



Urbanización periférica en Buenos Aires, Estambul, y Barcelona:

Una mirada 'desde el Sur' a las urbanizaciones españolas

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RESUMEN

Este artículo yuxtapone los procesos de urbanización que tuvieron lugar en el Gran Buenos Aires, el Estambul metropolitano, y la región metropolitana de Barcelona bajo sus respectivos regímenes desarrollistas a través del concepto de 'urbanización periférica' de Teresa Caldeira (2017). Este análisis comparativo destaca el papel de la autoconstrucción y la autourbanización como elementos fundamentales para sostener proyectos desarrollistas en todo el mundo al dar acceso a la vivienda a amplios sectores de la población y proporcionando, a su vez, una muy necesaria reserva de mano de obra industrial y un mercado de consumidores propietarios de suelo. Esta comparación señala también el papel clave del Estado (con demasiada frecuencia descartado como ausente) y las formas en que diferentes grupos sociales participan de la urbanización periférica (desde las clases pobres urbanas hasta las élites, pasando por las clases medias). Al centrarse en la urbanización periférica como proceso en lugar de como forma construida, esta comparación añade complejidad a los análisis que han tratado de explicar las prácticas periféricas en Barcelona exclusivamente a través de formas y modelos del Atlántico Norte, recurriendo en su lugar a países del Sur Global que han experimentado dinámicas similares.

Palabras clave: urbanización periférica, economía política, regímenes desarrollistas

Peripheral Urbanization in Buenos Aires, Istanbul, and Barcelona:

A 'southern' look at the Spanish urbanizacions

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I juxtapose the processes of urbanization that took place in Gran Buenos Aires, metropolitan Istanbul, and Barcelona's metropolitan region under their respective developmentalist regimes through Teresa Caldeira's (2017) conceptual lens of 'peripheral urbanization.' This comparative analysis flags the role of autoconstruction and autourbanization as central to sustaining developmentalist agendas across the globe by granting access to housing to large sectors of the population, providing in turn a much-needed pool of industrial laborers and a market of land-owning consumers. It also elucidates the key role of the State (too often dismissed as absent) and the ways in which different social groups engage in peripheral urbanization (from the urban poor to the middle classes, to the elites). By focusing on peripheral urbanization as a process rather than built form, this comparison also complicates analyses of Barcelona's peripheral practices that mirror solely on north-Atlantic forms and models, turning instead to countries in the Global South that have undergone similar dynamics.

Keywords: peripheral urbanization, political economy, developmentalist regimes

1. Introduction: 'Peripheral urbanization'

From Argentina to Turkey, to Spain, autoconstruction and autourbanization have long been key processes in providing housing for large sectors of the population, in shaping citizenship struggles, and, during the mid-20th century, in creating a market of consumers necessary to sustain developmentalist projects across the globe. In this paper, I will use Teresa Caldeira's notion of *peripheral urbanization* to address such processes of urbanization and juxtapose their different unfolding in the Gran Buenos Aires, Istanbul's Metropolitan Municipality, and the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona during the 20th century.

The notion of *peripheral urbanization* refers to a mode of production of space that is not necessarily limited to a specific geographical location or social group, but rather defined by the role that residents themselves play as agents of construction and urbanization, and the transversal logics through which they engage with the state and the law. Thus, peripheral urbanization appears clearly defined by Caldeira (2017) for (a) its specific temporality and the agency of its residents—as a sort of incremental architecture and urbanism; (b) its transversal engagement with official logics—not necessarily contesting them but operating with them in transversal ways that cannot be easily reduced to informal-formal, illegal-legal binaries; (c) encouraging new modes of politics and forms of insurgent citizenship; and (d) creating highly unequal and heterogeneous cities.

This approach appears to be highly productive for a number of reasons: First, it shifts the focus from form to process, unlinking this mode of urbanization from specific geographic locations and social groups (e.g. as a practice belonging exclusively to the urban poor) while complicating comparisons based solely on urban morphology (as those that have characterized the spread of Spain's *urbanizacions* during the 1970s, '80s, and '90s by analogy to other 'suburbanisms' in the Global North; e.g. Barba & Mercadé, 2006; Font, 1997, 2004; Muñoz, 2005; Solà-Morales, 1997). Second, it overcomes ill-defined, taken-for-granted concepts such as *informality* (that are devoid of specific content) and problematizes the highly narrowing dichotomy be-

tween *legality* and *illegality* (which overlooks the fact that these categories are socially constructed, reconstructed, and enacted by specific actors in specific contexts). Finally, by means of its transversal logics, this approach helps complexify the figure of the State as an idiosyncratic, populated entity (too often depicted as a homogeneous historical subject in studies of political economy).

It is thus using the notion of peripheral urbanization as a shared lens that I will compare, by juxtaposition, the cases of Buenos Aires, Istanbul, and Barcelona. The goal of this comparison is to elucidate difference rather than similarity, for peripheral urbanization not only generates heterogeneous cities but it is itself a heterogeneous process. The key role of the State (too often dismissed as 'absent'), the political and social context in which different policies are enacted, the specific genealogies of each landscape (i.e. their previous waves of urbanization and embedded socio-cultural practices), and the different engagement of each regime with Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) are some of the key questions that emerge as points of comparison and of difference, helping explain the different unfolding of peripheral urbanization in each case.

However, this comparison is in itself political, for the Spanish case is rarely seen as sharing any characteristics with countries in the Global South. Thus, peripheral urbanization as a shared interrogatory lens will also help challenge southern European "urbanisms" that, in their search for "First World models" (Roy, 2005), have put forth rather evolutionist views that fail to recognize the processes of urbanization of their own territories as a mode of production of space that appears to be dominant across the globe.

In the following sections, I will discuss each case separately and following the structure that seems more adequate for its own specific circumstances while touching upon the same questions outlined above, highlighted again at the end of each section.

2. El Gran Buenos Aires: Country clubs, loteos populares, and Villas Miseria

2.1. A new metropolitan horizon

In 1887, the national government of Argentina approved an extension plan that was to propel and regulate development for decades with an abstract grid while bounding its limitless expansion into the *pampa* with a system of regional parks. As the urbanist Adrián Gorelik (1998) discusses, the two urban figures of the grid and the park came thus to be not only key governmental tools to devise the future form of the federal capital, but also the embodiment of a new conception of metropolis and of public space—and with it, a new urban culture. Against the infinite grid, against its outrageous equalizing

geometry and its economically inefficient square blocks (that prevented the elites from devising profitable recombination of plots), the parks became an escape for the upper classes, the center of a new suburban form of life, and a symbol of their "technical, moral, and political repudiation of the grid" (Gorelik, 1998, p.38).

Barely two decades later, in 1904 and accompanied by the electrification of the tramway, the processes of private suburban expansion were unstoppable and, as Gorelik notices, unlike any other in Latin America: The incipient metropolitan capital was growing according to the vision and the guidelines set by the national government in the late 1880s. In other words, the state that had been able to foresee and plan, through the grid, the beltway, the tramways, and the regional parks system, an urban growth that would take decades to complete and inscribe in the periphery of Buenos Aires a new system of public spaces that would set the basis for its emergent metropolitan structure.

However, as more land was being plotted and sold, the once aristocratic periphery became an option for the petty bourgeoisie too, who saw in the new suburban setting an opportunity to build vacation homes closer to both sports facilities and an increasingly cherished landscape (Gómez, 2015b). As practices of *veraneo*, tourism, and sports became consolidated around the suburban model and its country clubs, the areas of greatest accessibility around the tram stations (and, later, the railroad stations) became saturated and started to spill over into the pampa. Land was being plotted and sold by private owners and developers even before the arrival of the train or based solely on the promise of a new road. Against the highly planned development that characterized the first expansion of Buenos Aires during the 1880-1910 period, the urbanization that followed between 1910-50 was increasingly "spontaneous in character in that it wasn't the result of conventional planning tools," giving birth to a new and much more "diffuse" metropolis (Gómez, 2015b, p.163) known as the second corona of the Gran Buenos Aires.

With an increasingly accessible plain thanks to the new road system and the later nationalization of the bus system (that lowered the cost of transportation), the second home model of the petty bourgeoisie became increasingly accessible to the middle classes during the 1940s and '50s. As Gómez puts it, "the new middle classes would start buying a *terrenito barato*, thinking about building themselves, little by little, a weekend home" (Gómez, 2015b, p.163). Autoconstruction, autourbanization, and temporality—or incrementality—became thus generalized characteristics of a mode of metropolitan urbanization increasingly accessible to the middle-classes that, now, could acquire and develop land far away from the expensive city center. It was a new way of living and experiencing the metropolis fueled, in turn, by a growing automobile industry: "There are many beautiful places nearby the

city that you and your family don't know of"—read a Ford advertisement of 1925—"Buy a Ford and learn about all the neighborhoods of the city and their picturesque landscapes. Be your own guide. Take the street or road that looks appealing to you" (Ford, 1925). [Figure 1]

2.2. Villas miseria, loteos populares, and ISI

With a blooming economy and booming urbanization, since the 1930s Buenos Aires was receiving large waves of European immigrants that would land in the overcrowded tenement houses of the city center, or else settle on unused land close to the port and the urban industrial areas (Cravino, 1998). Thus emerged the first *Villas Miseria*, settlements built through peripheral urbanization on (mostly) public land that served as a temporary home and a platform for upwards social mobility. [Figure 2] According to the urbanist Horacio Torres (2001), after a few years most immigrants would have acquired enough money to leave the *villa*—and, of course, the alternative was already there, in the hundreds of thousands of fellow citizens that were leaving the center to self-construct a second home on a *terrenito barato*.

The second corona was thus an opportunity for the new immigrants to acquire legal land tenure and to build a home wherever land was cheap (thanks, in turn, to a highly permissive land-use legislation). This process inscribed a new, first-home use to an already known mode of auto-constructing the peripheries of Buenos Aires through vacation homes, giving birth to the *loteos populares*. This particularity distinguishes the Argentinian case from its Latin-American neighbors in that, as Clichevsky et al. (1990, p.122) notice, "[t]he land use legislation in the province of Buenos Aires in force at the time allowed for the production of lots with minimal infrastructure, which led to a sub-market for low-income households that differed sharply from those in most other Latin-American countries: Land that was legally produced and commercialized and that was also affordable for the popular sectors."

From the 1950s onwards, this double-sided process of urban *Villas Miseria* and peripheral *loteos populares* acquired an entirely new dimension. The neutrality of Argentina during WWII helped capture the country's immense ground rent contained in primary material exports, exploiting the new international market that wartime destruction had generated and fueling, in turn, the developmentalist policies of the Argentinian state. Immediately after WWII, in 1946 the recently in(ex)carcerated and extremely popular Juan Domingo Perón won Argentina's general election, promoting the nationalization of strategic industries and services and raising significantly the minimum wage. But the enactment of ISI policies during the 1940s and '50s didn't just led to the emergence of a number of industrial developments in and around Buenos Aires. It also led to a collapse of the country's rural economies that sparked a new and massive wave of over 200.000 rural-urban

migrants per year that would follow the exact same strategy as the European immigrants that had been arriving since the '30s (van Gelder et al., 2016).

In this context, the nationalization of the railway system and the spread of *colectivos* were key to ensure that the new urban residents would be able to commute from their homes in the *loteos populares* to the new industrial developments. The size of the migratory phenomenon surpassed greatly the state's capacity to provide housing, but the lack of infrastructural requirements to legally acquire and develop a plot of land in the peripheries was providing a way out for the urban poor, sustaining both a market of consumers and a pool of workers that the new developmentalist agenda required. To be sure, this didn't occur through a process of land titling analogous to that of other developmentalist states, for the inhabitants of the *loteos populares* were always able to acquire land titles and develop their plots of land just as their upper-class neighbors of the country clubs had done before them (thus keeping the official percentage of "informal" dwellers to 5% of the city's population, whereas in Lima and Caracas it stood at 20%, in Rio de Janeiro at 30%, and in Mexico City at 40%; Gilbert, 1996).

Meanwhile, the situation in the *Villas Miseria* was one of exponential crowding. As public land around the ports and the industrial developments was becoming scarcer, the new settlers were building up. [Figure 3] Newcomers were thus relying on social networks and relations of kinship to find a place, construct a home with recycled materials, upgrade it and, hopefully, leave for a *loteo popular* (Cravino, 2006; van Gelder et al., 2016). With yet another wave of immigration coming from Paraguay, Bolivia, and Peru, and a progressive deterioration of Argentina's economy, the temporary character that the *Villas Miseria* acquired during the 1930s, '40s, and early '50s, was, in the '60s, turning into a quite permanent reality. The flow of people arriving in the villas was unmatched by the flow of people leaving, and the need to provide for this new, long-term everyday life gave rise to new organizations that would evolve into the *movimiento villero*. Thus, originally structured around soccer clubs founded by their residents, new organizations were emerging in every *villa* to deal with daily disputes and establish a certain degree of social ordering. Soccer clubs were particularly important on that front in that they required the building of clubhouses, the construction and maintenance of football pitches, and, most importantly, the organization of tournaments—that is, the organization of inter-*villa* events that helped develop something akin to a *villa* identity. An identity that, by the early '70s, had crystallized in second degree organizations of villa delegates capable of voicing, in a coordinated manner, the *villa's* concerns to the government under a new language of rights (Ziccardi, 1983, as discussed in van Gelder et al., 2016).

2.3. From dictatorship to neoliberalism

In 1976, the urban dynamics that had been gaining momentum since the '30s and all ISI policies came to an abrupt end. After two convoluted decades in which developmentalism had prevailed, the military coup d'état of 1976 not only ended Peronism, but it also explicitly took, as its mission, to eradicate all "informal settlements" in the Federal District. Thus, the residents of the *villas* dropped from 200,000 in 1976 to 10,000 in 1980, and 17 out of the 31 *villas* of the Gran Buenos Aires were wiped out in their entirety (14 of which were recuperated after democracy was restored in 1983; van Gelder et al. 2016).

But the effects of the dictatorial regime went far beyond the violent destructions of *villas*. Despite its brevity, the self-labeled "National Reorganization Process" government managed to shape the way in which urbanization, and, more specifically, peripheral urbanization would take place in the decades to follow. Only one year after the coup, the new military government passed the Provincial Land Use Law prescribing new standards for urban development and forbidding the plotting and developing of land without infrastructure (Clichevsky, 2001). Paired with the destruction of *villas*, a liberalization of rent control with the intention of stimulating a real-estate market, and a drastic fall in real wages, the dictatorial state had completely reshaped the way in which the urban poor could access housing in Buenos Aires: The new regime had not only expelled the urban poor from the city center but, by means of the Provincial Land Use Law, it had made illegal the very process that had allowed millions to get land titles and a house, and by which the entire second corona of the Gran Buenos Aires had developed for almost a century.

This new reality gave birth, in turn, to a new form of development built through peripheral urbanization that responded to neither the *Villas Miseria* nor the *loteos populares*: The *asentamientos*. Expelled from the *villas*, the city, and prevented from forming *loteos populares*, large groups of residents self-organized and invaded tracts of land overnight. Unlike the *villas*, these invasions were meticulously planned (in hope for legal recognition and permanence) and, unlike the *loteos populares*, they needed to be instantaneous. Thus, groups of between some tens and a few hundreds of families—including but no longer limited to new immigrants—would organize in collaboration with grassroots organizations, lawyers, church groups, and other social protest movements to identify, plot, and invade a tract of land overnight (van Gelder et al., 2016). It was a new form of urbanization that operated in a new temporality strictly devised to respond to an increasingly hostile state. Thus, the appearance of order, the looks of the constructions, the critical mass of residents, and the level of social organization were key to enhance the possibilities of success of the *asentamiento*—if we look 'planned' and there's

many of us, they can't kick us out, right?

Argentina's defeat in the Malvinas War in 1982 accelerated the end of military rule and a year later democracy was reinstalled. With an estimated 173,000 people living in *asentamientos*, under the new democratic government "repression against illegal land occupation was somewhat relieved while legislation unfavorable to the housing options of the low-income sectors remained in force" (van Gelder et al., 2016, p. 1966). Which is to say, nothing really changed. As van Gelder et al. (2016) explain, real wages continued to plummet and by 1989 the state was announcing "a surgery without anesthesia," meaning the privatization of public services, the sale of state companies, and a flexibilization of labor. A new fixed exchange rate with the US dollar made imports cheap, but it also certified the death of the Argentinian industry, leaving hundreds of thousands of workers unemployed. And the new policy of 'land regularization' for (existing) illegal land tenure—very much in line with the '90s neoclassical economic doctrine—was and has been used ever since to keep the residents of the reoccupied *villas* and the *asentamientos* on a situation of permanent liminality. On a permanent hold for titles over a land that has now become a highly profitable investment.

It is not possible to address here, in depth, the transformations that took place since the late '90s and early 2000s in the Gran Buenos Aires, but it is worth outlining two highly perverse twists that neoliberalism brought about: First, the 're-mastering' of the old, second-home country club model for the upper classes in the form of first-home *urbanizaciones cerradas*, *condominiums*, and *megaemprendimientos*—that is, wealthy private towns. In other words, the occupation of the outer edge of the second corona and the creation of a third corona through private, fenced developments (whose residents, of course, manage to get land titles and building permits, even if ex post facto) sitting next to *asentamientos* (whose resident are now not only deprived of land titles, but also see large portions of their public space, of the pampa, being privatized). Second, the transformation of the *Villas Miseria* into a rental and purchase market, where former relations of kinship that once granted asylum to the newcomers (and, eventually, the possibility of autoconstructing a home) have been subsumed and reoriented towards helping them find rental homes (and, if lucky, purchase a *chabola*). It is thus a new marketized logic that operates without land titles, and which has given rise to a new class relation between old and new immigrants in the *villas* in which the urban poor(er) are increasingly stripped of any means for improvement.

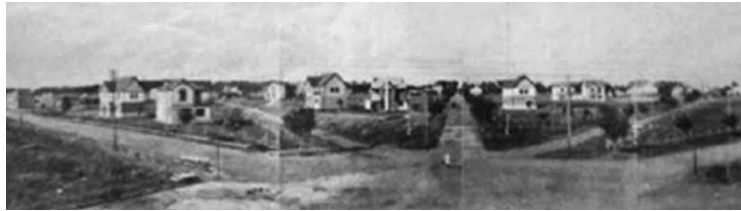


Figure 1. City Bell, south of Buenos Aires, showing the spread of new second homes across the 'infinite' pampa, circa 1930 (Gómez, 2015a). Figures 2, 3. Villa 31 in the 1930s; same Villa today after building up a rental market (Salvarredy, 2017).

Thus, in the case of Buenos Aires we find a very long legacy of autoconstruction and autourbanization engaged by different social classes, from the middle-upper classes of the early 20th century to the urban poor—and the obscenely rich—since the crisis of Fordism. Peripheral urbanization emerged thus as a two-sided process in Buenos Aires, connecting the urban *Villas Miseria* with the peripheral *loteos populares*, key in turn to grant access to land (and land titling) to a large part of its population while sustaining the developmentalist agenda of the Peronian state. The question of legality or illegality as something constructed appears here with utmost clarity when the military dictatorial government actively redrew the law to leave out, as illegal, the very processes that had given birth to the Gran Buenos Aires and had helped sustain its economy for decades. The need to engage transversally with the state and the law—always the case in the *villas*—emerged thus in the coronas only when faced with a hostile state that felt threatened by the level of social organization of the *villas* and the illegibility of the *loteos populares*. This hostility forced residents to creatively rethink both the temporality of their urbanization and the very architectonic language of their homes, now bound not only to their own symbolism and class communication but also forced to fall in line with the gaze of the militarized state. With neoliberalization and the spread (this time, permanent) of the elites, the contradictions and inequalities of the Gran Buenos Aires have not only become exacerbated, but also more flagrantly apparent: Illegalized houses “like brick cubes [in] unpaved dusty streets in summer, muddy in winter” (Thuillier, 2005, p.11) are sitting next to fenced development with private security and over-manicured

gardens, and the newcomers to the city's *villas* are seeing their below-minimum wages taken away to pay rent to a fellow worker.

3. Metropolitan Istanbul: Commons, *gecekondu*, and a new land market

3.1. The Ottoman commons and the *gecekondu*

The 20th century marked, for Turkey, the end of 623 years of monarchical Ottoman rule leading, in 1923, to the international recognition of the newly formed Republic of Turkey. Some 25 years later, after WWII the Democratic Party led by Mahmut Celâl Bayar enacted a series of developmentalist policies aimed at propelling a country that hadn't quite benefitted from its neutrality during the war as much as Latin America did. The statist approach undertaken by the Turkish State since the '20s to recover from the destruction of WWI was thus reoriented, during the '50s, toward a strict ISI strategy that not only limited imports, but also foreign direct investment and private participation in key industrial sectors (including mining, metallurgy, and energy). With such state control translating into national industrial growth in and around its main cities, the large urban centers of Turkey saw an exponential flow of rural-urban migrants that, in the case of Istanbul, contributed heavily to its overall growth, from 1 million in 1950 to 5 million in 1980, to 10 million in the 2000s (Keyder, 2005).

However, this rural-urban migration fueled by ISI policies (common in many developmentalist countries) and the overall growth of Istanbul's urban population were singular in two key aspects: First, despite the government's stimulation of national industry, this did not lead to an immediate process of agricultural decay as much as it did in Argentina or, as we will see, in Spain. With a strong program of agricultural support, peasant farms continued to be the main form of land tenure in Turkey, “slowing down the pace of urbanization” and securing strong linkages between the new urban peripheries and the countryside (Buğra, 2017, p.7). Thus, if in 1945 urban residents accounted for a 25% of Turkey's overall population, in 1980 they had only reached 44%, with 45% of employment still in agriculture.

Second, the 623 years of Ottoman rule left Turkey with a strong heritage reflected also in the law. Thus, despite the reforms that took place during the late 19th and early 20th century, under the Ottoman Land Code most of the land still belonged to the Empire through the no-longer functioning pious foundations. In the countryside, this land had been reclaimed by peasant communities for either private or collective farms. But not-so-profitable land in the urban fringes had remained in the hands of obsolete Ottoman imperial organs, resulting in the 20th century in a large pool of land owned by the new democratic state but largely unguarded and unused.

These two peculiarities of the Turkish developmentalist case heavily shaped the manner in which the new urban residents settled in the outskirts of Istanbul through peripheral urbanization (in what is commonly known in Turkey as *gecekondu*). [Figure 4] Non-commodified public land was thus key in ensuring that the new city residents of Istanbul would be able to *autoconstruct* a home just as the new migrants to Buenos Aires had done through the *Villas Miseria* (albeit, here, the amount of public land available for grasps was vastly different). At the same time, the processes of land appropriation and autoconstruction developed as collective affairs, depending on prior social networks and structures of kinship that would quickly evolve into new monetary relations between residents as well as new political alliances. As Caglar Keyder (2005, p.126) discusses, “most migration was chain migration, and initial networks depended on a shared reference to a common universe—usually a place of origin.” The ‘common universe’ Keyder refers to must be understood, precisely, in light of the continued strength of Turkey’s rural economies and communities that were not only acting as an entry point into the peripheral social network, but also helping it flourish by exchanging remittances for basic products—a sort of symbiosis between urban peripheries and rural farms (Buğra, 2017).

As *gecekondu* settlements expanded across the peripheries of Istanbul (virtually solving the housing issue and providing a pool of cheap labor for industrial works) the notion of “a right to *gecekondu*” expanded with it, leading to growing collective struggles and increasingly coordinated demands. With the support of revolutionary groups, new residents were establishing neighborhood committees to distribute land among themselves. And with the support of “leftist college students in architecture and urban planning” they were designing their new urban settings and public spaces in a planned, ‘modernist-looking’ manner that would facilitate their legalization. As Utku Balaban exemplifies in “The Enclosure of Urban Space,” Istanbul’s municipality was using the very vocabulary of ‘order and aesthetics’ to determine whether a *gecekondu* had potential for consolidation—arguing, in the case of the “Rumelihisarüsü squatter area,” that it had been developed in “an educated, skillful, organized and planned way in spite of the lack of official help and permission” (Balaban, 2011, p.2166).

With a state that was perceived as generally protective and encouraging, ISI policies in place that required a pool of cheap labor, and increasingly organized communities that had learnt how to use bribery and community connections to engage with the lower strata of the state, electoral politics became a way to obtain grant titles; and the public performance of title distribution a way to gain political momentum. But these processes of, in Keyder’s words, ‘state-enabled incorporation’ that were peeking during the ‘70s—a decade that accounted for almost half of the overall construction of *gecekondu* in Istanbul during the 20th century—came to an end, together with the deve-

lopmentalist agenda, with the military coup d’état of 1980.

3.2. An extreme case of market take-over

It is not possible to address here, in all its complexity, the *raison d’être* of the Turkish military regime of 1980 led by General Kenan Evren, or its slightly Islamized version of Turkish conservatism led by Turgut Özal. However, for the purposes of this paper it is relevant to flag its immediate economic and policy effects: In a context of economic crisis and soaring inflation that the oil crisis of 1974 had brought about, the militarized state enforced a shift from an import substitution economy to an export-led one, hoping to inscribe the country in the global market. Thus, tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade were immediately eliminated, and foreign-direct investment liberalized and encouraged. Toward the end of the ‘80s, “capital controls, too were eliminated with full financial liberalization, and the most fertile plots of land were sacrificed to tourism and real estate development, which had become leading sectors for economic expansion” (Buğra, 2017, p.9).

While the liberalization of the Turkish economy helped with their balance of payments problem (heritage of the oil crisis), it had devastating effects on the *gecekondu* and what had been, in Balaban’s words, a state-enabled “massive self-help project” (Balaban, 2011, p.2163). As new gated communities, office tours, hotels, and branding billboards spread across the city, industrial delocalization brought a loss of manufacturing and seasonal construction jobs, further aggravated by a sharp decrease in public employment (one of the safest and most stable bets for new residents up until the ‘80s). With a growing real-estate and touristic sector, and highly reduced employment opportunities for the urban poor, the land occupied by the *gecekondu* was becoming an increasingly valuable asset that would soon create new alliances and strange bedpartners to capture its rent gap.

As Keyder (2005, p.130) explains, “former populist politicians now respond to these market-mediated demands (...) for instance, the mayor of a squatter municipality has zoned a segment of public land under his jurisdiction as a ‘business district’ to be allocated to multinational companies. Others have designated large areas for eventual requests by private universities for campus land.” But the *gecekondu* residents didn’t remain passive to the new economic landscape either (which, to be sure, was gestating much before the military regime certified its legitimacy). As land was becoming scarcer and job opportunities rarer, the older and most well-established residents of the *gecekondu* decided to build up. [Figure 5] With a strong network in the community and amongst local politicians (and, in some cases, with land titles from previous ‘amnesties’) adding stories to their houses and having their neighborhoods designated for ‘upgrading’ was not only feasible, but also an excellent opportunity to extract rent. It offered an opportunity to improve

their life conditions and those of their families by playing a part in the new market that the liberalization policies of the '80s solidified.

However, the new structure of the multi-story *gecekondu* (with the owner on the ground floor and multiple stories for rent above) had dramatic effects for the new migrants. Forced into a rental market and deprived from the employment opportunities their older counterparts enjoyed, the newcomers had very little margin to improve. Just like with the villas in Buenos Aires but in a much more polarized way, the new rental market effectively created a class division between old and new migrants in the *gecekondu*s, between those who owned or had some claims over the land (and were capable to extract rent from it), and those who were seeing their below-minimum wages taken from them to pay rent. In other words, the non-commodified land that characterized the construction of Metropolitan Istanbul through peripheral urbanization turned into a fully marketized landscape of owners and rentiers. And the set of connections, social organizations, and hard-fought rights that had 'come with the land' was suddenly beyond the reach of the new *gecekondu* residents, with little option but to become Istanbul's new 'proletariat.'

The story, from here, is one of social division. What once was an alliance between *gecekondu* residents to push, through personal connections, bribery, and electoral politics the somewhat sympathetic developmentalist state, became an opposition between the new land-owning (or almost owning) classes and the new migrants. In this context, the old migrants no longer sought alliances with the newcomers or the progressivist parties that once helped them fight for land titles and rights. Rather, they sought the support of religious and conservative groups to promote neighborhood upgrading and further privatization, securing their investment in the new market-oriented landscape of the city of Istanbul (Keyder, 2005).

But in the new neoliberal chessboard of Istanbul, the state also became a player. As discussed by Tuna Kuyucu (2014), after the economic crisis of 2001, the State developed tools and partnerships to benefit from the processes of urban upgrading. Through the MHA—a former credit dispensing mechanism devised in 1984 to facilitate access to housing to the urban poor and fight the spread of *gecekondu*s, later turned into a middle-class home-ownership devise—the state itself became an all-powerful land broker and developer. One with “the authority to sell state land to private developers, use this land to develop for-profit housing through private partnerships, construct subsidized housing units for low-income groups, and change the zoning status of state-owned plots” (Kuyucu, 2014, p.616). Thus, the state has been able to designate 'transformation zones' and decide who, amongst those who had some form of legal claim on the land, gets to benefit from the new subsidized units. Playing to the already existing social division between old and new migrants within the *gecekondu*s, the neoliberal state bypasses

social opposition through a game of divide and conquer. One in which dubious aesthetic criteria and very malleable rules allow it to decide who stays, who goes, who gets relocated—and, of course, who gets evicted without any claims for compensation.



Figures 4, 5. A typical *gecekondu* and a clear example of residents 'going up,' literally building on top of the original *gecekondu* to create a new rental market (Balaban, 2011).

The case of Istanbul is certainly a perverse one, reason why Keyder (2005) labelled it a case of 'fetishization of land as a commodity' and Balaban (2011), taking it a step further, of 'urban enclosure.' What first characterized Istanbul's expansion through peripheral urbanization during the mid-20th century was the availability of public land (heritage of the Ottoman Empire) and very strong rural-urban socioeconomic linkages (key in providing both an entry into the social network of the peripheries and immediate means for subsistence). In this context, the developmentalist state enabled a 'massive self-help' project sustained by autoconstructed housing and industrial employment that secured both a market of consumers and a pool of laborers for industrial works. With growing levels of social organization, a strategic use of planning tools and aesthetic choices, and deep expertise in navigating political channels, the residents of the autoconstructed *gecekondu*s were able to obtain, after each election, either land titles or some form of legal recognition over their land. However, after the '80s' coup and the later neoliberal turn of the Turkish state, these dynamics changed dramatically for (and by) all actors involved: The older settlers saw, in the *gecekondu*s, an opportunity to build up and create a rental market that, in turn, would help their families improve in the new (neo)liberal context. Local conservative politicians, religious groups, and other organizations of civil society saw, in these new landed classes, an ally to push for neighborhood improvement plans to attract capital and extract rent from an increasingly valuable (and increasingly privatized) land. And even the state saw, in this scheme, a profitable opportunity, becoming itself a land broker and a for-profit developer with little-to-no opposition from an increasingly divided working class. In this context, the newcomers to the

*gecekondu*s are, unlike their ‘older peers,’ being deprived from both housing and employment opportunities, and from a strong class-based sociopolitical network to claim their rights. It is under this light that Balaban’s allegorical reference to the enclosure of the British commons acquires its full sense, resonating with Marx’s virtual discussion with Wakefield in “The Modern Theory of Colonisation” (Marx, 1859): It is not only that the land of the *gecekondu*s that is being privatized was ‘common,’ but via its privatization the new migrants are being deprived of their means of production, thus consolidating as a pool of permanent laborers that benefits both the new landed classes and the remaining, export-oriented industrial bourgeoisie.

4. Barcelona and its metropolitan region: chalets, urbanizacions, and the Spanish Transition

4.1. From ISI to FDI

The Civil War initiated by General Franco’s military coup d’état of 1936 ended, in 1939, in a nationalist victory. After 1939, Spain was a devastated, impoverished, and still largely agricultural country. The Francoist state responded to this situation with a strict policy of ISI that not only regulated imports but also prevented the arrival of foreign direct investment (FDI), aiming for an autarkical economy (i.e. complete self-sufficiency). However, in a largely agricultural country such as Spain and after the tremendous losses that the Civil War had occasioned, economic isolation was simply a bad idea. In the years that followed the Civil War, output in agriculture plummeted while inflation persisted despite the government’s attempts to regulate prices, leading in turn to an extensive black market, a sharp rise of unemployment rates, and a steady decline of the average standard of living. By 1950, half of the population of Spain’s relatively backwards agricultural sector was unemployed and seasonal job loss was affecting a third of its overall workforce (Charnock et al., 2014). Since the turn of the 20th century, Spain’s most industrialized cities had already seen the emergence of autoconstructed houses popularly known as *barraques* in Catalonia and *chabolas* in the rest of Spain—better conceptualized as *corees* by Joan Busquets (1999). With the Francoist regime’s bet for autarky, the number of *barraques* in Barcelona went from 6,000 units in 1929 to over 20,000 in the two decades that followed the Civil War (Oyón, 2008; Tåtjer & Larrea, 2010).

By the mid-late 1950s, after two decades of maintaining an ISI system that Spain’s ground rent contained in primary material exports could not sustain (unlike its Latin-American neighbors), the authoritarian state was faced with a social landscape of increasingly mobilized labor unions and families who barely survived thanks to the remittances of those who had fled the country (Charnock et al., 2014). The state responded to this situation by allowing the arrival of FDI in key industrial sectors and through major projects of infras-

structural and industrial restructuring to absorb surplus labor and maintain social control—an enterprise known as the Stabilization Plan (1959).

However, the Stabilization Plan not only aimed at fostering industrialization (now, under foreign capital). With the creation of the EU on the horizon, the realization that the fascisticized form of the state could not last, and in a moment of global industrial restructuring—i.e. the crisis of Fordism—industrial works also helped prepare the terrain for the country’s later transition to a European liberal democracy (1975–82). Under the auspices of an authoritarian regime, during the 1960s different members of the state apparatus leveraged their ability to grab land, the country’s lack of environmental regulations, and a highly repressed workforce to ensure both the creation of national companies and the landing of international ones (Fité Matamoros, 2018). As a result, the regime’s emergent industrial clusters operated almost as Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in that they offered foreign companies both cheap land and the possibility of relocating labor-intensive and low-skilled moments of their production processes in a low-waged and weakly unionized labor market, recycling in turn obsolete machinery and patents that were no longer competitive in the Euro-American scene (Charnock et al., 2014; Fité Matamoros, 2018). Thus, as the state selectively opened sectors of the national economy to allow for foreign capital and companies to settle, national companies were being privatized and fused with transnational ones, effectively updating the regime’s mechanisms of social control and capital accumulation to a new, transnational corporative logic.

After Spain’s failed attempt at joining the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1962, the new rhetoric of ‘meeting European standards’ meant that not only the political system needed to look democratic and the economy ‘trustworthy,’ but also that cities needed to look modern (and modernist; Domenech, 2018). Thus, while Francoist broadcasts were increasingly fetishizing the pipes, flags, and astronaut-looking suits used in its emergent industrial landscapes (e.g. El No-Do, 1967), new state parades were becoming an excuse for urban renovation. In the case of Barcelona, the dictator’s celebratory visits entailed the wiping out of its over-100,000 *barraquistes* and their replacement with insufficient public housing, private developments, and even fake facades (Zamarreño Aramendia, 2015), fostering in turn the emergence of increasingly more dislocated *corees* neighborhoods across the metropolitan area (Busquets, 1999). What was paramount in this context was to project an image of modern planning, social control, and economic growth—an image of what the regime thought Europe wanted to see, even if it had to be made out of cardboard.

In the meantime, FDI was being channeled to fuel the regime’s industrializing quest and justify the building of new energy and mobility infrastructures endorsed by the World Bank. However, the resulting industrial growth

did not only cluster around Spain's larger cities, spreading across the landscape instead. Here, the form of previous urbanization patterns is key to understand this peculiarity of Spain's urbanization (and Catalonia's in particular) that has shaped its landscapes until today: Urban agglomerations are small when compared to American or Asian cities, resulting in a splintering of towns and cities across the territory that operate at relatively short distances. And distance matters, for it makes an industrial development located 'far away' from Barcelona closer to the city's residents than one located in the fringes of the second corona of Buenos Aires or the periphery of Istanbul. In this context, the new industrial proto-SEZs crystallized across the landscape, amidst a constellation of towns and villages, ports, train railways, highways, agricultural lands, and traditional bourgeoisie weekend homes. And they contributed to producing a landscape that, following Francesco Indovina (1991), several Catalan scholars have characterized as a diffuse or polynuclear (e.g. Font, 1997; Nel-lo, 2001). It is this historical and geographical peculiarity that marked the way in which a large sector of the population would build a house from the 1960s onwards through a process that also seems to echo the logics of peripheral urbanization.

4.2. From bourgeoisie second homes to the '80s construction boom

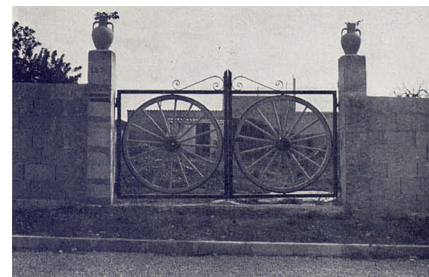
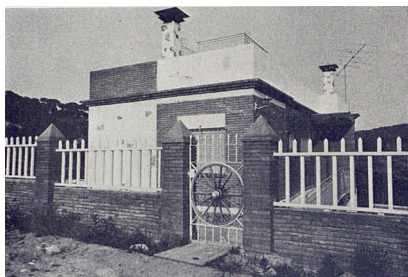
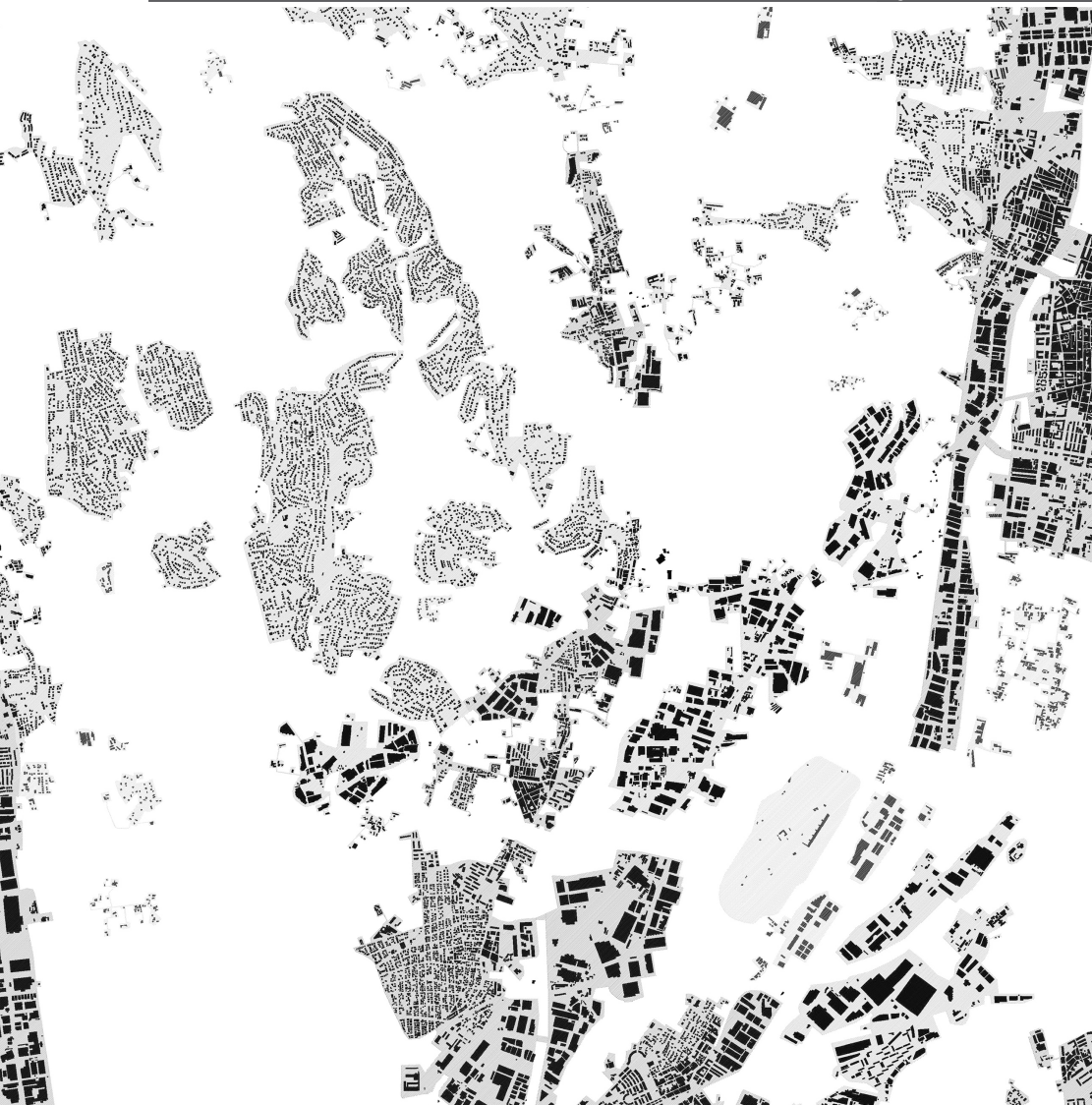
Before moving on to the post-1960s development of the metropolitan region of Barcelona, it is necessary to flag three phenomena inherited from previous periods that shaped its subsequent (sub)urban growth: First, there was a tradition, amongst the Catalan upper-classes, of building weekend *chalets* in the hills to 'escape the sickening fumes of Barcelona'—a practice not dissimilar to that of the Buenos Aires elites (echoed, in turn, by the aristocratic tourism of the northwestern Mediterranean coast; e.g. Graff, 2001). Second, since Primo de Rivera's dictatorship—in power during the 1920s, right before the II Spanish Republic (1931–39) and the Civil War (1936–39)—municipalities had acquired key land management competences. As Sambricio (1982) explains, the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera was the result of an unstable alliance between a decaying aristocracy and a rising bourgeoisie. Thus, when the new upper-class demanded to the otherwise hyper-centralized state a means to participate in government, the state had to respond—and the possibility of rezoning and developing land at a municipal level became the way to do so. Finally, just like fascist Italy and dictatorial Portugal, the Francoist regime reinforced the notion of 'a homeowner's society' as part of its nation-building, developmentalist agenda. It was a "Mediterranean welfare regime in relation to housing characterized by high homeownership rates and a weak, or only temporary, provision of social housing" (Felicianonio & Aalbers, 2018, pp.135–36).

As most urban histories and theories from the European South explain

(Font, 1997, 2007; Indovina, 1990; Muñoz, 2005; Nel-lo, 2001; Solà-Morales, 1997), the spread of mobility infrastructures, a growing automobile industry, and imagery of US suburbs and UK garden-cities fostered, from the 1960s onwards, the dispersion of Barcelona's population through low-density and largely second-home developments known as *urbanitzacions*. Rural landowners were plotting their increasingly devalued rural land and selling it to private actors to develop without permits, while the middle-lower classes developed a new urban mentality no longer tied to the compact city—a peripheral process closer to that of the second corona and the *loteos populares* of the Gran Buenos Aires than to the design of British satellite towns or the white flight of post-WWII US cities.

However, such an urban explosion didn't just respond to new consumption patterns but also to the new production landscapes brought about by a developmentalist regime. Indeed, the regime's industrial and infrastructural works helped devalue rural land and create a rent gap for the peasantry and small development companies to capture. And the scattered character of the emergent industrial enclaves offered a new landscape of low-skilled job opportunities in seasonal construction and industrial works both to the urban poor for whom the city was no longer welcoming and to the peasantry whose land was increasingly devalued. Thus, both the spread of *urbanitzacions* and what Busquets (1999) conceptualized as the latest round of metropolitan *corees*—i.e. Barcelona's processes of peripheral urbanization—were key to the regime's developmentalist agenda of the '60s: They granted access to housing to the workers and peasantry that would fuel industrial works (and which spilled over the state's public housing projects) while creating a new market of land-owning consumers.

From the late 1960s onwards, the spread of *urbanitzacions* grew exponentially, reaching its peak during the late-1980s and early '90s (further fueled by a touristic sector that had been gaining momentum since the democratic transition of 1975 and Spain's adherence to the EEC in 1986). Rural landowners were plotting and selling devalued rural and forestry land to private individuals and construction companies. At the same time, the upper classes were creating small construction companies to benefit from the development fever—after all, they had enough political influence in the municipality to reassure potential buyers that their houses would be legalized. In 1970, out of 508 *urbanitzacions* built in Barcelona's region, only 59 were sitting on urban land and had building permits (Cantallops, 1973). Trust was, thus, key in securing transactions for a land that was legally acquired but irregularly developed, as well as a general 'feeling of protection' from malleable land laws that both bribery, nested and overlapping administrations, and the sheer scale of the phenomenon allowed. Whether autoconstructed, built by third parties, or developed as a set by large construction companies, most *urbanitzacions* shared the exact same characteristics: Rambling streets, roads in cul-de-sac,



Figures 6, 7. La Vall del Tenes, Barcelona's metropolitan region. A typical case of spread of urbanizations on the hills surrounding an industrial valley. Images by the author elaborated with data from the IGN. Figures 8, 9, 10. Three examples of houses built in urbanizacions during the 1960s, with highly detailed fences and doors delimiting a privately own plot of land from an unpaved street (Cantallops, 1973).

and tree-like structures (a product of each private actor taking care of its own urbanization, depending in turn on the prior single access to the rural property that was sold and plotted), as well as a lack of basic infrastructure—essential, in turn, to make land cheap. [Figures 6–10]

The fact that the process of transversal engagement with the state and the law was one of fast and almost certain legalization (and that most *urbanitzacions* were second homes) meant that most neighborhoods did not develop strong forms of community organization. But this situation changed with the economic crisis of 1993 and the sudden turn of most second homes into first homes: For the first time, residents of the *urbanitzacions* had to self-organize to push for those basic services and infrastructure that had not been deemed essential in previous decades. Thus, after the mid-late 1990s new neighborhood committees and protest groups emerged—not for land titles, but for light, water, gas, schools, markets, buses, benches, and public spaces (e.g. “Els veïns d’urbanitzacions donen un suspens general als serveis municipals,” 2004). In response, Catalonia passed the law 3/2009 promising regularization and improvements in services and infrastructure for the *urbanitzacions*, but this has remained a chimera given the sheer magnitude of the phenomenon that catapulted Spain to the top of Europe’s housing stocks (Rodríguez Alonso, 2011).

As rents skyrocket in the ever-more popular city of Barcelona and new industrial-logistical developments continue to emerge and provide jobs amidst agricultural lands, the *urbanitzacions* seem to keep providing a way out to the middle-lower classes, but with a caveat. Land is indeed cheaper, but services are scarce, car dependence unavoidable, and the possibilities for community organizing extremely difficult (Muxí, 2013).

In the case of Barcelona, then, peripheral urbanization emerges in two interconnected and partially overlapped forms: Through the urban and metropolitan *corees* that boomed during the postwar period all the way into the 1960s, and, after the industrial expansion of the ‘60s under foreign capital, through the spread of *urbanitzacions* across the landscape. I have argued here these *urbanitzacions*—which account for great part of the Spanish construction boom, central in turn to Spain’s cycles of miraculous growth and crisis (Charnock et al., 2014)—respond to the logic of peripheral urbanization too, albeit differently phased. Whether some were autoconstructed by their residents and some by developers, these private actors were in charge of their own urbanization, meaning that the *urbanitzacions* lacked basic infrastructures and services. The notion of transversal logics appears to be key to understand the scale of the phenomenon and the complex web of actors involved. Unlike Buenos Aires, the process in Barcelona’s region was one of making things legal, of placing them inside the law to make profit and generate trust, in turn enlarging the future clientele. Thus, this process involved the working

and middle classes as much as the bourgeoisie and the lower strata of the state. The specific temporalities of the *urbanitzacions* were fundamental as well, not only because of the logic of the *caseta i l’hortet*—that is, of incrementality, of building a home little by little on a cheap piece of land—but also because looks and a certain degree of completion in a short period of time were key to ensure that the *urbanització* would be recognized by the government. The new modes of politics that characterized the *villas miseria* and the *gecekondus* appear here to be lagged. The speed and individual character through which *urbanitzacions* were built, their urban form, and the fact that these neighborhoods were mostly second homes meant that, for all those *urbanitzacions* immediately legalized, no form of social or political organization was possible or required. However, echoing the structures of those *urbanitzacions* that did not manage to obtain legal recognition, the 1990s post-crisis shift to first homes meant that new neighborhood organizations were required to voice collective concerns under a Lefebvrian language of rights—one that, only in the 2000s, found its way back to the European South from the Americas.

5. Conclusion: European exceptionalism?

In comparing the highly variegated processes of peripheral urbanization in their unfolding in Buenos Aires, Istanbul, and Barcelona, I can’t but reinstate what was briefly sketched in the introduction: First, peripheral urbanization is and has been a dominant mode of producing cities that has not only provided access to housing to millions of people across the globe, but also one that has sustained during the mid-20th century the developmentalist agendas of several countries, including Argentina, Turkey, and Spain. Second, the state is always present even when perceived as absent, shaping the way in which peripheral urbanization unfolds and, often times, redefining already occurring processes of urbanization as legal or illegal according to different political and economic agendas. Third, the residents who build their homes through peripheral urbanization always engage with the state and the law in one way or another, finding political channels and allies in different strata of the government to back their rights to stay put. Fourth, temporality and aesthetics are key not only as symbolic elements and forms of collective class-communication, but also as a strategic mechanism for new residents to present themselves before the state as ‘legible’ in order to strengthen their claims to the land. Finally, the residents of peripheral urbanization tend to engage in new forms of politics precisely because of and through their transversal engagement with the state and the law—resulting, in the case of Barcelona, in a two-phased phenomenon in which the brevity of the struggle for titles didn’t foster the emergence of new forms of political organization as much as their latter struggle for services and infrastructure.

On November 27, 2011, the British newspaper *The Independent* published an article titled “In Spain’s heart, a slum to shame Europe: The continent’s



Figures 11, 12. Last barraques of Barcelona, teared down for the 1992 Olympics (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1992). Chabolos in La Cañada Real, sector 13, on the outskirts of Madrid, 2014 (Robles, 2014)

largest shanty town—just a 15-minute drive from the affluent centre of Madrid.” The ‘shanty town’ the article refers to is the Cañada Real, a 16 km strip following an old cattle’s path where all the chabolistas relocated in the 1960s when evicted from the city center—the counterpart to Barcelona’s scattered processes of peripheral urbanization across the landscape. [Figures 11, 12] The shame this article is referring to seems to be echoed by those European histories and theories that still follow the logic of First World Models (and Third World Problems) denounced by Ananya Roy (2005), advancing rather evolutionist views against which both *barraquisme* and the spread of *urbanitzacions* can’t but appear as the exceptional product of past dictatorial times. It seems to be echoed by those morphological analyses that see the Spanish urbanitzacions as something akin to the British garden-cities and US suburbs rather than the loteos populares of the Gran Buenos Aires. It is the same shame displayed by the Francoist and Transitioning state that wanted to look European, following a fanciful idea of progress and development that seems to have survived until today—and against which the Cañada Real can’t but continue to appear as a shameful exception. But maybe it is time to rethink this misguided European exceptionalism, mirroring instead on those countries that are willing to learn from their peripheral practices. For if peripheral urbanization is not the exception but the norm, what will happen when the ‘break’ provided by a ridiculously large housing stock runs out?

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