city. The area should be transformed into a new centrality with urban corridors that connect it with the rest of the city and with the city centre. A detailed discussion on the content and effects of the Master Plan for Commune 8 is presented by Graciela Brandariz in the following chapter.

c) Economic development: Creating economic districts
The idea of economic districts dates back to the Urban Environment Plan (Law 2930) of 2008, where it states: "A polycentric city, among one of the features to be implemented in the transformation process, consolidating the hierarchy of its large Central Area and simultaneously promoting a network of secondary centres, as well as communal and neighbourhood centres with identity and vigour". Focusing in particular on the economic aspect of these centres, a number of laws have been passed since 2008 that aim to create certain themed "economic districts" (Distritos Económicos[10]) in different neighbourhoods of the city.

Each district has a law that, in short, describes which industrial sector is to be promoted, what the defined perimeter and location is, and what kind of benefits companies might obtain by establishing themselves there. According to the city government, the objectives of these districts are to promote the economic development of the identified sectors and to facilitate the urban and social development of previously neglected urban areas. Incentives can include loans and tax exemptions, as well as the creation of infrastructure that attracts companies in the sector.

Districts and neighbourhood locations:
- Technology: Parque Patricios
- Audiovisual: Chacarita, Villa Ortúzar, Paternal, Palermo and Colegiales
- Design: Barracas

Economic districts in the city of Buenos Aires

Audiovisual District
Technology District
Arts District
Pharmaceutical Centre
Design District
Logistics Centre
Sports District

- Arts: La Boca, San Telmo and Barracas
- Sports: Villa Lugano, Villa Riachuelo and Villa Soldati neighbourhoods

The two example sites of the ¿Urban Voids? workshop are situated in the "Audiovisual" (Playón Chacarita / Villa Fraga) and "Sport" (Villa Olímpica) economic districts.

The **Audiovisual District** was created by Law 3876 in September 2011 and, since then, film, TV, advertising, animation and video game producers have settled in the district, which has an area of 720 acres. The district promotes production of audiovisual content, provision of necessary services, processing and post-production of the resulting material and the growth of companies in the sector through financial tools, training and tax incentives. The Ministry of Education supports the development with a programme of curricular innovation in the technical state management schools, taking the training requirements in audiovisual activities as a point of reference. In this district, the railway premises of Chacarita and the informal Villa Fraga settlement are situated on the edge of the transfer hub of the Urquiza railway, generally called Chacarita. It is an area with characteristics of urban centrality in a residential neighbourhood that coexists with the audiovisual industry.

The **Sports District**, which has a surface area of 21.9 km², is an area promoting sports activities and the sports industry. It was created in December 2014 through Law 5235 and aims to transform Commune 8. More precisely, the neighbourhoods of Villa Lugano, Villa Soldati and Villa Riachuelo will be affected in terms of both their urban and social fabric due to the resulting building construction, economic and labour development. The promotion of sports activities and the sports industry through tax benefits focuses on factories of sporting goods or sports service companies, as well as construction companies and real estate developers. The theme for the district was selected because of the extensive green spaces in Commune 8 and the projected "Olympic Village" where most of the competitions will be held during the Youth Olympic Games in October 2018. The construction of the Olympic

Village, where athletes will be hosted, is ongoing in the Parque de la Ciudad. The Olympic Village project foresees a subdivision into housing blocks for the apartments and other service infrastructure, decreasing the surface area of the public park. Additionally, the planned improvements and complementary infrastructure for Commune 8 include enhanced public transport through the Metrobus Sur transport system, cleaning the Soldati Lake, a new Logistics Centre, a cultural facility called Buenos Aires City of Rock and the bus terminal for medium and long-distance trips.

Consequences of the creation of the districts – a reflection

Unfortunately, there is insufficient socio-economic data to carry out a detailed reflection on the impact of the economic-district policy. Nonetheless, it is already visible that, as models of economic and social concentration located in certain spaces, the districts have enabled certain financial actors to effect large-scale interventions. Even though the districts were implemented as compensatory policies for the imbalance between the north and south of the city, the effects following completion of public infrastructure works were far from balancing the territory. Instead, territorial imbalances have been accentuated with a consequent valorisation of the land and gentrification of the neighbourhoods involved. Other consequences of the district policy are:

- the role of the state as a promoter of private capital interventions (not as a balance of inequalities);
- changed uses of urban space – tax exemptions and taxes – with revaluation of areas, some geographically privileged;
- the generation of urban reconversion processes (with disadvantages for non-owners of commercial, housing and industrial spaces)'
- fragmentation of the territory: conformation of districts with uneven geographical development (increase of value in different zones), and
- legitimisation of urban renewal as processes of gentrification.

REFLECTIONS ON URBAN CHALLENGES IN BUENOS AIRES
by Alicia Gerscovich

Today, 16 years after the crisis of 2001, large parts of the population still have difficulty accessing the housing market. In the last year, laws have been passed for the urbanisation of some paradigmatic villas strategically positioned in the territory through infrastructure projects of unproven performance, with external loans used for their financing, and the construction carried out on land considered by the government as vacant. Nonetheless, while there is an increasing demand for housing, collective rights, such as the right to the city, are increasingly violated.

The absence of public policies on urban land use, as well as the dynamics of the private market, cause serious disturbances in the urban fabric at the expense of a population which has restricted or no access to such markets. A recent example has been the creation of the Agencia de Bienes de la Ciudad (Agency of Assets of the City). This means that competences, which were part of the city government, are transferred to the agency. Like its counterpart for the south of the city, Corporación Buenos Aires Sur, the creation of the agency facilitates the sale of public urban land. In the case of the Agency of Assets of the City, this would happen mostly in the neighbourhoods with high socio-economic power.

In this way, the population with less economic resources has no access to affordable housing in the city in locations that provide social infrastructure and labour opportunities. The diversity of programmes, combined with the 'atomisation' in different government agencies with underspent budgets, complicates management and control, as well as making it difficult for communities to understand the normative dynamics. This is increased by measures like the creation of mono-functional economic districts, which lead to the displacement of the most vulnerable and also to the impoverishment of the middle class, who are thus forced to abandon these central areas. The effects are areas undergoing gentrification and the relocation of inhabitants towards environmentally degraded areas in the peripheries without adequate infrastructure.

If the city is understood as a process of collective production in which all actors participate according to their position of power, it is the state through the government that should balance these capacities and provide the appropriate instruments to produce a more just and democratic City of Buenos Aires.

NOTES

1 It is important to mention the historically direct connections between the two cities as a result of the exchange of goods and passenger transport between Europe and Latin America, such as the connection of the Hamburg South American steamship company (Hamburg Südamerikanische Dampfschifffahrts-Gesellschaft) from Hamburg to Buenos Aires via Brazil.

2 http://www.hafencity.com/de/ueberblick/hafencity-die-genese-einer-idee.html

3 http://www.hafencity.com/upload/files/artikel/170302_HCH_FaltblattKompakt_web2_einzelseiten.pdf

4 Source: National Census of Households and Homes 2010

5 The Environmental Urban Plan is a law based on the Constitution of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and consists of a strategic framework and development guidelines for the urban territory of the CABA. See http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/planeamiento/consejo-del-plan-urbano-ambiental

6 The Territorial Model is a territorial analysis and a planning concept for the urban development of Buenos Aires over a period of 50 years (currently 2010-2060). See http://www.ssplan.buenosaires.gob.ar/MODELO%20TERRITORIAL/WEB/modelo_territorial.html

7 The survey carried out by the NGO Techo (2016) does not specify the exact number of inhabitants as a census would do. The given number of households is based on the interviews with inhabitants in the settlements.

8 Villas 20; 31 y 31 bis; Playón Chacarita - Villa Fraga and Rodrigo Bueno.

9 Agency responsible for implementing the housing policy in CABA.

10 The city government supplies information on all the economic districts on their webpage http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/distritoseconomicos.

Aerial photo of Buenos Aires.

4
WORKSHOP ON SITE(S) IN BUENOS AIRES

The ¿Urban Voids? workshop is dedicated to the dynamic interrelations and actors involved in the transformation processes of two concrete example sites in the City of Buenos Aires: Villa Olímpica – Villa 20 in the south of the city, and Playón Chacarita – Villa Fraga in the north. The two sites are considered as prototypes of current situations regarding the phenomenon of urban voids in the City of Buenos Aires.

El taller ¿Vacíos Urbanos? en la Ciudad de Buenos Aires está dedicado al abordaje de dos ejemplos concretos focalizados en los procesos de transformación urbana referidos a sus interrelaciones dinámicas y a los actores involucrados: Villa Olímpica - Villa 20 y Playón Chacarita – Villa Fraga ubicados en el sur y norte de la ciudad respectivamente. Ambos ejemplos son considerados casos prototípicos de situaciones actuales en relación al fenómeno de los vacíos urbanos en la Ciudad de Buenos Aires.

Different disciplinary perspectives on urban voids open up a broad spectrum of readings of urban development processes. However, their conceptualisation is only possible through the perception of an urban situation from a particular (disciplinary) perspective. In this context, the intrinsic dynamic and constitutive interrelations of urban voids are often neglected. The ¿Urban Voids? workshop is therefore dedicated to a conceptualisation of urban voids with respect to the dynamic interrelations and actors involved in the transformation processes of two concrete example sites in the City of Buenos Aires.

The variety of sites considered as urban voids in the urban structure of Buenos Aires reflects the city's discontinuity and ruptures in its evolution, the impact of economic and political crises, and the contentious struggles for urban space. In Buenos Aires, the struggle for urban land in recent years has been perpetual for social organisations and the most vulnerable sections of the population. The idea of occupying and urbanising urban voids is tightly intertwined with regional and global economic events. As in other Latin American cities, the informal occupation of unused urban areas or single vacant buildings is widespread. Defining certain sites as 'void' or vacant is therefore a controversial action, because the majority of spaces labelled as vacant or unused in terms of their original functions are informally occupied by people who are excluded from the formal housing market.

In this context, the selection of two example sites for the workshop was based on the consideration by the city government of areas currently undergoing a transformation process, from a sub-used or unused stage in terms of their intended original functions into new functions. The identified areas were, for a long time, neglected by public institutions and have, until now, lacked investment in terms of infrastructure and development plans. During the selection process, the large diversity of urban voids was made visible in terms of their scale and location in the city, the actors involved and the pace of the transformation processes. The two selected sites prototypically reflect the current situation of urban transformation processes in Buenos Aires and differ greatly in terms of their

The selected sites are prototypes of current situations regarding the phenomenon of urban voids.

Alicia Gerscovich

urban context, dimension, actors and related urban policies. One selected example is a (supposedly) sub-used area within the City Park (Parque de la Ciudad) adjacent to the informal Villa 20 settlement in the south. The area is currently transformed into athletes' housing for the 2018 Youth Olympic Games and is therefore named 'Villa Olímpica' (Olympic Village). The other example is the partially inactive railway yard close to the Chacarita transport hub and the 'Fraga' settlement1 in the north of the city called Playón Chacarita – Villa Fraga. For both sites, the city government plans to implement an urban renewal process within the policy framework of the urbanisation of informal settlements (Urbanización de Villas) and – in case of 'Villa Olímpica' – the Plan for Commune 8.

In case of the Playón Chacarita, with its nearby informal settlement of Villa Fraga, the project foresees the urbanisation of the informal settlement and the construction of new social housing, as well as the prolongation of Avenida Triunvirato and the realisation of private real-estate projects for housing, mixed social housing and commercial use. On the site of Villa Olímpica, the construction of athletes' housing is already in progress; meanwhile, in the adjacent informal Villa 20 settlement, surveys and the participatory process of urbanisation are being carried out.

The following two subchapters give an overview of the characteristics of each site's surroundings and historical evolution, as well as an introduction to relevant master plans, architectural projects and zoning laws. Additionally, they present the complexity of the cases revealed during the workshop's site visits and interviews with different actors, including quotes and photos taken during the workshop. Each description of the sites is subsequently complemented by "internal perspectives" from urban planner / architect Graciela Brandariz, who analyses the plan for Commune 8, and architect Liliana María Carbajal, who writes about contention in the urbanisation of Villa Fraga.

The workshop's case studies:
1) Villa Olímpica - Villa 20
and 2) Playón Chacarita -
Villa Fraga.

Playón Chacarita - Villa Fraga

Villa 20

Villa Olímpica

1km
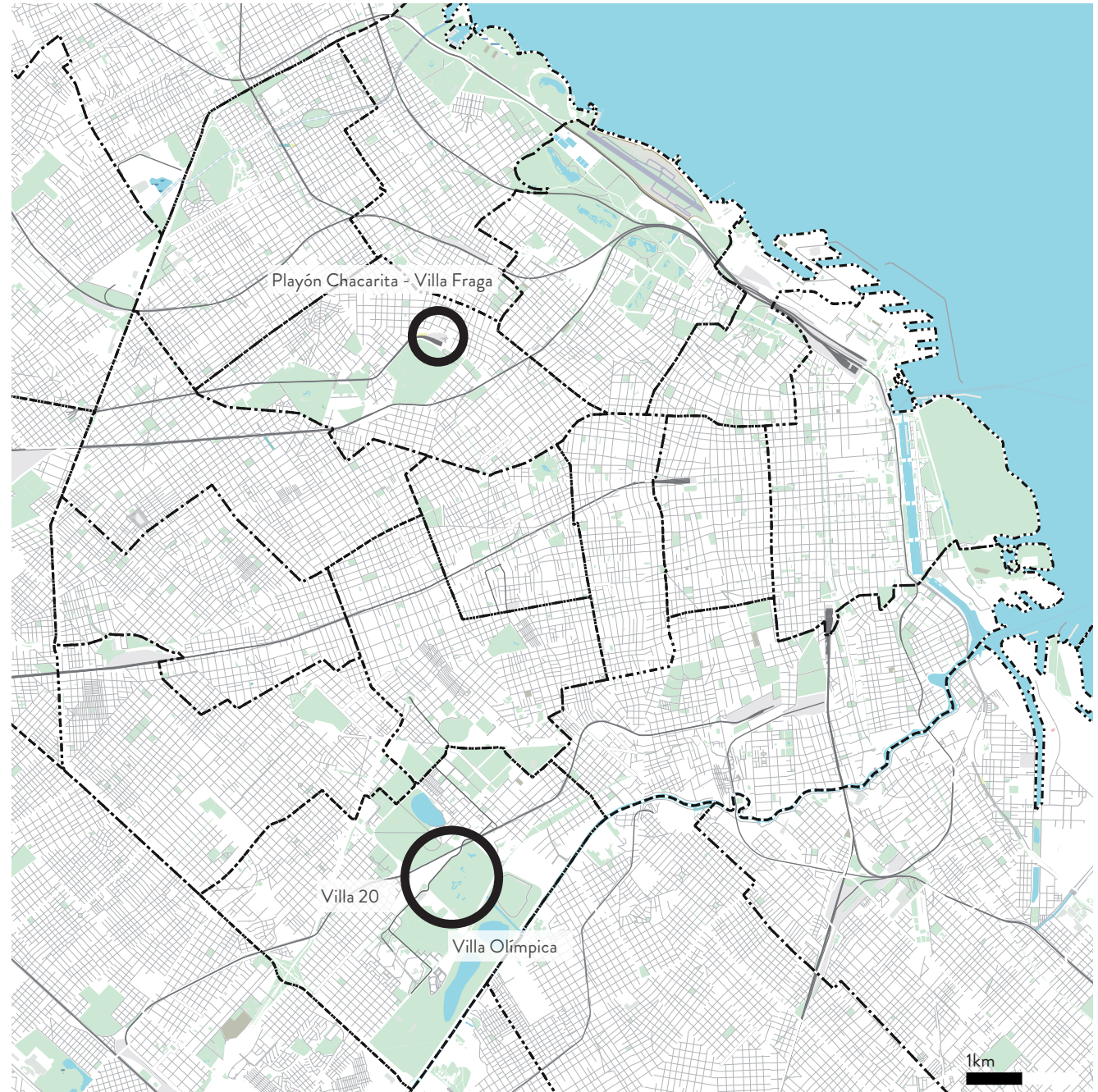
VILLA OLÍMPICA – PARQUE DE LA CIUDAD

Location
The area is part of the "Parque de la Ciudad" (City Park) south of Buenos Aires' city centre and runs along Avenida Escalada between Avenida Coronel Roca and Fernández de la Cruz.

Surface area
The Parque de la Ciudad extends over approx. 80 ha. The urban project "Villa Olímpica" reduces the area of the Parque de la Ciudad, which is the largest area of open space in the south of the city.

Surroundings
It is an area of large urban projects, mega blocks, social housing complexes (Villa Soldati, Lugano), a municipal golf course and the informal settlement Villa 20 (currently in urbanisation process). Recently the zoning and subdivision of the area corresponding to the Olympic Village and its surroundings was approved.
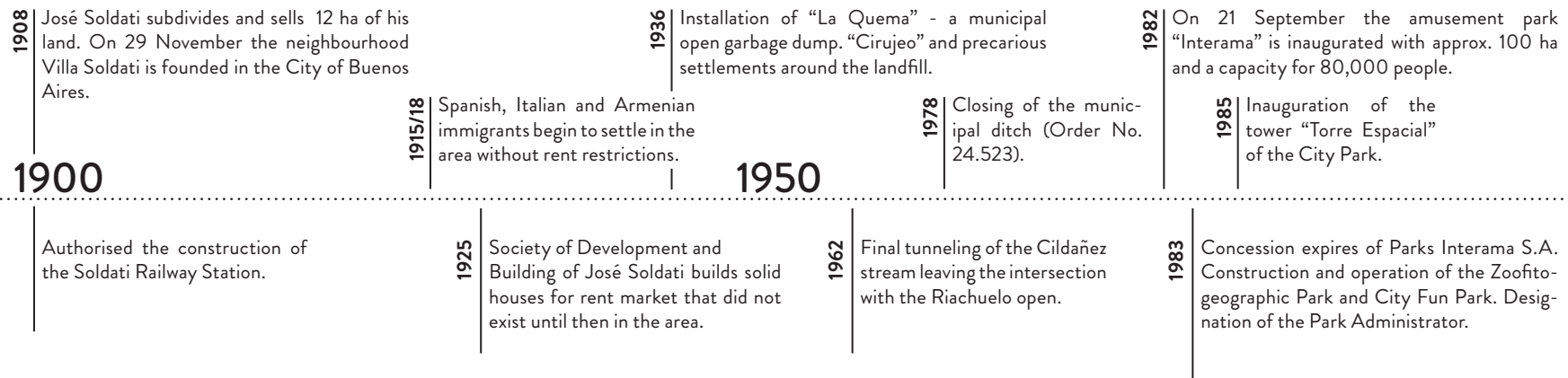
Current Domain:
City of Buenos Aires / **Future Domain:** Assets in the public domain that are declared unnecessary are transferred to the Corporación Buenos Aires Sur S.E.[2] for their sale, with exception of the land where the Olympic Village is being constructed, which will be transferred to the Housing Insitute of the City (IVC) after the Youth Olympic Games by the end of 2018.

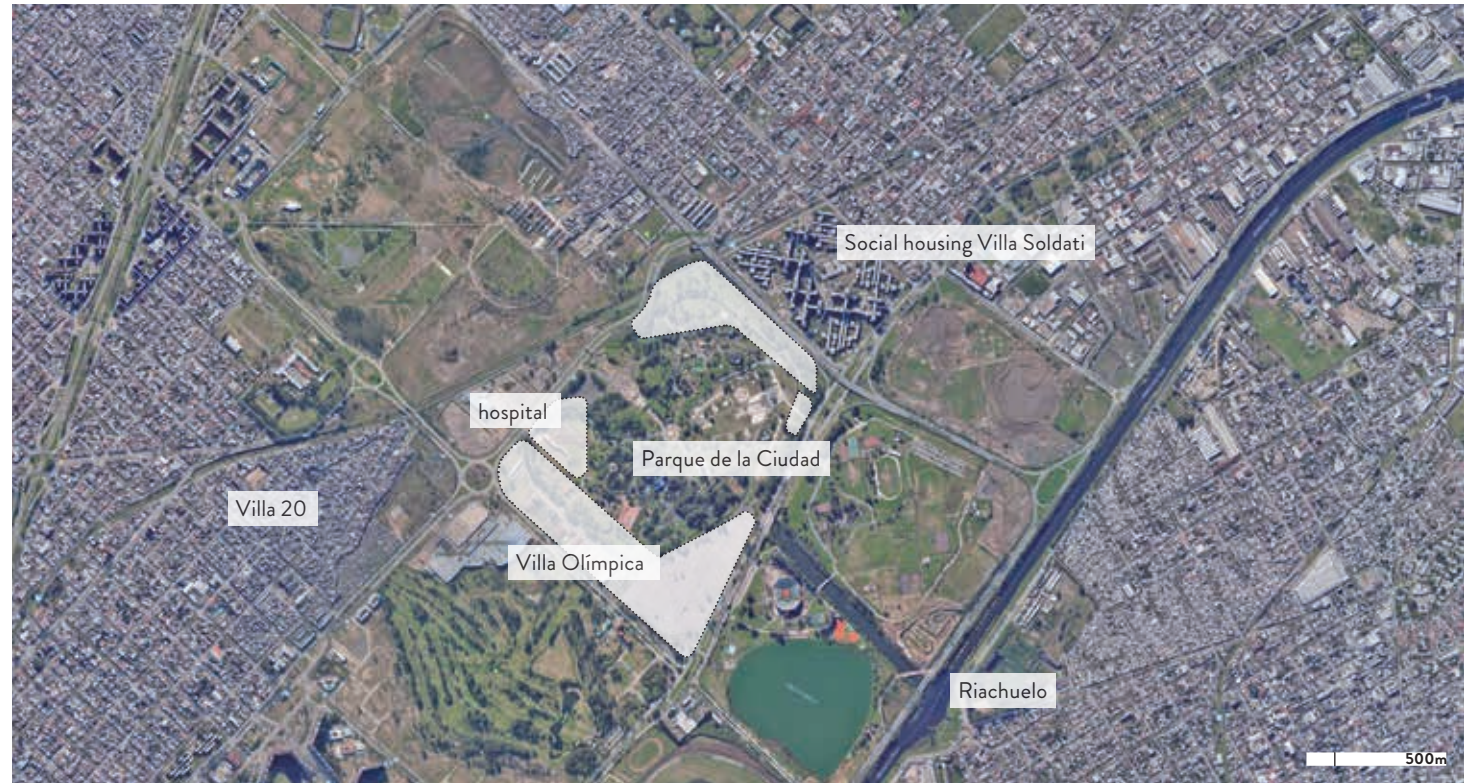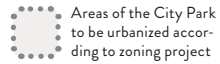**Timeline of Villa Soldati - Parque de la Ciudad - Villa Olímpica**
In the past, the area of Villa Soldati, in which Villa Olímpica is located, was subject to frequent flooding by the river Riachuelo and the stream Cildañez. The installation of the municipal waste disposal site "La Quema" in the 1930s happened parallel to the development of metallurgical industries and precarious settlements next to the open garbage dumps. After the closure of the waste disposal in 1978, the area was transformed through the construction of social housing and the creation of large-scale green spaces like Parque Roca, Parque Indoamericano and Parque de la Ciudad. In the following decades the theme park 'Parque de la Ciudad' was closed and re-opened several times. In 2016, large parts of the Parque de la Ciudad were assigned a new zoning for the construction of the Olympic Village.

1908 José Soldati subdivides and sells 12 ha of his land. On 29 November the neighbourhood Villa Soldati is founded in the City of Buenos Aires.

1936 Installation of "La Quema" - a municipal open garbage dump. "Cirujeo" and precarious settlements around the landfill.

1982 On 21 September the amusement park "Interama" is inaugurated with approx. 100 ha and a capacity for 80,000 people.

1915/18 Spanish, Italian and Armenian immigrants begin to settle in the area without rent restrictions.

1978 Closing of the municipal ditch (Order No. 24.523).

1985 Inauguration of the tower "Torre Espacial" of the City Park.

1900

1950

Authorised the construction of the Soldati Railway Station.

1925 Society of Development and Building of José Soldati builds solid houses for rent market that did not exist until then in the area.

1962 Final tunneling of the Cildañez stream leaving the intersection with the Riachuelo open.

1983 Concession expires of Parks Interama S.A. Construction and operation of the Zoofito-geographic Park and City Fun Park. Designation of the Park Administrator.

Timeline of Villa Olímpica Area / Parque de la Ciudad.

Area of Parque de la Ciudad, Villa Olímpica, Villa 20 and surroundings.

Areas of the City Park to be urbanized according to zoning project

Social housing Villa Soldati

hospital

Parque de la Ciudad

Villa 20

Villa Olímpica

Riachuelo

500m

1993 Intervention stops at the park Zoofito-geográfico. Designation of Administrative and Designate Directory (Decree No. 823 / MCBA).

2000

2006/07 Corporación Buenos Aires Sur S.E. becomes administrator of the City Park. Reopening of the City Park to organize recreational activities/games.

2011 Declaration of Cultural Heritage of the City of Buenos Aires to the monument "Torre Espacial"

2012/13 City authorizes call for public bidding "Buenos Aires Rock" in the City Park and approves the bases and conditions of the contest "City of Rock" to create a permanent space for mass cultural shows in the city as important milestones for tourist segment.

2016 Reversal of existing zoning for Olympic Village to concentrate the competences and accommodate athletes during the Youth Olympic Games.

2003 Closing the City Park to the public. Security works on the game equipment.

2008 Closure of game equipment and gastronomic facilities of the City Park for not meeting the minimum requirements of maintenance, conservation and hygiene by the Corporación Buenos Aires Sur S.E.

2014-16 Creation of the Sports District for the promotion of sports activity. Approval and award of public bidding for social housing Villa Olímpica.

2018 Inauguration of 3rd edition of the Youth Olympic Games on 1 October with City of Buenos Aires as host.

## SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERIZATION - VILLA OLÍMPICA

The socio-demographic investigation of Villa Olímpica is based on the "Population, Households and Housing Census" of the year 2010 (INDEC 2012). Since Villa Olímpica is situated in one of the largest green spaces of the city, the task to carry out a socio-demographic investigation is rather complex. For the analysis three scales of the census are used: the entire city of Buenos Aires, the Commune 8 and the census radius where the Villa Olímpica is located (ID: 020081301). Although the census radius is larger than the Villa Olímpica, it is the smallest possible unit that the census offers for our investigation.

According to the census, there are 45 people in 20 households living in the census radius. This means that the area is practically uninhabited and in strong contrast to the rest of the commune, which counts with 6.5% of the city's population.

Commune 8 is characterized by a high concentration of social vulnerability. 43% of the community cannot access any health service. The population's educational level is low: 44% finished primary school and 44% secondary school). In the census radius the educational level is even lower, where 80% of the population finished the primary, and only 20% reached the secondary school level.

A trend registered at city and Commune 8 level, also appears in Villa Olímpica: Houses (33%) and apartments (66%) predominate over other types of homes. The Commune 8 concentrates a great quantity of sheds ("ranchos" or "casillas") and rented rooms in inns ("hoteles y pensiones"). In this area we find the largest quantity of informal settlements in the city: More than 60,000 people or 32.9% of the city's population in informal settlements are located in this part of the city. This particularity of informality in the commune explains why in the census radius 90% of households couldn't declare a regular tenure status for their housing situation.

Situations of overcrowding[3] determine the life conditions of 11% of the households of the CABA (2-3 people per room), 23% in Commune 8 and 27% in the radius of Villa Olímpica. When analysing critical overcrowding (more than 3 people per room), the trend is repeated, since the city registered only 2% of households in this situation, the Commune 8 and the census radius of the Villa Olímpica showed 5% respectively. This accounts for a concentration of these vulnerable situations in this area of the city. Something similar happens with households that have at least one indicator of NBI[4] (Necesidades Básicas Insatisfechas; EN: unsatisfied basic needs). The relative values of the census radius (14%) are more than double of the ones in the city (6%).

Census radius for Villa Olímpica.

Villa 20
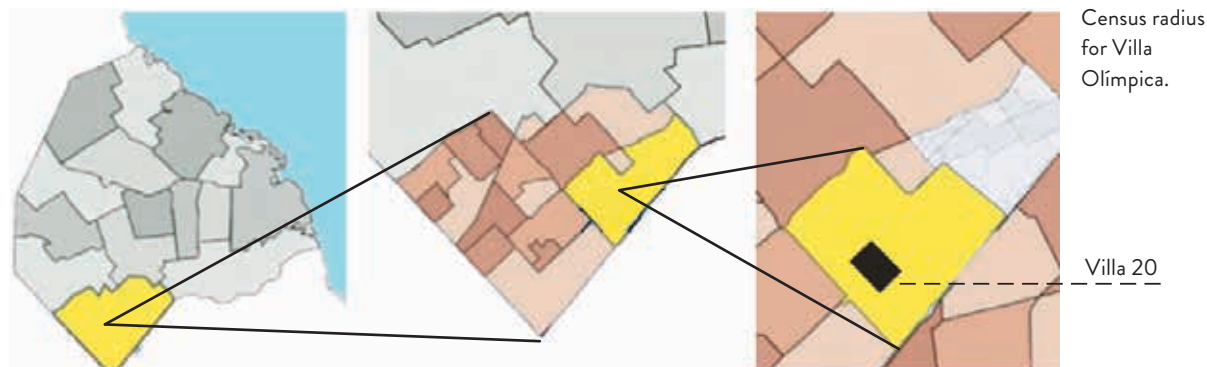
Construction site of Villa Olímpica.

Construction site of Villa Olímpica.

Most parts of the city (98%) and the Commune 8 (93%) are provided with basic services (water, gas and sewage), whereas in the census radius 60% of homes have insufficient basic services. This percentage is mostly due to the informal settlement located within the census radius.

In essence, Commune 8 presents the highest indicators of irregular tenure status, overcrowding, and lack of basic services, revealing a segregated territory in relation to the rest of the city. Nevertheless, during the last years the commune is in a transformation process with a large number of urban projects such as the Olympic

Village, the definition of economic districts and the urbanization of informal settlements, which seek to boost the area in socio-urbanistic terms. We will see in time the real impact of these interventions.

CHARACTERIZATION OF THE URBAN PROJECT VILLA OLÍMPICA

The project of the Villa Olímpica is part of the Plan for Commune 8, which includes a series of projects and interventions on large urban areas. In her article, which follows this subchapter, Graciela Brandariz gives a detailed analysis of the project for the Plan for Commune 8 in relation to the area's historic development.

To summarise the project of Villa Olímpica in short, it should be mentioned that the zoning law for the project aims at the reversal of public domain of parts of the "Parque de la Ciudad" for creating a:

- Zone "Villa Olímpica" (around Av. Escalada) with two sectors: the housing for athletes (5 blocks: 1250 apartments) which will be sold at the end of the Youth Olympic Games 2018 and the sale of the rest of the area (16 blocks) from January 2018 on;
- Zone of Infrastructure "Lacarra" near the highway "Cámpora" (area of 7 blocks to be sold from January 2018 on);
- Zone of Hospital Cecilia Grierson and
- re-design of Parque de la Ciudad (Zoning of Park) with a national competition.

This rezoning and new urban layout along with the ex-highway AU3 urbanization project on the Donado-Holmberg (see Desarrollo Urbano/GCBA 2015) axis in the north of the city – seems to be an anticipation of the new urban morphological code for the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, recently drawn up and currently in the final approval phase (La Nación 2016).

Architectural competitions for the Villa Olímpica
In the architectural projects destined to the residential buildings of the Olympic Village the "morphological" orientation and the objective of avoiding the homogeneity associated with the large ensembles are particularly evident in the planning and methodology. After the Youth Olympic Games in October 2018 the apartments will be sold with low interest loans by the City's Housing Institute (Instituto de la Vivienda de la Ciudad, IVC). Five competitions were realised by the chamber of architecture (Sociedad Central de Arquitectos, SCA) for the design of residential buildings on plots of compact housing blocks. Each of the five winner projects will be constructed in different housing blocks on the site of Villa Olímpica. In order to avoid repetition, the projects alternate within the housing blocks. The projects are built in series by different construction companies, which were awarded by best price tender.

INTERNAL PERSPECTIVES: COMMUNE 8 – PROBLEMATIC AREA VS. AREA OF OPPORTUNITY
by Graciela Brandariz

In 1947, the City of Buenos Aires reached almost 3,000,000 inhabitants, a figure that has since remained constant. Coinciding with the population levels, the territory of the city at that time also expanded its urbanised area until reaching its limits, manifestly leaving a large void in the southwest sector – occupied in particular today by Commune 8. It was then known as Bañado de Flores, and represented around 7% of the city's territory at 1,440 hectares. The fundamental reason why the area was not occupied was the fact that, located in the lowlands near the Riachuelo river and the Arroyo Cildañez, the area was subject to flooding. In addition, the discharge of solid waste from the city was located on this side of the city, which transformed much of the area into an immense and uncontrolled landfill site. Today, urban barriers, large infrastructure facilities, major social housing complexes and informal settlements predominate over the typical orthogonal urban structure. The foundation of the Villa Lugano and Villa Soldati neighbourhoods almost coincides with the opening of the railway and its stations in 1909. The urbanisation process is similar to that of many territories close to the new railway stations, which served as a focal point and inductor of the urbanisation process.

The current situation of the territorial structure of Commune 8 and its surroundings
The historical evolution of the commune's territory formed an urban structure, which is the result of the spontaneous urbanisation as well as a succession of partial interventions by the public sector that occupied all vacant areas of the commune. The interventions were not all successful and did not always achieve their objectives, leaving behind a space of opportunities either without specific projects, with a partial use, in a regressive situation, or with open or intrusive conflicts. This only serves to delay the necessary territorial organisation and integration that helps to transform a dissolved space (problem area) into an organised territory (area of opportunity) with effective and complementary uses.

It is estimated that, by 2016, Commune 8 had a population of 225,000.[5] The City is implementing a Plan for the Commune (Plan para la Comuna) with the aim of achieving more equitable, harmonious and sustainable development. On the occasion of the Youth Olympic Games, to be held in Buenos Aires in October 2018, the city is planning a number of construction works in the area of Commune 8 based on particular norms of modification of use and occupation of the territory. The construction works include infrastructure, sports facilities, housing, a hotel, the redesign of the public space and even works for the (re)urbanisation of the Villa 20 informal settlement. The Master Plan for Commune 8 (Plan Maestro para la Comuna 8) (2014) is guided by criteria and guidelines of the Environmental Urban Plan and the Territorial Model of the City, with the aim to develop a general plan for the development of Commune 8. The Commune is thus seeking to consolidate itself as a new centrality with urban corridors that connect it with the rest of the city and with the city centre.

In this sense, the Metrobus that crosses Avenida Roca and Avenida Cruz to Puente de la Noria provides an outstanding opportunity for the consolidation of development axes in the communal territory. The Av. Cruz is already connected to the Premetro, channelling passengers to and from Virreyes station of underground metro line E, which reaches Plaza de Mayo. There is also

The neighbourhoods of Commune 8.

vacant land along the avenue; this is the reason for interventions such as the Pharmaceutical Zone, currently under construction, as well as for proposals for the consolidation of its borders with housing and infrastructure facilities. Moreover, the avenue runs along the sewage canal left of the Riachuelo, which will contribute to the sanitation of this area. The characteristics of Av. Cruz from Av. Gral Paz to Av. Perito Moreno, such as the unification of local centralities and infrastructure facilities in addition to the infrastructure mentioned above, qualify this traffic artery as a key space for a new centrality with linear character, well diversified and with high potential as the structuring axis of the commune.

For this reason, interventions along the avenue are recommended in order to consolidate the nodes of centrality along its route. The location of these nodes is characterised by different environmental conditions, which is why their characteristics and functions must respond in each case to specific requirements. One of them is the stretch that runs through the area of Villa Soldati, a sustainable micro-urban spatial unit, together with the Soldati Housing Complex, the informal settlements of Villa 3 and Los Piletones. This node is also an intermodal transport hub, reinforced by the presence of the Metrobus, which could – accompanied by small shops and services – contribute to the economy and local employment.

The aforementioned Master Plan for Commune 8 proposes to create one of the "Regional Green Corridors" here, integrating the Av. Asturias from its beginning at Av. Dellepiane towards its southern extension, crossing the Indo-American Parks, Parque de la Ciudad and Parque Roca up to the Av. 27 de Febrero, on the banks of the Riachuelo river. The large parks of the commune are, due to their size and features, part of sustainable urban units and have been defined as a "public recreational space and biosphere".

In this context, and for a better understanding of the current territorial situation[6] and the proposals presented in the Master Plan for Commune 8, a synthesis based on a SWOT analysis is presented here:

STRENGTHS

- Consider Commune 8, with its three neighbourhoods, as a territorial unit, and provide it with a General Plan for its social-economic-environmental and urban development within the framework established by Law 2930/08 of the Urban Environmental Plan and the Territorial Model 2010-2060 for the City of Buenos Aires.
- The creation of new centralities in the Commune, the densification of existing ones and the proposed connectivity with other neighbourhoods and bordering municipalities through east-west and north-south transversal connections. In this last case, create new bridges over the Riachuelo on specified locations.
- Habitat and housing on the one hand and public space on the other are the two topics of significant relevance for the Commune. The Plan in this sense proves to be auspicious in terms of the future vision and development.
- With respect to public green space and the quality of transport and mobility, the situation is likely to improve.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Decontamination of the river Riachuelo that can provide a major opportunity in the city of Buenos Aires in terms of urban development. The impact on the public space can be far reaching, beyond the local area towards the region.
- Centralities: The possibility to increase the population in the area will produce new labour opportunities (of "agglomeration" as the plan calls it). The promotion and increase of medium-scale housing combined with mixed use facilities are key for the access and development of new labour opportunities derived from new urban fabrics.
- Housing: Feasible constructions which can be maintained with the income level of their future inhabitants.
- Villas / informal settlements: Urbanization on an appropriate scale to create and assure the positive coexistence between current and future neighbours.
- Green corridor: Territorial integration as a sustainable area with existing parks.

WEAKNESSES

- There is no policy that resolves the topic of wetlands prevalent in the lowlands of the Riachuelo.
- The Riachuelo, as a "key element" of the commune, has no relevance or role in the topics developed by the Plan, neither as a navigable water course in the region nor to increase the recreational activities in the commune.
- There is no explanation in the Plan as to how growth in existing informal settlements will be contained, nor new ones prevented from emerging while urbanisation progresses and proposed goals are met. This would avoid new occupations in the vacant spaces.
- The Plan does not mention the characteristics of the new infrastructures to be installed for future housing and infrastructure facilities, whose size and capacity should be calculated based on a non-established population level.
- Poor situation in terms of production and employment.

THREATS

- The reversal of the original zoning of many public green areas and properties and their alienation to finance public works is considered risky for the territorial integrity.
- A question is raised about the unity of the existing large parks and properties in the commune; it is necessary to verify in each case the provenance of its liquidation before defining parcels of land the fractions and opening streets, as well as in the sale of buildings.
- According to official statistics, the population of the commune is approx. 187,000 inhabitants; the plan foresees an increase of 70% (i.e. 125,000 additional inhabitants) which equals approx. 40,000 apartments with an average of 3 people per household.
- The morphological design of the housing blocks for the Olympic Village has an average capacity of 150 apartments per block. To reach the 40,000 apartments, 266 hectares are necessary only for housing blocks, if we consider the space for streets, infrastructure and service facilities the number increases by 40%, approx. 372 hectares. In past decades, there have been no cases of successful urban development on this scale.

IN CONCLUSION

Urban projects on strategic properties located in more fa-voured parts of the city, where processes of functional and real estate development are successful, do not run the risk of total deg-radation of the entire area in the case of an operational failure. Un-like these favoured areas, there are neighbourhoods, such as those located in the southern part of the city, which underwent regressive transformation processes, functional and socio-demographic dete-rioration, qualitative deterioration of functions and performance, etc. In this context, such processes are difficult to reverse with iso-lated projects in the short and medium term, and instead require integrated strategic approaches that all aim in the same direction.

By contrast to all the negative effects discussed in the pre-vious commentary, other comparative factors exist that would generate situations of positive character and foster the trans-formation into an area of opportunity. This area would have the capacity to become a local centre based on traffic connectivity that has been improved in the last 20 years and on the existence of urban voids with a certain capacity to foster new activities.

Urban design and architectural solutions have been proposed based on the identification of the main guidelines established by the existing urban legislation and the bill for the Master Plan for Commune 8. These solutions are recommended within a strategy that takes advantage of the opportunities of the current situation by seeking answers which integrate the different thematic lines and which work together with the consolidation of the communal ter-ritory and the improvement of the quality of life of its residents.

The legislative initiative of the executive power present-ed some modifications to the Master Plan, approved at the end of 2014. These modifications contained a series of specific pol-icies for each of the major sectors in the commune – sever-al of them considered as urban voids by the authorities – lacking a general multidisciplinary vision of territorial development.

Therefore, the overall development of this area will only be successful to the extent that it consists of integrated strategic public management, with a precise sequence of times and actions, coincid-ing public and private investments and strong control over and guid-ance of processes. Such management goes far beyond land reuse or a real estate enterprise, requiring more detailed stimuli, investments and studies of the causes of its regressive processes and initiatives linked to applying public, private and social management innovations.
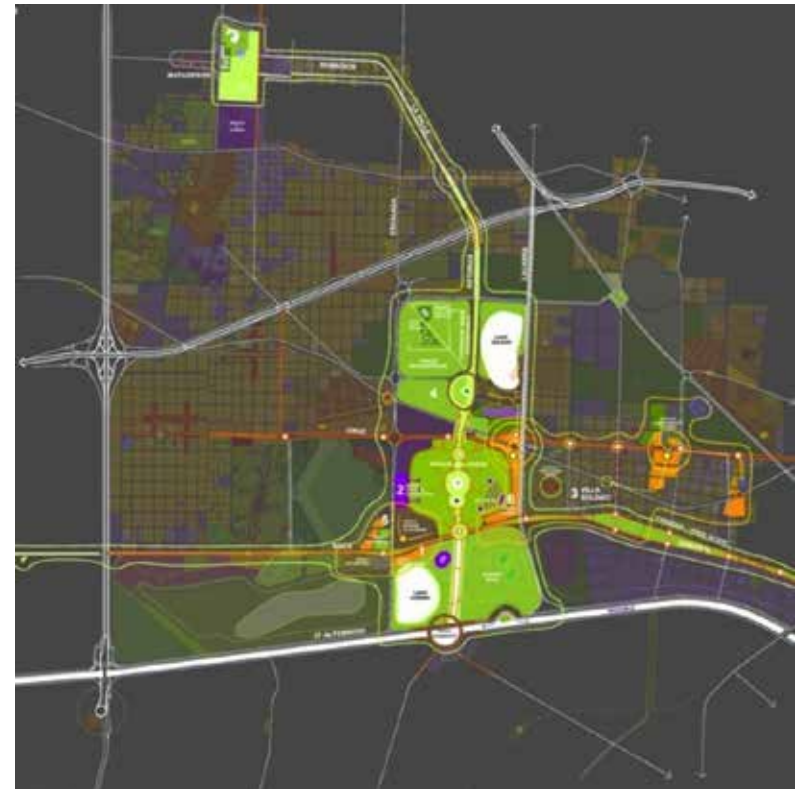
Green corridor in Commune 8.

Villa 20 street view.

PLAYÓN CHACARITA – VILLA FRAGA

Location
This area, in the northern part of CABA, runs along the streets of Zabala, Guevara, Céspedes, Fraga, Teodoro García, the axis of Avenida Federico Lacroze, the internal street of Estación del Ferrocarril General Urquiza, and is bordered by the Ferrocarril Urquiza area of operations up to the axis of Avenida Elcano, the Ferrocarril Urquiza railway and the Playa Ferroviaria de Colegiales.

Surface
The area covers approx. 6.7 hectares.

Surroundings
An area close to the Chacarita Cemetery, surrounded by rail tracks with sheds used partially by an urban gardening association, the settlement of Villa Fraga, commercial avenues and neighbourhoods of low and medium density housing, workshops and commercial premises. Chacarita transfer hub features train, subway, bus connections.
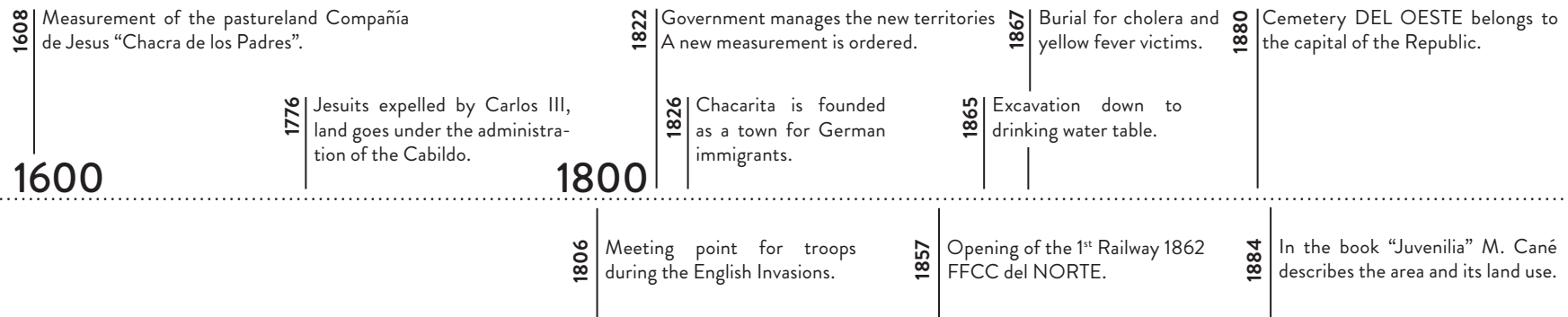
Domain
The area is a national asset, belonging to National Argentinian Railways (Ferrocarriles Argentinos).

Timeline of Chacarita area
The lands of the Chacarita area were used for the first time in the 17th century as a leisure space (known as "quinta") by the Colegio San Ignacio. The Jesuits used this cultivated, fertile land to build large-scale building ensembles. Once the Jesuits were expelled in the 18th century, these buildings served as locations to receive and house important figures of history and, because of its strategic location, as a refuge and meeting point for troops during the English Invasions. After various failed attempts to populate the area, it was only in 1862 with the arrival of the Northern Railroad and the fatal consequences of cholera and yellow fever that the Western Cemetery was installed as an institution of the newly-founded Capital of the Argentinian Republic in 1880. Towards the beginning of the 20th century, the area started to develop, but suffered from environmental contamination resulting from the incineration of bodies.
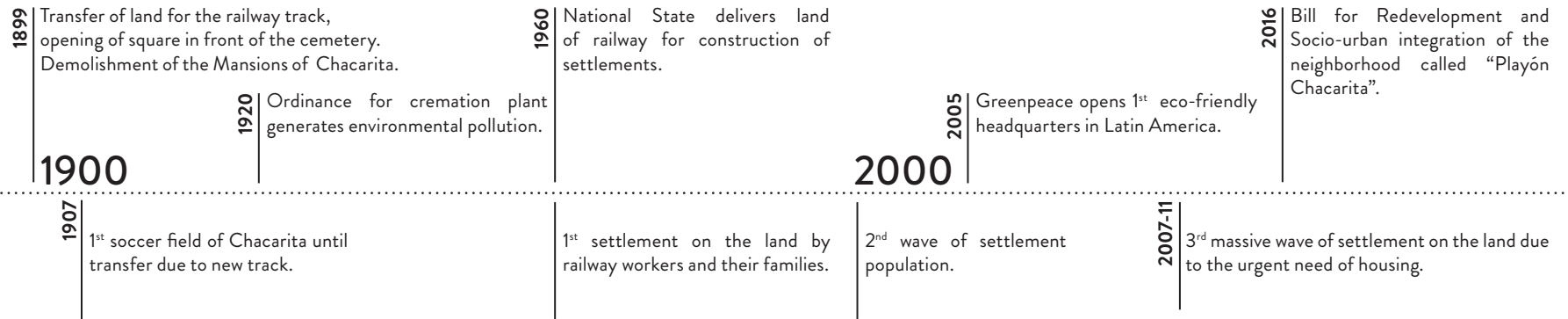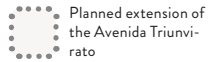
The first urbanisation of the land dates back to the 1960s, when the National State gave away plots of land to railway workers and their families. Many of these workers migrated from other parts of the country to the capital, along with their families, in order to work for the railway company. As a result, the National

1608 Measurement of the pastureland Compañía de Jesus "Chacra de los Padres".

1776 Jesuits expelled by Carlos III, land goes under the administration of the Cabildo.

1600

1806 Meeting point for troops during the English Invasions.

1822 Government manages the new territories A new measurement is ordered.

1826 Chacarita is founded as a town for German immigrants.

1800

1857 Opening of the 1st Railway 1862 FFCC del NORTE.

1865 Excavation down to drinking water table.

1867 Burial for cholera and yellow fever victims.

1880 Cemetery DEL OESTE belongs to the capital of the Republic.

1884 In the book "Juvenilia" M. Cané describes the area and its land use.

Timeline of Playón Chacarita - Villa Fraga.

Area of Playón Chacarita - Villa Fraga and surroundings.

Planned extension of the Avenida Triunvirato

Villa Fraga

Avenida Triunvirato

Playón Chacarita

Railway Station Chacarita

Chacarita Cementary

100m

1899 Transfer of land for the railway track, opening of square in front of the cemetery. Demolishment of the Mansions of Chacarita.

1920 Ordinance for cremation plant generates environmental pollution.

1900

1907 1st soccer field of Chacarita until transfer due to new track.

1960 National State delivers land of railway for construction of settlements.

1st settlement on the land by railway workers and their families.

2005 Greenpeace opens 1st eco-friendly headquarters in Latin America.

2000

2nd wave of settlement population.

2007-11 3rd massive wave of settlement on the land due to the urgent need of housing.

2016 Bill for Redevelopment and Socio-urban integration of the neighborhood called "Playón Chacarita".

State housed them in areas close to their places of work. Subsequently, there was a second period of population growth in the neighbourhood during the late 1990s and early 2000, which increased the area of the informal Fraga settlement. Between 2007 and 2011, there was a further massive population increase in the area, and especially in Villa Fraga, due to the housing shortage in the city as a whole. In 2016, a bill proposed the redevelopment and socio-urban integration of the area of the villa, with the extension of Avenida Triunvirato and the relocation of affected homes.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISATION

The Chacarita railway yard is located in Commune 15 of the City of Buenos Aires. This commune consists of the neighbourhoods (barrios) of Chacarita, Villa Crespo, Paternal, Villa Ortúzar, Agronomía and Parque Chas. Characteristics of the project site are indicated in the "National Population, Households and Housing Census" of 2010, used also by the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos, INDEC 2012).

The information from the Census allows an analysis of this area on three levels: the CABA (macro scale), Commune 15 (meso scale) and the census radius with the Chacarita railway yard (micro scale). Although the census radius is geographically larger than the location of the railway yard of Chacarita, it is the smallest unit of measurement offered in the census.

According to the 2010 National Census, Commune 15 contains 6.3% of the city's population. It has a total population of 182,574 inhabitants at a population density of 12,574 inhabitants/km². Of these inhabitants, 10% (18,651) were born abroad, of which 42% (7,833) come from neighbouring countries. Compared with the City of Buenos Aires, which has a population density is 14,450 inhabitants/km², Commune 15 has an average population density.

As Commune 15 is composed of middle-class neighbourhoods, it does not present higher vulnerability indicators. About 15% of the population does not have any access to health services (while the average figure for the city is 18%). The population's educational levels are similar to those for the city: 22% finished primary education, 37% completed secondary education, 14% finished tertiary studies and 25% hold an academic degree. These values are fairly similar even in the census radius of Playón Chacarita, where 27% of the population finished primary school, 35% graduated from high school, 15% completed tertiary studies and 21% hold a university degree.

Like the trend recorded at city level and in Commune 15, houses (33%) and apartments (67%) prevail over other types of accommodation in the Chacarita area. Even so, 5% of the population live in a rented room and 3% rent rooms in inns ("hoteles y pensiones"). Regarding the type of ownership, 35% of the population of the Playón Chacarita radius are tenants and 52% own the house and land.

Census radius for Playón Chacarita - Villa Fraga.

View of the railway towards Villa Fraga settlement.

Overcrowding is less prevalent in the Playón Chacarita than in the City, with only 5% of households living in overcrowded conditions (2-3 persons per room), compared with 9% in the CABA as a whole. The same applies to critical overcrowding (more than 3 people per room), with 1% in both the census radius and Commune 15, and 2% in the CABA. As for households with at least one indicator of NBI (Necesidades Básicas Insatisfechas; EN: unsatisfied basic needs), the relative value of the census radius (6%) coincides with that of the city (6%).

Regarding access to basic services, the city, Commune 15 and the radius of the railway yard enjoy very high levels of satisfaction with housing (98% satisfaction in both the city and the commune and 99 % satisfaction in the radius of the railway yard).

In short, Commune 15 is characterised by a middle-class population, with low indicators of irregular ownership, overcrowding and lack of basic services (water and gas supply and sewage). Even when the census radius of the Playón Chacarita is taken into account, the information available in the census does not reflect the situation of

Urban (organic) garden on site of Playón Chacarita.

vulnerability for the families that inhabit that place. According to newspaper reports, from 2009 onwards the informal Villa Fraga settlement has represented one of the settlements with the fastest growth in terms of population density within the city. However, this is not reflected in the census data. It is not entirely clear whether the invisibility of this situation is due to the fact that Villa Fraga was not registered or that the growth occurred after the census.

CHARACTERISATION OF THE VILLA FRAGA – PLAYÓN CHACARITA URBANISATION PROJECT

The National Government and the City are (as of March 2017) currently negotiating the transfer of the railway yard next to the Chacarita railway station, which will allow Avenue Triunvirato to be continued between Elcano and Avenue Lacroze. Above all, the city started to urbanise the informal settlement along Fraga street. It will be both a road project and the beginning of housing solutions for one of the settlements that grew the most in recent years.

The extension of the avenue will be carried out by AUSA, a state-owned highway company; a call for tenders has already been made. The avenue will consist of five lanes, three towards Lacroze and two towards Elcano street, with a tree-lined boulevard on the central axis. It will be 700 metres long, and run parallel to the Urquiza railway. In addition, there will be a turning point at the junction with Teodoro García street, which will also be opened with two lanes to Fraga street.

The railway line on which the avenue will be constructed belongs to the Agency of Administration of State Assets (Agencia de Administración de Bienes del Estado). This body endorses the transfer of the property for a central issue: the road work will be accompanied by the construction of housing for the informal settlement of Fraga. "We are working to build a participative project with the neighbours, some housing will have to be moved to open the streets, but the idea is to agree with the occupants, and we also want to talk with the rest of the residents of Chacarita to advance the urban regeneration of the area because there are strips of land on the side of Triunvirato street where you can build spaces

for the community", said a local government official responsible for the project (El Clarin 2016: n.p.). The city government of Buenos Aires, together with the Housing Institute (Instituto de la Vivienda, IVC), carried out a census and started to communicate with the inhabitants of the Villa Fraga settlement in working sessions. The final objective will be to open internal streets and to be able to integrate the settlement into the neighbourhood of Chacarita.

In the Fraga settlement – which occupies four blocks of Commune 15 – 2,764 people live in 1,042 homes. The government's objective is to integrate the settlement into the city, with an investment of 876 million pesos (approx. € 52 million) in 2017 for the construction of approximately 700 new homes and to effect improvements to a further 80 existing housing units.

THE NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK
The law approved on 23 March 2017 aims to redevelop the area called Playón Chacarita, promoting its social, cultural, environmental and urban integration so that its inhabitants can effectively exercise the fundamental human right to adequate housing.
A set of modifications was made in the Session of Deputies of the Legislature of the City on 15 December 2016, referring to the destination and densification of some areas of the project, especially those near the Avenida Elcano. Ultimately, the adopted law for Redevelopment and Social-Urban Integration of the neighbourhood called 'Playón Chacarita' can be summarised in relation to urban regulations on:

- the creation of 'participatory working sessions' with neighbours, public agencies and the Legislature of the City; the aim is to achieve consensus, but these sessions are not binding for the decisions taken by the government;
- the diagnosis, elaboration, execution, control, monitoring and evaluation of the Integral Urbanization Project to be dealt with in the 'participatory working sessions', and
- the creation of the 'Barrio Playón Chacarita' neighbourhood (Legislatura Buenos Aires 2017).

The plan for the project foresees the subdivision in the following zones:
- **Zone I: Residential with Zone Iª:** intended for residential use with medium and medium-high density housing, in which compatible uses are accepted – with the exception of offices, such compatible uses should be located in the ground floors of collective housing buildings; **Zone Iᵇ** is intended for residential use with medium and medium-high density housing, in which compatible uses are accepted – with the exception of offices, such compatible uses should be located in the ground floors of collective housing buildings.
- **Zone II: Urbanisation Park and infrastructure:** Permission granted to subdivide into plots of up to 35% of the block for exclusive use of service facilities, leaving at least the other 65% destined as Urbanization Park. The plots destined to service facilities must have at least $600m^2$ surface area and surface area ratio of 60%.
- **Zone III: Residential with complementary activities of retail, tertiary services and service infrastructure:** Preservation of pre-existing streets and paths, allowing those who are currently consolidated in urbanistic terms. Sidewalks: minimum of 4.00 metres, and a minimum of 8.00 metres for the streets. The regularisation of ownership in the Villa Fraga will try to form a plot structure according to the following criteria: minimum plots should be $72m^2$ with a front equal to or greater than 6 metres. A minimum surface area of $50m^2$ and 5m front will be allowed only in exceptional cases; plots larger than $500m^2$ must have a minimum front of 9 metres with a mandatory withdrawal of 4 metres.
- **Zone IV:** Intended for residential use with medium and medium-high density, in which compatible uses are accepted – with the exception of offices, such compatible uses should be located in the basements of collective housing buildings . The houses to be built in this area will be part of a social integration and mixture scheme that will include residents of the Barrio Playón Chacarita registered in the census carried out in 2016 and during 2017.

Football court inside the Villa Fraga settlement.

INTERNAL PERSPECTIVES: URBAN VOIDS – VACANT LAND: OPPORTUNITIES AND CONFLICTS IN AN UNEQUAL AND FRAGMENTED BUENOS AIRES

by Liliana María Carbajal

The city, as a driving force to stimulate political, economic, social and cultural development in the world, reached a turning point in the last decades of the 20th century. This 'epochal turn' is shown in the evolution of the city and territory, in social relations and in the very meaning of the term, and in processes that are produce *"exclusionary democracies"*, as José Nun (2015) calls it.

In cities of different latitudes, and in particular in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires, the territorial urban social policies of past decades produce, reproduce and interleave fragmentation processes or social and spatial exclusion. This leads to a consolidation of an urban situation in which the right to the city, the human rights, are unequally, radically and persistently violated. These conditions oblige us to delineate or appeal to new ways of thinking and to produce a city that has new ways of dealing with the conflict that emerges in these scenarios.

This requires incorporating perspectives and instruments which aim to tackle the conditions that create these scenarios. One of these perspectives revolves around what have been called 'urban voids' or 'vacant land'. Beyond the multiple meanings of these terms, we can assume that these constitute an opportunity to initiate processes of transformation, of social and spatial integration, towards a more just city. However, these processes can also take – appealing to an expression of Jordi Borja – "virtuous or perverse paths".

The existence of vacant land (decayed urban voids, obsolete constructions) can be seen as a symptom of failures in more general urban societal processes. In other words, these can be the visible elements of failures in or ruptures between the social, political and cultural processes and urban transformations with the capacity to contain and sustain the diversity of situations that emerge through them.

On the one hand, action with regard to urban voids or vacant land produces a physical and social degradation (spontaneous or planned) that creates conditions for possible conflicts of differing types and intensities. On the other hand, any improvement of an urban area tends towards a valorisation of the land, housing and services, making it more difficult to access or remain in the city. Even more distressing, it could lead to 'involuntary' (sometimes 'forced') displacement. As Jordi Borja (2011) once acknowledged: "Harvey was right, once we conceive cities for the middle class, the cities improve while at the same time expel the poor...".

This presents a perverse dilemma: namely, the decay or gentrification associated with or derived from key interventions of so-called 'renovation' or 'urban transformation'. This is without an apparent alternative and produces an urban social conflict in the territory of different intensity and of uncertain implications. In any case, the contentiousness reveals the contradictions in the urban social order, and opens a sequence of processes that are resolved in an inter-subjective relationship in power struggles and struggles for meaning, recognition, appropriation, or for access to material or symbolic goods, generally in strongly asymmetric relationships.

Therefore, it is necessary to review the interventions regarding these paradigms, to reflect on the terms used to name, define and configure these processes, and to reformulate questions about what type of city we want and aspire to create. After that, we need to ask ourselves what the mission of the processes, proposals, interventions, and administrative management in the city should be. A statement by Manuel Delgado (2015) can be taken as a warning of the current dynamics, insofar as these constitute "the risk of consolidating what opposes urban society, which denies and destroys it along the process at the same time as creates it".

In this context, we can observe processes in the City of Buenos Aires under the name of the so-called 'Re-urbanization of Villas or Informal Settlements', such as Villa Fraga or Playón Chacarita, as it has legitimately been named by their inhabitants.

Playón Chacarita is a configuration in which the constructed and the public space are almost the same thing, called "el macizo".[7] Ten thousand people live in overcrowded conditions next to a 'void' that demarcates an underutilised area of rail operations (points network and maintenance yard) of the Ferrocarril General Urquiza.

The following elements can be considered as expected tensions that can lead to a radical confrontation between actors: public space / green space, the opportunity for access to housing and a decent / fair living environment, opening up an avenue that changes the dynamic of the neighbourhood as conceived by the city administration.

If integration involves establishing relationships of reciprocity, the reactions of the 'formal' neighbours in Chacarita (a neighbourhood with a consolidated grid structure, infrastructure facilities and considerable connectivity / mobility) are the signal of what can result in failure or failed integration. From the quote "we are a private neighbourhood[8] deprived of water, light, sewers..." (resident of Playón Chacarita at the public hearing in December 2016) to the rhetoric of social urban integration, no significant progress has been made thus far.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

If no intervention is harmless, we can say that this process, by the way it has been managed, has intensified the confrontation *with and among* the neighbours of the area. In this context, it is necessary to redefine the process and criteria in terms of its programmatic, propositional and executive aspects. It requires an approach sustained within and towards the territory as well as a permanent dialogue with the diverse actors concerned with access to the environment and the city.

Then, an analysis is needed which is open to the discourses of the different actors and which makes the social meaning of urban interventions visible. Moreover, it is necessary to insert the interpretation in a set of urban social contradictions, studying "the reciprocal interactions between the urbanistic interventions and the social dynamics in terms of participation, claims and justice". The conflict of the urban order must avoid the binary perspective in the production of the urban space and open itself towards complex constructions.

The struggle in the territory for *the right* of the inhabitants of Playón Chacarita *to have rights* – the city as a contested arena – opens new questions: Can the urban transformation be conceived and redirected based on the experiences of resistance? Can the resistance be thought of as alternative form of current urban production? If participatory planning involves inhabitants becoming actors, taking the stage and expressing their wishes for their city, then this has not happened yet in the discussed case...

The historicity and evolution of the "informal city" reveals a diversity of causes and socioeconomic, spatial and institutional factors, confirming that "settlements cannot be explained if the city as a whole is not explained" (Cravino 2016). In the same sense, urban phenomena, evoked as neutral or referenced as marginality-marginalised or segregation-segregated, have to be given visibility and the possibility to understand "through which mechanisms actors operate to marginalise and segregate" (Laskowski 2015). The interventions must then operate based on the scenarios and factors that led to their configuration.

Moreover, not anticipating the resistance and the management of the social, urban and territorial conflicts emerging from the different proposals might not – beyond good intentions – have any correlation with actions that seek to reverse the conditions which are intended to be corrected. As has often been said, we do not know if another world is possible, but it is necessary (Sousa Santos 2015). Applying this idea to the city means a *practiced*

We are a private neighborhood deprived of water, light, sewers...

Resident of the Fraga settlement

The organic urban garden 'El Galpón' at Playón Chacarita with Villa Fraga settlement in the back.

democracy, in which diverse social groups construct a pluralistic, equitable and integrated city. It also means formulating proposals that recognise the rights of citizenship and incorporate coherent, coordinated and convergent public policies (Martínez

Nogueira 2010). In short, "thinking the city, dreaming the city, involves making decisions about the collective future with the irreplaceable goal of achieving a fairer city" (Cajide 2007).

PRESENTING THE WORK ON SITE(S)

The working materials handed out at the start of the workshop raised questions in relation to the quality of the dynamics on the two sites. During the workshop, the interviews with local actors, site visits guided by inhabitants and practitioners and subsequent discussions with local experts in the working groups were crucial in approaching the two sites of urban voids.

In the case of the Villa Olímpica, the site visit on the first day of the workshop showed the area's close connection to the informal Villa 20 settlement. Participants in these discussions included: the coordinator of the urbanisation project for Villa 20, Martín Motta; a representative of the residents of Villa 20; and the coordinator of the construction works for athletes' housing at Villa Olímpica, Florencia Piñedo. Their discussions revealed the interdependency of the two adjacent urban projects beyond spatial relations.

Martín Motta explained the complex urbanisation process of the informal settlement, which is based on three central points: infrastructure and facilities, housing integration, and social and economic integration in relation to labour opportunities. The transformation of this large informal settlement with approx. 9,500 houses and 9,200 families is required by law. In this complex process, various entities of the city administration work in participatory working groups with inhabitants of the villa. A survey and census of the villa is required in order to give property titles to those inhabitants who will stay in their self-constructed houses and to determine the number of new apartments necessary for those who will have to leave their homes. The latter are situated on planned access streets or public space or their buildings not fulfil the safety requirements or are occupied by tenants of rented rooms. The neighbourhood with new apartments, called barrio Papa Francisco, will be situated between Villa 20 and the plots for the Villa Olímpica, blocking the view to the informal settlement. The complex entanglement and the dynamics of informal and formal urban phenomenon can be observed regarding the high percentage of informal rent (approx. 24% according to the government coordinator)

within the settlement, as well as the informal sale of houses in light of the urbanisation project and the Olympic Games in 2018.

> We don't ask for much. We ask for a dignified way of living, nothing more and nothing less.
>
> Representative of Villa Fraga

In the search for a location for the Villa Olímpica, a place to house the athletes, the city government relied on the city map looking for vacant areas, according to architect Florencia Piñedo. The area of the Parque de la Ciudad (City Park) and its surroundings were considered as sub-used and in need of an urban renewal process within the framework of the Plan for Commune 8 (cf. Graciela Brandariz' article). During the site visit, Florencia Piñedo explained the complex logistical challenge of the construction of the Villa Olímpica with a definite deadline in 2018. Another key issue discussed was the different (and partially contradictory) usage requirements of the athletes at the time of the Olympic games and later on, with subsequent use as a residential area with subsidised housing administrated by the Housing Institute of the City (Instituto de la Vivienda, IVC)[9].

The second site, Playón Chacarita – Villa Fraga, was explored with two site visits. The first visit focused on the informal Villa Fraga settlement and the adjacent railway yard. This visit was guided by architect Juan Pablo Negro, a coordinator of the city administration for the urbanisation project, as well as various representatives from Villa Fraga. The informal settlement, with its 540 houses and 1,050 families, differs from Villa 20 to the south not only in terms of its size but also through its central location next to the Chacarita transport hub, which comprises local trains, an underground metro line and 40 bus routes. These characteristics are also some of the reasons why the settlement's high density and rapid growth go hand in hand with an approximately 30% rate of informal rent (according to the project coordinator). Therefore, the urbanisation project aims to lower the density within the existing settlement through construction

of new housing on the railway area next to the settlement, as well as social facilities and new public spaces within the existing structure. Another characteristic noted during the site visit was the specific appropriation of public space in the settlement by the large migrant population from neighbouring Latin American countries.

Another site visit at Playón Chacarita focused on the partial use of the railway yard as the 'El Galpón' organic market and an adjacent organic urban garden, whose activities were explained by a member of the NGO Mutual Sentimiento Federico Arce. The Mutual Sentimiento runs a wide range of activities in addition to urban gardening, such as an education centre, a radio station, a cultural centre and a pharmacy distributing generic medicines. The facilities and activities are also joined by residents of the settlement. Nonetheless, the urban project with the Avenida Triunvirato does not take the current activities and location of the organic market and urban garden into consideration.

"How can you guarantee that there will not be overcrowding and renting out of spaces after the urbanization?" (Timothy Pape)
"The thing is that the people don't have a place to live independently, whether here or somewhere else: if the government would provide more job opportunities, there wouldn't be so many coming to live in villas because of the lack of income...". (Villa representative)
"Once the ownership titles have been provided to inhabitants, the government could control and act upon any irregularities more easily in these circumstances." (Juan Pablo Negro)

In light of the information, which has been briefly summarised here, the working groups decided to proceed with their own particular working process based on interdisciplinary discussions among the European and local participants. The following two accounts of the working process and its presented outcome at the final day of the workshop are based on the participants' own reflections and include comments from guests of the final presentation.

Public space and appropriation in Villa Fraga.
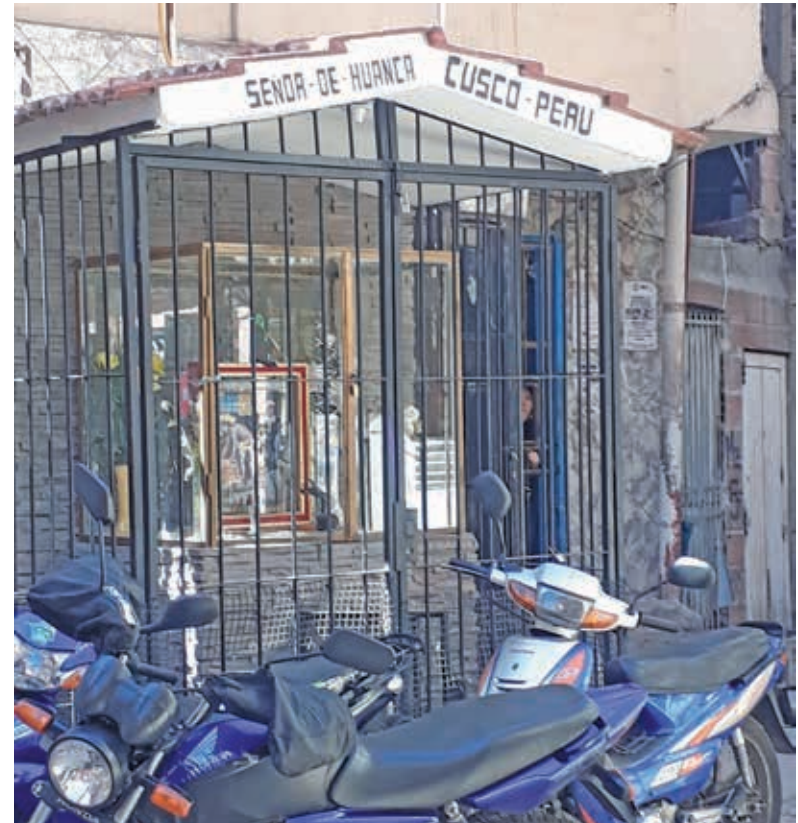
Informal real estate market in Villa 20.

TIME IN PERSPECTIVE: PRESENTING SCENARIOS FOR VILLA OLÍMPICA AND VILLA 20[10]

The Villa Olímpica working group was confronted with the urban complexity of Commune 8, where the Villa Olímpica is located. Kathrin Wildner, a German participant of this group, summarised the starting situation as follows:

"As we learned through excursions and the excellent input of Graciela Brandariz, the southern part of the city of Buenos Aires is (and always was) a rather complex, very fragmented and contested area, with very diverse actors involved. Since the beginning of the 20th century, it was considered as a backyard of the city, limited by the strongly polluted Riachuelo river. The zone went through different phases of urban experimentation, for example housing projects like Villa Soldati, to provide decent housing for poor people. Now this residential area is a conflictive and marginalised space in vicinity to the run down theme park 'Parque de la Ciudad'. Both projects were planned and constructed in late 1970s. The area is still considered marginalised, and even nowadays is geographically quite enclosed in the urban fabric. Since 2012, there has been a new integrative master plan to revitalise the whole area

of Commune 8, but the precarious conditions (lack of urban and social infrastructure), isolated fragmented areas, contested interests (pharmaceutical node, improvement of informal settlement, Olympic Village, etc.) remain obvious." (Kathrin Wildner)

"In the process of analysing the case study, in order to try to understand the present situations and complexities, it was remarkable to observe the difficulties in establishing, explaining and finding meanings – despite experiences of citizens of Buenos Aires. One discussion point, for example, focused on reasons why Villa 20 and Villa Olímpica share the term 'Villa' despite the significant differences in their realities." (Gabriela Campari)

"The working group decided to focus mainly on relationships established between the Olympic Village and Villa 20. The group's main concern was how this relationship would be managed as soon as the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) ends, considering that the property of the sports apartments would be transferred to the Housing Institute of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (IVC) and empty plots outside the new urbanisation would be transferred to the Corporación Buenos Aires

COMMERCIALIZATION OF VOIDS
USE A TEMPORARY INTERVENTION
AS IMPULS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Graphic of workshop presentation.

LAS DOS VILLAS

Presentation of Villa Olímpica working group.

Sur. To what extent would the new infrastructure, buildings and public spaces, developed with public investment, benefit the local population in one of the poorest and most deprived locations of Buenos Aires and the city as a whole?" (Daniel Kozak)

"It was obvious that experiences from Hamburg, with a strategic approach to the transfer of public land, could be a useful starting point for our work. However, we had to learn

(a) that the transfer of such an approach to an Argentinian study area had to consider several important context conditions, e.g. the very sharp divide in the political landscape of Argentina between different 'Post-Peron' movements and the present conservative Government; and the fact that the area has been subject of a series of selective and incomplete public interventions over the last decades, and the Youth Olympics Project runs the risk of being the next fruitless step in this series;

(b) that there are – regardless the specifics of Buenos Aires – parallels between the approach of Buenos Aires and strategies elsewhere in the world that seek to employ temporary interventions as well as a strategic use of public land in order to regenerate deprived areas in cities (e.g. Olympic Park in East London; IBA in Hamburg-Wilhelmsburg). (...) Bearing all this in mind, the working group nevertheless tried an experiment of a land sales strategy for this area that aims to create public rather than purely private goods. They were aware that such proposals would not solve the problems of the south of Buenos Aires, but they could maybe help develop a more responsible and sustainable approach to public land in the city." (Joachim Thiel)

Critically reflecting this approach, Olga Wainstein noted that "within the complexity of Commune 8 – one of the most contested areas in the southern zone – these reductions (to a certain spatial aspect, e.g. Villa 20 – Villa Olímpica) are always likely to lose the relationship with the context and lead to partial conclusions."

On the final day of the workshop, the working group presented their analysis and an exercise comprising two scenarios incorporating the important aspect of time in the urban development of the site. The analysis focused on the relations between Villa 20 and Villa Olímpica within the urban policy in the area. One of the main points was called "commercialisation of urban voids", where the land is used as a generator of money to fund the urbanisation of Villa 20 and other infrastructure in the surrounding. Another point was "the temporary intervention to speed up the process": the Youth Olympic Games, with a deadline in 2018.

The timeline created by the group visualised the problem that all projects in need of funding from the sale of land had to wait until after 2018. The second problem under discussion was the expected sale of land via best-price tender, because conflicting interests would emerge between future investors and community needs for the area. Departing from these problems the group designed two scenarios as an exercise in order to approach the study case. In Scenario 1, the athletes' apartments would be transferred to the

Housing Institute of the City and then sold with a best-price tender, without any conditions for the investor; Scenario 2 was conceptualised with a tender not only asking for the price but also for concepts how to achieve objectives of community developments.

These scenarios encouraged a rich discussion and reflections that could serve to trigger public debates. Exemplarily, two points were presented to the audience, one focusing on the residential buildings and the other one on the public space. In case of Scenario 1, the focus would be on future middle class residents, which brings uncertainties in terms of acceptance of the location from this target group. A strong stimulus from the real estate market would be necessary in this scenario. The commercial spaces on the ground floor would be equally difficult to rent out and would probably not foster local commercial activity. In Scenario 2, conditions would allow the possibility of priority access for the local population to the housing complexes and also the reservation of some apartments as social housing for rent. This could also be applied to the commercial spaces in the ground floor in order to allow local residents and inhabitants of Commune 8 to use these spaces. Another discussion point was the privatisation of and limited access to public space in Scenario 1, and public space allowing connections to the surroundings of the area in Scenario 2.

The group's final reflections on their working process summarised that tenders focusing on best-price revenues do not guarantee sustainable development of an area even in economic terms, due to the risk of public 'repair costs' for unintended effects. Tenders mixing expected qualities with price scenarios should not be understood as a better solution, but they force discussions about the qualitative 'production of the city' integrating multi-spatial aspects of the surroundings. Within this process, the public sector needs to take an active role, apart from selling the land and waiting for the effects.

> There is not something we have to fill, a void; but there is an overall urban process.
>
> Workshop participant

AN AVENUE AS AN ACTOR: PRESENTING QUESTIONS ABOUT VILLA FRAGA – PLAYÓN CHACARITA

The Playón Chacarita – Villa Fraga working group started its analysis by decoding the material and structuring it along a timeline. This timeline not only illustrated the chronological development of Villa Fraga and its surroundings, but also clarified different levels of influence: political actors, spatial transformation, stakeholders and interrelations on micro/city, regional/national, and international levels. (Friederike Schröder)

In relation to the content, the timeline revealed insights into land ownership and usage. The railway yard land is in the possession of the national railway company, and therefore an asset of the national government. Since the national and the city governments are currently ruled by the same political party, there is an opportunity for the asset to be transferred to the city administration in order to carry out the urban project and construct the new avenue. The fact is, however, that one part of the land is in concession to a private cargo rail company until 2024, while another smaller part is currently loaned on a yearly contract to the NGO Mutual Sentimiento. In this context, the new Avenida Triunvirato turns into a central issue, since the construction of a public street as an overriding public interest could serve to legitimate the asset transfer.

Taking the Avenida Triunvirato as a main actor, the working group proceeded with testing two different scenarios. One scenario was the development of the area without construction of the Avenida Triunvirato, and the other one included construction of the Avenida. Through the comparison of the two scenarios and their impacts, it was possible to extract key elements for the development of the area.

Complemented by a brainstorm on different development scenarios for the case study, the analysis resulted in an integrated development concept considering land use, housing typologies, ownership, gender equality commitments, strategies for inclusion of low income population, landscape development and others. (Friederike Schröder)

Presentation of the Playón Chacarita - Villa Fraga working group.
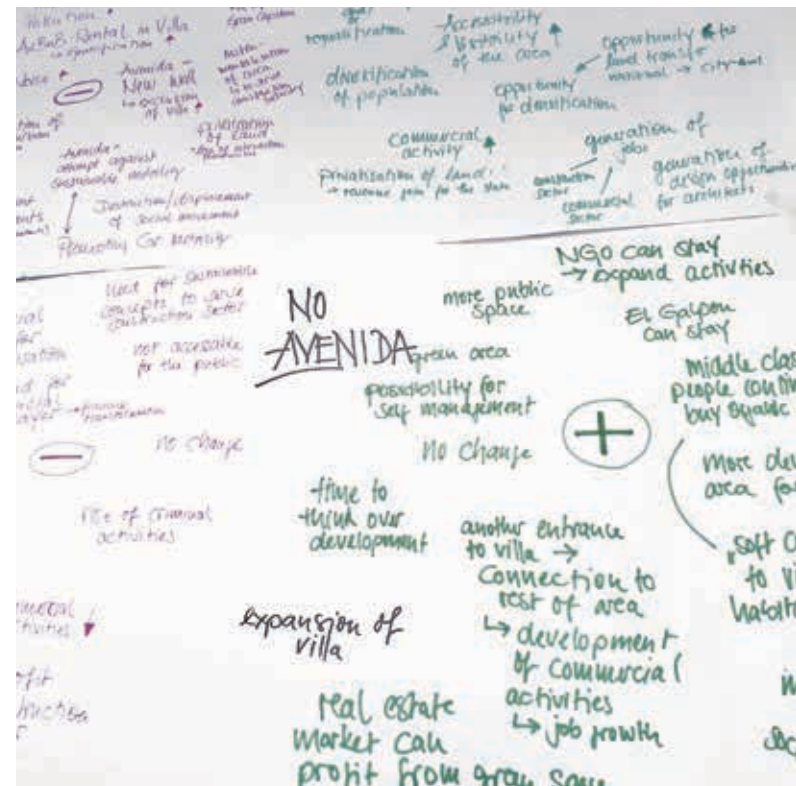
For the development concept, the tender-example from HafenCity in Hamburg served as a guiding tool for the discussion of certain existing and prospective needs, challenges and interests of the actors involved in the area's transformation. Existing parameters that need to be considered were identified; among others, these in- cluded the current normative specifications, social and functional mix, linkages to the urban surrounding, educational opportunities and medical services (NGO Mutual Sentimiento), considerations of the audio-visual cluster, retail space like the "fería internada" (in- door fair), etc. Ideas for the characteristics and specific requirements for the area's development were, amongst others, the construction for mixed-residential and office use, public space with green space including the urban gardening association, infrastructure (sewage, electricity...), decontamination of soil, restricted parking spaces per apartment, relocation of a railway line, mixture of social and co- operative housing for rent, resource efficient architecture, etc.

As a result of this exercise, the Playón Chacarita – Vil- la Fraga working group extracted a set of questions consid- ered important by the participants for the public debate on the area and on the development of urban voids in general.

Open questions that emerged out of the tender discussion were:

- Who claims the right to this neighbourhood?
- What opportunities are offered by the area and urban voids, and to whom?
- Which role does the social meaning play in the de- velopment of an area and urban voids?
- What are necessary linkages between the area and its surround- ings for social and urban interventions (cultural, economic...)?
- What rights are legitimated and/or neglected by public bod- ies in the transformation of an area and urban voids?
- How do academics and professionals define their role in and contribution to urban development processes?
- How can wishes and interests of different actors and stakeholders in the area be taken into account? ...

Villa Fraga – Playón Chacarita provoked a critical look at a territory considered empty or full according to the needs and aspirations of the actors involved. This territory can be consid- ered contested by those from "inside the informal settlement" and those from "outside", i.e. the surrounding neighbourhood and other involved actors on the territory, such as the NGO Mutual Sentimiento and the private cargo rail company.
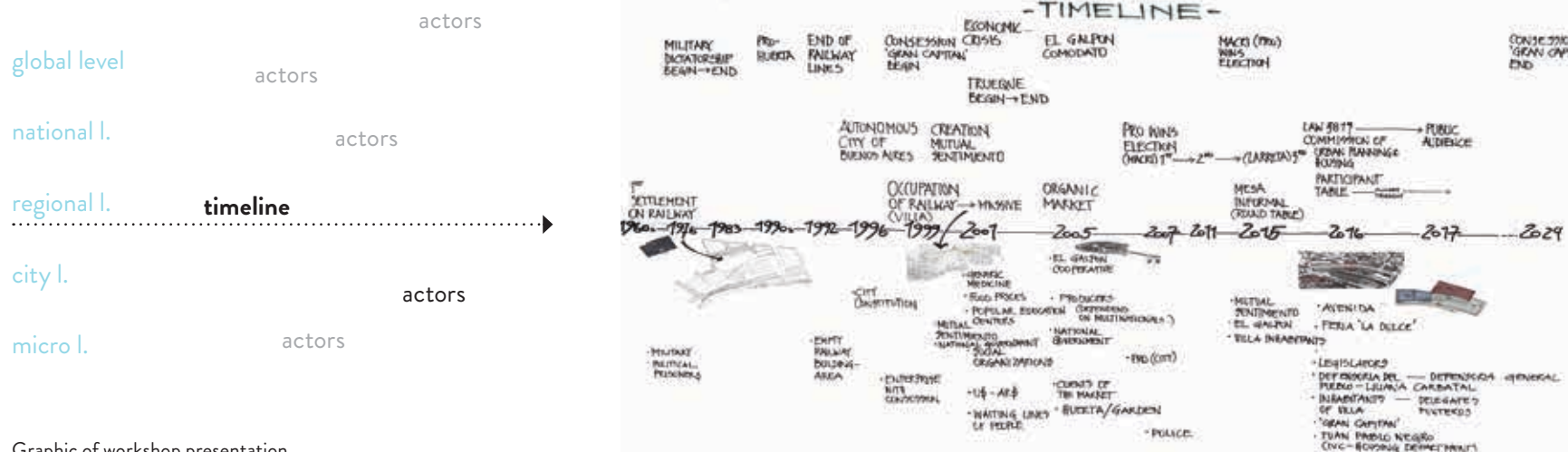
Graphic of workshop presentation.

REFLECTIONS ON THE WORKING PROCESS ON SITE(S)

"As for the field work on the two case studies, it was extremely interesting to follow the narratives of the coordinators who are currently leading the urbanisation projects in Villa Fraga and Villa 20, to be able to grasp the dimension of these projects. It was interesting to see how projects, which may be interesting from their narrative, find their limits in the dynamics of implementation. (...) Also, it was of priceless value to be able to interview the official in charge of the construction work of Villa Olímpica. The narrative of the official showed the voids that exist in the project and missing relations with the environment of the construction site." (Cecilia Zapata)

With all its intensity, the workshop process generated interaction and an exchange of information that visualised different approaches to urban problems. In the case of Villa Olímpica, the city government's reduction of an urban problem to the housing issue de-contextualised the phenomenon and did not incorporate the dynamics of its immediate environment. This issue became almost essential in group work, amplifying the complexity of the case and the scale of investigation. (Gabriela Campari)

"The reality is that the two selected case studies are ghettos within a fragmented city where the absence of integration and inclusion are increasingly present. Working on these fragments without contemplating their integration, not having been able to deepen the analysis of the Environmental Urban Plan (2008) and the Territorial Model (2011) can lead to proposals of wrong future scenarios." (Olga Wainstein)

"Some of the remaining questions:
- What is the agency of all the different actors in the planning process?
- How is the local community involved in decision-making? Who are the activists? What concept of participatory planning is involved?
- How can the very diverse range of actors inside the villas be integrated?
- How can we reflect more on property rights and invent new forms of land use?
- What could be an active role for politics in mediation of planning processes and negotiation?" (Kathrin Wildner)

"It was also very interesting to grasp the dimension of the relations between the processes of urbanisation undertaken in the two informal settlements and the urban renewal works in the areas where they are located. This made clear the criteria for the selection of the settlements to be urbanised by the government, and also visualised the dependency of these processes of (re)urbanisation with the large-scale projects in which they are inserted. The dominance of market logic was present in a very strong way in the cases." (Cecilia Zapata)

"Within the framework of the 'right to the city', we need to think of it as a multitude of rights. In case of Villa Fraga, we need to consider the needs of the immigrant population living there: the Peruvians, Paraguayans, Bolivians etc., with their own way of appropriating urban space and building traditions. We need to consider the rights of these informal immigrants as well!" (Mariela Diaz)

"The transversality and interdisciplinarity of the working group enabled new approaches to the understanding of the urban void from a position of each disciplinary field, opening the debate to new scenarios, increasing the visibility of actors, considering the surrounding in its potentiality, listening to the different logics and understanding the void as a territory in transformation that should not be conceived by design professionals alone." (Alicia Gerscovich)

"The audience pointed out that the urban voids were created to justify the profits of real estate market, and stressed the reformist agenda embedded in the urban segregation." (Ana Paula Koury)

EXTRACT OF GUEST COMMENTS

"I have my doubts as to what 'integration' means. I suspect that there is more than one model of integration and social development. Argentina is not aiming for equality, integration etc. I think that, not only in Argentina and Buenos Aires, but in the whole world, at this historic moment people are rather aiming for segregation. (...) We have to think about how to create the conditions of another kind of integration, which has its roots in society and not in policies from our political leaders." (Guest comment of a local political scientist)

"We have to think that the void is not empty at all, it's full of many things, of different uses and long histories in these spaces. (...) But we have to think: what is the result [of the two urbanisation projects] in relation to the entire city? We have two expressive interventions – it is interesting to consider whether it is intended or necessary to hand over the right to the city to its inhabitants? Are they able to create a more interesting and sustainable real estate situation for the city? (...) On the other hand, we have to better understand the different spaces that appear to be isolated. Informality and formality are not really divided: in the formal market, there is informality and the other way around." (Guest comment of a local architect / head of an NGO)

"If we think that we are confronted with structural problems, we need to develop adequate theoretical and practical approaches, and not continue with business as usual. (...) The question is not whether to leave 20% [of an area] for social housing. No! It is to conceive of an alternative city and a rationale of commerce, with social adjustments, to conceive of a city with alternative logics." (Guest comment of a local specialist in social conflicts)

"I like the idea of defining the void as something that is not empty. I think what you studied in both examples is provocative in a positive way, which can change ideas and enrich the debate. Thanks a lot!" (Guest comment of a local architect / director of research and training institute)

NOTES

1 Fraga is the name of nearby street.

2 Corporación Buenos Aires Sur S.E is a public company, created with the specific mission of promoting the social and economic development of the southern area of the City of Buenos Aires (Law 470/2000) in order to compensate for inequalities between areas within the city. It comprises programmes and projects according to three differentiated, complementary and interrelated focal points: Strengthening human and social capital, economic development and improvement of living environment.

3 Overcrowding conditions are measured as a ratio of the total number of household members to the number of rooms for the exclusive use of the household. Technically, critical overcrowding is considered as more than three people per household in the room (Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas Públicas de la Nación 2014).

4 The concept of the NBI is based on the establishment of minimum welfare thresholds, according to universally accepted levels, which must be reached from the coverage of a set of basic material needs. Thus, when households, or people living in them, cannot meet such needs, they are categorised as NBI. According to this approach, a concept of structural poverty is defined based on indicators linked to essential housing conditions, household members' schooling in formal primary education and their entry into the labour market, concepts that are linked to the quality of life. (Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas Públicas de la Nación 2014).

5 Data from the Subsecretaría de Desarrollo Económico/Ministerio de Modernización, Innovación y Tecnología, GCBA

6 It should be noted that the analysis and the matrix were prepared prior to the enactment of Law No. 5704/16 Urbanization City Park: City Park, Villa Olímpica and Villa 20.

7 The English translation would be "massif" as a unit of constructed material.

8 In allusion to the high standard neighbourhoods and gated communities

9 The allocation of housing will be made according to the following guidelines: a) They must be granted through bank credit granted at preferential rates in public entities of the City of Buenos Aires. b) At least 50% of the units must be awarded to residents who have been living in Commune 8 for at least five years; the other 50% is given with priority to residents of the remaining communes in the south of the City.

10 Comments on the meaning of the term "villa" in each example. In 'Villa Olímpica', the term refers to a building ensemble planned on a vacant plot with specific characteristics and all infrastructure services necessary, similar to the concept of Italian "villa". In 'Villa 20', the term indicates a settlement of spontaneous growth by inserting in an interstice / void of the city, generally lacking in nearby services.

Final presentation of workshop at Casa Cultural Rodolfo Walsh.

5
REFLECTIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENTS

The ¿Urban Voids? workshop in Buenos Aires opened up new views, opportunities of access and reflective debate, which were reflected by the participants in short comments. The participants' accounts relate to the conceptualisation of urban voids, the workshop's methodology in terms of transdisciplinary and transcultural research, as well as the networks built and future possibilities of cooperation.

El taller ¿Vacíos Urbanos? desarrollado en Buenos Aires abrió nuevas perspectivas, oportunidades de abordaje y debate reflexivo, que los participantes reflejaron en breves comentarios a modo de cierre. Estas reflexiones se refieren a la conceptualización de los vacíos urbanos, a la metodología del taller en términos de investigación transdisciplinaria y transcultural, así como a las redes generadas y las posibilidades futuras de cooperación.

In the course of the intensive workshop week, different disciplinary perspectives on urban voids brought to mind the complexity and local specificity of urban transformation processes. The collective analysis of these transformation processes, with different cultural and disciplinary backgrounds, produced outcomes on various levels.

- On a content related level, the workshop fostered a better understanding of local specificities of urban transformation processes and of transformative research in general.
- On the level of methodological approaches, the diverse perspectives brought into discussion by the participants, practitioners and experts on site revealed new insights into transdisciplinary and transcultural research.
- On an organisational level, the workshop's aim to build a multidisciplinary network of scientists on urban transformation research between Latin America and Europe was set in motion.

According to these levels, the following subchapters present the outcomes of the workshop by quoting the participants' reflections and perspectives of the experience on 1) the conceptualisation of urban voids, 2) the methodology of the workshop in terms of transdisciplinary and transcultural research as well as 3) the built networks and future possibilities of cooperation.

1.   REFLECTION ON THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF URBAN VOIDS

Although, as mentioned, the sole focus on a disciplinary conceptualisation of urban voids limits the understanding of the dynamic transformation processes, a look at the concepts of the term by workshop participants facilitates a better understanding of the disciplinary standpoints and perspectives involved in the workshop. "The clearer the outline of individual disciplines are, the more interesting is the assemblage of their perspectives on an object, which only unfolds its wide range of aspects in the variety of different professional approaches" (Hauser and Weber 2015: 12). The following quotes from some participants give an insight into the variety of readings and the critical reflection on the perspectives after the workshop.

We all had to leave our comfort zones and try to learn – not only learning from other disciplines but also the challenge to explain each other [across cultural and linguistic barriers].

Workshop participant

"For me, as a lawyer, the title ¿Urban Voids? could be considered a disciplinary provocation. The notion of an empty space, on which plans and projects are superimposed, as it were, without any relations or ties, is alien to my jurisprudential understanding of planning disciplines. Space is always tied to interests and rights that need to be taken into account when deciding on future use. The term 'voids' suggests a vacuum, a space free from interests and rights, and therefore provokes contradiction. The workshop in Buenos Aires confirmed this perspective of mine. The project areas, which also included informal settlements, are – of course – not spaces free of interests or rights. On the contrary, the planning tasks and procedures are extremely complex and challenging because of the dense population and the social problems." (Martin Wickel)

"There is an evident problem with conceptualising these cases with the term 'urban void'. As a very quick initial survey shows, far from being voided, these are complex sites with an important material and intangible history. One could argue that there is no such thing as an 'urban void'. Or, in other words, that there is a contradiction in terms within the concept, an oxymoron that reveals less than it conceals. By definition, what is urban is filled with significance. By labelling a site as a 'void', there is also an ideological and political risk, as it can be understood as a *carte blanche* for any type of intervention – as anything is better than a void. 'Vacant site' is slightly better, but it still falls foul of the same problems. The French term *terrain vague* is close to the same issues. But at least it includes in its etymological root the notion of *vagueness*, and in that sense it has a less definitive connotation. In the case of the sites examined, the use of the concept of 'urban void' applied to Villa 20 is decidedly inappropriate, and even malign. As Roland Barthes argues in *Writing degree zero*, "language is never innocent: words always carry attached a second memory

Discussion of participants during the workshop.

that mysteriously persists in the midst of new meanings" (Barthes 1968: 16). The terminology used to read the city and how we conceptualise an urban site matters a great deal." (Daniel Kozak)

"The development of an area is not limited to the reuse of urban voids or investment in real estate ventures, it requires integrated strategic management with a clear sequence of times and actions in the midst of highly participatory processes with public-private investments and a strong management control." (Olga Wainstein)

"Returning to the concept of the right to the city, focused on access to material resources – of which urban land forms a constituent part – and to the symbolic resources – such as participation, access to culture and to information – urban voids should be redefined and read as a strategic response

to spatial segregation and social exclusion. In this sense, urban voids are opportunities and challenges to put this right into practice in the construction of citizenship." (Alicia Gerscovich)

"As for my personal conclusions on the issue of urban voids, it was interesting to see a certain confirmation on the hypothesis that urban voids as empty spaces exist only in certain moments for certain actors. All the presented policies and strategies for the two project sites aimed at filling an imagined void and emerged out of a few actors' needs rather than an integral synthesis the places and spaces in transformation. Therefore it is very important to conduct preparatory work on such integral synthesis and exploration in interdisciplinary research teams and to clarify the manifold roles of different professionals involved in these processes." (Judith Lehner)

"The German word "Brache" (EN: fallow, SP: baldío), used to label certain kinds of urban territories, is borrowed from (traditional) agriculture. The term refers to an uncultivated field which is not farmed for a certain period of time to allow it to recover and be more productive later on. In urban contexts, these territories are sometimes claimed as voids. They seem to be leftovers, though they are not empty – often, these urban territories are full of informal uses – but there are no public plans known so far. From an economic perspective, they are highly productive zones of urban development processes. Somehow in between: not anymore, and not yet." (Kathrin Wildner)

2.   CONCLUSIONS ON WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY
Introduction by Timothy Pape

A workshop is an encounter between different people who work together for a compact time in one place on the same topic. Therefore, the methodology of a workshop is determined first and foremost through the composition of the workshop team and its locality in relation to the themes studies. The multidisciplinary workshop team of 16 academic professors, research assistants and doctoral students from Latin America and Europe, coming from various urban related disciplines, worked together for one week on

different example sites, venues, and institutions, and met with a variety of differently involved actors in the city of Buenos Aires. This complexity of different approaches, conceptions and realities was the substrate of the workshop, but also had to be moderated and hence asked for an enormous and sensitive preparation – in this case in particular from the Argentinian side. The organisation of workshop was a prime example in this sense through: (1) the choice of two relevant and highly controversially discussed case studies and the provided opportunities of encountering related actors from social, economic and political institutions and from academia and (2) the involvement of local experts, professions and residents. The aim of the workshop was to challenge dominant or taken for granted approaches rather than to provide any comprehensive analysis of the cases.

In urban theory and urban daily practice, the well-attuned and repetitive confrontation of different interests and conceptions often lead to unbridgeable controversies and oppositions. The potential of the complex composition of the ¿Urban Voids? workshop could be understood as always providing a third, and hence additional perspective for such oppositions. This opened up new views, opportunities of access and reflective debate. We have experienced this potential in the workshop team on various levels, for example: the "impartial" international presence changed the availability of

Site visit at the organic market El Galpón, Playón Chacarita.

Working group at FADU-UBA.

different actors to meet, but it also changed the whole dynamic of the meetings. Seen from a European standpoint, this distant perspective seemed to open up doors and to lower inhibition thresholds in discussions on institutional levels. In encounters with locals in the case studies, however, the same distant reality often also created atmospheres of "feeling of out of place" or even "as some kind of displaced intruder". While the possibility to engage with the localities had been very informative and inspiring, the changing dynamic of encounters in the field needs thorough reflection. In fact, I would argue that the following discussions within the core team of academics was probably the most valuable contribution of the workshop. Here, the context of the variety of present cultures, nationalities, languages and urban disciplines challenges the most confident and taken for granted conceptions and opened up different views and approaches not only towards the "foreign" reality, but in particular in reflection of the own culture of urban research.

The methodology of a workshop is always also an experiment, as it wants to bring together and challenge different methodological approaches. This puts also the theme of the ¿Urban Voids? workshop in the centre of a methodological discussion. This is to say, besides different theoretical and practical aspects of urban voids that were addressed, they could also be regarded as hidden perspectives in the urban discourse. In this sense, I consider one of the most valid results of the workshop to be the generated questions and doubt in established dynamics of respective urban research approaches in the reflection of the workshop outcomes on the last day in Buenos Aires – again in dialogue with local experts.

Learning from … Europe and Latin America
"Working in an international and interdisciplinary team for such a condensed period of time was intriguing in the sense that it revealed (among others) a key lesson: making the knowledge available for the group and collectively creating new insights and ideas is particularly challenging in an interdisciplinary and international team. Finding a common language, stepping forward and backwards in producing knowledge, breaking disciplinary patterns in favour of creating new insights – all of it needed intense and

controversial discussions, sometimes overextension, time, and appreciation of each one's knowledge." (Friederike Schröder)

"Not only the Hamburg group but also the local specialists and the voice of the "'inhabitants/occupants' themselves contributed to a wide view on the different layers that are related to issues of urban voids issues." (María Silvia López Coda)

"The lived experience as part of a multidisciplinary working group is very enriching and rare in our fields, and even more so when the participants with different professions have to share knowledge about a territory, in this case, our city of Buenos Aires and, specifically, on two enclaves undergoing transformation with different characteristics and unique situations not addressed from the European centralities." (Alicia Gerscovich)

"Another aspect that stood out from the workshop was learning the methodologies / approaches contributed by the German colleagues for the case studies. The strategies of analysis with scenarios and the establishment of qualitative preconditions for a tender allowed case studies to be looked at from a level of "practicality", reality and feasibility which is often missing in the scientific perspective." (Cecilia Zapata)

"Most of us are used to workshops that involve a small teaching staff and then a larger number of students (from different nationalities and disciplinary backgrounds). A workshop without students – for a time – makes it possible to reveal how we (experienced scholars, academics, professors) are challenged by confrontation with different disciplinary and cultural approaches to urban and social issues. On the one hand, for example, it was very interesting to observe the different attitudes between architectural/planning-oriented colleagues and those who are more grounded in the social sciences. On the other hand, as Europeans in Latin America, it was very relevant to reflect our attitudes and orientations in approaching the specificities of the (economic, social, regulatory, political) local environment.

In this sense, besides having a great insight into the issue of urban voids and the way it is represented, discussed and
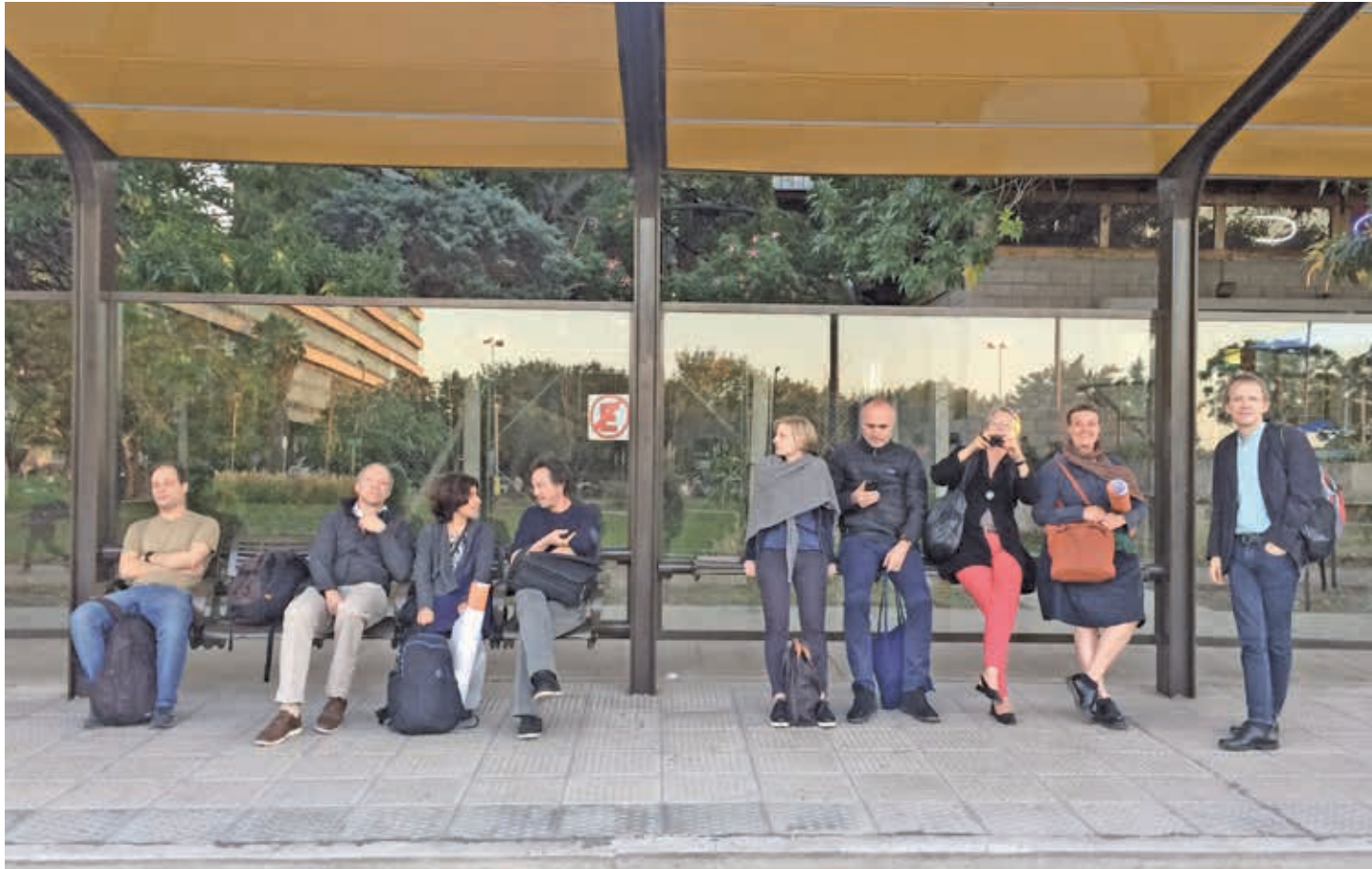
Participants from Hamburg at bus station on the way to site visits.

dealt with by urban policies in Buenos Aires, the workshop was an excellent learning experience as far as my research as well as teaching competences in a multidisciplinary and multicultural environment are concerned." (Massimo Bricocoli)

"At the beginning of the workshop, it was not clear what the outcome should be or to whom it would be directed. In my group (Villa Olímpica), the Argentinian participants were hesitant to talk and write about scenarios as they imagined the paper would be presented at official boards. Only after it was made very clear that we would not prepare a paper to present it to the local government as

an expert report, and that the focus was rather on the exercise of discussing international and interdisciplinary collaborative potential relating to the invention of planning instruments, they were more at ease to think freely about possibilities." (Kathrin Wildner)

"From my point of view, the difference of approach to the problematic raised in the workshop became evident in the methodology to be applied. There, it was noticed that the European group came with a more rigid methodology than the one we usually apply, or maybe that was my perception." (Olga Wainstein)

"It seemed to me that the task of understanding Buenos Aires as a Latin American city from a European point of view already challenged the discussions. Interesting to me was the observation that the process of explaining by Argentinian participants and asking by the guest researchers already triggered a process of new, more diversified insights on topics like the informal-formal space production. The site visits and discussions with local actors were essential for a broader angle on the city's transformation processes. And once again it was the mixture of local and foreign participants that opened new possibilities of access: For example, the international audience opened doors to the city's administration, which are usually more difficult to access by local (critical) researchers, and also the questions asked by Argentinian participants to the local actors at the project sites already showed an insight into the local specifics of urban planning in Buenos Aires." (Judith Lehner)

"The experience during an international conference of sociologists some years ago in Buenos Aires showed that European scientists can learn a lot from Latin American empirical findings and theoretical perspectives of young and senior academics. But conferences don't offer opportunities for direct cooperation and exchange. This started by tutoring a PhD-thesis of a European scholar about ¿Urban Voids? in contact with a colleague from architecture in Buenos Aires and motivated me strongly to apply with support of young academics for the necessary funding for the workshop." (Ingrid Breckner)

Learning from... other disciplines
"In relation to the interdisciplinary work of the Argentine and German team, it was more than interesting to be able to explain and understand informality (as a characteristic of Latin American urbanisation processes). The discussions demonstrated that not even Argentinian researchers can agree on how we think of informality, and it was even more difficult to try to explain it to foreign researchers. It was apparent that this phenomenon generates contradictions." (Cecilia Zapata)

"All issues addressed with the focus on urban transformations from the 'void', open up new perspectives, provide knowledge and establish relationships between the disciplines that enable an understanding of the reality in a more holistic way and inserted in the territory. As well it proposes new challenges on local experiences open to other contexts in which the exchange is at the same time possibility and shared knowledge that can enrich the researchers' capacities with new disciplinary and cultural insights.

Methods of representation and innovative approaches from my training: deconstruction of the case study, analysis from different perspectives, reconstruction with a transdisciplinary approach." (Alicia Gerscovich)

"The workshop brought together a huge amount of knowledge from different perspectives helping to understand the structural context, political culture and political/cultural/economic actors." (Friederike Schröder)

"This kind of small workshop, with selected and invited participants, seems to be an excellent way to reflect on research perspectives of urban development and inventive new experiments. To understand the immanent potentials as well as limits and logics of such interdisciplinary team work, it is highly necessary to keep on doing such exercises, to slow down, provide space and opportunities to exchange ideas, and to create new questions in order to learn from each other." (Kathrin Wildner)

Reflecting on the workshop process and approach
"Preparing the workshop with colleagues in Buenos Aires raised the important question about a possible outcome of the interdisciplinary exercise. The Argentinian idea to work on a masterplan for selected ¿Urban Voids? was not feasible, because professionals in the fields of planning law, urban economy and sociology, geography and urban ethnography – as members of the European group – would not have been able to do it. Therefore, we needed a thematic focus offering opportunities for professional contributions from all disciplines involved. We decided to translate and adapt the new typology of a 'call for tender', including politically desired contents and expected prices to conditions in Buenos Aires. This planning instrument works as a content-related guideline for

architectural competitions and has been already successfully implemented in different projects in Hamburg. Results show that it is possible to convince and force private investors and architects not only to think about their immediate revenue from isolated buildings but also about the long-term sustainability of a complex urban tissue with mixed uses for different users." (Ingrid Breckner)

"During the workshop, it became clear that the use of this instrument [call for tender] is very necessary. In particular, the city must have a clear idea of the basic orientation of the project. The basic principles of the project must be defined. Otherwise, there is the risk that unresolved conflicts are transferred into the tender procedure. Whether conflicts can be resolved seems more than questionable. Accordingly, I was critical of the application of this instrument in 'Villa 20'. The discussions around the project were still very much dominated by fundamental questions, which had to be clarified before the specification of the framework conditions as a prerequisite for the use of the tender concept. At the same time, for me, the workshop seemed to be a success in this respect, because the use of innovative instruments for cooperative urban development was discussed intensively. In my opinion, there was a common understanding of the advantages of tender procedures, which were not just price-oriented but also qualitative." (Martin Wickel)

"The European participants introduced a new instrument for addressing urban voids, in particular for governmental and private actors, incorporating social components in the economic valuation of the ground. This implies that the provision of public land, once the decision is made, can contribute to the effective development of the area, with the contribution of the private sector and the decision and control of the government, social investment weightings that apply in the decision for best project. This involves the implementation of a dynamic tool that can operate by ensuring the best use of urban voids, to the extent that the authorities can contrast the new uses and expectations for the territory." (Alicia Gerscovich)

"During the peer discussions at the university, the knowledge of local specifics and its transmission took a lot of time and sometimes got in the way of developing applicable conclusions. The experience showed that methodological approaches for the workshop like the development of timelines, scenarios or a call for tender helped guide the discussion, although these tools were mostly brought in by the European researchers. In my opinion, the timeline approach in particular helped to produce knowledge about all actors involved and the interdependency among them for the project site of Chacarita. Also, a draft for a call for tender structured the final discussions at the end of the workshop, though unfortunately with little time to finalise it." (Judith Lehner)

"I must admit that, in front of the selected examples of Villa Olímpica and Playón Chacarita – Villa Fraga, I had my doubts about the magnitude and complexity of each one, because they were recognised as territories under disputed interests and in particular because the workshop would be carried out by a very heterogeneous group in terms of formation and origin." (Olga Wainstein)

"As an urban ethnographer, I would have liked very much to do more explorative fieldwork, walking around, for example to experience local traffic infrastructure and public transport, understand distances and orientations or look at the existing shopping venues to think about the potentials of centrality of Commune 8." (Kathrin Wildner)

"Even if it would have been interesting and fruitful to have more time for deeper empirical investigation, the diversity of professional, political and inhabitants' perspectives on necessary and ongoing transformations of our project sites was impressing and perfectly organised by our Argentinian colleagues. As European researchers, without the interdisciplinary cooperation of a workshop, it would have never been possible to get such a differentiated insight into the local context and its limits and potential for transformation. But for a deeper understanding of each other, and to learn to cope with different professional and societal realities in developing adequate concepts for different urban conditions, financial support is also required to enable colleagues from Argentina to attend similar workshops in Europe." (Ingrid Breckner)

"We were guided by the architects leading the urban renewal process; we discussed with the residents' representatives and we explored the surroundings to identify other occupants of the areas. Besides the local forces, we also met policy makers and architects who are leading social movements in the city of Buenos Aires. Thus the local and external voices who have been (or potentially would be) involved in the urban renewal process were presented to the group. It clearly showed us the interests wrapped up in or excluded from the ongoing transformation of those areas." (Ana Paula Koury)

"The programme was very well organised, allowing the visiting group as well as the local colleagues to visit and share knowledge about the two sites where the issue of 'urban voids' was investigated. The site visits were excellent, allowing an exchange with local stakeholders, and time was available to return to the sites and conduct more in-depth analysis. The organisation of two working groups, each focused on one of the two case studies, was very effective and, given a common orientation and finalisation, allowed the development of different pathways, styles and discussions. Involving external guests, the final presentation was a very vivid moment of exchange and reflection, an excellent chance to share the knowledge we all gained in such a brief but intense time. The schedule of the workshop was very intensive, well organised and fine-tuned. However, a suggestion for a further initiative could be to have a mid-session break in order to allow individual urban explorations." (Massimo Bricocoli)

"I profit from the exchange of knowledge and experience between all participants, who engaged in peer-to-peer discussions according to their specificities and fields of action and discovered complementary points of view in their analysis." (Alicia Gerscovich)

"The composition of the workshop group, in its diversity of disciplines, language skills, research experiences and interests, as well as the working hierarchies and gender dynamics, did provide huge potential, but at the same time was very challenging and demanding in terms of communication. Looking back and reflecting on the workshop, it might would have been helpful to get some more ideas

Site visit Villa Fraga - Playón Chacarita with representatives of the city administration.

beforehand from each participant, their perspectives, for example by exchanging some papers on topics etc." (Kathrin Wildner)

"The role of Ana Paula Koury (Sao Paolo) and Massimo Bricocoli (Milano) as external observers and critics was very helpful, maybe their roles could even be extended." (Kathrin Wildner)

3. FORMING A NETWORK: FUTURE PROSPECTS AND COOPERATION POSSIBILITIES

Apart from the methodological development of new perspectives, research questions and approaches to urban transformation processes, the ¿Urban Voids? project also aims to establish a multidisciplinary scientific network of researchers on urban transformation research between Latin America and Europe, as well as to gain knowledge on how to make an active contribution to processes of "initiating, steering and increasing reflexivity in societal transformations" (Schneidewind et.al. 2016: 8).

In this sense, the first workshop in Buenos Aires intended to establish connections with actors who are actively involved in the city's urban development processes, such as members of NGOs, government officials, deputies of the Buenos Aires legislature and colleagues from different academic institutions. These actors served on the one hand as first connecting points of a future network on urban transformation research between Europe and Latin America, while on the other hand their interactions gave insights into emerging contributions for the transformation processes in practice.

In tangible terms, one of the connecting points would be the current visiting Professor and Walter Gropius Chair (DAAD), Markus Vogl, who participated in the workshop presentation as an invited guest. Markus Vogl continues to work on the site of Villa 20 – Villa Olímpica in the urban design course with graduate students in Buenos Aires, continuing the initial analysis conducted during the ¿Urban Voids? workshop.

Also, the workshop visualised possible synergies and joint activities between the "Resource Efficiency in Architecture and Planning" programme of the HafenCity University Hamburg, with its Academic Dean Prof. Martin Wickel, and the Research Centre Habitat and Energy (CIHE-FADU-UBA), and its Director Prof. Daniel Kozak. Extending the network towards other European and Latin American institutions was made possible through the active involvement of the two guest critics. Ana Paula Koury sees a special

potential to extend the research topic and approach of the workshop to Brazilian urban development issues and relate it to the research conducted at São Judas University, São Paulo, Brazil. In Europe, Massimo Bricocoli is the connection point to Italy's Politecnico di Milano. "I hope that there will be the chance to further develop the experience and I would be very glad to support a joint project, on behalf of Politecnico di Milano" (Massimo Bricocoli). Ana Paula Koury writes that "the workshop was a great contribution to the research we have been developing at the São Judas University since 2013 in the Architecture and Urbanism Graduate Programme. The new planning and participation agenda for the environmental policy in Brazil granted by Fapesp (São Paulo State Research Agency) from 2013-2016 deals with conflicts between mobility and environmental policies. In late 2016, we signed an agreement with the local city government to foster our study case in a neighbourhood at the east side of São Paulo City where our university headquarters are based. The east zone of São Paulo is the most densely-populated part of the city, and contains around 4.5 million of the city's 12 million inhabitants. The majority of our students live there. Thus, we were honoured to be invited to participate in the ¿Urban Voids? workshop. It helped us to think on strategies to deal with our huge urban concentration."

In terms of an active contribution to processes of urban transformation, the Argentinian project coordinator, Alicia Gerscovich, continues on the topic of urban voids in Villa Fraga as an expert consultant for the deputy of the legislature, Javier Gentilini. She does so in the participatory working group for the neighbourhood Playón Chacarita, in accordance with the establishment of the law for the re-development of the villa. Olga Wainstein, executive director of the Centro de Estudios del Hábitat y la Vivienda (FADU-UBA), emphasises in her reflection on the ¿Urban Voids? workshop the concrete impact on the public debate and local government: "The ¿Urban Voids? project between Buenos Aires and Hamburg is a very meaningful initiative, where the collective reflection and exchange is valuable to each one of the participants not only in professional terms, but also because it activates initiatives that form part of the public debate and are incorporated in the local government's agenda."

Construction site visit of cooperative housing.

6
ANNEX

WORKSHOP TEAM

PROJECT COORDINATORS

Prof. Dr. Ingrid Breckner
Chair Urban and Regional Sociology
HafenCity Universität Hamburg

Prof. Arq. Alicia Gerscovich, Esp.
Centro de Estudios del Hábitat y la
Vivienda, Facultad de Arquitectura,
Diseño y Urbanismo, Universidad de
Buenos Aires (FADU-UBA)

PARTICIPANTS FROM HAMBURG

MSc. Judith Lehner
Architecture, Urbanism

Dipl.-Ing. MSc. Timothy Pape
Architecture, Urbanism,
Cultural Studies

Dr. Friederike Schröder
Geography

Dr. Joachim Thiel
Urban and Regional Economics

Prof. Dr. Martin Wickel, LL.M.
Law

Prof. Dr. Kathrin Wildner
Urban Anthropology

PARTICIPANTS FROM BUENOS AIRES

Dr. Gabriela Campari
Landscape Design & Planning

MA Mariana Cavalieri
Sociology, Local Economic
Development

Dr. Mariela Paula Diaz
Sociology

Prof. Dr. Daniel Kozak
Architecture, Urbanism

MA María Silvia López Coda
Architectural Heritage, Argentine
Culture

Arq. MA Olga Wainstein-Krasuk
Architecture, Local Economic
Development

Dr. María Cecilia Zapata
Social Sciences, Sociology

GUEST CRITICS

Prof. Dr. Massimo Bricocoli
Urban Policies, Housing

Dr. Ana Paula Koury
Architecture, Housing policies

CURRICULUM VITAE OF WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

PROJECT COORDINATORS

Ingrid Breckner, Dr. rer. soc., Chair of Urban and Regional Sociology, HafenCity University Hamburg. Teaching in Urban Planning and Urban Design study programmes. Focuses of research and publications: Social metamorphoses of cities, housing, mobility and migration, (in)security in urban spaces, social impact of ecological policies, regional food supply and culinary cultures. Member of various national and international scientific organisations.
www.hcu-hamburg.de/research/arbeitsgebiete/prof-dr-ingrid-breckner/personen
ingrid.breckner@hcu-hamburg.de

Alicia Gerscovich, architect and specialist in Habitat Technology and Production. Associate Professor in architecture and senior researcher at the Centro de Estudios del Hábitat y la Vivienda, Facultad de Arquitectura, Diseño y Urbanismo, Universidad de Buenos Aires (FADU-UBA). As a fellow of CONICET, she served as director and researcher in projects financed through national and international funds. Author and co-author of various peer-reviewed publications, invited professor and speaker at congresses. National evaluator for CONEAU and ARCU-SUR, MERCOSUR educational sector for careers in architecture. She was Director General of the Housing Commission of the Legislature of the City of Buenos Aires and continues there as a consultant on urban issues of habitat and territory.
agersc@gmail.com

PARTICIPANTS FROM HAMBURG

Judith Lehner, architect. Studied Architecture at the Vienna University of Technology, the Universidad de Sevilla (ETSA), and the Universidad de Buenos Aires (FADU). Active since 2008 as both an architect and a lecturer at the interface of theory and practice (Vienna UT, Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning). Doctoral candidate of the international PhD programme Urban Metamorphoses at HafenCity University Hamburg, where she specialises in urban transformation processes and housing strategies in Latin America and Europe.
judith.lehner@hcu-hamburg.de

Timothy Pape is an architect and urbanist. He studied Architecture and Urban Design (MA) at the Technical University of Berlin and the Southern California Institute of Architecture Los Angeles, as well as Media and Communication (MSc) at the London School of Economics and Political Science at the Politecnico di Milano. In his PhD thesis (2017) at the Centre for Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths College, University of London, he developed an interdisciplinary approach to articulate dynamic forms of urban neighbourhood practices. Timothy Pape practices as a freelance architect and holds a position as researcher for Urban Planning/Design at HafenCity University Hamburg.
Timothy.pape@hcu-hamburg.de

Friederike Schröder, Dr., studied Geography, Political Sciences and Resource Economy at the Georg-August University Göttingen, the National University of Singapore (NUS), and the University of Hamburg. She did her PhD at the University of Hamburg on informal governance structures in South China's urban development. She currently works at the HafenCity University as programme manager for two study programmes, Urban Design and Metropolitan Culture.
friederike.schroeder@hcu-hamburg.de

Joachim Thiel, urban and regional studies scholar, senior lecturer at HafenCity University Hamburg (HCU). Studied Urban and Regional Planning at Dortmund University. In 2003, he completed his PhD in Urban and Regional Economics at Hamburg University of Technology. Between 2006 and 2010, he served as Strategic Development Officer in the Presidential Office of HCU, since when he has been a senior lecturer in the Urban and Regional Economics working group. Main research topics: creative industries and urban development, geographies of large-scale construction projects and large-scale events, organisational ecologies of smart city strategies.
joachim.thiel@hcu-hamburg.de

Martin Wickel, Prof. Dr, LL.M., studied law firstly in Bremen and later in Frankfurt am Main and passed the first state legal examination in 1992. In 1995, he completed his doctoral thesis on the subject of "grandfathering in environmental law". In the same year, he started his legal internship in Frankfurt, Darmstadt and Berlin, which he completed successfully with his state examination. In 1996, he participated in the British Council European Young Lawyers Scheme and studied at the College of Law in London. In 1998, he received his accreditation as a lawyer and began studying again at the University of Michigan, where he achieved a Master of Laws degree in 1999. Martin Wickel gained his professorship in Law and Administration in the Department of Urban Planning at the TU Hamburg-Harburg in 2001, and has been a Professor at the HCU since 2006. Since 2009, he has been a member of the Nature Conservation Council of the Sovereign Hanseatic City of Hamburg. martin.wickel@hcu-hamburg.de

Kathrin Wildner, Dr. An urban anthropologist, she has completed ethnographic fieldwork in New York City, Mexico City, Istanbul, Bogotá and other urban agglomerations. As an urban researcher, she teaches, publishes and participates in transdisciplinary projects and international exhibitions. She is a founding member of metroZones – Center for Urban Affairs (www.metrozones.info). Between 2013-2015, she was Visiting Professor on the Master Programme 'Spatial Strategies' at the Art Academy Weissensee, Berlin. Since 2012, she has been Professor for Cultural Theory and Practice at HafenCity University, Hamburg. www.kwildner.net kathrin.wildner@hcu-hamburg.de

PARTICIPANTS FROM BUENOS AIRES

Gabriela Campari, PhD in Social Sciences at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA), BA in Planning and Landscape Design UBA. Professor of Geography and researcher in the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Urbanism (FADU), she specialises in the study of the urban public landscape and approaches to problems related to production, uses and management of the same. gcampari@fadu.uba.ar / gecampari@yahoo.com.ar

Mariana Cavalieri, sociologist. Studied sociology at the University of Buenos Aires (2003), and achieved a Master's degree in Local Economic Development in a dual degree programme by the Autonomous University of Madrid and the National University of San Martín (2012). Researcher at the Center for Habitat and Housing Studies at FADU-UBA, coordinator and Professor of the postgraduate programme DEL. Inclusive Cities. Latin America. Good practices at FADU-UBA. Fellowship at the Edmundo Granda Ugalde Leaders in International Health Programme (2017)-PAHO/OMS, Research Fellow at the Ministry of Health; co-author of books and publications. mariana.cavalieri@gmail.com

Mariela Paula Diaz, sociologist. Doctor in Social Sciences at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA) and Postdoctoral Fellow in the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET, Argentina). Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters and the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Urbanism of UBA. Her research specialties lie in the "habitat popular" and the labour market insertion of Bolivia's Aymaras migrants in Bolivia and Argentina. madidip@gmail.com

Daniel Kozak. Architect (University of Buenos Aires), graduated with Diploma of Honour and CPAU Medal (summa cum laude) and PhD in Built Environment (Oxford Brookes University); Director of the Research Centre for Habitat and Energy (CIHE-FADU-UBA). Professor of Urban Theory and Urban Project Studio (FADU-UBA); CONICET Researcher at the Center for Urban and Regional Studies of the National Scientific and Technical Research Council of Argentina; and Affiliate Associate Professor at Washington University in St. Louis. He has been an Alfa-Ibis (EU) Doctoral Fellow, Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellow and Visiting Scholar at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University (GSAPP). He has participated in multidisciplinary teams in environmental assessments, urban plans and projects. daniel.kozak@conicet.gov.ar

María Silvia López Coda, architect (FADU-UBA 1989). Master of Argentine Culture (INAP 1992). She is currently Associate Professor at University of Buenos Aires (FADU-UBA) on History of Architecture, Project Design at Ciclo Básico Común and Contemporary Architecture. Involved in research and teaching since 1990; Lecturer, member of research teams in the Research Department (FADU-UBA): current research projects are on the topic of local pre-modern architecture. She is also Co-Director on the topic of modern architecture and urban planning in Misiones 1955-1965. Organiser and exponent of national and international conferences related to Latin American architecture, design and urban planning in contemporary architecture as well as conservation and repurposing of heritage sites and design. Author of articles related to pedagogical issues and methods for students. Project Manager at HDA (Hugo Debernardi Architects). As member of the metaphorarq artistic collective since 2009, she has been selected for different competitions and built interactive site specific installations in Buenos Aires. http://colectivometaphorarq.blogspot.com.ar masilvialc@gmail.com

Olga Inés Wainstein-Krasuk, architect. Achieved a Master's degree in Local Economic Development from the University of Buenos Aires, and a Master's degree in Local Development from the dual degree programme of Autonomous University of Madrid and National University of San Martín. Executive Director of the Center for Habitat and Housing Studies of the FADU-UBA; General Coordinator of Cooperation Projects; Director of Research Projects; Director and Professor of the postgraduate programme DEL. Inclusive Cities. Latin America. Good practices at FADU-UBA. External consultant at national and international level of public and private organisations. Consultant at IDB, UNDP, OAS, Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other public and private organisations, NGOs, Avina Foundation, others. General Coordinator and Lecturer at national and international forums and congresses. Director of Research Interns and Postdoctoral Stays. Author and co-author of books and publications. She has received more than 50 national and international awards for her professional and research work. olgaineswa@gmail.com

María Cecilia Zapata. She holds a PhD in Social Sciences (FCS), a Master's degree in Public Administration (FCE) and a Bachelor's degree and Professorship in Sociology (FCS) from the University of Buenos Aires (UBA). She is currently Assistant Researcher at CONICET (National Council of Scientific and Technical Research) and in the Urban Studies area at the Gino Germani Research Institute (AEU-UBA). She teaches "Introduction to Knowledge of Society and State" in the common core cycle at UBA, in the Thesis Workshop of the Master's in Habitat and Poverty in Latin America (FADU / FCS-UBA) and in the General Thesis Workshop II of the Doctorate in Social Sciences (FCS-UBA). Since 2016, she has been the Director of Quid 16 Magazine of the AEU. She specialises in the study of housing policies, social production of habitat and processes of urban transformation in the City of Buenos Aires, with emphasis on the analysis of the impact of social participation on the different modalities of access to housing by the popular sectors. ceciliazapata@gmail.com

GUEST CRITICS

Massimo Bricocoli (PhD, IUAV Venice) is Associate Professor of Urban Policies at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies at Politecnico di Milano, where he is member of the PhD Board, Faculty and Vice Dean for International Relations at the School AUIC. He has been teaching at the HafenCity University Hamburg (2016-2018), Université du Luxembourg (2015-2016), Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen (2014) and as Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellow (2009-2010). He is a Member of the International Scientific Board of the IBA Wien – Neues Soziales Wohnen 2016-2022 and of the Study Group on Urban Policies of the Italian Ministry of Infrastructure. His research and teaching focuses on: urban regeneration; housing; neighbourhoods and urban development projects; social change patterns, and the restructuring of local welfare.
massimo.bricocoli@polimi.it

Ana Paula Koury, architect. Adjunct Professor on the graduate programme in Architecture and Urbanism at the University São

Judas Tadeu in São Paulo (since 2008) and on the undergraduate course (since 2003). Studied Architecture and Urban Planning in the School of Engineering of São Carlos (1991). Master in Technology of the Building Environment (1999). PhD in Urban Environmental Structures from the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism University of São Paulo (2005). Fulbright Visiting Professor Chair in Global Cities (CUNY) at the Bernard and Anne Spitzer School of Architecture (Autumn 2016). Postdoctoral research at Brazilian Studies Institute at São Paulo University on the relation between developmentalist policies and urban planning. She was a consultant to the Urban Institute for the preparation of the document produced for the UN conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III). Member of the Special Adviser Group of the International Relations Board of CAPES, the Federal Agency for Improvement of the Superior Education in Brazil. prof.anakoury@usjt.br

EXTERNAL GUESTS, GUIDES, AUTHORS, ADVISORS...
Federico Arce. Coordinator of El Galpón of the NGO Mutual Sentimiento, Av. Federico Lacroze 4171, Chacarita neighbourhood, space of social economy with the sale of products without pesticides and natural meat produced by a networks agroecological family farm. www.elgalpon.org.ar

Enrique Aubeyzón. BA in Political Science (1983) UCA, specialising in International Relations. Master's degree in Business Management Development IAE. Managing Director of the City Park, Ministerio de Modernización, Innovación y Tecnología, GCBA (since 2016). Ex-Director of Institutional and Strategic Development, Hospital Universitario Austral (2010/2013), Municipality of Pilar, Province of Buenos Aires. eaubeyzon@buenosaires.gob.ar

Graciela Brandariz. Architect, with focus on Urbanism and Planning, UB. Specialist in Metropolitan Environmental Management (2008), FADU-UBA / Politécnico de Milán. Master's degree in Metropolitan Environmental Management (GAM), FADU/UBA. Executive

Management of Brandariz-Camus Consultancy & Associates. Recording Secretary and President of the Subcommittee of Urban Planning / Society of Architects (Sociedad de Arquitectos, SCA). Vice President of the 3rd Strategic Plan Buenos Aires. Member of various advisory boards: CAPUA, Consejo Asesor/APrA, GCBA. gbrandar@hotmail.com

Liliana Carbajal. Architect, FADU-UBA. Postgraduate degree in Land management: Urban planning, infrastructure and environment, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya. Mediation and conflict management specialist. Works at the Defensoría del Pueblo CABA: social problems in urban territory (since 2013). Panellist at national and international congresses, author of various articles, co-author of the book "Mediación Comunitaria. Conflictos en el Escenario Social Urbano" (México 2005, Buenos Aires 2006, Genoa 2016). licarbajal@yahoo.com.ar

Carlos Colombo. Architect, FADU-UBA. "Subsecretario de Planeamiento", Ministerio de Desarrollo Urbano y Transporte, GCBA (since 2016). Professor of Urban Design Specialisation FADU-UBA. Independent professional in the private sector (since 1992). Winner of various regional and national architecture and urbanism competitions. He received two awards at the Biennial of Architecture and Urbanism, Sociedad de Architectos - Consejo Profesional de Arquitectura y Urbanismo SCA-CPAU 2008 and 2010. carloscolombo@buenosaires.gob.ar

Javier Gentilini. Political scientist, UBA. Deputy of the Buenos Aires City Legislature (since 2014): ex-President of the Housing Commission 2013/15 and currently 1st Vice-President of the Housing and Culture Commission. Lecturer at the Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, UBA, in Political Science, Sociology and Social Work as well as in the Centro Universitario of the prison of Devoto. He was assistant manager of the Regularization of Property Management of the Instituto de Vivienda de la Ciudad, GCBA (2000/2013). javier_gentilini@yahoo.com.ar

Nestor Jeifetz. Architect, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, UNLP. Main coordinator of the Interdisciplinary Professional Team of the Movement of Occupiers and Tenants (Movimiento de Ocupantes e Inquilinos, MOI). President of the Federación de Cooperativas Autogestionarias MOI. Member of the Coordination of the Latin American Secretariat for Housing and Popular Habitat (Secretaria Latinoamericana de la Vivienda y el Hábitat Popular, SELVIHP). njeifetz@gmail.com

Martín Motta. Architect, Universidad Nacional del Nordeste. Doctorate in architecture, Universidad de Buenos Aires (2017). Coordinator of the Villa 20 Urbanization Project, IVC-GCBA (since 2016). Former fellow of Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas CONICET, Centro de Estudios Urbanos y Regionales (CEUR). Lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, Universidad Nacional del Nordeste FAU-UNNE and at PROPUR FADU-UBA. Executive Secretary of the ULACAV Network. Researcher at FAU-UNNE and POIESIS-FADU-UBA related to urban-regional, habitat and housing issues. National consultant on urbanism, habitat and housing projects. Former expert consultant in the Área de Desarrollos Urbanísticos PROCREAR, Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas Públicas de la Nación (2012/2016). j.martin.motta@gmail.com

Juan Pablo Negro. Architect, urban and regional planner, Faculty of Architecture, Urbanism, Design and Urbanism, Universidad de Buenos Aires FADU-UBA (2003). Project coordinator, Housing Institute of the City (Instituto de Vivienda de la Ciudad, IVC), Government of the City of Buenos Aires GCBA (since 2016). Associate Professor in Urban and Architecture Design, FADU-UBA (2009/2017). Professor and Associate Researcher Centro POIESIS-FAD-UBA (2001/2017). Former coordinator of Urban Projects of the Plan PROCREAR, Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas Públicas de la Nación (2012/2016). juanpablonegroarq@gmail.com

Mariano Orlando. Architect, FADU-UBA. Managing Director of Urban Planning, Subsecretaria de Planeamiento, Ministerio de Desarrollo Urbano y Transporte, GCBA (since 2016). Specialist in urban design, university lecturer, FADU-UBA. Independent professional. Various positions in the Subsecretaría de Planeamiento and the Instituto de Vivienda, GCBA, and the Subsecretaría de Planeamiento Territorial, Tierras y Viviendas, Municipality of San Fernando, Province of Buenos Aires. marianoorlando@buenosaires.gob.ar

Maria Florencia Piñedo Villar. Architect, FADU-UBA. Master's degree in Building and Construction Management, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. Responsible for the Department Unit Special Projects Olympic Village (Unidad de Proyectos Especiales Villa Olímpica), Subsecretaría de Obras, MDUyT, GCBA (since 2014). She worked in the area of management of construction projects and business development in architectural and engineering works. fpinero@buenosaires.gob.ar

Peti and Luis. Representatives and residents of Villa Fraga – Playón Chacarita.
Jeanet. Representative and resident of Villa 20.

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NOTE ON AUTHORS

If not otherwise noted, all texts were written by Ingrid Breckner, Alicia Gerscovich, Judith Lehner and Timothy Pape. The subchapter "Buenos Aires: Urban transformation processes and projects" was written by Alicia Gerscovich, Gabriela Campari, Mariana Cavalieri, Daniel Kozak, Judith Lehner, Silvia López Coda and María Cecilia Zapata.

PICTURE CREDITS

FRONT COVER

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The ¿Urban Voids? project is a multi-disciplinary academic exchange for the development of research methodologies on current dynamics of urban transformation in the agglomerations of Buenos Aires and Hamburg. Using the example of urban voids as a phenomenon of discontinuity in transformation processes helps to collect and exchange cultural and disciplinary perspectives for the development of research questions and methodological approaches in the transdisciplinary and transcultural research contexts of urban and societal transformative research. This report documents the first workshop within the ¿Urban Voids? project, carried out in Buenos Aires in March 2017.

El proyecto ¿Vacíos Urbanos? propone un intercambio académico multidisciplinario focalizado en metodologías de investigación sobre dinámicas urbanas en las aglomeraciones de Hamburgo y Buenos Aires. Los vacíos urbanos, entendidos como rupturas discontinuas en los procesos de transformación urbana, ayudan a comprender e intercambiar nuevos interrogantes y abordajes de investigación en el contexto transdisciplinar y transcultural del proyecto, des- de diferentes perspectivas disciplinarias de investigaciones sobre transformaciones urbanas y sociales. En el marco del proyecto ¿Vacíos Urbanos?, el presente informe documenta el primer taller realizado en Buenos Aires en marzo del 2017.

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