



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet  
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Landscape Architecture, Horticulture  
and Crop Production Science

# Mapping in/e/qualities

Explorations of (in)formality along  
waterscapes of Buenos Aires

MALIN SÖDERSTRÖM







Mapping in/e/qualities  
Explorations of (in)formality along waterscapes of Buenos Aires

Kartläggning av ojämlikheter  
Undersökningar av (in)formalitet längs vattenlandskap i Buenos Aires

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Malmö, September 2015



## SUMMARY

The pace of which urban populations are growing put a lot of pressure on the urban sector to provide housing and serviced land. Today around 50 % of the world's population live in cities, and according to United Nations Population Divisions latest report from 2014, the world will see continued global population growth. Large disparities can be found between the developed and developing countries in the world. Alarming figures show that more than a billion residents worldwide live in informal settlements, self-constructed urban district that lack the same services, quality and infrastructures as the formal districts.

In cities with informal urbanisation the segregation between formal and informal settlements often enhances the marginalisation and stigmatisation of the informal dweller. In informal settlements the lack of sanitation, infrastructure and services are immense problems for the dwellers. In addition, informal settlements are often established in precarious and unsafe landscape conditions; on residual industrial land, mountain slopes, floodplains and riversides. In Buenos Aires, Argentina, some of the most common hazards that informal settlers are exposed to are related to water, particularly flooding and contaminated water.

This thesis sets out to investigate the spatial-aesthetic relationships of areas close to large-scale waterscapes of Buenos Aires. The focus of this study lies in how inequalities are consolidated through landscape and landscape representations of formal and informal places. Further this study explores how these spatial-aesthetic appreciations can be applied in transformation of informal settlements in Buenos Aires. This study is made with qualitative research with literature studies, field studies of Buenos Aires with two months immersion on site and the use of the investigatory method of the deviant transect. The purpose of this study is to help to support an urban development striving for equality.

This study proposes spatial-aesthetic appreciation (mapping) and possible transformation (design) of landscapes for leisure, food and shelter. The thesis stresses the potential shift from a distinction between equality and inequality towards an inclusive landscape of qualities. Thus the focus of this study lies on finding and utilising site-specific qualities of Buenos Aires.

Finally, in accordance with findings from this study, some future research on the topic of; site-specific design and informal settlements, interdisciplinary practice in urban planning; and landscape representations are suggested.



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## INTRODUCTION

When working with this master thesis project, I've sometimes been thinking about if there has been any event or situation, during my studies of landscape architecture, that has been of special influence or a starting point for this project (except the official one of this course). When reflecting, I've come to appreciate two significant "take offs"; the first during my second year of bachelor degree, where I first got to know about gentrification. My curiosity and interest for the phenomena, this physical manifestation of inequality, was deepened and materialised in my bachelor thesis where I studied gentrification processes in Malmö and Stockholm, Sweden. It was around this period, 2012, that my interest for social sustainability and justice connected to landscape architecture started to grow and my picture and idea of landscape architecture widened and altered. Not long after finishing my Bachelor degree in Landscape Planning I went on a backpack-travel to South America. During this travel, off duty yet with the picture of Swedish gentrification still stuck in my mind, I witnessed how inequality was more significantly and physically manifested. This time in; informal settlements for the poor and gated communities for the rich, as well as the rare experience of surveillance and police-patrolling of public spaces such as central plazas and parks.

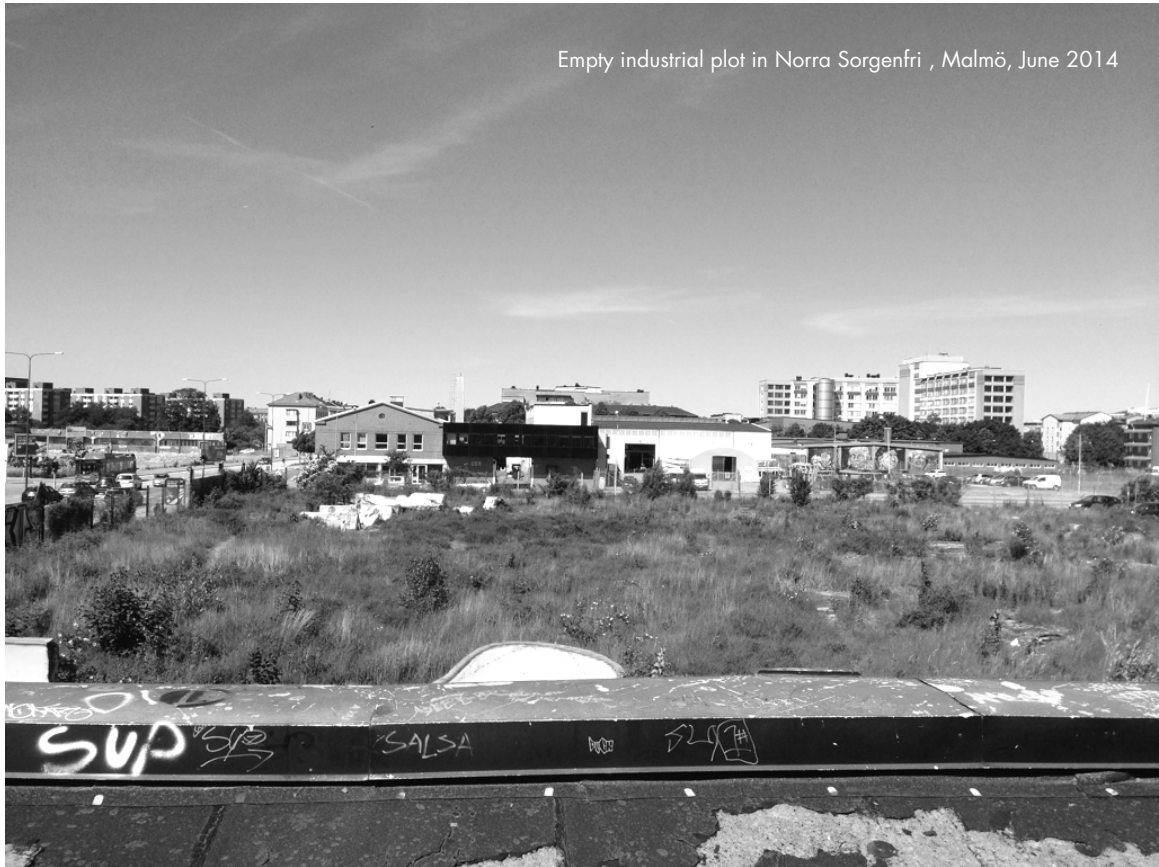
Second "take off", where my ideas about landscape architecture was yet again questioned and transformed, I've educated to a master course I took part of in 2014, called Planning Project - Driving Forces and Contemporary Tendencies. This time the point of interest had to do with what we sometimes refer to as the 4th dimension of space, the aspect of time. During this course I got to question the conventional master plan, how this large-scale and authoritarian way of planning not only stretches over a long period of time, but also that the common way of master planning often neglect the fact that a site is mobile ground, a space/place that changes over time. The master plan as a heritage from the era of Modernism is a very "top-down" approach to planning. I here got introduced to the importance of site-specific design and planning, with ephemeral and temporal aspects of landscape, to the idea of participatory processes and temporal activities as part of urban planning, a more "bottom up" approach to urban development.

Around the same time, summer/early autumn 2014, I decided I wanted to go back to South America to investigate landscape architecture and public space further, as a topic for my master thesis. I then came in contact with my supervisor, Professor and landscape architect Lisa Diedrich and her Argentinian contact, Professor and architect Flavio Janches. The overall topic for my thesis, back then, was public space interventions in informal settlements of Buenos Aires. To finance the fieldtrip to Buenos Aires I applied for a Minor Field Studies Scholarship from SIDA (The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) with the motive of knowledge exchange between Argentina and Sweden, between urban planning professionals in Latin America and Europe. My main motive for this exchange was as follows; economic crisis, larger inequality and influx of refugees, are affecting the urban landscapes of European countries, thus contemporary European urban designers might soon have to deal with similar issues as Latin American practitioners have been faced with for decades.

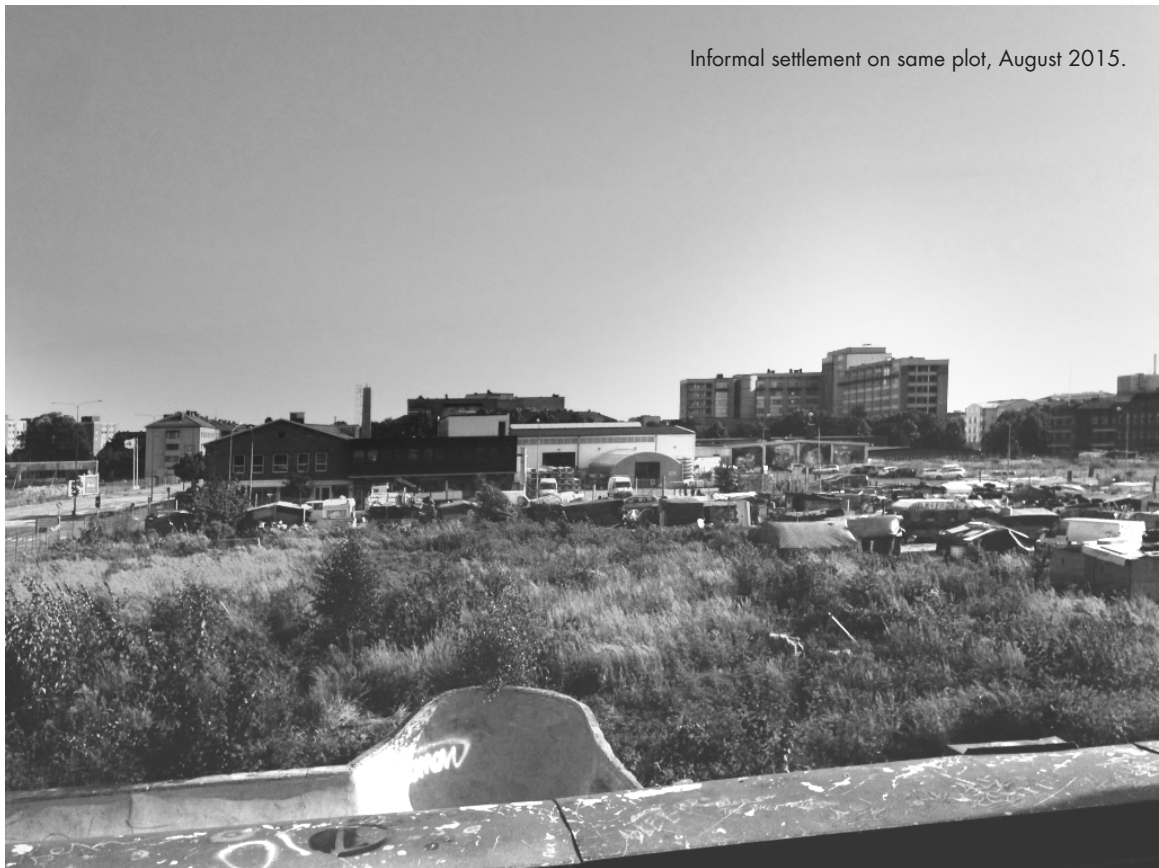
Around the same time for my application writing (early autumn 2014), close to where I live in Malmö; a group of EU-migrants established a tent camp on an abandoned industrial plot in Norra Sorgenfri. The appearance of EU-migrants, immigrants from deprived countries of Eastern Europe, has increased in Sweden during recent years. Many of these immigrants live in tent camps and support themselves by begging.

Informal settlements are still a rare element in the Swedish urban landscape, though as this thesis attempts to illustrate, it is a great and increasing part of the urban fabric in cities around the world. Thus informal settlements are a phenomenon that has to be understood and addressed by practitioners worldwide.

Empty industrial plot in Norra Sorgenfri , Malmö, June 2014



Informal settlement on same plot, August 2015.



## BACKGROUND

The rapid growth of urban populations put a lot of pressure on the urban sector to provide housing and serviced land. Today around 50 % of the world's population live in cities, according to United Nations Population Divisions latest report from 2014, the world will see continued global population growth as well as continued urbanization. It is projected that the growth in the following 15 years will occur in urban areas. The continued urbanization is a great challenge for urban planning and calls for major focus on sustainable development to improve the lives of both urban and rural dwellers (United Nations 2014).

Large disparities can be found between the developed and developing countries in the world. Alarming figures show that more than a billion residents worldwide live in informal settlements, self-constructed urban district that lack the same services, quality and infrastructures as the formal districts. To manage the gap between the affluent nations and the unequal living conditions found in many cities in developing countries we need innovative approaches in urban planning. A self-constructed city, often referred to as informal settlement, often evolve without any prescribed design, planning or legal guidelines. These are settlements constructed by individual and communal initiatives, dynamic forms of urbanization that constantly are under transformation, rich in diverse socio-economic conditions often well adapted to local conditions. These are also places often associated with hazardous and problematic landscape conditions; urban areas where social and environmental problems are aggravated, large, complex urban realities which demand more than conventional methods (Gouverneur 2014).

United Nations agency for human settlements and sustainable urban development, UN-Habitat, estimates that in 2030 around 3 billion people (about 40 % of the worlds population) will be in need of access to proper housing, basic services and infrastructure. They've calculated that the need of housing units with serviced and documented land can be translated into the need to complete 96,150 housing units per day from now until 2030. The need is largest in the developing countries, unfortunately deficiency in governance system, institutions and regulations either obsolete or lacking in capacity or information, limits the required supply and development. The housing backlog in cities around the world is the receipt of deficiency in urban planning and the construction sector. Consequently, we now see a large increase in development of all kinds of informal settlements in various global contexts. Constraints in formal housing and land delivery systems have lead people who would normally qualify for housing programs to become slum dwellers (UN-Habitat 2015). As informal settlements continue to transform and expand they might soon be the dominant part of urbanization in most developing countries. The amount of people that live and will live in informal settlements has global implications such as health problems, stress on social and ecological systems, segregation and inequality (Gouverneur 2014).

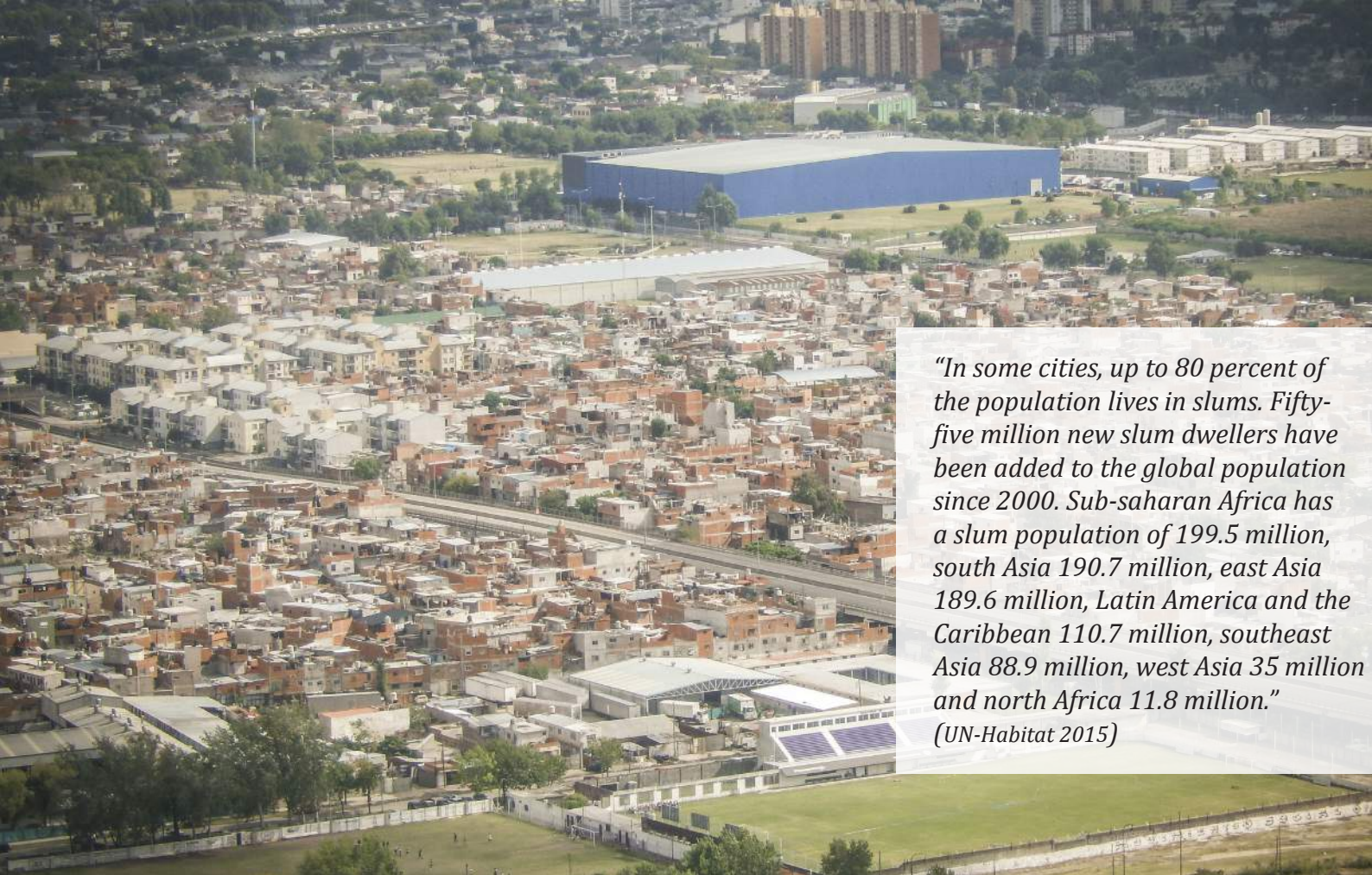
In cities with informal urbanisation the segregation between

formal and informal settlements often enhances the marginalisation and stigmatisation of the informal dweller. The lack of sanitation, infrastructure and services causes immense problems for dwellers of informal settlements. In addition, the informal settlements are often established in precarious and unsafe landscape conditions; on residual industrial land, mountain slopes, floodplains and riversides. In Buenos Aires, Argentina, some of the most common hazards that informal settlers are exposed to are related to water, generally flooding and contaminated water (TECHO 2013). Similarly, some of the most significant threats due to climate change (regarding the whole city, formal as well as informal areas) are rising sea- and river levels, frequently heavy rainfalls and storms causing flooding, rising temperatures and draught (Mehrotra 2012). In Buenos Aires and elsewhere, informal settlements are often situated in 'waterscapes'. This position supports the marginalisation of its inhabitants (Janches 2012).

In Buenos Aires, public space interventions as part of "urbanisation" or upgrading of informal settlements have gained more interest among practitioners in recent years. Particularly, there has been an increase in the interest of developing small-scale, more easily executed interventions, to compliment the large-scale project (such as housing programs and infrastructure projects) which are often difficult to execute due to financial reasons (Janches<sup>1</sup> 2015). Among these small-scaled public space interventions a common focus has been on spaces for play and meeting. In accordance with socio-ecological urban development (Bradley et al 2015), the strategy of transformation in small selective measures can be a way to get financing and enable temporal activities in the settlements, as a mean to strengthen the social bonds in the communities as well as enhancing accessibility between the formal and informal parts of the city (Janches 2012). Moreover, such measures provide a tangible result: public spaces are material and can be apprehended by everyone with all senses. Consequently, spatial-aesthetic transformations can be the starting point of an integration process.

But how to identify such spatial-aesthetic 'starting points' within the overwhelmingly large metropolitan landscape of Buenos Aires, full of inequalities? Maps do not really help as they rarely display the unofficial, the informal, and the non-desired. As landscape representations, they forward simplified concepts of the reality. In landscape design when using solely landscape representations to study a site, the simplified concepts can easily contribute to generic design solutions with site-specific aspects neglected (Diedrich et al 2014). In the light of informal settlements, landscape representations are often inadequate or sometimes totally missing. If spatial-aesthetic transformations can become the starting point for a broader integration process, mapping spatial-aesthetic realities and relationships can be the starting point for these transformations. Representing informal and formal elements of the urban landscape on an equal footing can help prefigure a more equal appreciation of the fragmented city, a springboard for taking measures in favour of equality.





*"In some cities, up to 80 percent of the population lives in slums. Fifty-five million new slum dwellers have been added to the global population since 2000. Sub-saharan Africa has a slum population of 199.5 million, south Asia 190.7 million, east Asia 189.6 million, Latin America and the Caribbean 110.7 million, southeast Asia 88.9 million, west Asia 35 million and north Africa 11.8 million."*  
(UN-Habitat 2015)

## RESEARCH QUESTION AND AIM

The aim of this study is to investigate the spatial-aesthetic relationships of areas close to large-scale waterscapes of Buenos Aires. My interest lies in how inequalities are consolidated through landscape and landscape representations of formal and informal places. The purpose of this study is to help to support an urban development striving for equality, thus the research question of this master thesis is:

*How to achieve a spatial-aesthetic appreciation along the waterscapes of the socio-economically fragmented city of Buenos Aires?*

With the sub-question:

*How to employ this appreciation in site-transformation of informal settlements along waterscapes of Buenos Aires?*

The methodology used to answer these research questions consists of qualitative research through literature studies, field studies of Buenos Aires with two months immersion on site and the use of the investigatory method of the deviant transect. The empirical materials in this study consists of Buenos Aires' waterscapes (i.e. main water bodies or arteries and the adjacent urbanized land). The thesis is presented in a book proposing a spatial-aesthetic appreciation (mapping) and possible transformation (design) of landscapes for leisure, food and shelter. To stress the potential shift from a distinction between equality and inequality toward an inclusive landscape of qualities, this thesis is entitled: *Mapping in/e/qualities*. The focus of this thesis follows the hierarchy of research questions thus the main part of this thesis treats spatial aesthetic appreciations. The design proposal is only treated briefly to exemplify how the findings can be used in site-specific, small-scale and short termed interventions of the area of Lago Soldati, thus my proposal can be seen as a springboard for future and more far reaching interventions.

## METHODOLOGY

In the work with this thesis, as mentioned, the main methods have been qualitative research through literature studies, two months immersion on-site and fieldwork with deviant transect as main method.

This study has been made with a hermeneutical and qualitative approach. When trying to answer the question of how to approach a subject, as in this case, a qualitative method is beneficial to use (Davidson & Patel: 2003). The fieldtrip to Buenos Aires has included what Mikkelsen calls 'action oriented observations' in a way to gain greater understanding of a participatory field (Mikkelsen, 2005:326). A hermeneutical research approach and qualitative methods additionally enable the use of quantitative data such as statistics (Davidson & Patel 2003).

I have studied the empirical material of my thesis through two months immersion on site in Buenos Aires, carried out in spring 2015. My fieldwork was based on the method of the deviant transect, which promotes the experience of the field as foundational element, prompting reflection, discussion and theorization beyond the field. Thus the literature studies were made prior to, as well as, post transecting. The findings in this thesis are translations from on-site spatial experiences to off-site discussions and reflections. From the material collected through deviant transects, I've composed expanded cartography, qualitative mappings which lead me to call the thesis 'Mapping in/e/qualities'. The investigatory nature of the deviant transect made the literature study quite extensive reaching from, for instance; sociological publications of environmental-justice, to landscape architecture literature on the topic of designing waterscapes to literature about urban planning and design. One aim has been to try to understand the findings in this thesis from an interdisciplinary perspective therefore the theories chapter display a variation of literature with economic explanations with Sassen (2014) and de Soto (2004), theories on landscape representations with Mc Harg (1992/1969), Kahn (2001) and Pousin (2012), handbooks in urban planning and design, treating; temporality, socio-ecological sustainability and informality, with Bishop & Williams (2012), Bradley et al (2015) and Gouverneur (2014). Additionally, the deviant transect is a fieldwork method addressing site-specific elements, thus a great part of the literature have also been focused on post-structuralism site-theories.

### \_Deviant transect

The design researchers, Lisa Diedrich et al (2014), have observed a trend among landscape architects to approach their sites of intervention with the notion of site being as something static and materialistic. While claiming to produce "site specific" design, this perspective in reality leaves much of what exists on site neglected. As a consequence ephemeral and atmospheric qualities are often overlooked. As a reaction Diedrich et al are researching new fieldwork methods to foster site-specific design, methods that encounter and embrace not only the static and material perspective but also the immaterial and dynamic aspects of a landscape. The method is called deviant transect\*

and puts emphasis on an experiential approach to site. In a recent publication (Diedrich et al 2014), they use water landscapes on the Canary Islands as site for fieldwork to explain how the deviant transect can be applied. They identify water landscapes as potent areas for investigation since they're often understood as temporary. Water conditions can't just be understood as ephemeral landscapes conditions but have to be comprehended as conditions of climate, economic and social change since they are conditions that have effected human settlements and practice over time. It is argued that it is important to understand site as an active participant in site transformation. In seeking a shift from universal-solutions of water landscapes Diedrich et al encourage practitioners to start investigating sites from particularities, to get a more nuanced narrative of site, and to put an end to inappropriate trends of generic solutions to water landscapes. With the deviant transect they want to enable relational transformation of landscapes. Thus, formulate a method that enables the designer to capture subtle aspects of site often found in landscapes that are constantly changing due to cultural and natural dynamics. The intention with this method of fieldwork is to complement in-studio studies such as maps, statistics and diagrams. The authors describe how the idea of the deviant transect brings together three geographically dispersed researchers who would otherwise rely on the possibility to investigate site through digital means alone.

Before the actual fieldwork on site, research is carried out, in order to get to know the site through contemporary and historic maps, documents, statistics and other available site data. Afterwards the actual itinerary of the travel is proposed, drawn as a 'transect line' across the site and landscape, the object for the fieldwork. The route is then chosen in a very free manner with pre-studies, knowledge and clues about the site as main guidance. While on site the terrain, landscape features, meetings and discoveries invite the researcher to deviate from the initial transect line, and the reasons for this deviation deliver motives of reflection, starting points of knowledge generation. Discoveries and places from transects that lead the designer to reflection and further discussions are what Diedrich et al call *prompts*. From the prompts, investigation of particularities can be used as starting point for farther reaching discussions about the site. After traveling and investigating a site, the materials collected through the transecting are used to translate on-site qualities and phenomenon into off-site mappings and discussions. In post- travelling process, mappings and re-mappings can lead to interesting findings. From the authors example of the "Canarysect" (2014:6) it became clear that most of the new knowledge about site was generated from deviations, both on site and post-travel during narrating and mapping. They draw the conclusion that pre-knowledge enables definition of travelling itinerary, but if nothing provokes the designer to deviate during transects, not much new knowledge is produced (Diedrich et al 2014).

The shift between the planned itinerary and the factual on-site experience enables discovery. No shift means no discovery but only confirmation of pre-knowledge [...] the shift depends on the researchers' knowledge and interests, their moves, motion and emotion. It depends on WHO travels,





Transect tools for fieldwork in Buenos Aires

as the knowledge generated each time and by each person will never be the same. (Diedrich et al 2014:6)

The deviant transect involves many of the landscape architects' conventional tools such as modelling, drawing and photographing, filming, sampling etc. When combining the outcome of these tools with each other and triangulating with other forms of insight, one gets a richer narrative of the site. This kind of open-work design method can also be described as deep mapping or trans-areal travelling. With an experiential and intellectual approach the deviant transect aims to produce site knowledge including the narrative and temporal dynamics of it (Diedrich et al 2014).

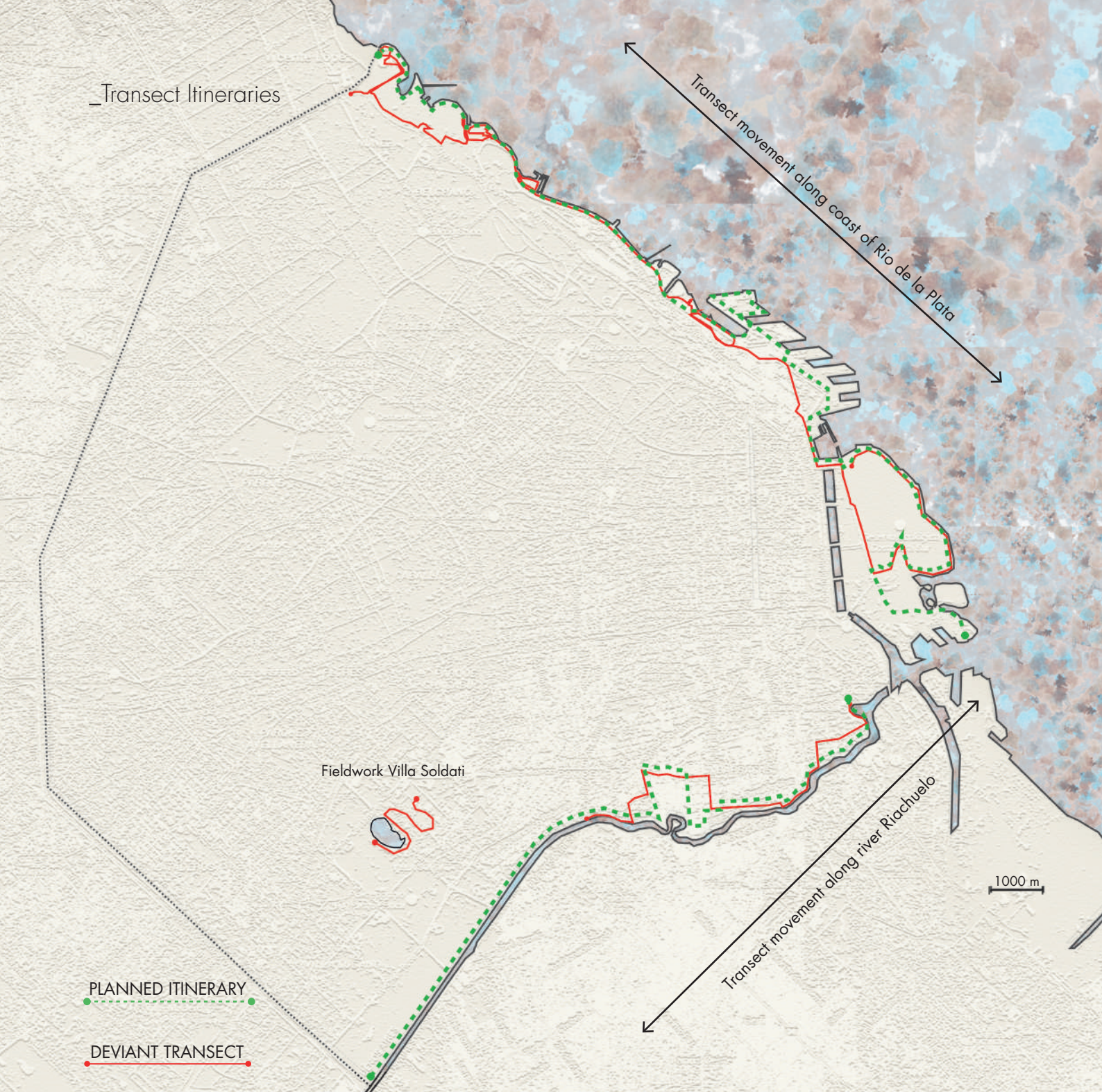
The inspiration to the deviant transect has come from writings and mappings from the 18th and 19th century geographer and traveller, Alexander von Humboldt. With relational thinking and open minded empirical studies, Humboldt regarded science as mobile ground. In terms of the deviant transect, Humboldt promoted on-site experience and particularities from site as starting points for knowledge production. Thus, rejecting the notion of 'reflection at distance', commonly used in his times (2014:3). Another inspiring and at the time, revolutionary relation to science was Humboldt's way of positioning science as transareal pursuit, making him investigate and cross boundaries between disciplines, regarding knowledge as

open work. Diedrich et al see similarities between the context of the time for Humboldt's work and ours; they're both times of intense global movement, the 19th century context of movement through seafaring and increased trade with the colonies, and ours driven by a globalised economy:

From our design research perspective, Humboldt's claim seems to be more contemporary than ever: as everything in the world is interrelated only science understood as mobile can help us generate appropriate knowledge for the design of complex contemporary landscapes. (Diedrich et al 2014:3)

With the deviant transect, Diedrich et al, intend to translate some of the tools used of Humboldt into a contemporary research method. Pre-transect, transect, and post-transect are all important parts of the method. When synthesising findings in mapping and narrating of site, one can produce not only in-process cartographic diaries for communicating site for future transformation, but also landscape representations that challenges conventional cartography.





In the case of transects carried out in Buenos Aires, the itineraries were chosen by; pre-knowledge from earlier visit in Buenos Aires, studies of maps and discussion with my supervisors and the deviant transect as a fieldwork method focused on waterscapes and landscapes connected to water. Additionally, it seemed equitable that this harbour-city would reveal interesting sites, if explored along the water. Pre-studies showed an interesting and diverse coastline with the appearance of; some new landscape architecture projects and public parks, the public University of Buenos Aires, the port, the old port recently transformed into BA's high-end district Puerto Madero with the adjacent ecological reserve, Reserva Ecológica.

Experiences on-site contributed to the interest in another large-scale waterscape of Buenos Aires, the river Riachuelo. Historically industrial activities and warehouses have been

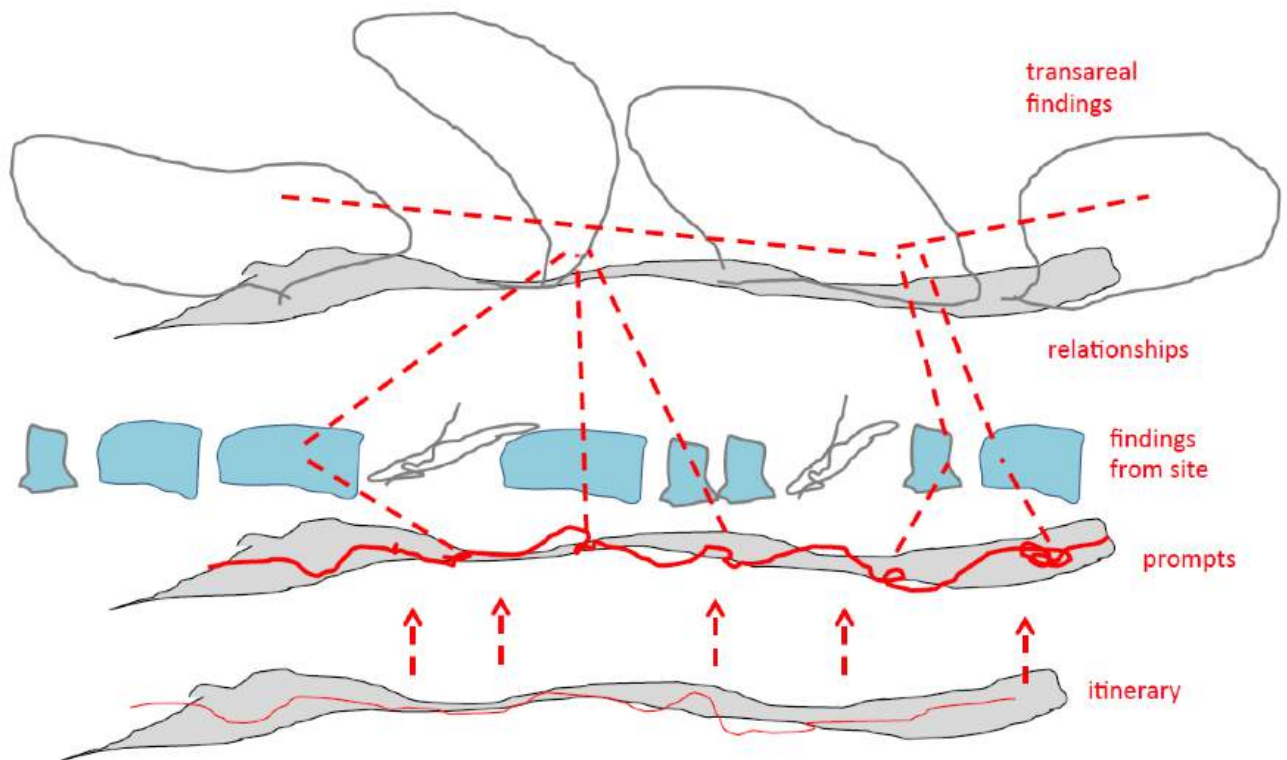
concentrated along the river. The river was an important transportway for workers and goods between the industries and the old port. Due to the harbour activities around the estuary of Rio de la Plata and the river mouth of Riachuelo with the famous district La Boca (Spanish for "the Mouth"), the city river has historically been the centre-point for industry, trade, immigration and informal settlements, a heritage still present today. With less pre-studies than on the coastal transect, an itinerary was drawn along the northern riverside in accordance with pre-determined limitations of only doing fieldwork within the city-borders.

Transects were also carried out in the area Villa Soldati, though without any pre-defined itineraries, due to uncertainties regarding access and safety for fieldwork.



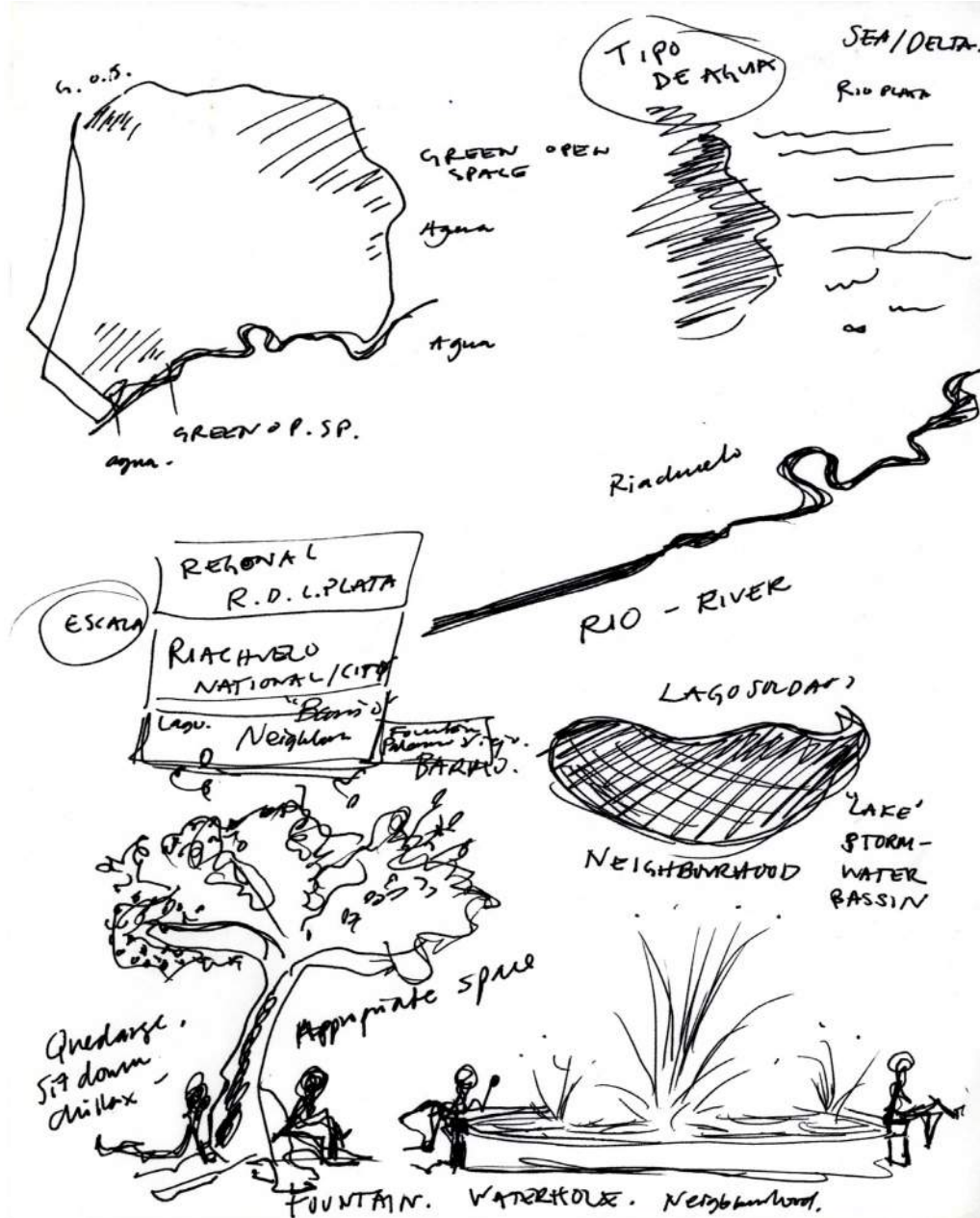
*"The transect has two general aims: contributing to design education, and developing design research. Unlike to classical pedagogic study trips, the transects do not provide the students with predefined jobs to get done along the trip in order to satisfy a learning objective: rather students are asked to find their own jobs and be open to a new kind of formerly unidentified knowledge that might be accessible" (Diedrich et al 2012: 163).*

Picture from lecture-material by Lisa Diedrich from presentation at Nordes Design Research Conference (2013)



The findings of my investigatory work are presented as experiential cartography. These are mappings in an obviously qualitative way where my, the designer's, on-site experience and impressions, are used as the basis for landscape representation. The findings from fieldwork are many, though three main topics have crystallised as relevant ones to bring to the table of discussion; landscapes for leisure, food and shelter. These three topics help us discover and view the fragmented urban structure of Buenos Aires, a metropolitan city divided in formal and informal settlements. The fragmentation and segregation is prominent through the city's spatial relation to the adjacent large-scale waterscapes. These waterscapes guide us through the city's historic expansion and how this expansion has enhanced fragmentation. The topics of landscapes for leisure, food and shelter are related to basic urban requirements and display both local and global phenomena, considered in their relation to landscape. I recognized some of the sites I've

travelled as spatial manifestations of inequalities, but I've also recognized inequalities in how these sites were mapped. Both the site itself and its representation became my prompts for questioning in/e/qualities. The attractive, wealthy and formal parts of the city are mapped in various colourful and enticing ways, whilst other parts of the city, seldom are given the same weight of importance when mapped. Regarding these places, quantitative data and statistics about problems deriving from socioeconomic differences are more frequently the centre of attention in the displayed mappings. One should be careful not to romanticise poverty and social injustice, though by mapping the formal and informal city in such different ways, the sense of them being dichotomies are enhanced. When some inhabitants of the city are mostly represented as figures and numbers, could this be an unconscious process of dehumanising them? When your neighbourhood is not at all displayed on the city map, what message does that give you?



Sketches as mappings, from transect of waterscapes in Buenos Aires.

## Research Boundaries

In the anthology *Site Matters* (2005), the American scholars Carol J Burns and Andrea Kahn present an alternative concept of site. Instead of the traditional way of looking at site as a place within property lines placed as an entity in surrounding physical context, they argue that site is more than actual property and that the boundaries between site and its contextual values are fuzzier and far more extensive than just its surroundings. To help analyse site and reveal actual site-specific values they divide site in three areas; *area of control*, *area of influence* and *area of effect*. Site is built up and contains values on various spatial and time scales. Burns and Kahn mean that less site-specific value are overlooked when viewing site as constructed of; areas of control, similar to actual property lines, areas of influence, anything that influences or are influenced by the area of control (e.g. surrounding environment, political rule, culture values etc.) and areas of effect, which implicates design action and regards the areas that would be effected by a spatial transformation. Despite the different geographies and temporalities of the categories (control, influence and effect) they are often intersecting.

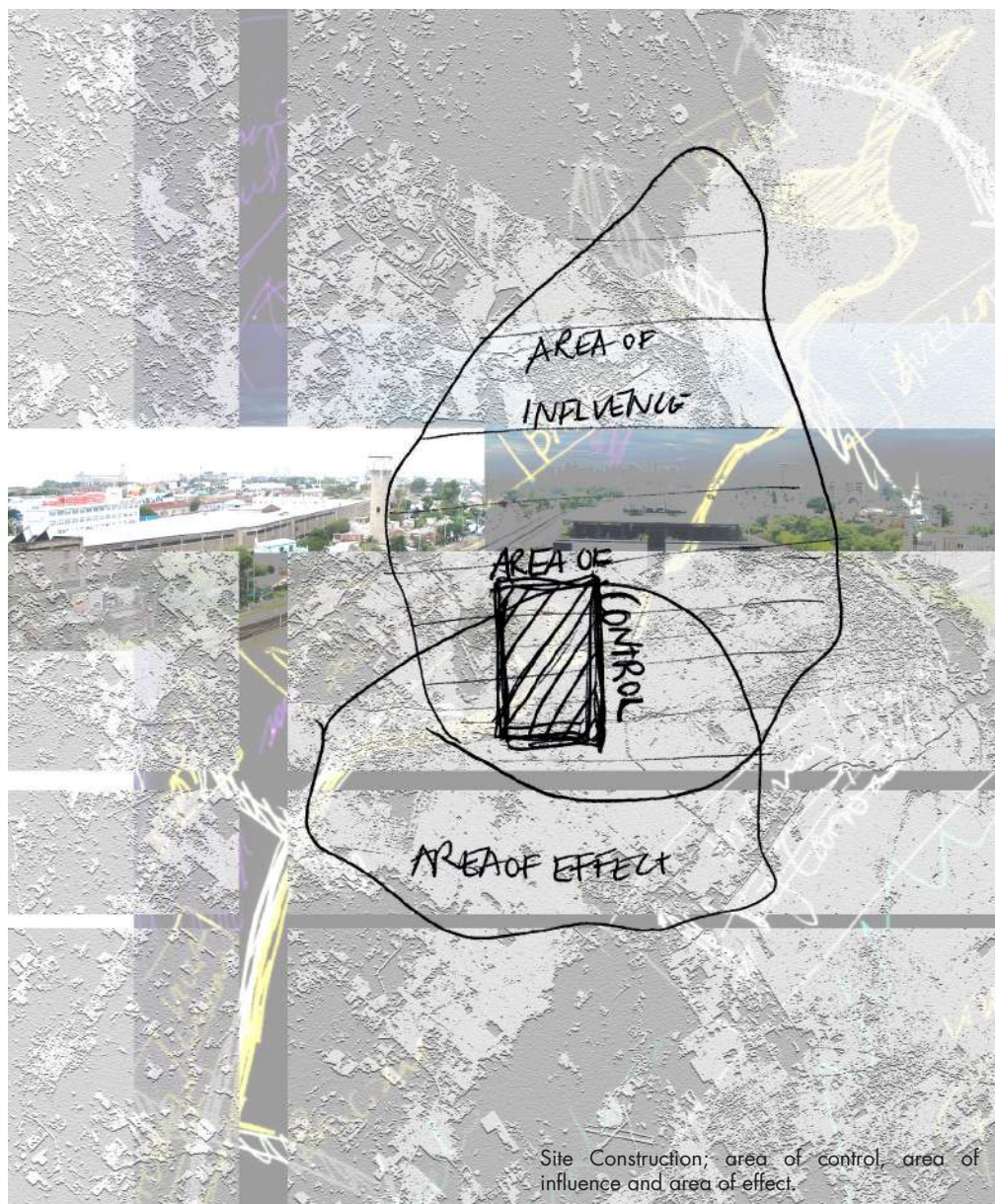
In this study, the initial topic of interest has been informal settlements and public space interventions. With this entry I soon came in contact with the area Villa Soldati in southern

Buenos Aires. Prior to fieldtrip the literature studies, itineraries and contacts was made with the fundamental idea of "getting a grip of" and understanding Buenos Aires as local, national and global urban construction. Moreover, I wanted to understand the phenomenon of informal settlements as part of the urban construction (whether driver, divider or detent).

In the light of the ideas presented by Burns and Kahn (2005), the area of control in this study is an area within the district Villa Soldati around a water-course called Lago Soldati (see further presentation of area in chapter 3, "Mapping Site"). In order to understand my area of control, I've carried out several transects around the city, the two most significant has been along waterscapes; the Coastal-transect and the Riachuelo-transect. Early in the process I determined to limit the fieldwork to the boundaries of The Autonomous City of Buenos Aires to manage under given space and time conditions of the fieldtrip. Pre-determined systems of taking photos, films, sound-recordings, samples and sketches has been helpful, but also affected the outcome presented in this thesis. In the synthesising of the immense amount of material collected on-site, the restriction of focusing on the prompts has been essential to guide the work forward.

In the work with this thesis I've established some contacts with urban planners working in Buenos Aires. Through my supervisor Lisa Diedrich I got in contact with Dr Flavio Janches, architect





and urban designer based in Buenos Aires. He became my supervisor on the fieldtrip to Argentina and was also the one that helped me with other contacts, most important, the connection with *Secretaria de Habitat e Inclusion* (SECHI). SECHI is a governmental organisation of Buenos Aires City that do projects with urbanisation and inclusion of informal settlements around the city. Through my contact with the office of SECHI in district Villa Soldati, I got access to information and the possibility of field studies in some informal settlements, which otherwise would have been unsafe and rather difficult. While studying at the office in Villa Soldati, a particular watercourse in the area caught my interest. The interest for Lago Soldati and its surroundings is the reason why this area has come to be the particular site for application of transformation strategies in this thesis.

## \_Thesis Navigation

The thesis is divided into four main parts. The first one, *Founding*, describes theories and histories that have helped and guided my understanding of the fragmented city of Buenos Aires. As presented in the background above, my motive for going to Buenos Aires was initially to get a greater understanding of the dynamics and landscapes of informal settlements, thus some of the theories deals with this topic. Emergent trends in landscape architecture of 'site-specific design' have influenced

the research design of this thesis and my will to experience site through extensive fieldwork. More over, the topic of site-specific design led to the immerse in literature treating post-structuralism site theories. One subject that has caught my interest during this study is the one of landscape representation, the dichotomies of qualitative and quantitative mappings in cartographic visualisations versus charts and tables of statistics; which areas of a city are presented enthusiastically and which aren't? Thus a great part of the theories discuss landscape representation. Similar to Buenos Aires, all parts of this thesis touch upon, deal with or even embrace fragmentation. As a conscious choice, the structure of this thesis mirrors the fragmented thoughts and ideas that have come to be a significant element of this study. In the second part, named *Finding*, prompts from transects are presented and discussed, and it is noticeable that fragmentation is found as a normal state of mind in the city of Buenos Aires. Some of the backsides of fragmentation displayed as segregation, here becomes evident. In the third part, named *Transforming*, suggestions of transformation strategies for an area with informal settlements are presented. The transformation strategies are related to the findings and prompts from transects around the city. Finally, the fourth and last part, named *Reflecting*, contains critical reflections and discussions about my work with this study, evaluation of methods and choices made on the way.

# PART 1: FOUNDING

## **CHAPTER 1: THEORIES**

*The work with this study has been a constant oscillation between theory and practice. My personal and professional experiences as a landscape architect student has affected the way in which I have approached, experienced and analysed site. The following theoretical chapter is presented to make my process of analysing landscape more transparent. Moreover the theory has worked as a fond of discourses and ideas to which findings and understandings from this study can relate to. This chapter begin with a section that treats informal urbanism from various perspectives formerly design strategies and in economic explanations. In relation to the method of the deviant transect, the theory chapter then subsequent with a presentation of literature regarding knowledge production and site-specific design. Further some contemporary ideas of urban planning are displayed and finally the topic of landscape representations are presented.*

# INFORMALITY – TOWARDS EXPULSION OR INCLUSION?

*This extensive section aims at deepening our understanding of informal settlements. The following text about planning for future informal settlements helps uncover the nature of informal settlements through the described design measures. The subsequent texts about global economy and informality, describes the abundant systems at work and deflates some of the prejudice about the informal dweller.*

## \_Planning for Future Informal Settlements

Informal urbanism has been a topic for urban planners in developing countries for centuries. Rapid urbanisation, poverty and inequality are often manifested as growth of informal settlements. The American scholar David Gouverneur has collected lessons and experiences from his practices in Latin America, mainly focused on informal settlements, in the book *Planning and Design for Future Informal Settlements* (2014). Through case studies and analysing former attempts of informal urbanism, Gouverneur pinpoints strengths and weaknesses in urban planning practice dealing with informality and attempts to plan these places ahead. He calls for responsible action to handle challenges in the developing world and proposes a model that he calls Informal Armatures. He argues that we have to promote favourable conditions for future informal cities; and this is done by addressing issues paramount in planning of formal cities, yet with innovative methods. This model stresses the importance of viewing the informal settlements as a vital physical structure that together with conscious design and management holds opportunities for a more resource efficient and qualitative way of living.

Informal urbanism is not a new phenomena, it has been part of and a driver of urbanization through out history. It's when these self-constructed cities become too large and continue to expand that the resulting social and environmental hazards become evident. Accordingly, efforts to change or control self-constructed cities have also been a significant part of urban growth. These efforts have historically aimed at sanitizing, beautifying and to streamline the city. Gouverneur means that these efforts have always had one thing in common - the goal to establish different morphological and performative conditions than those found in the self-constructed city. He means that this top-down approached where planned and designed solutions are imposed to local conditions, reached its climax during the era of Modernism. Regulation by zoning and organisation of mono-functional areas were part of the Modernist Movement that inspired city-making all over the world. This very controlled way of planning and designing was totally opposite to the mix-use and self-constructed fabric of the traditional city. The heritage of Modernism includes the top-down approach, urban sprawl and high dependency of vehicular mobility, counterparts to one of today's planning ideals of sustainable urban development (Gouverneur, 2014).

With Informal Armatures (IA) issues such as land use, mobility, food sufficiency, water management, governance and identity are somewhat considered. Gouverneur anticipates that IA, with its set of principles for stakeholders, can be used as guide

of performative and physical development to bridge the gap between informal and formal cities and enable future informal settlement to be an integrated part of sustainable cities. IA aims to provide spatial, economic, ecological, infrastructural and managerial support that informal settlements usually lack. The model is built up by three components called *corridors*, *patches* and *stewards*. These three in turn, can be further divided into; *attractors* and *protectors* (for corridors); *receptor patches* and *transformer patches* (for patches); and *garden keepers* (for stewards). The components in IA works as layers to pre-determine or edit systems of open spaces, areas for settlement, distribution of amenities and services and management. Whether the areas in mind are empty land or existing informal settlements these layers can be used to help with upgrading and expansion. During implementation of the model it is important to engage with the local landscape and evolve morphologies and performance of the settlements over time.

Corridors form the main system of open spaces as organizers of the public realm. The subcategories attractors are meant to encourage settlement through implementation of attractive features (square, pedestrian lane, playground etc) focused on public spaces. Attractors should work the backbone of pedestrian-friendly public spaces, engaging both mobility and infrastructural issues. An example of attractors in informal growth is presented in the mobility corridors with the Metro-cable stations, created on non-occupied land in Medellin, Colombia. Attractors are interventions that catalyse urbanisation, thus it's important that they are flexible and serve various stages of the settlements evolution. Protectors, on the other hand, are areas that seek to protect and reduce pressure on landscapes that are more environmentally fragile or less suitable for settlement. Areas in need of protection could be, for instance, wetlands, arable land, historic sites or riverbeds. Protectors are highly interesting when dealing with informal growth, since the self-constructed cities often occur on unsuitable grounds where landscape can have hazardous consequences in i.e. landslides, flooding and contamination. When implementing corridors, planners and designers should first examine areas that need protection and then search for areas that can work as attractors. Gouverneur displays an example from Caracas, Venezuela, where the idea of protectors was materialized in a long stretched green band along a park that needed to be kept from squatters. The green band included agriculture sites, gardens and educational facilities. These protectors helped to keep an eye on the land that needed protection but also facilitated amenities valuable for the community. Protectors can often work as valuable green corridors favourable for



biodiversity if consisting of waterways, vegetated areas or recreational strips.

Corridors work as place holders for the public realm, to add to the settlement the infill layer in the IA model is called Patches. With patches, individuals as well as communal efforts drive urban development, providing morphological and functional conditions that could not be achieved without external help. The sub-categories of patches are called Receptors and Transformers. The first one is urban infill where informal occupation is expected to occur, whilst the latter category refers to areas that are reserved for income-generating and productive uses. Indications of where to plan for receptor areas, are areas with good pedestrian accessibility to communal services such as schools, day care and sport facilities. Gouverneur explains some different scenarios of how the occupation of receptor patches may occur:

- a) as non-assisted process where individuals simply move into an area without previous urban layouts or services, taking over a parcel and start building their own basic shelter.
- b) as a semi-assisted process where public sector, communal organizations or "pirate developers" offers several degrees of organisation to make the informal occupation more efficient. This could mean defining the grid, deal with lot distribution, infrastructural issues, technical assistance for construction and communal services.
- c) as complete urbanization schemes where services and infrastructure and basic formal housing units are provided, units that can further be expanded by the resident.

The nature of informal settlements lies in that the settlers without much assistance often accomplish the occupation process, which is why the Informal Armatures approach doesn't recommend any special formal organization to deal with the receptor patches. Though it is important that community leaders and management communicate the ideas of Informal Armatures in as early stages as possible to enable organisation of Receptor patches as well as labour, skills and aspirations.

Transformers are patches that focus on activities that can provide productive and economic benefits for the community. These patches could initially be developed by the public sector or public-private-community partnerships and are supposed to provide goods and sources of income for institutions that support the Informal Armatures initiative. These economic drivers should

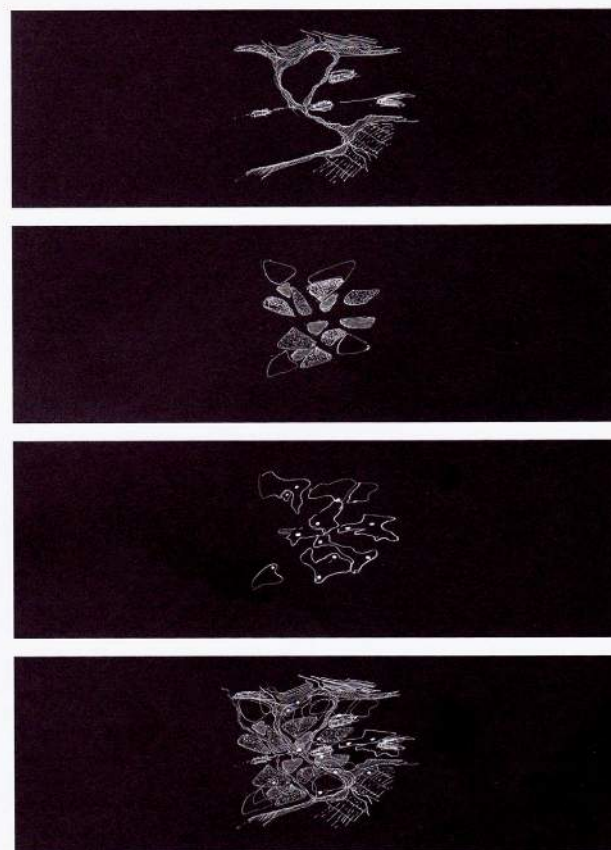
preferably include services and amenities beneficial for the residents. It is common that residents from the informal city take part in the public realm and the amenities of the formal city i.e. sports clubs, parks, cinema and shopping malls, and then return to their homes in the informal settlements often in more peripheral parts of town. The aim with the transformer patches is to develop attractive services such as culture and sport venues inside the self-constructed city to enhance competitiveness with the formal areas as well as to attract residents from the formal city to go to these places. Gouverneur presents an example where city planners in Medellin made an effort to create attractors for the formal residents as well as the informal ones inside a self constructed area of town. Here they planned and designed state-of-the-art libraries and educational hubs with an adjacent square and attractors such as good communication lines. When word got out that these interventions had made the areas safer, even locals and tourist began to visit. Transformer patches always interact with receptors and corridors, they are flexible areas that should serve different uses and demands as the expectations differ in the informal settlements as well as the broader city. In early stages of development, the possibilities with transformer patches are many. Transformer patches can i.e. take the form of:

- a) tent shelters where basic services can be offered, similar to refugee camps.
- b) incorporate recycling centres and take advantage of city debris offering low-cost construction materials for new settlers. This enables new families to occupy the lots in the receptor patches as soon as possible.
- c) offer machinery, technical assistance and low-cost transportation to make settlement more effective.

When transformer patches are implemented in already mature settlements they could offer:

- d) parks, real-estate operations, manufacturing centres, culture and educational facilities
- e) further on the transformers can work as catalyst for urban change and might include the construction of a new hospital, concert hall, stadium or university; amenities that would have normally been established in the formal city.

The provision of such basic services as in example a-c, could as well be applicable to the provision of potable water or



Picture of Informal Armatures (Gouverneur 2014:162)

Figure 5.1: Conceptual design components of the Informal Armatures approach. From top to bottom: Corridors, Patches, Stewards, Ensemble, Sketches by David Gouverneur

community gardens to feed the new settlers, these basic services often demand public and institutional support. When basic needs are accounted for (e.g. communal water system, shops and food markets) the transformer patches can undergo a metamorphose and serve other productive and economically beneficial uses.

The third and last component of IA approach is called Stewards. Stewards involve uses; performative and spatial conditions that engages the community so that the public realm endures during all phases of settlement. Stewards are supposed to look after the public assets and open spaces. Stewards can be individuals trusted by the community, community organizations or institutions. The way urbanisation processes are initiated varies between formal and informal cities. In the formal city urban layouts with conventional planning and zoning ordinances, determine the organisation of parks, squares and infrastructure and then urban infill occurs. In the informal city, on the other hand, urban infill, of communal or individual occupation of land, is the driving force for development. Thus the public realm is often neglected until the public sector intervenes and gradually introduces public spaces, infrastructure and services. Consequently, the best way to protect land in the informal city is by using it, by visually recognising it, it becomes defensible. Stewards can be various uses within corridors and patches. It is important that stewards should be able to engage emotionally with the community hence taking the shape of a person, an institution, a use, a spatial form that secures the local demands of a certain area. Gouverneur states the importance of stewards' connection to local culture and demand. This importance is embodied in the Spanish colonial plazas found in many Latin American cities:

The plazas, surrounded by institutional buildings, were representation of the political and social pillars of their culture, which in this case were imposed on the local culture. These institutional buildings framed the public spaces, connoting that the collective matters were more important than the individual ones. They also kept an observant eye on the public area where people performed communal rituals. The notion of Stewards was implicit in this spatial organization. (Gouverneur 2014:182-83)

The notion of "Garden Keepers" is introduced as a way to

secure land fit for future demands. Garden Keepers is a sort of Steward especially useful for launch custody or use of parts of larger territories. In dividing larger land areas into smaller parts, some of the land can get used directly whilst some are just put "on hold" for future demands. As in the case of gardens, these subdivided enclaves might have to have clear boundaries, thus some areas might be fenced off whilst some are planted on or for instance used as a temporary football field. With this strategy larger areas can be made defensible through its temporary use and other parts kept unoccupied until required, when resources for development are available. As a bond between the users and the site emerge, the stewards and garden keepers might shift their attention to other areas or altogether discontinue their roles.

Informal Armatures is a model created from academia and practical experiences of informal cities, it has yet only been tested in design studios. Gouverneur stresses the importance of strong pilot projects, where the results of IA can be evaluated and discussed in the contexts of academia, politics and public opinion.

If appropriately guided the informal city can make significant contributions to sustainable urban life, impacting large cities of the developing world in a positive way. The informal city is compact, pedestrian friendly, and socially cohesive. It is capable of incorporating mixed uses at a neighbourhood scale. It consumes little energy and produces relatively low quantities of solid waste when compared to formal cities. All of these positive attributes facilitate the task of creating a sustainable future for cities. (Gouverneur 2014:264)

The city of Buenos Aires have to consider informality as part of a greater system and solution. Similar ideas as presented in IA can be traced to interventions in informal settlements around Buenos Aires, though it could be interesting to further test out and apply the strategies of Gouverneur's IA-model. Similarly, it could be motivated for the city of Buenos Aires to consider the aim of what Gouverneur describes as hybrid urbanisation, cities where the formal and informal merge and develop qualities richer and more resilient than found in either of the two on their own.

## \_Expulsions - Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy

In the book *Expulsions - Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy* (2014) sociologist and researcher Saskia Sassen presents relevant perspectives of marginalisation. With geographies and histories from all over the world, she displays how we, in an acceleratory way, are destroying our planet. She begins by conceptualising the reconstitution of "the economy", showing how the spaces of economies are shrinking in fewer workers, fewer firms, and fewer consumers. This evolving logic in the global North has its parallel in the Global South with World Bank and IMF restructuring programs, launched in many countries in the 1980's. Additionally, she explains how subprime mortgages for modest-income households have been transformed to a financial project enabling increased profit, satisfying a high finance-world, leaving millions of households in the global North excluded:

The global geography of extraction that has long been part of economic development has gone well beyond its traditional association with plantations and mines, even as these are also expanding. It extends to extracting the gains workers fought for during much of the twentieth century, the land from beneath small farmers, and the modest homes from many who trustingly put down their savings. The mechanisms of these extractions are often far more complex than the outcomes, which are often quite elementary. (Sassen 2014:219)

Sassen describes extractions in terms of environmental devastation. Due to massive extraction of land and water, many landscapes are destroyed and people evicted. She examines cases of dead water caused by fertilizer-runoff and garbage dumps. She takes us to places of dead land caused by toxification due to industrial waste and mining operations. Sassen also shows tragic cases of the interplay between environmental devastation and social expulsion in; land grabs where farmers and villagers experience eviction, and how financial crisis in the West have led to massive unemployment.

With what she calls 'predatory formations' she reinforces her hypothesis of how we now, in the new geological era of the *Anthropocene*, have moved from dynamics that used to bring people in, to dynamics that push people out. She argues that we have experienced a shift from Keynesianism to a global era of privatisation, deregulations, and open borders for some. In her work, she sets out to explain how this has happened, revealing evidence and dynamics of a systemic shift. These indications have in common expulsions from diverse systems in play – biospheric, social and economic, materialized in narratives of severe climate change, land grabs and financial crisis. According to Sassen, predatory formations are conglomerations of powerful cooperations, markets, governments and technologies. Together they form powerful dynamics that cannot be reduced to any of the original actors. Thus the predatory formations are very complex, and difficult to understand. Consequently, there are major difficulties in

finding out which actor is accountable for what. As indicated above, the predatory formations are greatly connected to the fact that we nowadays have a very narrow conception of economic growth. Sassen means that our understanding of economic growth has shifted; from the post-world war ideas of the welfare state (inclusion and wealth for all), towards more excluding ideas rooted in the global economic deprivations during the end of the last century (with major wealth for few and expulsions and poverty for many others). As a consequence today's institutions seem to gain corporate economic growth:

Today's systemic edge is a space of expulsions, in contrast to the Keynesian epoch where the systemic edge was a space of incorporation, not because it was an ideal period but because the constitutive systematicities were about mass production and mass consumption. Today's are not. (Sassen 2014:221)

Sassen seeks to explain that all the processes are a question of constitutive participation and membership. Even though our division of nations and sectors help us explain some of the processes, her motive is to go beyond these borders in revealing a larger life space that is itself a threat:

I sought to grasp the existence of larger transversal trends that point to planetary conditions – expulsion of people, economies and life spaces. (Sassen 2014:221)

Sassen ends her book with a question: "What are the spaces of the expelled?" (2014:222). The stories and lives of people that live in expulsion are seldom conceptually visible in the modern economies and states. Then why should we display spaces of expulsions? Sassen means that in the era of the Anthropocene with predatory formations we can no longer neglect these spaces, since they are growing spaces that are increasingly differentiated. Spaces that in this era, are present realities:

...the spaces of the expelled cry out for conceptual recognition. They are many, they are growing, and they are diversifying. [...] They are potentially the new spaces of making – making local economies, new histories, and new modes of membership. (2014:222)

Sassen presents many of the worst cases of expulsion from around the world, even though the extension of expulsion is not yet visible everywhere, nuances of what she describes are realities in almost all nations. With the concept of 'expulsions', she offers us an analytical tool that helps us explain some of the destructive powers at work, and how these powers feed on our social, economic and biospheric systems; with marginalised people and dead land and water as result. These processes can help explain some of the spatial realities in Buenos Aires - a fragmented city divided in formal and informal parts, partially surrounded by contaminated waterscapes.



## \_The Mystery of Capital

In - *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else* (2004), economist and researcher Hernando de Soto gives us interesting perspectives on global poverty and informality. With examples and materials from developing countries in Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East, he shows us how the majority of people living in poverty already posses assets to practice capitalism with success. He explains that even in the poorest of countries the poor are devoted to saving and that the values of these savings are enormous. The fundamental problem, according to de Soto, is that the people don't properly own these mentioned savings and resources, since they're seldom accurately registered or dealt with in an adequate way in accordance to the legal system. These inaccessible resources are often; houses built on land where the ownership is not properly documented, businesses run under unclear circumstances without any defined person as economically responsible or industries existing in blind spots invisible for investors. The problem for the developing countries and the majority of people living in poverty, is not their lack of property, it is their lack of capital. If property is not sufficiently registered it's difficult to translate to capital, to make fungible (when a good or property is able to be substituted by another good of equal value or utility; somehow translated to a market value). Compare this to the western and developing countries where every piece of land is sufficiently documented according to ownership and all goods stored in a warehouse are possible to find registered in the books. These documentations and systems are visible signs of an enormous process where all these properties are connected to the rest of the economy. Thanks to this representational process, property can live an invisible life parallel to its physical existence, as a property but also as capital. Property that is translated to capital can work as security for credit. The registration process also gives a reason for the owner wanting to be linked or connected to their property, hence clear ownership, addresses, credit-history and suchlike can be added and often found documented. De Soto explains that this information is also the foundation for establishing other valuable documents, collect debts and calculating society services etc. Representational process akin does not exist in the same extent in the developing countries and without it, their assets remains dead capital. The poor people in these countries, which construct the great majority of the population, have a lot of assets but no process for representing it and turning it into capital. They have crops but no documentation, they have businesses but no company by-laws and they have houses but no title deeds, contemporary economic situation that de Soto calls 'the Mystery of Capital'. De Soto deflates western world arguments about the fail of capitalism in developing countries stating it's rather a blindness and taking this system for granted that makes the western world unwilling to understand the mechanism of how and why capitalism is or isn't working around the globe. This unawareness, de Soto claims, makes European and American leaders come up with foolish explanations of why capitalism, time after time, fails in the developing countries, foolish explanations sound accordingly; they have not undergone the protestant reformation, they're paralyzed by the heritage of European colonization, their inhabitants are lazy and lack sense of entrepreneurship or they simply have less IQ. As de Soto states, these explanations are not only inhuman, they are also false. The cities of the third world are packed with entrepreneurs, inhabitants of these countries are enthusiastic and clever and they often have the amazing capability of creating profit out of practically nothing. One of the reasons for their poverty and the fail of capitalism is simply their inability to create capital. Capital is the force that increases the productivity of the labour-force and what shapes the nations wealth. De Soto explains that the problem that most developing countries have in common is their obsolete and complicated legislation. People in general want their everyday life and existence to be part of the formal

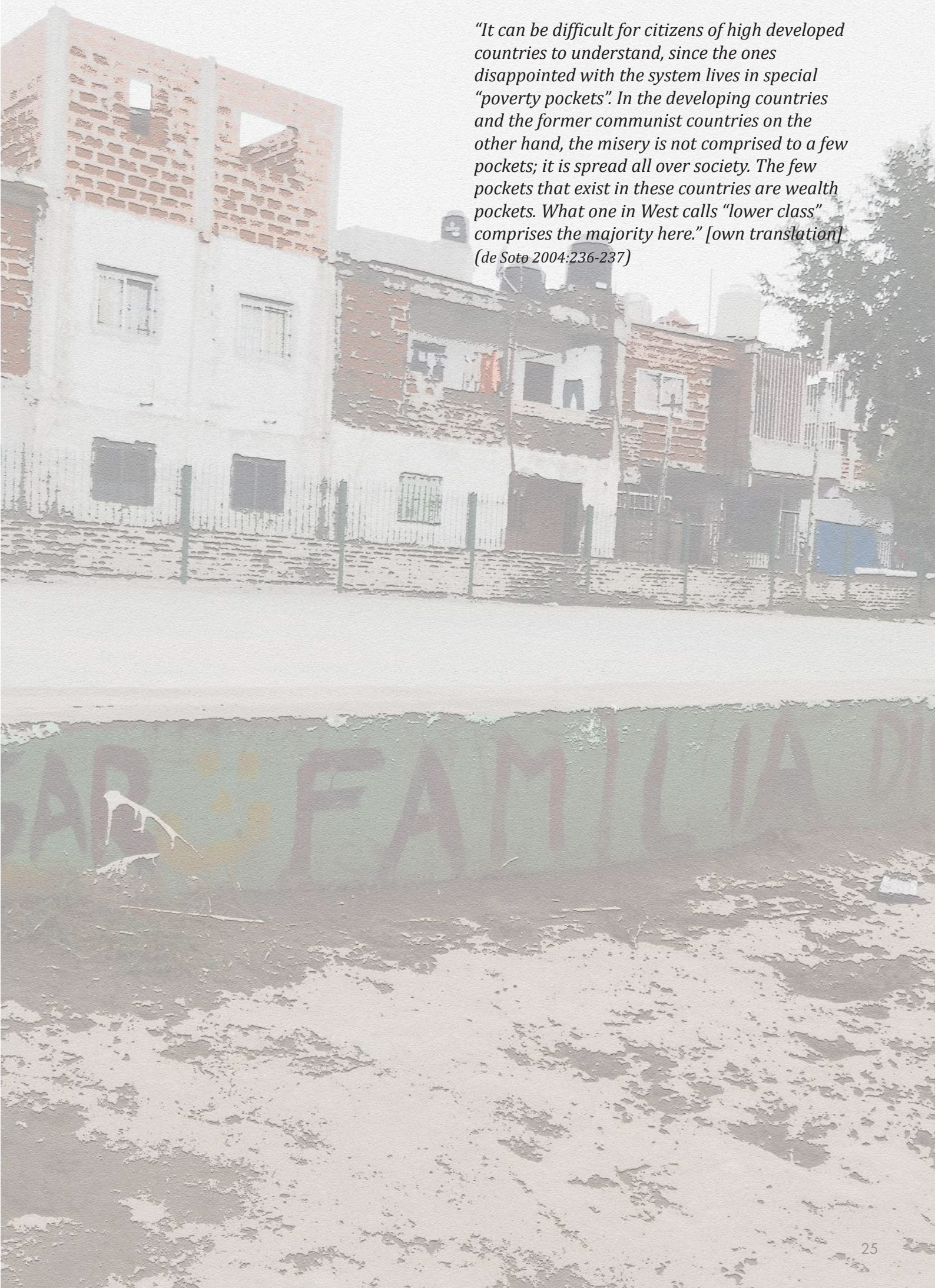
system, but bureaucracy and complicated laws make it almost impossible. This causes expansion of informal economies with informal settlements, informal businesses, informal labour and informal ownerships. De Soto shows examples from his own country, in Lima, where his research team has gone through all the bureaucracy and steps that it takes to legally acquire a dwelling. This experiment reveals that it takes over 6 years to get a legal permit to build a house on state owned land, going through 207 administrative steps at 52 different authorities. To gain legacy for this plot it took over 728 steps. Similar examples are shown from Egypt, Philippines and Haiti, where inhabitants have to go through legislative processes in hundreds of steps, at side-splitting numbers of authorities, for more than decades to legalize their property or business. De Soto describes in simple and detailed manners several reasons of how the situation and mystery of capitalism has become what it is today. He runs through politics and urbanisation since the industrialisation in Europe and USA, comparing it with similar, yet delayed processes and dynamics found in the developing countries. His construe reveals that there are many lessons to learn from the developed world and their introduction to capitalism.

In the light of migration, de Soto displays how the inability of legal systems to adapt to and take even steps with the economic and social upturn, has enhanced discrimination and economic injustice of migrating groups. Rural-urban migration has been very common in developing countries in recent decades often caused by agriculture crisis. Additionally, infrastructural improvements have also helped facilitate the migration in these countries with; new communication ways (radio, TV, internet etc.), centralisation of power, higher wages and the access to education in cities. The expansion of the formal cities has not taken even steps with the migration to cities which we see in the major expansion of informal settlements in developing countries. Many people have been forced to work and live in systems outside the law since the legal way often is to complicated or out of reach for majority of the poor population. The amount of illegal land occupation is seen in the expansion of informal cities around the world. In Peru the informal agglomerations are called *pueblos jóvenes*, in Brazil *favelas*, in Mexico *barrios marginales*, Venezuela's *ranchos* as well as shantytowns in many other developing countries. The majority of these nation's economies are comprised of dead capital, found in the informal sectors and everything indicates that the informal sector is just going to increase. Consequently, informality can no longer be seen as separate discipline or problem, it has to be dealt with from a holistic perspective. De Soto argues that it is a matter of political will and legislative development to change these conditions and to really see the opportunity of incorporating the informal sectors into the formal economies. The challenge that developing countries face is an enormous one. Reformation of legislation and incorporation of the informal sector has been done before, haply two centuries ago in Europe. It is a total waste to promote open economies when the current situation only gains small and globalised elites and exclude most of humanity.

Even though Argentina is not classified as a developing country, de Soto gives us some explanations to forces that can have caused informal growth in Buenos Aires. As displayed later in this thesis, global economic crisis has hit hard in Argentina during recent decades, additionally the migration from rural areas and neighbouring countries has been significant. The prejudice from formal dwellers against informal dwellers is a contributing factor to the stigmatisation and marginalisation of these inhabitants, and one can easily see similarities in the global perspective of the patronizing attitude from western world countries towards developing ones.



*"It can be difficult for citizens of high developed countries to understand, since the ones disappointed with the system lives in special "poverty pockets". In the developing countries and the former communist countries on the other hand, the misery is not comprised to a few pockets; it is spread all over society. The few pockets that exist in these countries are wealth pockets. What one in West calls "lower class" comprises the majority here." [own translation] (de Soto 2004:236-237)*





# INVESTIGATING THE PARTICULAR

*In this section, in relation to the method of the deviant transect, some relevant discourses on the topic of knowledge-production and site specific design is presented.*

*“Rather than being stuck science in some kind of autonomous sphere, science becomes a form of knowing-through-experiencing” (Ette 2012:218)*

## \_Alexander von Humboldt and the Americas

On site explorations and choice of method (deviant transect) in Buenos Aires have been severely influenced by the work of the Prussian geographer and explorer, Alexander von Humboldt. Though he lived and was operative over 200 years ago, materials from his travels and studies offer some interesting ideas for fieldwork today. Due to lack of English translation of his efforts, Humboldt's work has just recently been acknowledged. In the introductory chapter of *Alexander von Humboldt and the Americas* (2012), Vera M. Kutzinski et al describes why academia and scholars of today could gain a lot by taking influences from the quite unknown Humboldt. Social sciences scholars have during the last decades started to re-discover the work of this great European transareal traveller, and his importance for 19th century research of ecology, linguistics, and aesthetics. Kutzinski et al describe the values of Humboldt's writing where the width of findings and discussions makes it easily related to many disciplines, that there is always something that everyone can relate to and use for their own pursuits:

What makes Humboldt's writings so unusual and compelling - as well as frustrating to some readers - is his penchant for relating everything to everything, which typically produces a flood of incredible diverse observational details flung across global geographies without a straight narrative trajectory [...] To resort to several anachronisms we may say that Humboldt approached the study of natural phenomena, human cultures and societies, and the very concepts of nature, culture and civilization, from a transdisciplinary and transareal perspective. He integrated them all, not into a seamless whole (system or schema) but into a dynamic work of art made up by carefully balanced and interconnected moving parts-what Ottmar Ette calls “Mobile des Wissen”, a mobile of knowledge (Ette 2009b). (Kutzinski et al 2012:9)

The process of layering vastly different scales, topics, disciplines and thoughts are not as common today due to the fragmentation of academia and epistemology in the distinction between disciplines, distinctions not yet existing at Humboldt's time. His way of working brings up relevant questions about epistemological and academic divisions, revealing the benefits and multi faceted ways of what we would today call interdisciplinary approach. Kutzinski et al shows us how the legacy of Humboldt can inspire us to reconnect the human with the natural and the social science, focusing more on what is in German called “Wissenschaft”, in French “les sciences” and in English what simplified can be called “knowledge production” (Kutzinski et al. 2012:9).

In today's global world, Humboldt's perspectives and tools in

accordance with what the authors call his “world openness” (2012:10) could be useful resources when addressing problems with social injustice, environmental devastation and global climate change.

Humboldt's analyses and commentaries are fundamentally rooted in local *particulars* [italic mine], and making them “general” is a logical consequence both of his far flung comparative approach to knowledge production and his desire for intellectually participating in, and contributing to, a larger world-larger in a planetary sense and larger also because its benefits were to reach beyond academia into the public sphere. (Kutzinski et al. 2012:10-11)

In politics and academia, in a will to describe and process phenomena, we continuously apply simplified binaries. Kutzinski et al argues that one of the most obvious of these binaries is that of the “local” and the “global”. Instead of focusing on presumed oppositions and relentlessness, they mean that Humboldt's writings compel us to pay attention to the interplay of varies phenomena, disciplines, politics, nations and cultures. In this trans areal approach new perspectives can be found leading to other understandings, leading to valuable knowledge production.


In a latter chapter of the book, Ottmar Ette (2012) sketches the concept of “Humboldtian science”, underlining that the knowledge of Humboldt is always empirically grounded in his travel experiences:

Part of Humboldt's research agenda are the different areas of what he called “science exactes”, along with the investigation of anthropological and social, political and economic, linguistic, historical, literary, cartographic, and broadly cultural phenomena [...] it is a slightly innovative concept of science in which radically different disciplines and areas of knowledge are dynamically put in relation to one another. The Humboldtian concept of science is best described as a science that is at once transdisciplinary, intercultural, cosmopolitan, and fractal. (Ette 2012:215)

To sum up his way of thinking, Ette displays a quote written in Humboldt's travel diary in time for his first transcontinental travel to the Americas ““Alles ist Wechselwirkung” – “everything is interrelated”” (Ette 2012:216)

In the work with this thesis I've found the explanations of Humboldt's trans-areal and interdisciplinary work very relevant. Not only to justify the very qualitative way of working but also to emphasise the importance, for knowledge production, of actual immersion on site, in my case two months living, working and transecting in Buenos Aires.





*"...I would like to posit that in traditional design practice, the "proper way to see" has historically been guided by principles that seek to master site, and that this desire to master contributes to, and reinforces the habitual practices of "overlooking" (Kahn 1996:181)*

## \_Overlooking Site

The American scholar Andrea Kahn (1996) displays some interesting thoughts of how architectural practice often neglect or miss out site-specific values. She discusses how common practice often tends to focus on how the designer can master and control site, affecting the time spent on analysing site. Site is seen as a passive object, more or less containing predefined meanings that are easily taken away or erased in the favour of the site maker, the designer. Kahn means that this way of creating pseudo-empirical and pre-design documents is how design practice is neglecting site as an existing place filled with meaning and relations, temporal and static, varied in scale and in time. She argues that this is a way of "overlooking" site.

Kahn relates the power relations between site and the designer with theories of gender studies and patriarchal control "...the relationship between maker and site (embodied by operations of overlooking) has historically been one of domination, analogous to the "enclosure of women in men's conceptual universe" (1996:181). The representational way of analysing site, Kahn argues is easily compared with how gender studies describe the patriarchal relationship between the one in control, the man (the maker) and the passive object, the woman (the site). She means that the business as usual of overlooking analysis of site, flattens and creates vague representation of it. To break free from the patriarchal control present in modern design practice, Kahn suggests another way of reading site, an explicitly subjective way of reading and analysing site detaching site from boundaries and similarities of property, what she calls site constructions.

With site construction Kahn wants us to appreciate instead of depreciate site, hence stop business as usual production of pre-design and pseudo-empirical documents and aim for analysis and actual site understandings:

...site constructions neither search out nor represent a lack. They consider site not as an empty vessel, but a source of meaning. For design practice, this suggests existing conditions be respected and utilised rather than treated as dispensable obstacles standing in the way of some pre-determined plan. In terms of gender, site is no longer construed as a passive receptacle. (Kahn 1996:182)

Finally, Kahn concludes in explaining that site construction breaks us free from the illusion of contained and controllable sites, thus its gender implications, and in this defines site as something else than property, something that should not be minimised to and conceived as an passive object, but as something larger and more dynamic, as mobile ground:

In terms of design practice, this shift dislocates repressive design methods held in place by more divisive analysis methods – powers that seek to break site down in preparation for its colonisation by designs announced in a rhetoric of patriarchal control. Here, the maker no longer dominates, but instead negotiates and even co-operates with unforgettable site forces that can never be brought entirely under control. (1996:184-185)

Kahn's descriptions are related to the critique of master plans in urban planning. In pre-defined, inflexible plans the negotiation with site is often lost. In relation to Buenos Aires and informal settlements, it seems like generic design solutions are often applied when interventions are made in informal settlements when upgrading these areas.





## FROM THE GROUND UP

*The following section treats some contemporary influences in urban planning, encouraging participation and experimental mind-sets. Finally, on the topic of integration some contemporary Swedish ideas of socio-ecological urban development are displayed.*

### \_Creativity and the City

Embracing and encouraging grass-root initiatives can be an important factor in city-planning. In his essay *Creativity and the City - Thinking Through the Steps* (2007), the urban planning-consultant Charles Landry, reminds us of the importance to break free from business as usual when constructing and re-constructing the urban. In his text he describes creativity as a method in urban change and shows the importance of working across disciplines. Creativity might not be the answer to all urban problems but it forces people to change their mind-set and enable other ways to find new solutions. Urban creativity requires a strong ethical framework to achieve progress in the right direction. It is important to face the cities obstacles honestly and reconfigure, reposition and represent where the city stands. Ambiance and atmosphere are key elements for a creative environment and to create some kind of platform where activities can take place and develop. Landry call these platforms milieus, which is a combination of hard and soft infrastructure. The hard consists of road, buildings and physical things, the soft the interactions between people; the intangible feelings people have about a place. For the inhabitants and users it is important that they get the feeling of being an active participant rather than a passive consumer.

Landry is also referring to Jane Jacobs's maxim of the

importance of diversity in a public space with four crucial conditions; the diversity of activities, fine grain of urban form, diversity of building stock and the critical mass of people. He is adding the diversity of experiences and mentions that it is the main element to create a vibrant surrounding, as well as the diversity of built form creating visual stimulation. This is not only in the responsibility of city planners and designers but those who form the regulations. Landry is suggesting to ask what kind of city do we want to be and how should we get there? The Creative City idea claims that if conditions are right, ordinary people can make the extra ordinary happen if given the chance, but keeping in mind that it is a dynamic process, not an end result.

Culture activities such as art, dance and music are very present in the Argentinian culture, both folklore and contemporary such. Incorporation of culture events and activities in transformation and integration between formal and informal areas could be a useful addition in physical and social change. Authorities, NGO's and other actors working in the informal settlements of Buenos Aires, are more frequently offering some culture activities for the inhabitants of these areas when making interventions.





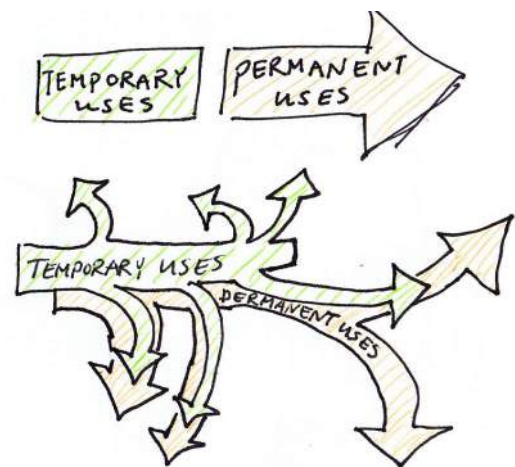
Temporal activities as protest and seed of questioning

Picture source from <http://onwardstate.com/2011/09/15/concrete-to-green-parking-day-comes-to-state-college/> than further graphically altered by author

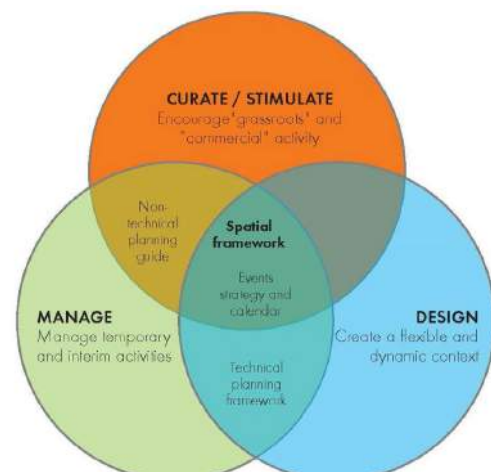
## \_The Temporary City

In recent years there has been a growing interest among practitioners, of urban design and planning, for temporary actions and activities in urban development. These 'meanwhile', pop up and regeneration uses are presented and extensively discussed in the book *The Temporary City*, by Peter Bishop and Lesley Williams (2012). The book gives concrete examples in Europe and North America for opportunities in the temporary landscape and as a consequence, the possible benefits for a place. It shows the increasing trend of temporary use as a strong contrast to the city development with master plans, permanent structures and long-term strategies. Bishop et al argue for a more flexible approach in planning to understand the city as a place under constant revision with room to move and space for the unexpected. It could be used as a tool through how initiatives can be drip-fed for incremental change. Temporal activities and events enable involvement and feedback from the actual users of a place. It is not only a beneficial way to create seeds for site-transformation, in terms of economic sustainability temporal activities are cheaper than static permanent interventions, and creates a foundation for an active appreciated place. We need to recognise that part of the city development should be left up to natural succession, where the community plays a major role in the construction of society and allow new activities and thrive.

In relation to Buenos Aires, temporal activities are present features in the formal city with events in public space such as free leisure activities, concerts, food trucks and markets. In upgrading projects and when trying to bridge the formal and informal areas, there's a possibility to extend the use of temporal activities and involve inhabitants of the informal urban areas as well.



Temporary activities as springboard for permanent design and use



Framework for Temporal Activities according to Bishop (2014). Picture by Peter Bishop (Bishop 2014:69).



## \_Socio-Ecological Urban Development – Concepts and Local Practice

In the Global North during recent years, sustainability has been a buzzword in urban planning. Sweden is often pointed out as a forefront nation in terms of sustainable urban development. The term sustainability has often been criticised for being vague and diffuse, thus a three-folded description is referred to; ecological, social and economic sustainability. These three legs are often extracted and evaluated separately (Bradley et al 2015). As a response to this division, Swedish researchers Karin Bradley, Ulrika Gunnarsson-Östling and Moa Thunström has written the book *Socio-ecological Urban Development – Concepts and Local Practice* (2015), as the title indicate they want to show the interrelations between social and ecological sustainable development. The book's supposed to work as a handbook for practitioners and scholar in urban planning. The authors guides us through the brindle histories of the sustainability concept, finally leading to the concept that they now encourage us to use; Socio-ecological urban development.

Sustainable development is a universal concept, which derives from many different disciplines. Even though ideas and practices of sustainability was nothing new, the concept and expression got widely known through the Brundtland report from 1987, where sustainable development is defined as an development that satisfies today's need without sacrificing the opportunities for future generations to satisfy theirs. As with many versatile expressions, the definitions are many and different. Behind the concept of sustainable development lied an accelerated worry for environmental destruction and ideas about the possible limits of economic growth. At the time, the pragmatic solution through the Brundtland report was to advocate for economic growth as answer to both over- and under-consumption, which led to a mayor focus on technologies and potentiation. This paradox has led to many interpretations of the concept of sustainability. Even though sustainable development can be understood as a uniting concept, which protects the environment and untangles conflicts between economic and social development, it is said that there's seldom any consensus about the definition of it and some argues that the concept is worn out and have lost all meaning. Instead of understanding sustainable development as a meaningless concept, Bradley et al stress the importance of defining the word according to its context and project (e.g. building project, infrastructure development, farming, planning process etc.). The variation of interpretations gives various views on, in which degree socioeconomic development conflicts with protection of the environment (Bradley et al 2015).

### \_Ecological Sustainability

In the case of ecological sustainability there are variations of understandings; neoclassical explanations which argues that there's no fundamental conflict between economic growth and environmental protection; and other more reductionist ideas, but which still supports the idea of compatibility between economic growth and environmental protection. These understandings are rooted in the idea that nature and ecological values can be quantitatively measured and translated into monetary values, to enable balancing and/or punishing systems when nature resources are overused. The ideas in traditional ecology are fundamentally different, here the nature is seen as something that has to be protected from the negative effects caused by economic activities, thus the understanding that socioeconomic development, one way or another, always will consume natural capital (Bradley et al 2015).

A more contemporary ecological discourse discusses fact that the human being is the leading agent for environmental change on our planet. It is a fact that human activities are globally affecting the earth's climate and ecosystems, to the extent that we've now entered a new geological epoch – The Anthropocene. In the Anthropocene ecosystems and humans can no longer be seen as separately existing, in this epoch it is acknowledged that the human beings are part of the ecosystems and have a great impact on them. Administration of the socio-ecological systems is important to secure ecosystem-services (Bradley et al 2015).

Another interesting ecological concept is the one of environmental justice, which Bradley et al describes as:

...perspectives that focuses on conflicts, power and justice in relation to environmental issues. It particularly focuses on which groups in society (locally and globally) generate environmental problems, and which groups suffer from them. Drawing attention to problems is fundamental, as are the opportunities for more groups to participate in and influence processes that affect our shared environment. (Bradley et al 2014:31)

In a field study from a Swedish city, it was shown that children from areas with socio-economic low status also live in the most polluted areas, whilst children from wealthier areas of high socio-economic status live in the least polluted areas. Environmental justice is applicable for planning processes but the amount of actual justice is often dependent on planners and

## ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Ecosystem services is a fairly new concept now frequently used in planning (new in the terms of word-construction not the actual phenomena). According to Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (Naturvårdsverket). It is a uniting expression used to describe relations and processes in ecosystems that forms services that contributes to the well-being of human beings. It's a concept deriving from a purely anthropocentric perspective which only regards the advantage points for the human being, evaluations of ecosystem services is crucial to enable integration of it in decision-making processes (Naturvårdsverket, 2014).

politicians understanding of justice. Environmental justice can be divided into three areas of justice-perspective; distributive justice, procedural justice and rights perspective. The first mainly deals with distribution of environmental problems, the second addresses democratic issues and social groups possibility partake in decision-making processes affecting the environment and the third regards minimum norms for environmental rights. Bradley et al means that when it comes to distributive justice one has to consider what it is that is going to be allocated, similarly in procedural justice one have to consider who to engage in the process since many environmental problems are not only local e.g. problems with green-house-gas emissions (Bradley et al 2015).

### Social Sustainability

Aspects such as well-being, community, balance in everyday life and life-quality often fall under the umbrella of social sustainability. Community and sense of belonging are other aspects that are connected to a socially sustainable neighbourhood, as well as place identity, which is often used as a term in environmental psychology describing the sense of feeling proud and attached to a place (e.g. a city, neighbourhood or house)(Bradley et al 2015).

With social sustainability in urban development questions of democracy, distribution and justice has to be addressed as well as social norms and differences. To better understand the concept in planning one can divide it into two parts; socially sustainable planning processes and justice perspective. The first directs democratic issues, participation and involvement whilst the latter regards distribution of amenities, services, infrastructure, housing renovations, innovations etc.

In social sustainability one often talk about social capital, social mix, social and cohesiveness. Social capital is often used on an individual and group level and regards social ties to community, work, school, other people, to have support and networks. Strong social capital is very important for social sustainability. Social mix is often discussed in terms of integration in a city or neighbourhood, where people of different class and background have the same possibility to have job, a place to live thus can live mixed with each other. Social cohesiveness sounds a bit like a counterpart to social mix but is essentially a term used in region-political context, aiming at minimizing the socio-economic differences between people in a region, to minimize internal conflicts and enhance global competitiveness (Bradley et al 2015).

In contemporary planning discourses the social aspects of social sustainability are now addressed more comprehensively. Obstacles and possibilities with integration, social justice, participation, well-being and engagement are factors that are crucial to reach a socio-ecological urban development. Today urban planning work with many visionary goals and documents, and social sustainability is one of those goals, at the same time we can see an insecurity in how to deal with this concept on a local level. There are several examples from around the world where there have recently been built environmental-profile neighbourhoods that all lack when it comes to social integration and needs of different social groups. Consequently Bradley et al stresses the importance of bridging the social and ecological aspects of sustainable urban development to reach new levels of sustainability (Bradley et al 2015).

### Socio-Ecologic Development on a Local Scale

Further on, the authors state examples of interventions and practices for a local socio-ecological urban development such as; promoting cycling culture, create shared and non-commercial spaces, reduction of environmentally harmful consumption, citizen participation through environmental pedagogy, linking security to sustainability, cultivate for sustainable development, awareness of consequences of rent increases, sustainable technological and recourse savings, local sun and wind power, supporting local economies and co-production of the urban environment. Finally, Bradley et al puts socio-ecological development in a wider perspective, discussing ideas and solutions of socio-ecological practice in the future.

The handbook is written from a Swedish perspective, nevertheless there are interesting thoughts that can be applicable in urban planning around the world. In relating the concept of sustainability to the prescribed context, in the case of this study, the city of Buenos Aires, there's a possibility to achieve socio-ecological urban development. Lack of socio-ecological development is very present in the informal settlements of Buenos Aires, where environmental injustice, caused by precarious landscape and dwellings, are a substantial element of everyday life. Moreover, sustainable development is not significantly visible in the formal areas, particularly not with the remarkable presence of vehicular traffic.

# LANDSCAPE REPRESENTATIONS

*In this final section of the theories chapter, three dispersed publications on the topic of landscape representations are displayed. The publications are presented in chronological order in an attempt to give an indication of the contemporary development of landscape representations.*

## \_Design with Nature

In *Design with Nature* (1992/1969), the Scottish landscape architect Ian Mc Harg investigates the values of land, nature and landscape. The legacy of this book has been prominent in landscape architecture and urban planning. The evaluation processes and step-by-step like procedure of how to evaluate land use in terms of suitability for conservation, recreation and urbanization. The working procedure used in *Design with Nature* is what lay the foundation for Geographical Information System (GIS), a digital tool frequently used in urban planning today. The book, which was the first one of its kind in addressing ecological values, has had major impact on other professional fields as well.

In *Design with Nature*, one of the chapters display an evaluation of suitable lands uses from Staten Island, outside New York. His study includes a number of inventories of ecological values such as geological, soil conditions, hydrology, wildlife habitats, existing vegetation and so on, producing a rich information bank of values that may encourage a certain use and development whilst restricting others. Evaluation of the data indicated prospected land use of recreational, conservational, residential or industrial commercial character. The evaluations result are in the book displayed as colourful maps where colour and brightness of each character indicates the suitable usage. In *Design with Nature*, regarding the Staten Island land use evaluation, Mc Harg comments that it is one of the most elaborate studies he has undertaken and that "it does offer some hope for a planning process that is rational, explicit, replicatable and can employ the values of the community in its development." (Mc Harg 1992/1969:115).

His publication may be old but his ways of observing landscape and the values of nature/landscape is still evident. As he states himself the most valuable innovation could be the way of addressing "zoning" and functional separation of land use. Written in the late sixties of post-modernism era, the ideas of complementary land use with ecological and social values incorporated in the evaluation tool could be understood as a direct respond to the Modernistic ideas that, since after WWII and until then had great global influence on urban planning. Today's global planning-trends with densification, diversification of the mixed city could be seen as a development from Mc Harg's ideas of complementary land use:

Nature is process and values inhibiting both limitations and opportunities for human use. (Mc Harg 1992/69:105)

However, these ambitious evaluations, with integration of some "soft values" tend to form landscape representations in charts, diagrams and plans; representations which can be beneficial

in decision-making processes in planning. Nevertheless, the visual expression is associated with positivism and quantitative research measures easily deceiving the reader to understand it as the pure reality, hard facts, and black on white. The heritage in landscape architecture practice from Mc Harg's way of measuring and representing landscapes leans more towards the quantitative in its rationalistic and repeatable methods. Consequently, complementary landscape representations with emphasis on site-specific qualities and features are essential to widen the understanding of landscape. In the terms of Buenos Aires, the presence of GIS -maps and analysis visualisations as major visual communication tool has been noticeable. Thus, it is partly from these observations my intentions of creating extended qualitative cartographies derives.

## \_Imaging New York – Representations and Perceptions of the City

"Representations are powerful formulations." (Kahn 2001:237) Representations of the city are often rationalised to the extent that they can be seen as a "concept" for it. As the words imply, rationalize and concept leaves many aspects unrevealed. A city is a complex and diverse landscape and therefore deserves representations of the same dignity. Problematising these representations of "concept-cities", Andrea Kahn discuss two examples from New York; the 1960's "Panorama of New York" and the Business Improvement District (BID), practiced since the late 90's until today. Robert Moses' "Panorama" was a 1:100 scale model of the five boroughs of New York. In contrast to former exhibited models, this one claimed to show the real image of New York. Displayed in the model was most of the park commissioner Moses' realised and planned, modernist large-scale projects. Highways lightly coloured with adjacent large green spaces these also in eye-catching vivid colours showed a glorified picture of the city. In reality these green spaces, portrayed as quality public spaces, were inaccessible dead zones. Ecological, social and dynamic layers were totally neglected in Moses' model as well as its connection to the surrounding environments. Kahn argues that the "Panorama" representation was solely a tool for Moses to represent his ideals and career, a way to exert control. The BID is a legislative and financial mechanism that operates as a self-taxing enclave. Deriving from the 60's functionalism of "special districts", a BID separate itself from its surrounding in being a private cooperate entity. A BID can only be formed if the majority of a district wants it, though the majority and the power is connected to taxable value of land, thus a few big property owners can rule over many small ones. In 1982 the city of New York was authorized to create BIDs, since then many BIDs have





been founded. These corporations have a lot of power over the urban landscape. Kahn mentions some BIDs in Mid-town Manhattan, which make "improvements" and regulations that affect both the physical as well as the aesthetical landscape. Some BIDs have a lot of capital and therefore power, and are actively changing the landscape making it more accurate to the picture of a business and commercial district. Kahn means that a consequence of the way the BIDs are exerting control over the image of New York, is the development of a more homogeneous urban landscape.

Both examples that Kahn display, verify the initial quote, representations are powerful formulations. The "Panorama" and BIDs are representations and applications of control, significant to the ideals of their time, Moses' Modernism and BIDs as a product of neo-liberalism. Today's fierce competition in branding and profiling cities is a great example of the neo-liberalistic forces in landscape representations. Is the car drivers image of the city, represented in all brochures and adds about the Bike-city Copenhagen? Where is the place for the labour worker in the business and commercial hub of New York? What is included in the representations of Buenos Aires, "the Paris of South America"?

As in many cities, the heritage from different planning eras is significant in the structure of Buenos Aires; the colonial power-centre and the grid, the zoning and concentration of industries along the river Riachuelo, the boulevards and central axis, the enormous green city parks, the modernistic infrastructure systems with highways and airports, the informal settlements, the gated communities and the transformed harbour-scapes in luxury district as Puerto Madero to mention a few. In Buenos Aires these appear as layers of time, which sometimes merges and sometimes nearly repel each other.

## \_Urban Cuttings: Sections and Crossings

The French architect and researcher Frédéric Pousin has made several research works on urban landscape and the epistemological value of visual representation in architecture and urbanism. In the chapter *Urban Cuttings: Sections and Crossings* from the book *Landscape, Vision, Motion* (2012) he emphasises the importance of varied tools and perspectives in landscape representation. Pousin encourages us to break free from the idea of boundaries of certain urbanism to expand the view and dialogues of urban territory; in order to approach and deal with territory as more of a dynamic conception of routes and crossings that involves several space and time spectrum. Among professionals in urbanism (i.e. architects and

landscape architects) there's a wish and exploration for tools of representing the dynamic conceptions of urbanism. Among tools involving video-graphics, photo graphics and cartographies, Pousin states that "the urban transects" have lead to a lot of exploration and investigations. The urban transects present the vertical circumstances of space compared to the map, which only shows a projection of it on a horizontal surface. The shift between these representations of space requires a different view of space as well as relationship to it. While the map requires global vision, transects as well as sections and crossings are based on a certain route, a certain "cutting" of the landscape (urban or not). Pousin presents several examples of transects, sections and crossings used historically as well as in contemporary investigations and projects, arguing that the transect is a form of diagram representation; a representation that breaks down large quantity of information to articulate the main structures. As diagrams have no scale they can show many time and space realities.

Additionally Pousin describes representations of crossings. Crossings are also a form of "cutting", though different from transects in the way that they involve body movements, confronted to a milieu. To represent crossings can be complex and diverse, he exemplifies with a crossing made through townscape in the UK, in which the material involved photo-graphics, journalistic text and captions, images, sections and maps. With the sections as well as the crossing, space is no longer a flat surface. The transect as a schematic representation can be a good tool for communication between different actors and crossings as a way of exploring can reveal many circumstances of a milieu as well as encourage discovery. Pousin argues that urban transects can be a way of articulating and mobilizing knowledge as well as producing knowledge about the urban milieu.

As with the deviant transect, the main fieldwork method in this study, Pousin's "urban transect" put emphasis on the designers immersion on site. Knowledge is produced through bodily experience when physically crossing a landscape, these sensorial experiences are often difficult to communicate and translate to non-site materials. From transecting the urban landscape of Buenos Aires I inhabit bodily experiences of that landscape; the intense soundscape from highways and airplanes, the powerful heat from the sun, the pulse and rhythm of certain streets and districts, the smell and taste from parilla foodtrucks and sight of locals just sitting down contemplating over a cup of Maté in the park.



## **CHAPTER 2: HISTORIES**

*Understanding Argentina's past is paramount to understanding its present. With its turmoil history of colonisation, undemocratic rule and corruption this country has gone through a lot to get where it is today. To understand the contemporary polarities and dynamics of the Argentinian landscape and society one has to recognise some of its history.*



A world map with a red dot in Argentina. A semi-transparent grey box in the top left contains the text "\_Brief History of Argentina & Buenos Aires". The map shows the continents and oceans, with a red dot marking the location of Buenos Aires in Argentina. A vertical dashed line runs through the map, and a horizontal dashed line runs across the middle.

## \_Brief History of Argentina & Buenos Aires





The Spanish colonisation of what today is called Argentina began in the 16th century (Landguiden 2014). Europeans arrive in the region with the voyage of Amerigo Vespucci, and shortly after that, Spain established its first colony in the area that today is known as Buenos Aires (Michigan University 2014). The colonizers brutally displaced and killed most of the indigenous people who formerly lived in the area. The strategic port location have made Buenos Aires a wanted spot since its foundation and during its history several attempts have been made trying to take control over Buenos Aires (Bao 2014). The area of Buenos Aires became included in the two vice-royalties of Peru and Río de la Plata. The latter claimed its independence in 1816, but it wasn't until about half a century later that the republic of Argentina was founded. Alleviations of trade-laws led to many foreign investments and rise in export of kettle, sheep and cereal products. The prosperity attracted many European immigrants from e.g. Spain, Italy and Germany, people in search for a better life. In the end of the 19th century, poor immigrants kept on flooding into Buenos Aires, nearly doubling the city's population to one million residents. The industrial sector couldn't absorb all the immigrants and their need, which led to widening of the gap between the rich and the poor (Landguiden 2014). Between 1870 and 1920, Buenos Aires population consisted of more than a 50% foreigners. The great urbanization rate led to a change in the cities physical structure during this time. The former expression of typical colonial style was transformed into a city influenced by monumentality and modernization (deeply swayed by Haussmann's renovation of Paris in the mid 1800's), where old colonial houses were torn down, mayor streets widened and urban services improved. At the same time, south of the formal city centre, an informal urbanisation was taking place around the river mouth of Riachuelo, in the workingclass district called La Boca. Consequently, Buenos Aires growth during the late 1800's and early 1900's was taking place from two central points manifested in distinctly different ways; one with socio-economic low status in the informal settlements of La Boca and the other of socio-economic high status in the formal city centre, where monuments and boulevards manifested the prosperity of Argentinian economy (Janches<sup>2</sup> 2015). Around this time

(beginning of 1900's) mayor export of goods to Europe had made the new republic of Argentina one of the richest countries in the world. At the same time new radical political parties gained influence and after the world economic depression of 1929, the Argentinian economy got many problems and experienced massive decay leading to great political instability and military rule taking power in 1930 and 1943. When the first elections were held in Argentina, after the coup in 1943, one of the coup-plotters, Juan Domingo Perón, won and became president. The Peronist movement came to dominate Argentine politics. In 1955 he was deposed by the military and went into exile, but was able to return to power in 1973. Situation in the country became increasingly polarized and 1976, the military seized power again. The junta took a hard line against government critics and perhaps as many as 30,000 people may have been killed (Landguiden 2014).

The dictatorship, and the era that is called La Guerra Sucia (eng. "the Dirty War"), saw its end when Argentina in 1982 made a failed attempt to seize the Falkland Islands from Britain, which became the fall of the military junta and the year after, in 1983, democracy was restored. In the early 2000 's, the country went into an acute economic crisis, which also affected politics. A recovery began in 2003 when Néstor Kirchner was elected president. The presidential election in 2007 brought Cristina Fernández de Kirchner to power, where she succeeded her husband, Néstor Kirchner presidency. Both belonged to the Victory Front, a left faction of the Peronist-party, the political movement that dominated Argentine politics for many years (Landguiden 2014).

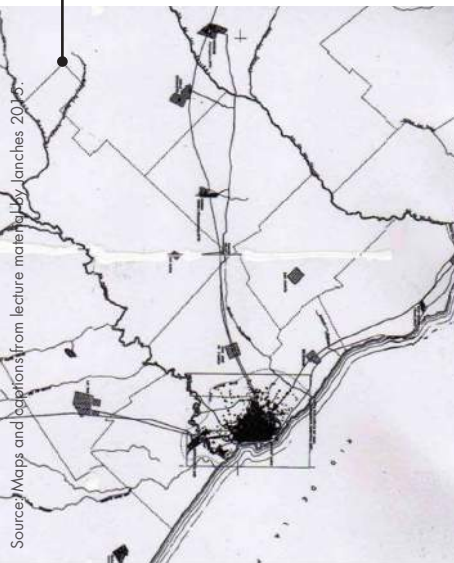
Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's first year in power was marked by conflicts with farmers protesting against the increasing export taxes on agricultural goods and she lost popularity. 2011, opinion turned and she was re-elected as president (Landguiden 2014). In 2014 the country failed to complete a debt coupon payment to the IMF and defaulted for the second time in 12 years and it was announced that Argentina's economy had officially entered recession (Economist 2014a). New presidential elections are held in autumn 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Conversation with Flavio Janches Architect and Associate Professor in Architecture, Facultad de Arquitectura, Diseño y Urbanismo, Universidad de Buenos Aires; February 27th 2015, March 30th 2015, April 8th 2015



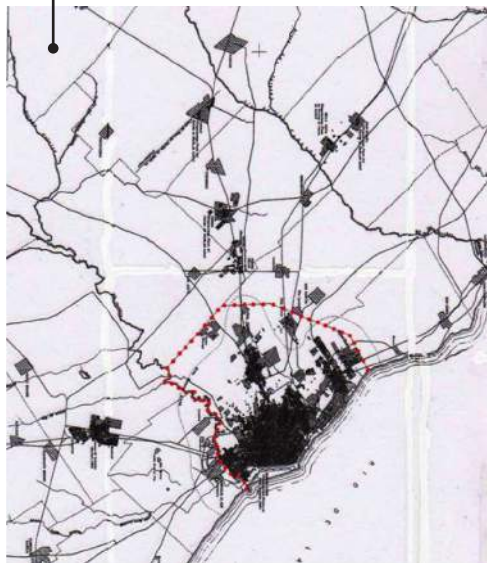
Buenos Aires<sup>1</sup>, 1870.  
Population: 180.000 people.

The railway begins a slow suburban expansion in three branches (North, West and South). But the city is still a small city concentrated around its historical core.



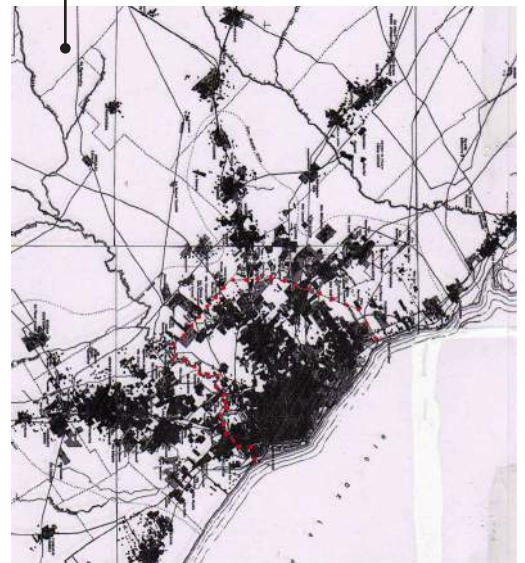
Buenos Aires, 1895.  
Population: c. 600.000 people.

The Capital city has already been demarcated and the public grid has been traced. The expansion inside the Capital city has begun. The grid allows an unlimited expansion, producing a flat and extensive city which evenly prolongs over the Pampas.



Buenos Aires, 1910.  
Population: 1.300.000 people.

The electric Tramway, with low rates, combines with the low prizes of the lots in development. This helps the formation of a new suburban crown of popular neighborhoods inside the Capital. The three branches of metropolitan expansion are consolidated.



<sup>1</sup> Metropolitan Region of Buenos Aires



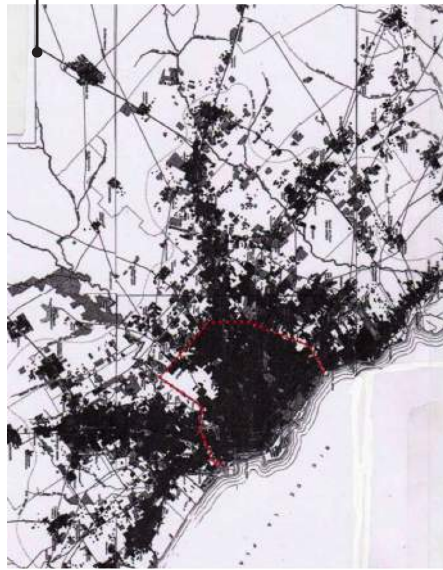
Buenos Aires, 1935.  
Population: c. 3.500.000 people.

Begins the second stage of the expansion, the "Great Buenos Aires", which will grow with the new population that comes from the inner Country and the bordering countries.



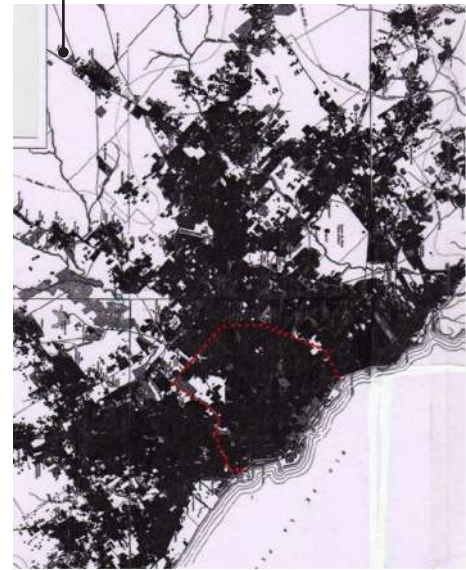
Buenos Aires, 1948.  
Population: c. 4.800.000 people.

Continued expansion of metropolitan region.



Buenos Aires, 1965.  
Population: c. 8.000.000 people.

The expansion is completed with massive lots, without public plans or infrastructure.





## \_Buenos Aires Today



Source: Based on a satellite image from [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8d/Buenos\\_Aires\\_city\\_and\\_vicinity\\_satellite\\_image\\_LandSat-5\\_2011-08-21\\_near\\_natural\\_colors\\_30\\_m\\_resolution.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8d/Buenos_Aires_city_and_vicinity_satellite_image_LandSat-5_2011-08-21_near_natural_colors_30_m_resolution.jpg) and further graphically altered by the author.



Buenos Aires, 2014  
Population: 13,076,300 people<sup>2</sup>

The Greater Metropolitan Region of Buenos Aires (GMRBA), consists of both the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and its surrounding municipalities. The region is one of the largest metropolitan areas in South America. The MRBA has increased its population by approximately 3 million new inhabitants over the last 20 years (Fernandez et al 2011). Most new inhabitants has been absorbed in the surrounding municipalities. The rapid population growth points to a series of urban problems. Challenges lies mostly in how to guide the urban growth, facilitating infrastructure, climate change adaptation, services and housing for all income groups (Janches et al 2014).

In 2014 the population of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires was estimated to 2,891,000<sup>2</sup> people.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: World Population Review (2015)





## \_The Fragmented City of Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires is a notorious example of what Latin American geographer Prévôt-Schapira calls the "divided metropolis." two factors, urbanization and poverty, contribute to a contentious territorial model that has undergone great changes in the past forty years. (Cuellar 2011: 24)

The urban dynamics of Latin America involves a lot of changes. With a history of colonisation, undemocratic leadership and economic crisis this continent still has to deal with a shroud of inequity (Janiches et al. 2011). Here we can find clearly fragmented cities with two opposing conditions, of formal and informal settlements. The physical segregation found in Latin American cities today can be connected to the physical organisation of Spanish colonial settlements; a central area for the church and aristocracy, surrounded by areas of craftspeople and an outer ring or peripheral area of the poor inhabitants. To understand Buenos Aires we have to add a layer of Haussmannian "linear growth" of boulevards, railways and monuments, which, as outlined above, took place around the shift 19th-20th century due to industrialisation, immigration and rapid urbanisation. With relatively strong zoning principles (residential, industrial, commercial etc.) the city developed along the important "lines". During the mid 1900's Buenos Aires, yet again, experienced a rapid growth of population, this time due to waves of rural immigration. During this period, spatial and social polarization between classes crystallised even more, which is evident in the

growth of informal settlements all around the city of Buenos Aires. The numbers of inhabitants of informal settlements increased to almost 180, 000 by the 1970's and has increased ever since. Industrial deprivation and decay in economy during the 80's created areas of "industry-cemeteries" along the districts, which at the time were considered peripheral areas (Cuellar, 2011). These former industrial grounds came to be the zones where mayor informal settlements was built during the 1990's-00's (Janiches<sup>3</sup> 2015). At the same time the 90's was the great decade of privatization (industry, electricity, housing, public transport etc.) and enclosed real-estate markets and developments, which led to an increase in inequality and poverty. During this period, corporate and private interests began to exploit the overall lack and fragility of territorial management. In addition, a major economic crisis happened in 2001, affecting a majority of Argentinians, and the contemporary city of Buenos Aires now shows the face of a fragmented city where marginalisation and stigmatization is highlighted in the growth of the informal settlements, the villas miserables (Cuellar, 2011):

The urban form of Buenos Aires can be structured into four periods: colonial (1550 to 1820), post-colonial (1820 to 1920), "polarized" (1920 to 1970), and "fragmented" (1970 to present). (Cuellar 2011: 24)



Panorama of central areas in east Buenos Aires. Here you see highrise-buildings of Palermo and the large park-areas of "Bosque Palermo" (eng. "Palermo Forest"), the skyline in the background consists of northern, wealthy districts and to the far right is a glimpse of Rio de la Plata.



Panorama from a villa miseria, named Los Piletones, in south Buenos Aires. In the background we see the houses, self-made and small-scale constructions built with the typical orange bricks and concrete. In the foreground we see the recently constructed multi-sport area, initiated by the government of Buenos Aires as part of urbanizing the informal settlement. As part of the urbanizing-projects we see the yellow container that constitute the local district-office with government representatives (to the far right in the picture).

## \_Villas Miserias

In Argentina informal settlements are called *villas miserias* or *villas de emergencias*, in spoken language known as villas. A word often used for smaller settlements or indication of recent occupation of land is *asentamientos*. These informal settlements vary from small groups of precarious houses to larger, more organized communities with thousands of residents. The houses are often made up by scrap material, bricks or wood, here the variation and quality varies as well from shacks to houses made of brick and concrete (Janches<sup>4</sup> 2015):

The existence of villas de emergencia is not only an expression of polarization and economic marginality but also demonstrates strong socio-cultural components of segregation and rejection. The villa, as a precarious and illegal settlement as well as on account of its high rates of violence and crime, represents for the city's formal inhabitant a strange and scary urban space. The people living there are subject to stigmatization due in part to their economic distance from the rest of society, but mainly to their belonging and identification as villeros [villa dwellers].” (Janches et al 2011:20)

In the villas, landscape is conceived both as the primary problem and as the main opportunity for intervention and improvement. These informal settlements are often established on residual land without economic value, but often exposed to risks. The landscape of the villas often includes ravines and floodplains, proximity to toxic sites, including sewage canals

and industrial facilities; it's a landscape that contributes to many environmental, public health and security problems. In the villas there is often a large deficiency in typical urban infrastructure, leading to lack of public facilities, public transport and storm-water management. In addition these settlements are very densely built and places for recreational activities therefore absent (Beardsley & Werthmann 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Conversation with Flavio Janches Architect and Associate Professor in Architecture, Facultad de Arquitectura, Diseño y Urbanismo, Universidad de Buenos Aires; February 27th 2015, March 30th 2015, April 8th 2015





## **CHAPTER 3: MAPPING SITE**

*With previous chapters in mind, we are now travelling closer to site. In the following section selected maps of Buenos Aires, that have prompted questions about landscape representations, are presented. Further, we're zooming in, getting closer to the area of control, ending this section with an introduction of Lago Soldati.*

## Landscape Representations: Finding the Map

Through my hunt for a physical, detailed, map of Buenos Aires I got some interesting thoughts. I had to run around for days to find a map that actually contained the whole city. Most places I got to had only the “tourist”-version of maps, colourful enticing representations, with some of the city’s top sites even represented as 3D figures. I was irritated, since these maps were cropped and showed less than half of the city. Even some maps that posed to represent the “whole” city of Buenos Aires, did not. Finally I got a hold of a map that contained all borders around the Autonomous city of Buenos Aires. A victory in itself. I was satisfied, but stuck with thoughts about landscape representations.

As stated in the Theories part of this thesis, landscape representations are powerful instruments. Behind a map stands always a creator. Most people take part of and use maps on a daily basis, and there are at least as many maps and cartographies as there are people on this planet. Even if we know about the natural state of subjective parameters in maps and cartographies, we often perceive them as mirroring reality, because most of the time, they are close enough and suits our purposes.

### PUBLIC SPACE IN LATIN AMERICAN CITIES

The boundaries between public and private space are sometimes quite ambiguous. According to UN Habitat public space has become fragmented in many Latin American cities. Maintenance, supply, design, safety and accessibility vary strongly and are factors that contribute to the spatial and social fragmentation of these cities. Within informal settlements, public space does seldom extend further than the narrow streets or a football field. In these urban areas, which are often overcrowded with very little domestic space, public space can play a very important role, thus through relatively small public space interventions one could make a relevant change (UN-Habitat 2012). This development and structure is very relevant as description of the situation in Buenos Aires.

Measurements on green space distribution per inhabitant, made by UNEP 2010, show that porteños\* have 2 m<sup>2</sup>/inhabitant. As described by UN HABITAT, discrepancy of what is defined as public and green space affects the result of measurements as such. Nevertheless, if these numbers are close to the real situation, they’re far from WHO’s (World Health Organization) recommendations of minimum 9 m<sup>2</sup>/inhabitant, which means Buenos Aires have a significant deficiency in green-structure (UN HABITAT 2012: WHO 2012). Among health indicators of sustainable cities, WHO states the importance of green, environmental amenities and the; availability, accessibility, quality, and security of public green spaces (WHO 2012).



### BORDERS

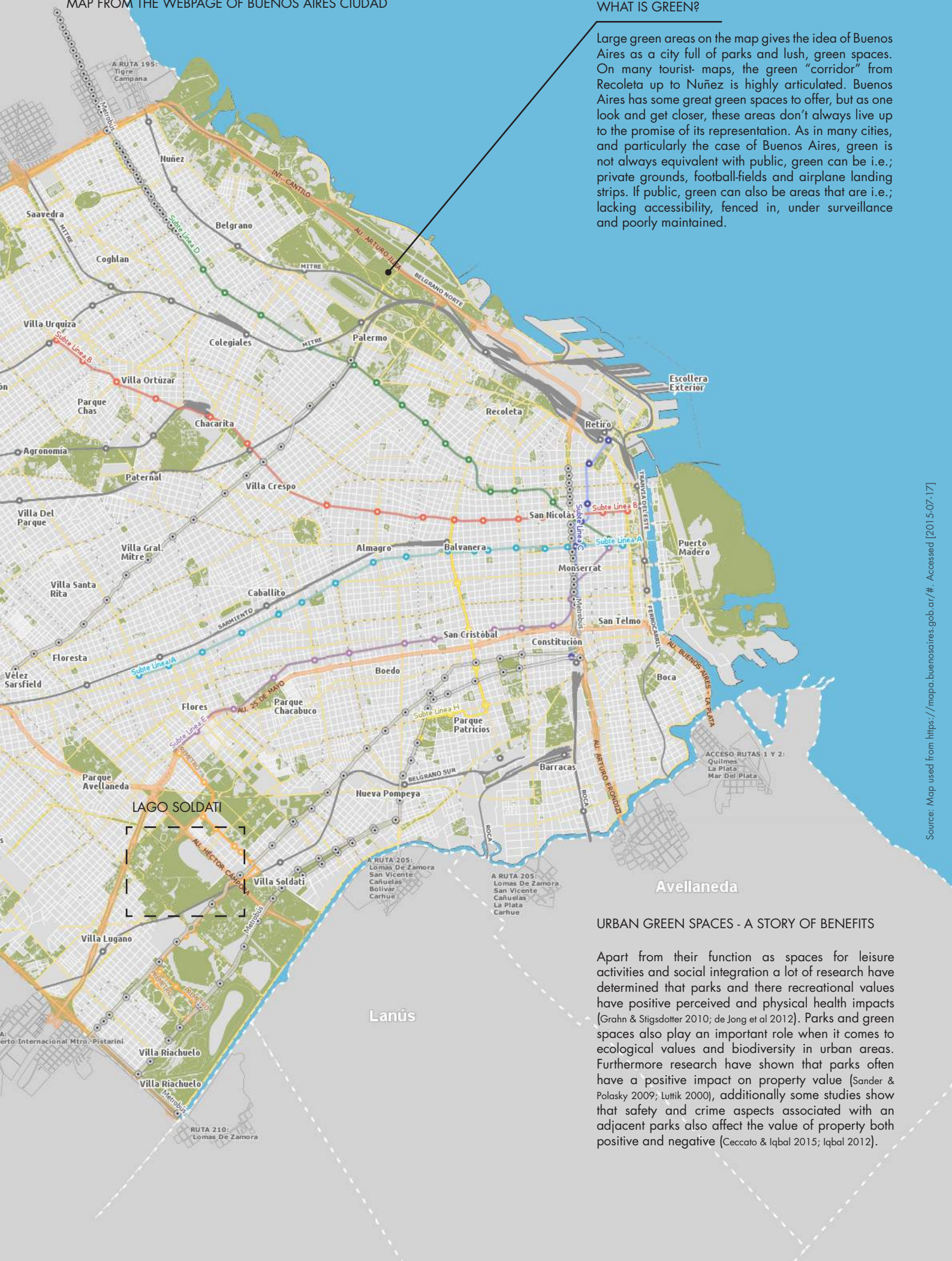
In accordance with the geographical limitations of this thesis, This map only displays the Autonomus City of Buenos Aires, the surrounding grey colour indicates the city borders. The borders consist of the highways in the west and north, the river Riachuelo in the south and southeast, as well as Rio de La Plata in the east.



MAP FROM THE WEBPAGE OF BUENOS AIRES CIUDAD

## WHAT IS GREEN?

Large green areas on the map gives the idea of Buenos Aires as a city full of parks and lush, green spaces. On many tourist- maps, the green "corridor" from Recoleta up to Nuñez is highly articulated. Buenos Aires has some great green spaces to offer, but as one look and get closer, these areas don't always live up to the promise of its representation. As in many cities, and particularly the case of Buenos Aires, green is not always equivalent with public, green can be i.e.; private grounds, football-fields and airplane landing strips. If public, green can also be areas that are i.e.; lacking accessibility, fenced in, under surveillance and poorly maintained.



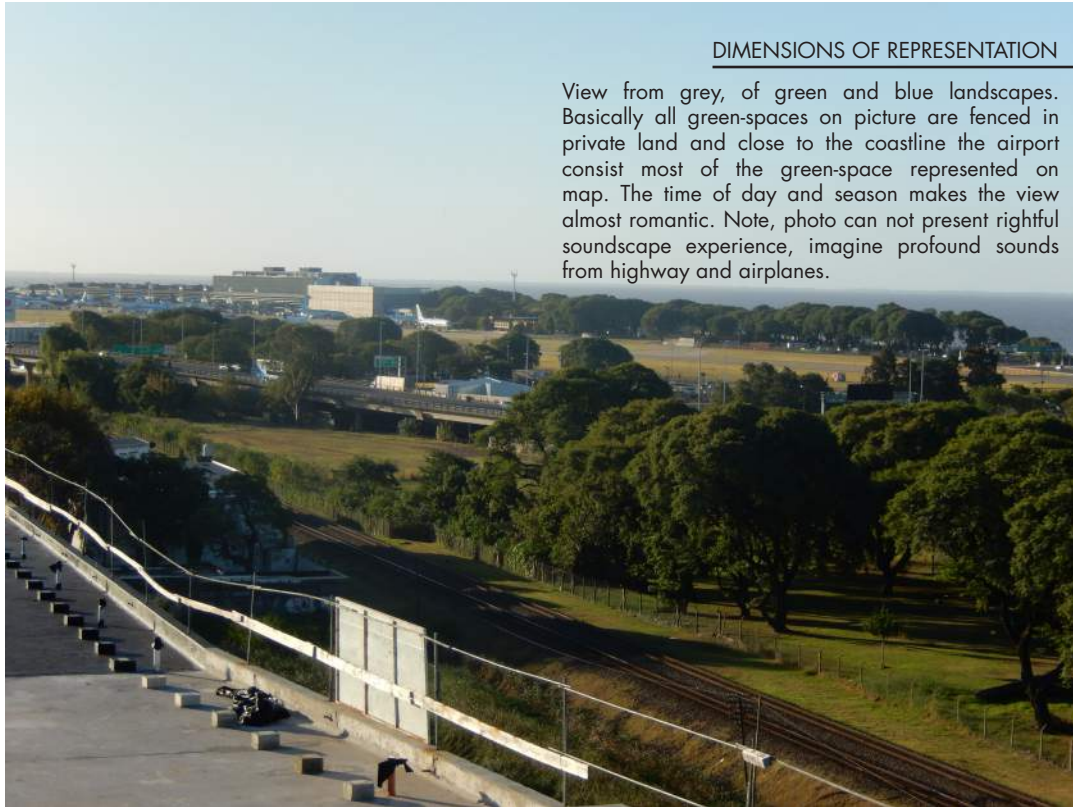
## URBAN GREEN SPACES - A STORY OF BENEFITS

Apart from their function as spaces for leisure activities and social integration a lot of research have determined that parks and there recreational values have positive perceived and physical health impacts (Grahn & Stigsdotter 2010; de Jong et al 2012). Parks and green spaces also play an important role when it comes to ecological values and biodiversity in urban areas. Furthermore research have shown that parks often have a positive impact on property value (Sander & Polasky 2009; Luttik 2000), additionally some studies show that safety and crime aspects associated with an adjacent parks also affect the value of property both positive and negative (Ceccato & Iqbal 2015; Iqbal 2012).



## Landscape Representations: Green, Blue and Grey

The colour coding and concept of green as vegetation, blue as water and grey as constructed material displays a landscape without nuances. It is within the wider spectrum of colours or nuances that actual qualities of site can be revealed. The simplified and prejudice concepts of 'green, blue and grey' are insufficient when trying to understand and grasp specific elements of site. The prejudice concepts of landscape representations persist generic design with little relation to site, thus in the aim of catching site-specific qualities and nuances of landscape, one have to go on-site. With my spatial-aesthetic appreciations I will develop new representations to prompt questions about the consequence of simplified perceptions of landscape.



### DIMENSIONS OF REPRESENTATION

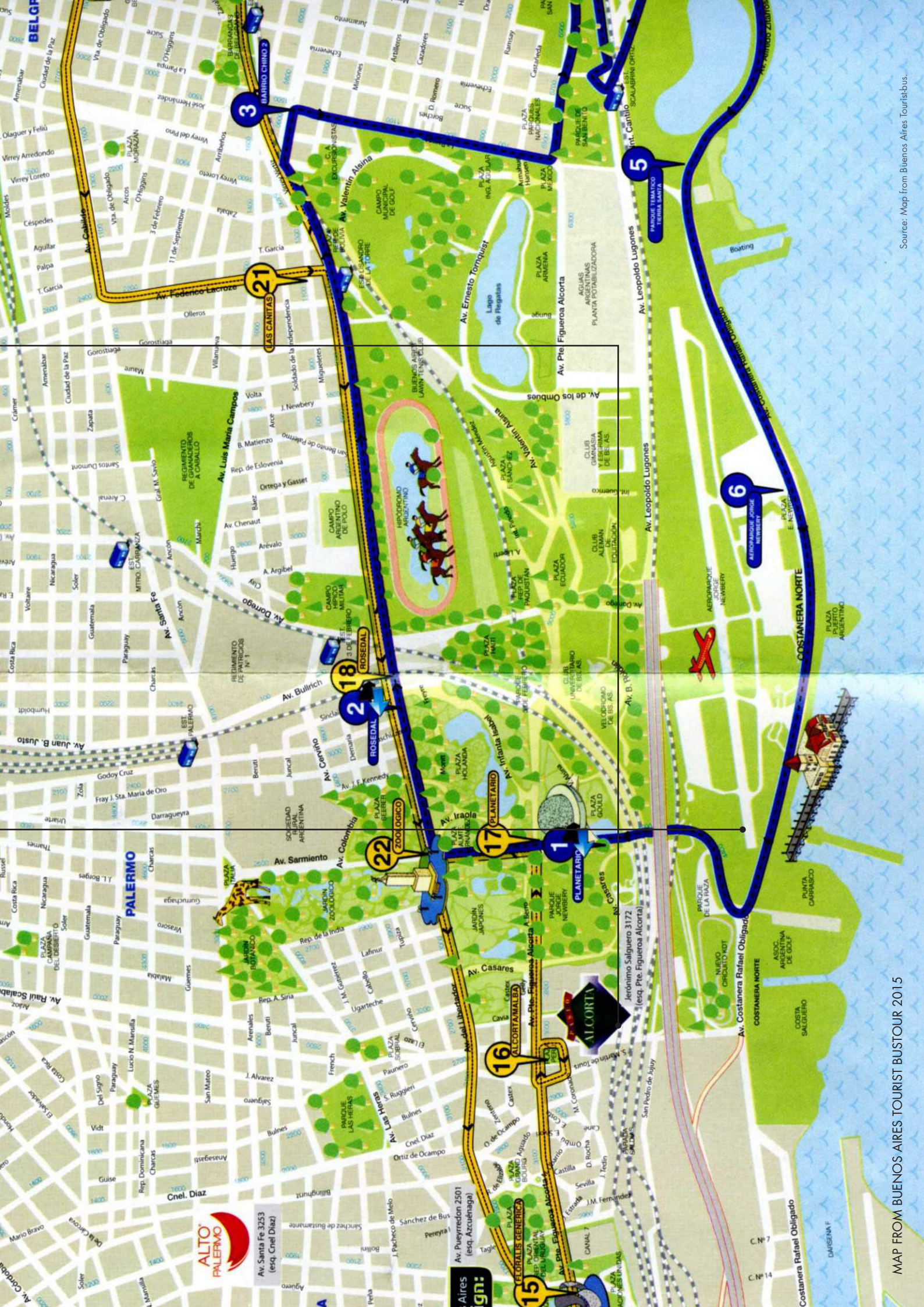
View from grey, of green and blue landscapes. Basically all green-spaces on picture are fenced in private land and close to the coastline the airport consist most of the green-space represented on map. The time of day and season makes the view almost romantic. Note, photo can not present rightful soundscape experience, imagine profound sounds from highway and airplanes.



### OFF-SITE / ON-SITE

People watching the airplanes start and land. On map, airport is airport (sometimes represented deceptively green), on-site airport is e.g. entertainment, business (see street-vendor and plastic airplanes) and sound-pollution.

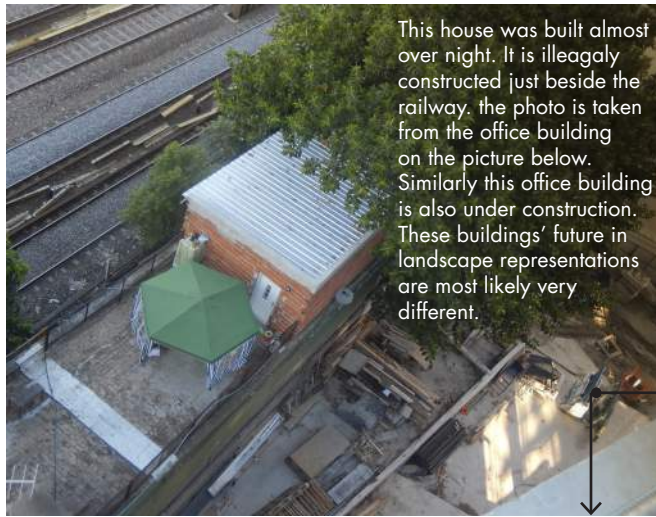






## \_Landscape Representations: Informality and Mapping

Unofficial, informal and undesired elements in the urban landscape are often neglected in landscape representation. Representing informal and formal elements of the urban landscape on an equal footing can help prefigure a more equal appreciation of the fragmented city. Mapping site-qualities gives an opportunity to gain knowledge about the so often neglected and preconditioned informal areas. In BA, on-site experiences and creation of spatial-aesthetic appreciations could be a starting-point for taking measures in favour of equality.

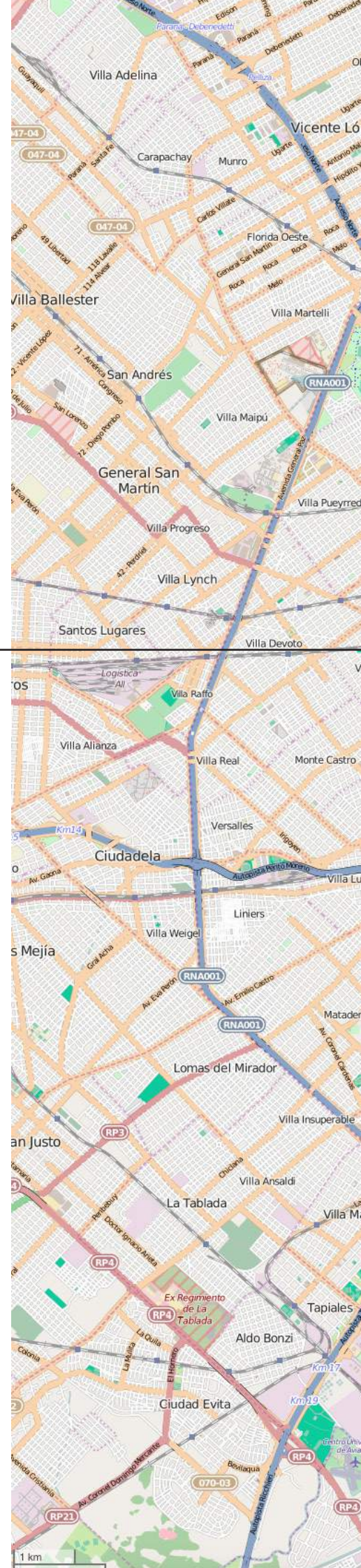


## TO BE OR NOT TO BE...ACKNOWLEDGED ON THE MAP

Many villas have existed for a long time, even though they're seldom represented on official maps. When comparing BA city maps with Open Street Maps (OSM) and Google satellite pictures. In relation to the villas explored through transects, the OSM maps seem to be the landscape representation where these areas are most visible and acknowledged.

However, from my experience informal settlements are more frequently represented as charts and numbers, often with emphasis on the precarious and problematic socio-economic situations associated with them.

How does it feel when your home is not visible on the map? By mapping differently, representing not only the best things nor solely the worst, could a more nuanced picture allow us to rethink the urban structure? Could particularities while exploring, for the sake of understanding, become not only seeds of questioning, but seeds of transformation?





## MAP FROM OPEN STREET MAPS

## OPEN STREET MAPS

© OpenStreetMaps is a community based map database that supply maps for web-pages, apps and mapping-devices worldwide. OpenStreetMaps is built up by a community of cartographers that contribute and maintain cartographic data such as roads, parks, waterscapes, property etc. The community recognize and emphasise local knowledge among its contributors. Areal photos, GPS, field-maps and other tools are used to control that the OSM maps are correct and updated. Among the contributors are map-enthusiasts, GIS-professionals, engineers, volunteers who map disaster effected areas and many others who together keep the OSM servers up en running (Open Street Map 2015).





## Landscape Representations: Mapping Waterscapes

Interesting situations and discourses can be processed when looking at spaces where land and water meet. To study these phenomena, is just a start to look at landscape as waterscapes. As Diedrich et al (2014) discuss in the method of the deviant transect, studying waterscapes is a mean to understand human relationships to land. Landscape phenomena that otherwise are more hidden in urban space can sometimes be more clear in and around water. When studying these waterscapes in Buenos Aires, of varied character and scale; Rio de la Plata, Riachuelo and Lago Soldati, one can find particularities that are connected and similar to landscape situations elsewhere. Though it might not directly appear so, a lot of the presented literature in the theories part of this thesis, partially discuss discourses related to waterscapes such as; climate change, contamination of water, socio-ecological sustainability, environmental justice and equality.

In relation to landscape representations a significant finding has been that concepts of urban constructions, and waterscapes can be rather misleading. The waterscapes presented gives us a foundation to question the meaning of blue-coloured areas. Here and elsewhere around the world water can be brown (Rio de la Plata and sediment), grey (Riachuelo and garbage) and green (Lago Soldati and vegetation).



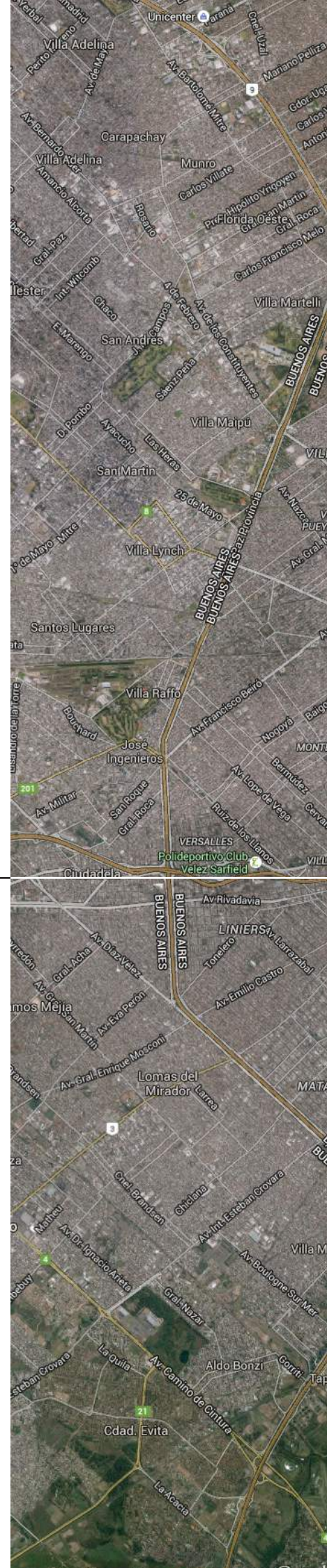
Rio de la plata



Riachuelo



Lago Soldati



### RIVER RIACHUELO

The river Riachuelo constitute the southern border of the Autonomous city of Buenos Aires. Historically it has been important as a transportation route to the old port for workers and goods. An implication of the close connection to the port is the agglomeration of industries and warehouses that was established from the later part of the 1800's and some decades onward. During this time, a significant amount of European immigrants settle down in Buenos Aires leading to a demographic change around the areas of the river-mouth and the district today known as La Boca. The development with informal connotations, have had a great impact on the culture identity of the city, with Italian, Spanish and Armenian influences and the birth of the world-famous dance, Tango (Silvestri 2003; Janches<sup>5</sup> 2015).

Due to heavy problems with flooding coastal communities along the river, several works with canalization and rectification of Riachuelo was carried out from the end of the 19th to mid 20th century (Silvestri 2003).

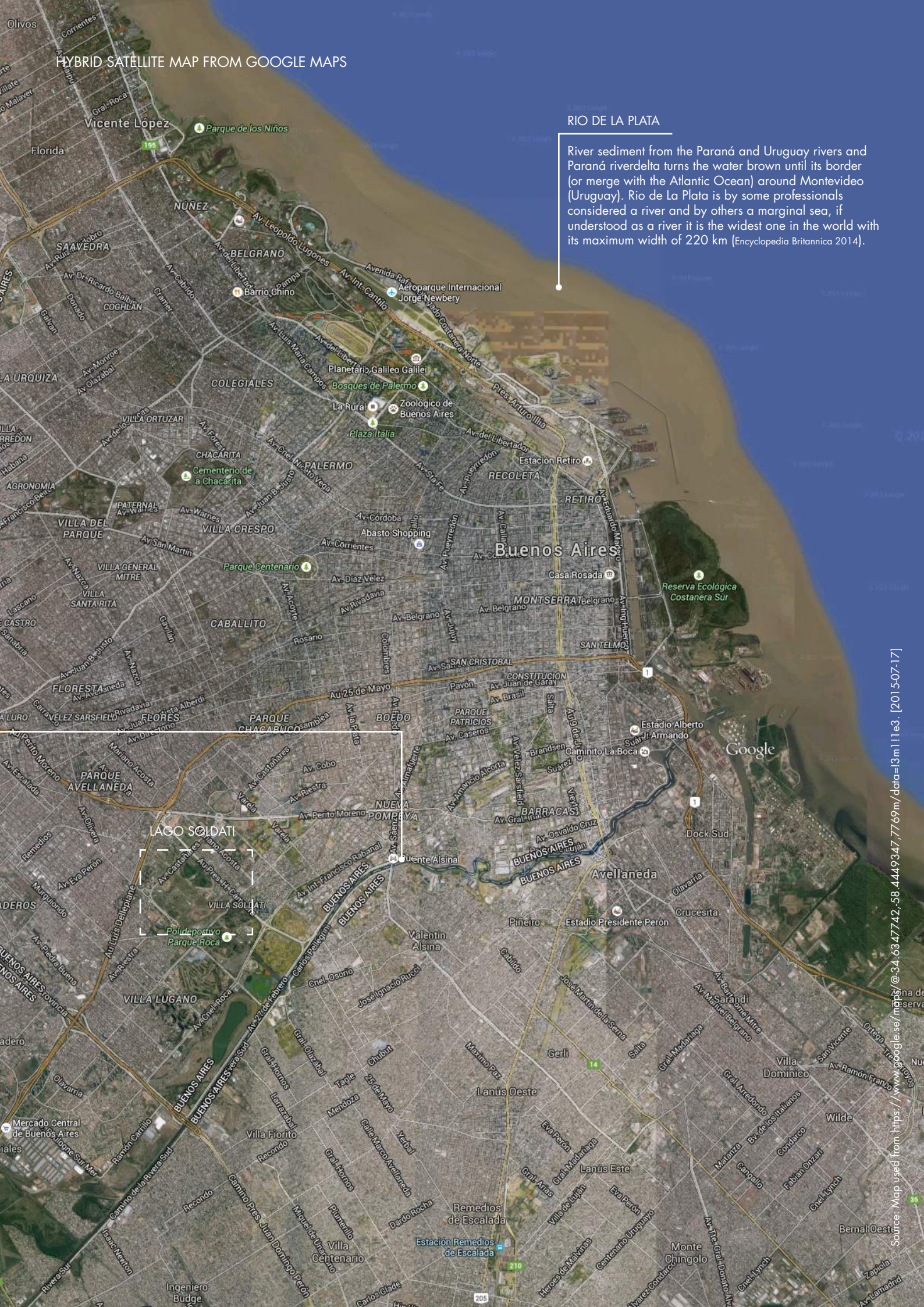
When the sanitation program for Riachuelo started a couple of years ago, with the World Bank as one of the main supporters, it was ranked as one of the most polluted rivers in the world (World Bank 2014). Domestic sewage and wastes generated from the chemical, petrochemical, pharmaceutical, metallurgical, leather, food, textile and paper industries have been listed as the primary sources of contamination of Riachuelo (Stephenson et al 1998).

Due to economic crisis in the last decades, many of the industries have shut down, leaving large plots of contaminated, abandoned land (Silvestri, 2003). On some of these plots, squatting and construction of informal settlements have occurred, and today there are a large amount of villas situated along or close to the riverbed of Riachuelo.



## RIO DE LA PLATA

River sediment from the Paraná and Uruguay rivers and Paraná riverdelta turns the water brown until its border (or merge with the Atlantic Ocean) around Montevideo (Uruguay). Rio de La Plata is by some professionals considered a river and by others a marginal sea, if understood as a river it is the widest one in the world with its maximum width of 220 km (Encyclopedia Britannica 2014).





## \_Positioning Lago Soldati



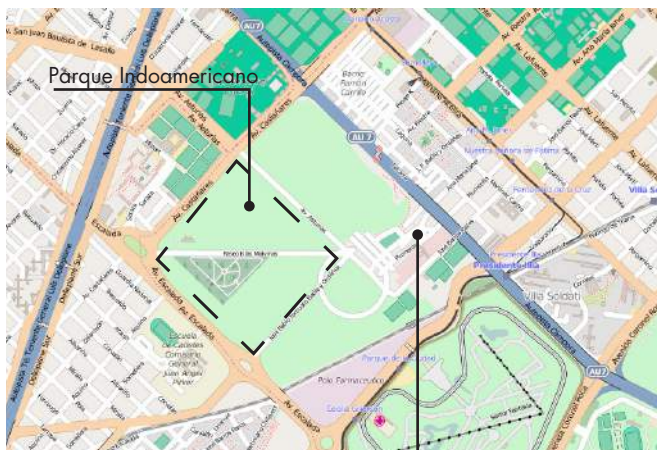
In recent years the acknowledgment of the villas and their problems has gained more focus. Many villas lack amenities and basic services, basic sanitation, local sewage and water systems. Some have electricity, though this power is often taken illegally directly from the formal grid. Today many organisations from NGO's to public authorities agree on that the villas has to become "urbanised", meaning improvement of housing, infrastructure and basic services (Janiches<sup>6</sup> 2015). The state has long been absent from the villas, and in its place other power structures have sprung up, some of them democratically chosen through elections and others are powerful people known as *punteros* ("point people") with some loyal support since they have proven to solve day-to-day problems in the villa. Yet lack of trust and money has only made small interventions and improvements possible in the villas and some villeros express their disappointment with the interventions only focusing on public space such as plazas and playgrounds instead of improvements of basic infrastructure and sewage (Economist 2014b; SECHIT<sup>7</sup> 2015).

In the southern areas of Buenos Aires, the district Villa Soldati is located. This district is one of the most vulnerable ones due to very high levels of precarious housing (villas, asentamientos and housing complexes) compared to the rest of the city. The area is also interesting since it contains some of the largest green spaces found in southern Buenos Aires; Parque Indoamericano and Parque de la Ciudad. The first one is a

public green space that has been the area for both squatting and riots, which has led to parts of the park being closed off by the government, the latter is a private park, fenced off, that contains a decayed amusement park with old broken carousels and a large viewing tower (the highest point in Buenos Aires). It is also the place where several large concerts and music festivals are held every year through events called Buenos Aires Rock. In and around the area there are a great amount of private sport facilities mainly football clubs, inaccessible to non-members.

Within the district Villa Soldati the watercourse Lago Soldati (en. "Lake Soldati") is situated. Lago Soldati is a relief-basin connected to the stream Cildañez. The basin function as a regulator and relief mechanism of rainwater and the flow of the streams to prevent flooding in the surrounding areas. During the last decades informal settlements has been established along the boarder of the watercourse, and today we can find villa Los Piletones and the recent settlement villa La Esperanza here. The inhabitants in the neighbouring villas have used the watercourse as an open garbage dump for several years, which has diminished Lago Soldati's function as relief basin. A consequence of the lack of proper sewage and garbage management is that the groundwater comes in contact with private wells as with landfill sites, a situation that contributes to water pollution and the proliferation of multiple diseases (dengue, yellow fever, diarrhea, skin spots,





#### ON THE MAP

Here on the OSM-map the structures of both Los Piletones and La Esperanza are mapped. In this case the cartographic community displays a more equal representation of the area around Lago Soldati.



#### URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

GIS-Map showing grades of "Urban Sustainability". The area of and around Lago Soldati is turquoise, which means it has a value a 0.00-0.23. How does a place with 0.00-0.23 urban sustainability; sound, smell, feel, taste and look like?

respiratory problems, etc.). The contamination of Lago Soldati also increased the population of rats and problems with odour. In 2014 a sanitation project of Lago Soldati started and it's estimated to be finalized in autumn 2015. The project "Refuncionalización del Lago Soldati" (eng. "Re-functionalization of Lake Soldati"), has included eliminating over 300 000 rats and removal of around 230 tons of trash from the watercourse. It also includes a system of valves that regulate the flow of water and allowed to relieve the flow of streams and prevent that water from becoming stagnant. The project foresees the construction of a walkway around the lake, to be able to integrate surrounding inhabitants and make it more accessible as a recreational area (SECHI 2014).

The landscape character of Villa Soldati is a low lying land that historically has been marshes, wetlands and complementary streams to the large river Riachuelo (Cosacov et al 2011). The sanitation and recovery of Lago Soldati thus plays an important role not only for the well-being of the over 2000 inhabitants of the neighbouring villas, but for other residential districts along the stream Cildañez (SECHI 2014).

Ever since the areas was inhabited in 1908, the demographic homogeneity has been similar, settlers has resided from the lower classes of society with socio-economic low status. As mentioned the landscape character of low lying land close to streams and marches has contributed to the frequent exposure

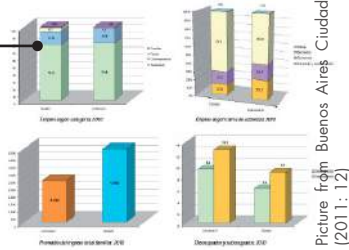
of flooding. Presence of industrial activities and a municipal garbage dump has contributed to the pollution of the area. The garbage dump established 1915 was, when closed down 1978, considered one of the largest in the world. Large plans of recuperation with semi-public parks followed in the 1970-80's (among them Parque Indoamericano and Parque de la Ciudad ). During the same time, efforts of social recuperation was made with the construction of several social housing projects in the area. Villa Los Piletones, which is situated beside Lago Soldati, was established in the 80's and villa La Esperanza is an expansion of this informal settlement, risen up in the recent decade (Cosacov et al 2011). As will be described further in PART 2 of this thesis, some efforts are made to try to change the situation, however Los Piletones and La Esperanza suffer from similar precarious landscape conditions and lack of "urbanization" as many other villas around the city of Buenos Aires.



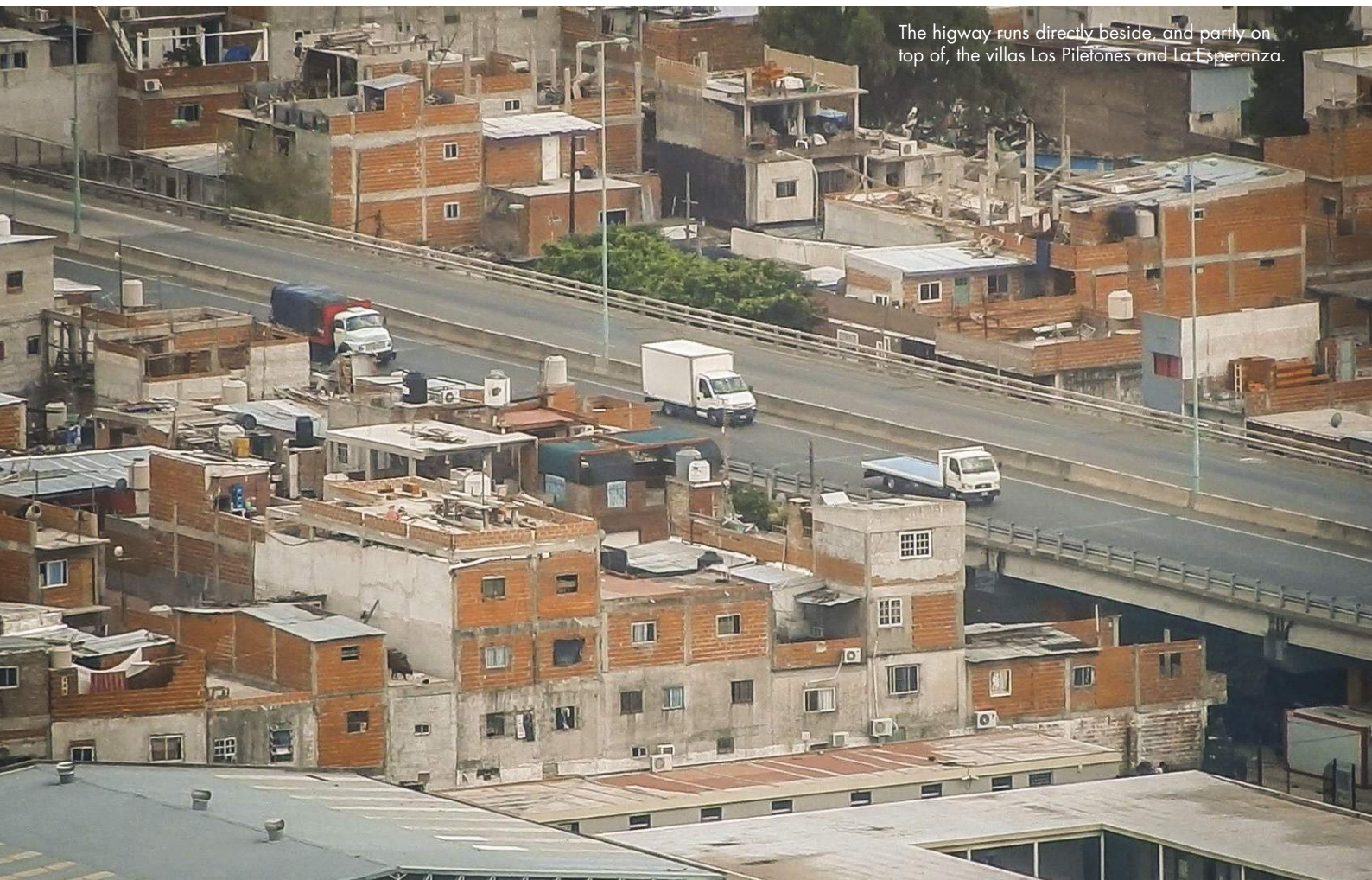
## \_Picturing Landscape Around Lago Soldati

### NUMBERS & CHARTS

Common representation of less attractive areas of the city, here charts from governmental documents showing socio-economic status of Comuna 8/ Villa Soldati.



Unlike what the name indicates, Lago Soldati (eng. Lake Soldati) is seldom entirely filled with water, like a real lake. The water-level varies a lot in depending on the weather conditions and pressure on the connected water-streams. Its function as a relief-basin has been lacking due to problems with dumping of domestic waste, leaving the water-course eutrophicated, overgrown and contaminated.





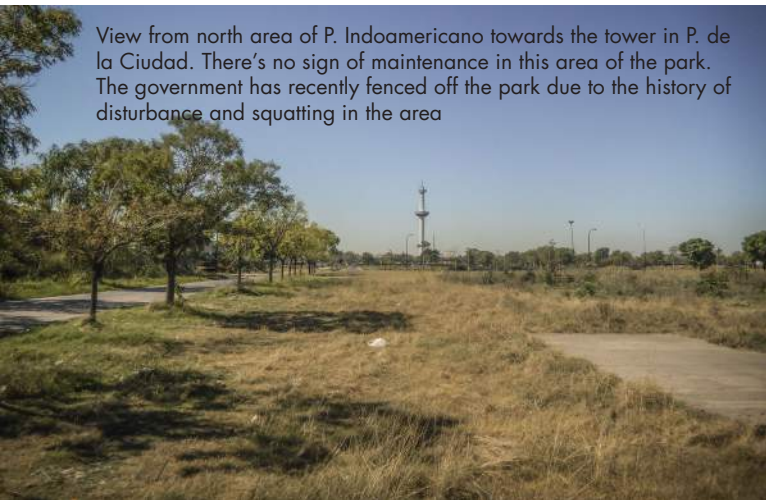


## GREEN-TECH

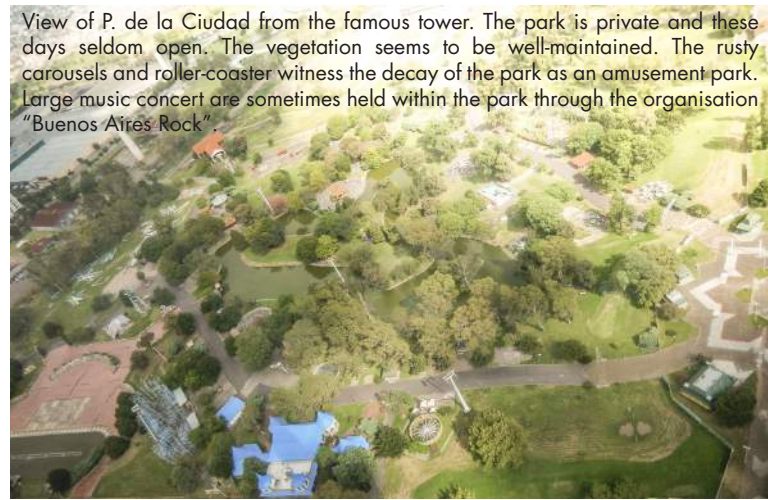
Before the sanitation program started the whole watercourse was totally overgrown. The vegetation combined with all the garbage was a great place for rats to nest and breed. Traces of the littering are still visible like here when we found an old computer hiding behind plants in the corners of the water-course.



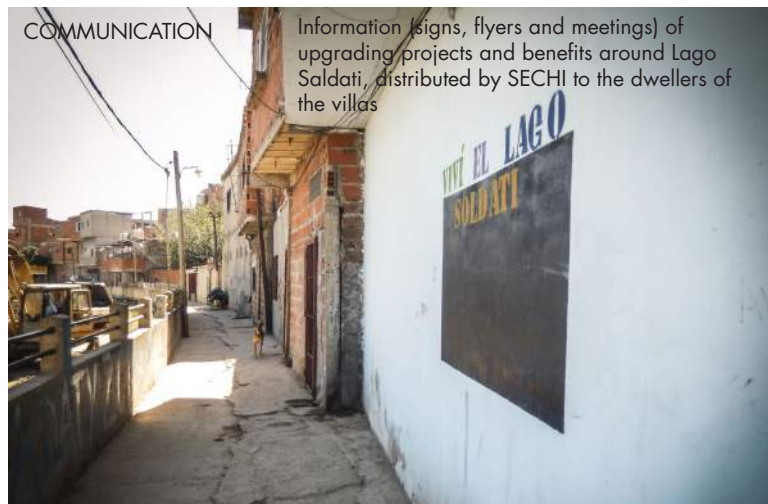
Laughing and encouraged by his colleges, Dani takes photos of the rare finding. Dani works at the community office in Los Piletones (La Sede Piletones) and he has lived in the villa since he was little. Together with his colleges he works a lot with communication with the neighbours and workshops for the children in the area.



View from north area of P. Indoamericano towards the tower in P. de la Ciudad. There's no sign of maintenance in this area of the park. The government has recently fenced off the park due to the history of disturbance and squatting in the area



View of P. de la Ciudad from the famous tower. The park is private and these days seldom open. The vegetation seems to be well-maintained. The rusty carousels and roller-coaster witness the decay of the park as an amusement park. Large music concert are sometimes held within the park through the organisation "Buenos Aires Rock".

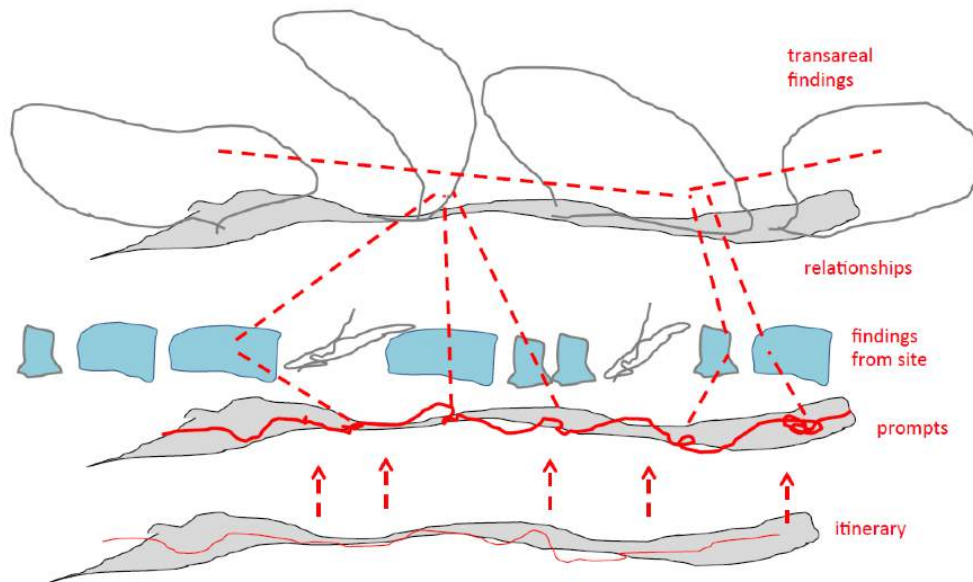


## COMMUNICATION

Information (signs, flyers and meetings) of upgrading projects and benefits around Lago Soldati, distributed by SECHI to the dwellers of the villas

## PART 2: FINDING





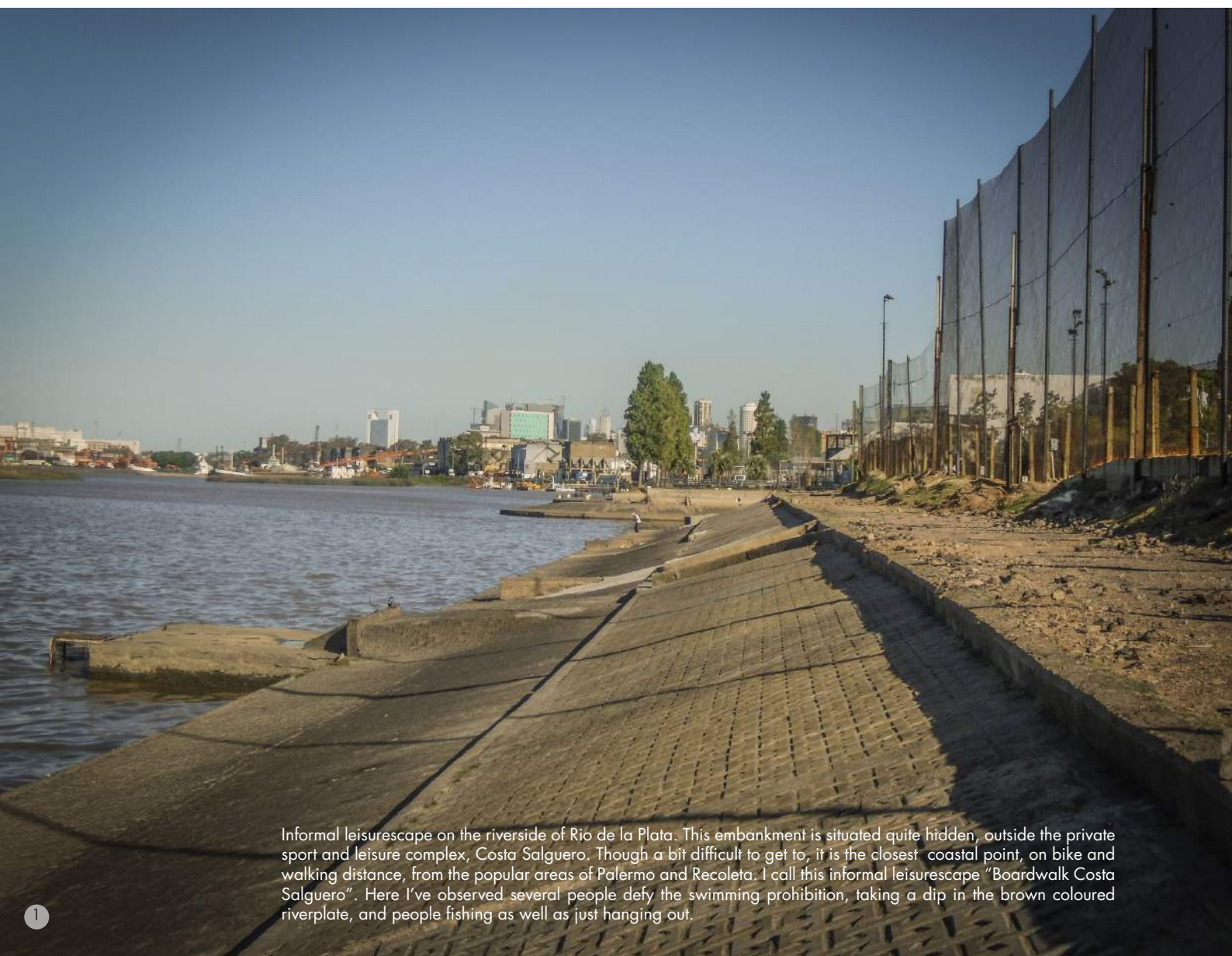
*In the search for site-specific qualities, transecting two waterscapes of Buenos Aires, the coast and river Riachuelo, my research question emerged:*

*How to achieve a spatial-aesthetic appreciation along the waterscapes of the socio-economically fragmented city of Buenos Aires?*

*A sequence of travelled sites, site findings brought home, readings and reflections post-travel, prompted findings of a new sort: transareal - geographically, as they concern many of the sites travelled, and thematically, as they concern many aspects of urban life. To answer my research question, I have synthesized them into landscape architectural narratives, conveyed as mappings of a new sort. They unfold over the following pages and communicate my personal spatial-aesthetic appreciation of the city's waterscapes while laying the foundation for an equality oriented urban transformation of; leiscurescapes, foodscapes and shelterscapes.*

*The selected topics have crystallised from experiences and discussions that prompted question and ideas. For instance, the translation from on-site phenomena into off-site mappings have partly derived from these experiences; the trouble of actually getting in contact with the water along the coastal transect, prompted me to see that most places where this was actually possible were at "informal" leiscurescapes; in-between, left-over or "un-designed" places. Moreover, the significant amount of people fishing along the coastline at formal as well as informal places made me think about foodscapes of public space. Further, my initial interest for informal settlements and their locations, morphology and landscape features combined with the on-site experiences of these shelterscapes situated in central, peripheral, attractive as well as un-attractive, "in-between spaces" prompted the thoughts about representation and the will to display these phenomena.*

*This means that I will share selected experiences and elaborations from my transect travels in Buenos Aires. Over the following pages you will take part of my appreciation, hence (re)construction of explored sites. Fragments of ideas, discourses and particularities, which I, in this present moment and coming future, am still Finding.*



1 Informal leiscapescape on the riverside of Río de la Plata. This embankment is situated quite hidden, outside the private sport and leisure complex, Costa Salguero. Though a bit difficult to get to, it is the closest coastal point, on bike and walking distance, from the popular areas of Palermo and Recoleta. I call this informal leiscapescape "Boardwalk Costa Salguero". Here I've observed several people defy the swimming prohibition, taking a dip in the brown coloured riverplate, and people fishing as well as just hanging out.



## LEISURESCAPES

*In the last century during the expansion of Buenos Aires, the city has turned its back on the water; major infrastructure systems have cut off the connection between the city and Rio de La Plata, industrial activities have claimed the riverside and contributed to the extreme pollution of Riachuelo. Similarly, informal settlements and gated communities have occupied the waterfronts and been part in contamination of water and deprivation of the landscape's resilience. However, in recent years a new trend is visible along the waterfronts of Buenos Aires the transformation of some of the waterscapes into public spaces; a variation of parks, bike and pedestrian paths and plazas.*

*During my transects along the coastline, along Riachuelo and around Lago Soldati, I've experienced some of these formal leiscapes, but also encountered a number of informal ones. Other than facilitators of leisure activities and meetings these leiscapes are of various characters and functions; some are well needed green spaces in areas with great deficiency in green-structure, others withhold ecological capacities important for*

*threatened and rare species of Buenos Aires flora and fauna, some works as what Gouverneur (2014) would call Corridors in connecting and protecting important water and land.*

*This change of land-use is welcome in a dense and hectic city as Buenos Aires. Though as you will see in the findings presented in the following pages, work is not completed solely by facilitating these leiscapes, it's essential to consider people's accessibility to them as well. As Bishop & Williams (2012) argue, programming leiscapes with temporal and free activities is a good way to attract people and enable appropriation of public spaces, a great example of this is found in the seasonal event of Buenos Aires Playa in Parque los Ninos (North BA) and Parque Indoamericano (South BA).*

*In this chapter findings regarding places for leisure activities is presented. For me, the concept of leiscapes, include everything from; contemplative and recreational spaces to nodes and paths of more social or physically active character.*



### RESERVA ECOLÓGICA

Reserva Ecologica Costanera Sur is a very popular place for leisure activities. When preparing for the fieldtrip to Buenos Aires, over a coffee with my former arts and architecture teacher, the argentinean Juan Carlos Peirone, I got to know that the reserve was created from infill of material from major infrastructure project, mainly from constructions during the rule of the Military Juntas in the 70's. The local government at the time wanted to reclaim land from the river to establish the administrative centre of the city here. This project was abandoned in 1984, leaving a lot of rubble along Costanera Sur, where once swimmers enjoyed Rio de la Plata. Due to special water-streams important species of flora and fauna was eventually "self-established". From contaminated water and the remains of cement and bricks, wild vegetation found it's way up to cover the filling. This situate the foundation of what today is the biggest ecological reserve within the city borders (Peirone<sup>8</sup> 2015; Buenos Aires Ciudad 2015).

### COSTANERA SUR

During the fieldtrip I've gotten to know architect Maria Gugliemini. When discussing the most recent large-scale re-development project of the city (the habourscape transformation of Puerto Madero) she tells me stories about the board-walk Costanera Sur, how her parents here used to swim in the river-plate (Gugliemini<sup>9</sup> 2015). At first I don't really understand where the swimmingplace was situated, since this was before the existence of the ecological reserve. Later, when walking along the board-walk of Costanera Sur, traces are visible of what was once one of the most popular swimming and meeting-places of the city (from late 1910's-50's)(Buenos Aires Ciudad 2015).



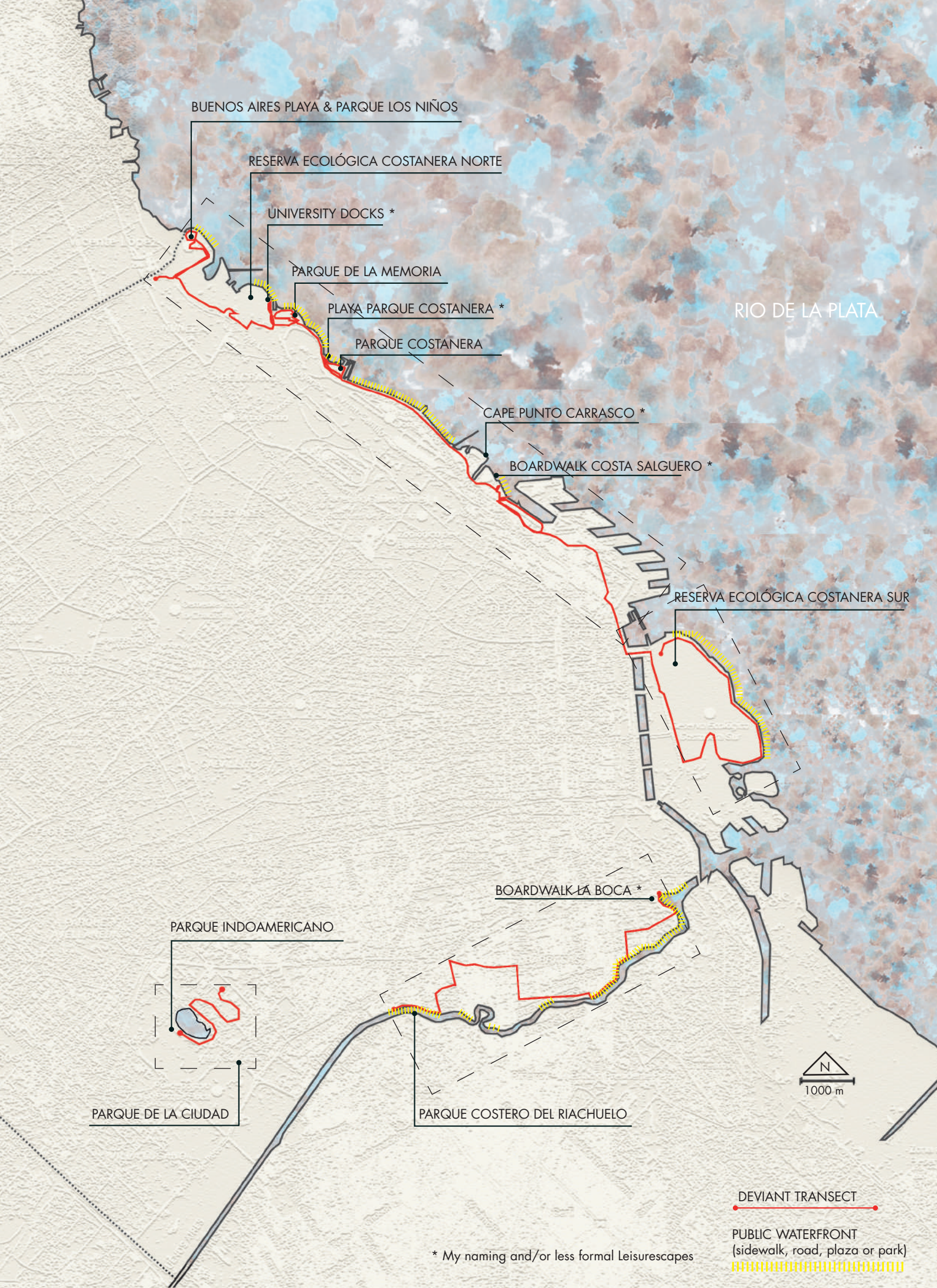
### BACK TO THE RIVER

The Riachuelo/Matanza River basin is one of the top most polluted places of the world. Public space interventions that are aiming at getting the riverbed free from informal settlements and to create interesting public spaces along the river have recently been made. Despite being a waterscape, Riachuelo could be viewed as the counterpart to the Reserva Ecológica, but here are also leisurescapes to be found. The question is if the extensive sanitation program can rescue what easily could be called "dead water", and if there's a future for the leisurescape along the river.

<sup>8</sup> Conversation with Juan Carlos Peirone, Architect, Artist and teacher at SLU, Malmö/Cordoba; February 2nd 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Conversation with María Gugliemini, Architect, KLM Arquitectos, Buenos Aires; February 20th, March 6th, March 13th, March 28th, April 7th 2015.







# \_Leisurescapes: a Matter of Time as Much as of Space



Free wifi

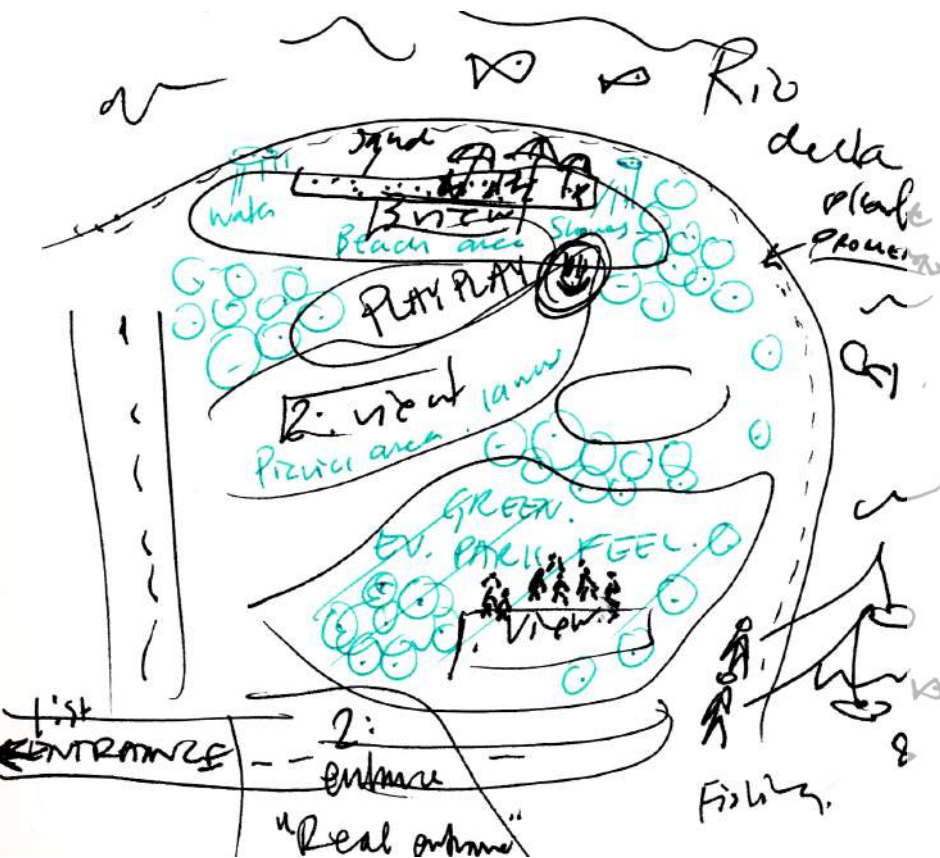
There's a stage from which instructors hold free dance and workout-classes

Several playful waterholes, showers fountains and sculptures.

During summer season the two BA Playas together attract more than 10 000 visitors every weekend. A majority of visitors go to the north playa in Parque los Niños (Infobae 2009).

Several free cultural and sport activities are offered to the visitors such as; volleyball, dance-class, music-class, football-tennis, face-painting, painting and open storytelling for kids.

Several people are employed as crew to guard and assist all activities and facilities at the playa. Around the area police are patrolling and the entrance of the park are manned with guards



Plan-sketch from transect: Parque los Niños/ BA Playa

## BUENOS AIRES PLAYA

Buenos Aires Playa is a seasonal, temporary park event. The city government of Buenos Aires launched it first time 2008 (SECHI<sup>10</sup> 2015). This temporal urban beach, inspired by similar projects in Paris, Rom and Berlin, is set up for summer vacation every year, which in Argentina means January and February. Buenos Aires Playa was 2015 launched in two public parks; Parque los Niños (in the north part of the city) and in Parque Indoamericano (in the south of the city).

BA Playa project is a great example of how temporal activities can be part in activating the public spaces along the coast of Buenos Aires, as well as other public spaces in the city. As Bishop and Williams (2012) show, temporal activities can also be a driver in development and planning of urban spaces. BA Playa in Parque Indoamericano could be a starting point in a well needed refurbishment of the park. Possibly, the development could benefit from using temporal activities in the process of transforming spaces in and around villas around Lago Soldati.

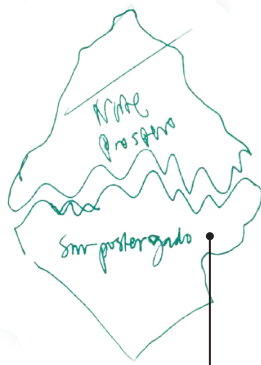




Most interiors are colour-coded with yellow colour, a colour often used in government initiated projects around in the city. The BA Playa project and other projects has been criticised and accused of engaging in propaganda for using the same colours, as the political party (PRO), who currently leading the government of Buenos Aires

Parque los Niños is the far most north-east corner of the Autonomous city of Buenos Aires, the houses in the background are in San Isidro, one of many surrounding municipalities in the Province of Buenos Aires

When season is over and BA-Playa demolished, left is the large lawn, possible to use for other temporal activities and events.



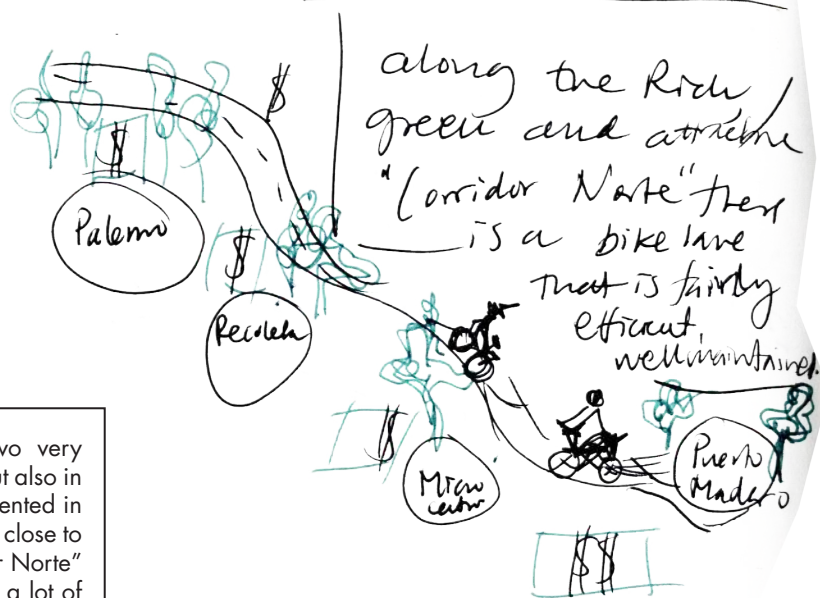
ON TOP, IN FRONT!

Parque los Niños and Parque Indoamericano are two very different parks, not only in the light of design and age, but also in their actual location within the city. The former, here presented in the panorama-picture is in the northern zone by the coast, close to wealthy districts of the city often referred to as "Corridor Norte" (eng. "Northern corridor"). Corridor Norte is a belt with a lot of green-structure, inhabiting most of the cities famous parks such as Bosque de Palermo, Jardín Botánico, Jardín Zoológico, stretching from Recoleta through Palermo, Belgrano up to Nuñez.

In general the north part of the city inhabits porteños with higher socio-economic status than in the southern districts. This is also the case when it comes to the adjacent suburbs, the northern coastal ones with San Isidro, Olivos (where one can find president Fernandez Kirshners mansion) and Tigre are considered wealthier than southern ones such as Villa Madero, Villa Florito and Avellaneda (SECHI<sup>12</sup> 2015).

As the city, the province of Buenos Aires has a lot of problems with informal settlements. In the wealthier districts along the waterfront of Buenos Aires Province there are also a high amount of gated communities. Both formal and informal settlements close to waterscapes impact on and are effect of the landscape's capacity and resilience, especially when it comes to flooding (Janches<sup>12</sup> 2015).

Sketch from biking along Corridor Norte



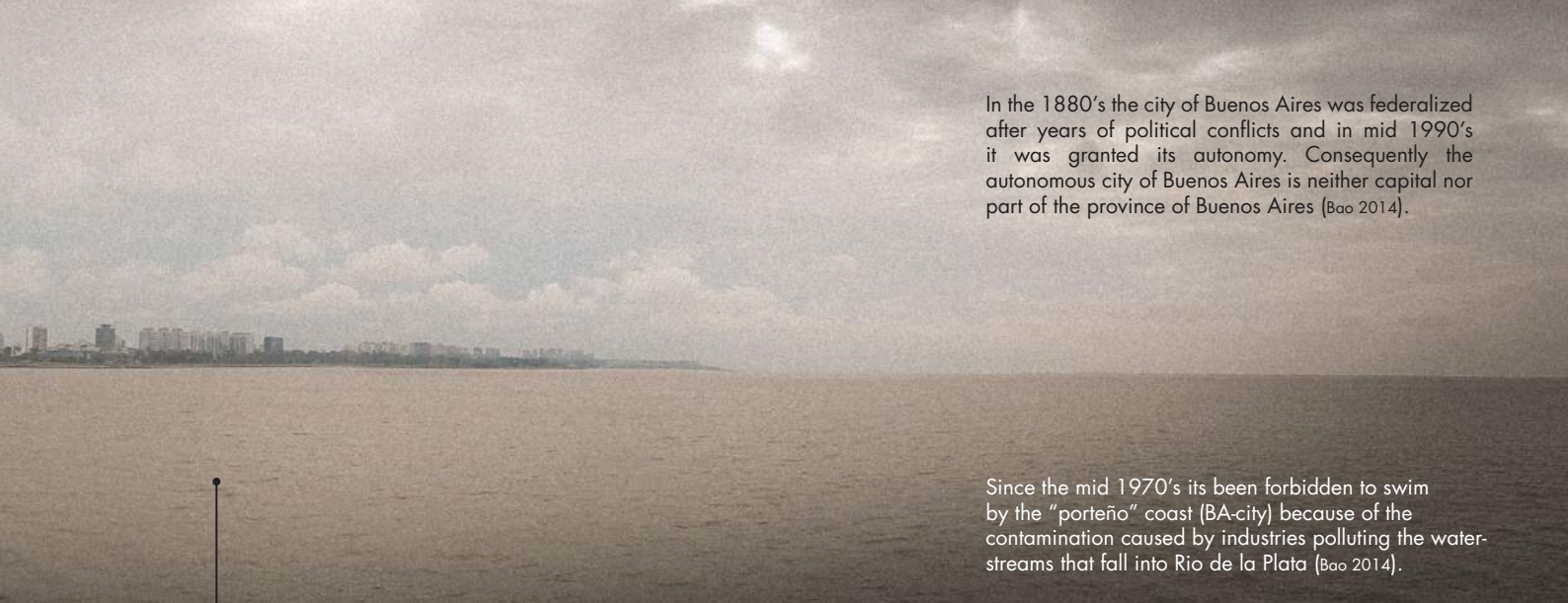
In the beginning of my fieldtrip (in February 2015) I had the great opportunity to attend an international conference called *Urbanismo Inclusivo* (eng. "Inclusive Urbanism"), held in Buenos Aires by the BA-city government and the Latin American organisation CIDEU. Several professionals working with urban development (i.e. politicians, planners and architects) participated and shared projects, engaged in workshops and networking activities, all on the topic of inclusive urbanism. Here's a sketch found in my notations from the opening speech by the Mayor of Buenos Aires, Mauricio Macri (who is now running for the presidential post in the 2015 elections). Text says Norte Prospero; Sur Postergado (eng. "North Prosperous; South Delayed")



## \_Leisurescapes: Despite of Dirty Water and Dirty War







In the 1880's the city of Buenos Aires was federalized after years of political conflicts and in mid 1990's it was granted its autonomy. Consequently the autonomous city of Buenos Aires is neither capital nor part of the province of Buenos Aires (Bao 2014).

Since the mid 1970's its been forbidden to swim by the "porteño" coast (BA-city) because of the contamination caused by industries polluting the water-streams that fall into Rio de la Plata (Bao 2014).

#### SAD WATER

During the Dictatorship of the last Military Junta, what is referred to *La Guerra Sucia* (eng. "The Dirty War"), thousands of people of the opposition and political left-wing "disappeared". To disappear meant getting captured, abducted, often tortured or raped and then killed. Testimonies from military leaders confirm that thousands of people were drugged and dropped into Rio de La Plata to drown. The statue in the water outside Parque de la Memoria, as well as the park is a memorial for these horrible events.



The names of the victims are engraved on monuments around the park.



## \_Leisurescapes: People Under the Sun



9



10



11

### SHADOW

The city has a humid subtropical climate with long hot summers, and winters with low precipitation caused by the central semi-permanent high pressure centre in the South Atlantic (Mehrotra et al 2012). In summer the Buenos Aires sun can be very strong. Average daytime temperatures in January is 29° C (Accuweather 2015) . During fieldwork for this thesis, there were many days with temperature reaching far over 30° C. Places of shadow are crucial elements when planning and designing urban areas, in particular public spaces.





In Parque los Niños, the variation of trees offer shadow as well as interesting landscape elements. On hot summer-days the multiple significance of trees becomes evident, particularly in public spaces where one can see concentrations of people under the cooling tree-crowns.



12



13

#### MAINTENANCE

On summer days Buenos Aires Playa is packed with people. Wear and tear and maintenance have to be highly considered in public areas aimed for leisure activities in such a densely populated city as Buenos Aires



# Leisurescapes: a Matter of Accessibility Walking to Buenos Aires Playa



Sketch from transect: accessibility of Parque los Niños and BA Playa

## TO GET THERE..

It's difficult and quite scary to get from the major bus-stop to the entrance of Parque los Niños. To get there one have to walk through tunnels, below and beside highways, pass through railway embankments, simultaneously walking on the trafficked car-road. The path is unsafe, dark and the sound-pollution from surrounding traffic is immense. While at the entrance one is greeted by guards and bags are checked so they're not containing any prohibited items or alcohol.



## PRIVATE SPORT-FACILITIES

From the entrance to the park one have to walk quite far on a sidewalk containing a bike- and pedestrian lane. On the right hand-side there's a fence, behind the fence a private sports-club with a large amount of football fields. On the left hand-side there's an even higher fence that surround a golf-course. Finally, after walking approximately 25 minutes from the bus-stop, one reaches the "real entrance" of the park.

Large areas of inaccessible private grounds, often sport-clubs, are common elements in the city of Buenos Aires. In addition to the large-scale infrastructure-apparatus, private sport-facilities contribute to the lack of connectivity between the city and the coast.



## \_Sustainable Ways to Travel: Road-Trip by Foot



1st sign



Car-road/ "Pedestrianlane"



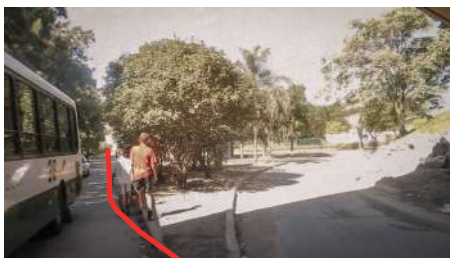
Highway to the right, railway to the left, highway above and car-road below.



At some parts there are leftover space along the road to walk on



2nd sign



Official entrance



"Real" entrance



BA-Playa

Walking from bus-stop to Parque los Niños and further to BA Playa is neither pleasant, safe or easy. In general, BA is a city that is quite easy to walk in. Some areas, mostly the older ones still have small and human scale houses, pleasant to walk around in, whilst many new (and some older districts) are characterized by similar-looking high-rise buildings affecting light, air and other spatial characteristics of streetscapes in BA. Moreover, as in the case with walking to Parque los Niños, the large-scale size of the city, with attached infrastructure-systems and large distances add to the disparities of scales, affecting the constructed environment and walkability of the city.



# Leisurescapes: a Matter of Accessibility

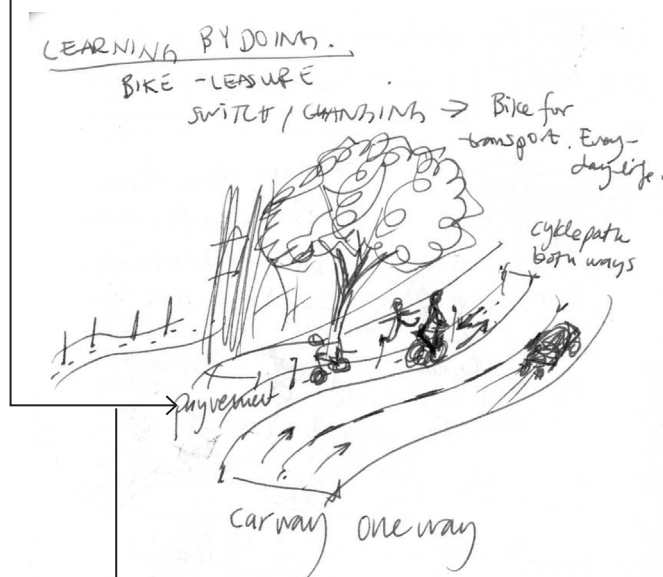
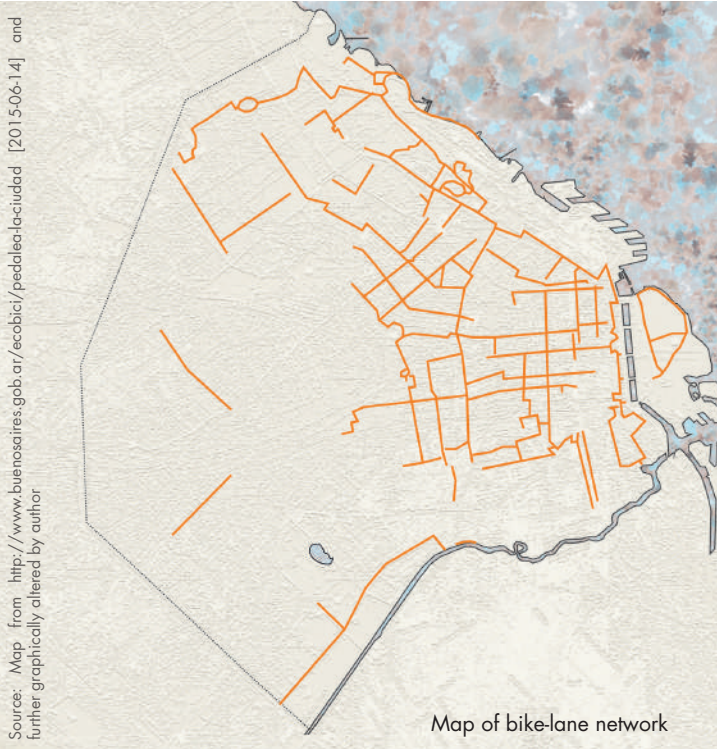
## Biking Across Town

The construction of an extensive bike-lane network has been going on since 2009. So far the the majority of lanes have been established in the central and tourist districts. This effort is a great step towards a more socio-ecological urban development. However, lanes are narrow, sometimes of bad quality and poorly connected which still makes it difficult to use the bike for transportation. The distribution of the bike-lanes is fairly unjust, almost non existing in the southern and west parts of the city.



### ECO BICI

Inspired by many Capitals around the western world, Buenos Aires have recently launched a public bike-system, Eco-Bici. The yellow bikes can be rented for free at several spots around town.



### SAFETY

The bike-lanes are often divided into two narrow lanes for traffic in both directions, whilst the car-roads often are one-way streets. Thus there are major safety issues in each crossing for bike-riders when sharing the same road as car traffic. The implementation of bike-lanes into car-roads is the most common structure of the new bike-lane network in BA.

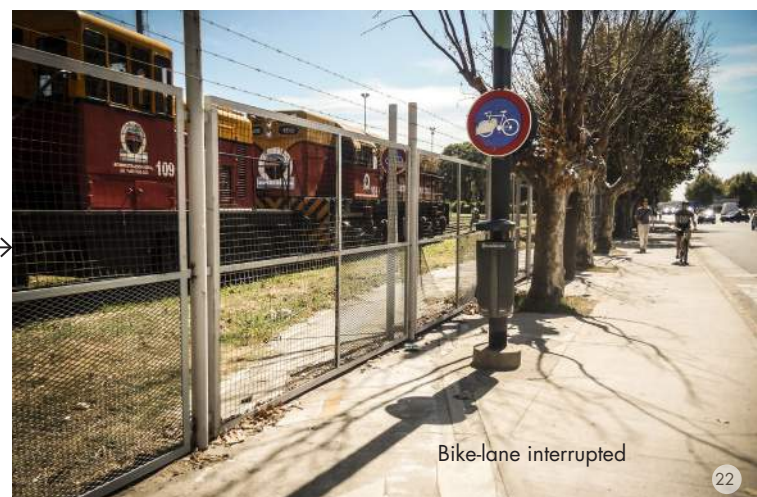


Signage is scarce, but exist at some places. One of the better lanes are along Corridor Norte. Here you have a fairly direct and wide route from Puerto Madero up to Nuñez.



## TO FEEL THE FLOW

When biking in Buenos Aires, it strikes me that it is very difficult to get a smooth and continuous ride. Obstacles in lanes or broken ones, hectic car-traffic and dangerous crossings are factors that constantly stops the flow.





The bike-lanes have higher quality within the large parks of Bosque Palermo enhancing the feeling of biking as a leisure activity only executed in a specific arena, rather than the whole city.



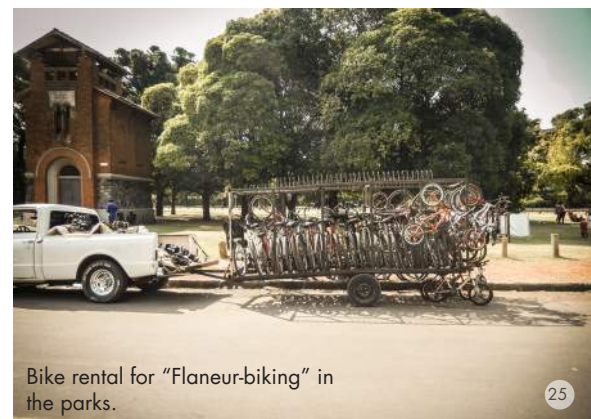
#### PARK DAYS AND BIKE-STROLLS

Each Sunday the car-roads are closed of to the benefit of pedestrians and bikers in the parks of *Bosque de Palermo*. On Sundays if weather is good, most parks are packed with people engaging in varies leisure activities. Regarding the biking, my observations is that porteños engage in it as more of a specific and planned leisure activity, like here on Sunday park days, rather than as an everyday transportation tool.



Leisure-biking a beautiful Sunday in the parks of Bosques de Palermo

24



Bike rental for "Flaneur-biking" in the parks.

25



A rare sight; Bike as transport as well as bike with baby-chair

26

## Leisurescapes: a Matter of Accessibility

### Biking To and Along the City Coast



Pedestrian/Bike Bridge

Car-Bridge

Car-Road

Highway

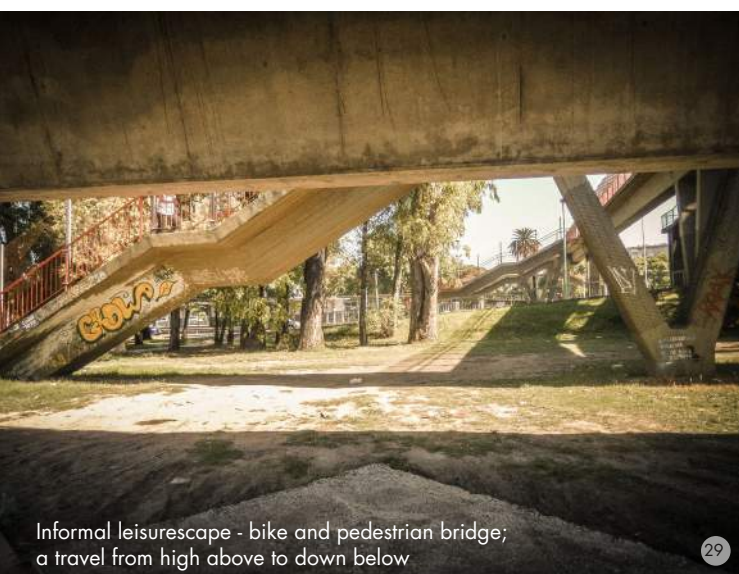
Train Platform

27



Bike-lane/-bridge/-tunnel helps to cross;  
car-road, highway and railroad. To  
reach coast, follow signs to airport.

28



Informal leisurescape - bike and pedestrian bridge;  
a travel from high above to down below

29

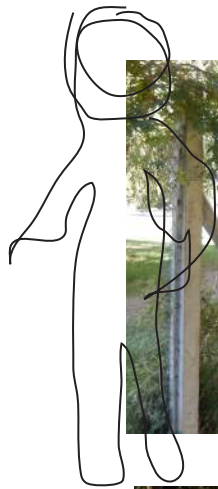
The city of Buenos Aires has lost the connection to the river plate during its expansion the last century. The layers of epochs of urban planning is visible in the structure of Buenos Aires. The heritage of modernism and functionalism is striking in the way infrastructure systems with airports, railways and highways cut through the city. Striking is also the fact that these infrastructure models, bridging and connecting in one scale, are urban barriers and dividers in another. As the norms and ideals of society change, so does the way we arrange our cities. The waterfront historically connected to ports, labour, trade, known as precarious landscape of hazards and flooding, unattractive for residential use has in our time, come to represent wealth and prestige, attractive landscapes for both residential and recreational use. These global trends are significant in harbour-scapes transformations of the last decade s, and have come to represent the forefront of urban development in many cities around the world.

Things change, Buenos Aires, the city that ones turned its back on the waterfront is now embracing its qualities and presence. Urban development project during the last decades are proof of it; large public parks has been established along the coast, the old harbour has been transformed into a new city district, Puerto Madero, small scale leisurescapes along River riachuelo as well as the watercourse Lago Soldati are some implications of the monetary and recreational value of water found during transects. But, are these interventions enough to reconnect with the water? Enormous infrastructure systems and private grounds are still blocking the access between these public green spaces and the city core. To reach the sea by foot or bike, one still has to struggle. Lack of signage, lack of safe crossings, lack of access and maintenance is lack of sustainable city planning. Implementation of socio-ecological urban development could help bridge urban barriers and make public space more *public*.





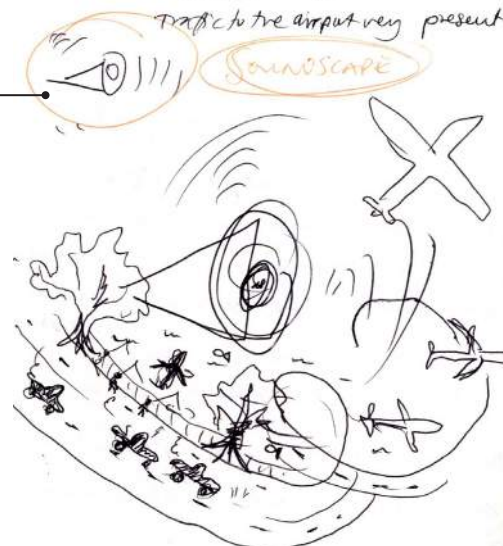
View from Bike/pedestrian bridge. To reach the coast from the city is not easy, one have to cross many barriers of large-scale infrastructure systems.



- Horrible noise pollution from Airport
  - Highway
  - adjacent large carroad.
- Traffic to the airport very present

#### SOUNDSCAPE

Sound-pollution is immense along the leiscapes of the coast due to adjacent airport and highways. Sketch from coastal transect.






## Leisurescapes: a Matter of Accessibility Fencescapes

When transecting the city, particularly around the waterscapes a significant element are the fenced off land. Land that seems to be in use as well as abandoned. Another significant feature is that a majority of public parks are surrounded by fences. Weather see-through or wall-like these fences evoke thoughts of private and public as well as questions of accessibility.

The fence is both a protector and a symbol of safety, yet at the same time a barrier and signal of a hostile environment. The fence can be a physical manifestation of capital, when people are trying to mark and protect their property. When an area is fenced off one can be inside or outside - integrated or excluded. The fence also signals that there are certain rules inside of it the area. When it comes to a public park, as soon as you pass the entrance, going from outside to inside, you agree to these rules and conditions.

Borders are not only fences, they're obligations and rules, exclusions and inclusions. Borders do not solve conflicts, they translocate them.



When trying to travel along the coastline, the closest one get is the fences around the private grounds that occupy large parts of the northern waterfront. However, this picture displays the fence around the public park, Parque de la Memoria.

33


### FENCE AND PUBLIC PARKS

In recent years, the Government of Buenos Aires has, with the argument of delimiting crime, started to put up fences around public parks. Many of these public parks now have opening hours, similar to office working-hours. This action has been met with opposition as well as encouragement (Reed 2012; Guglielmini<sup>13</sup> 2015). Whether the action reduces crime rates or not, fencing in/out/ around/off, is a physical manifestation of borders. It is a physical border that enables one to be either within (inside) or without (outside). The borders also enable certain rules to be applied to someone located within them. The fence as a border often emphasises where and how to enter and exit the fenced in area, more exactly, at the places where the fence does not exist or is portable, often materialised as a gate. The gate enables complete enclosing of the fenced in area. In the case of public green spaces, as parks, the possibilities to enter and exit wherever one see fit enhances the use of sustainable transportation through the park, thus it's superable to think that fenced in/out/ around/off parks could delimit important health benefits in urban everyday life.

### ANTICIPATING PLAZA ARMENIA


The green fence divide the public park/square, Plaza Armenia in Palermo, into two places; one fenced off formal leiscapes with play equipment and more vegetation, and the other (un-fenced), square-like with the popular meeting-place of a large fountain. Due to restoration, during my two months living in this area, the park was mainly closed off both physically and visually (see green curtains in pic). One day as I pass on my daily walk, I find one of the gates open. I'm surprised that the green curtains and traces of construction is still there. I enter the park and inside there're two new play areas for children. Though early in the morning, there're already many kids with their parents using the new playscapes, equipment that still have their plastic wrappers folded around them. Whilst outside the fence again, I pass a child walking with his dad. The child jumps up and down shouting "Papa, papa, la plaza Armenia ya esta abierto, Hallelujah!", "Hallelujah" the father answers with enthusiasm (eng. "Dad, dad, Plaza Armenia is now open, Hallelujah!"). A few days later the official re-opening event takes place, this time there's no sign of the plastic wrappers.

### Leisurescape Through Fence



Fenced off bikelane in downtown BA.

34



Fences around Plaza Armenia

35



## \_Shelter Through Fence

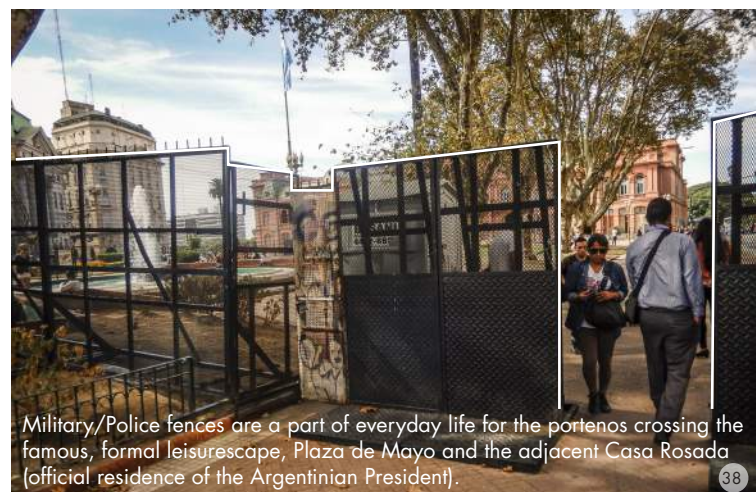
Gated community in Palermo Chico along the wealthy areas of "Corridor Norte", close to Boardwalk Costa Salguero. Situated on the other side of the railroad is an informal settlement (which I haven't found an "official" name of, it's either recently established or unacknowledged).



In Buenos Aires most properties are fenced in or enclosed, this phenomena has an affect on the streetscape and human scale level of the city. Fenced of or enclosed entrances share the space with commercial activities. Villas on the other hand are often fenced in by infrastructure systems such railways and highways.



One of the largest informal settlements in BA is Villa 31. It is one of the oldest Villas very centrally located in between the port and the Retiro train station. <sup>37</sup>



Military/Police fences are a part of everyday life for the portenos crossing the famous, formal leiscapescape, Plaza de Mayo and the adjacent Casa Rosada [official residence of the Argentinian President]. <sup>38</sup>



## \_Disrespected Fence: Informal Leisurescapes





# \_Water Through Fence

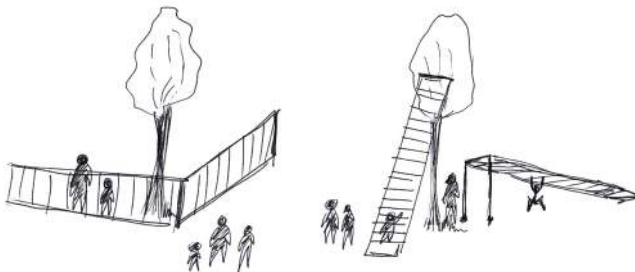
## TEMPORARY BEACH

Thanks to local tide the shore outside Parque Costero sometimes become a real, yet informal, *playa* (eng. "beach").



## PERMANENT SIGN

In the urban sports park Parque Costero, signs make it clear that water contact is prohibited by the authorities. Top sign; "Prohibited to enter the River". Middle; "Prohibited to fish". Bottom; "Dont enter".



Put fences differently?

## \_ Leisurescapes: more Temporal, more Accessible, more Creatively 'Fenced'!

What the maps couldn't give me, the transect could. The exploration of spatial and social situations have given me a more nuanced picture of Buenos Aires. Consequently I've observed a fragmentation of formal and informal places. Thus findings prompt me to consider and have in mind the following aspects for transformation of the site Lago Soldati:

- Public space interventions are re-connecting the city with the waterfronts
- Free and temporal activities could be beneficial tools to activate public spaces as well as engage people in the design of them.
- Establishments of leisurescapes along waterscapes of Buenos Aires can help protect land and people from precarious landscapes.
- The accessibility to the leisurescapes presented, with focus on equal and sustainable transportation is lacking. Improvements can be made with focus on connectivity and accessibility for bikes and pedestrians.
- Discussions of accessibility and availability of leisurescapes should be ever ongoing, fences and surveillance of these included.
- Public space interventions with the motto "To put fences differently", are welcome.





## FOOD & NATIONAL IDENTITY

Informal foodscapes: I'm in villa 21-24, with two landscape professionals on a site visit to prepare for a public space intervention of a small yard. The upgrading is mainly focused on integrating more vegetative element in the area. An event of planting together with the neighbours is planned. When where talking to the neighbours about the plans one week prior to the event, one women (originally from Paraguay) proudly tells me that she's going to bake a national dish from her country to the people participating in the plantings. Seven days later she and her Argentinian neighbour has prepared two significant dishes from their native countries; *tartas fritas* (eng. (fried pastry; Paraguay) and *empanadas al horno* (oven baked meat-filled pasties; Argentina).



## **FOODSCAPES**

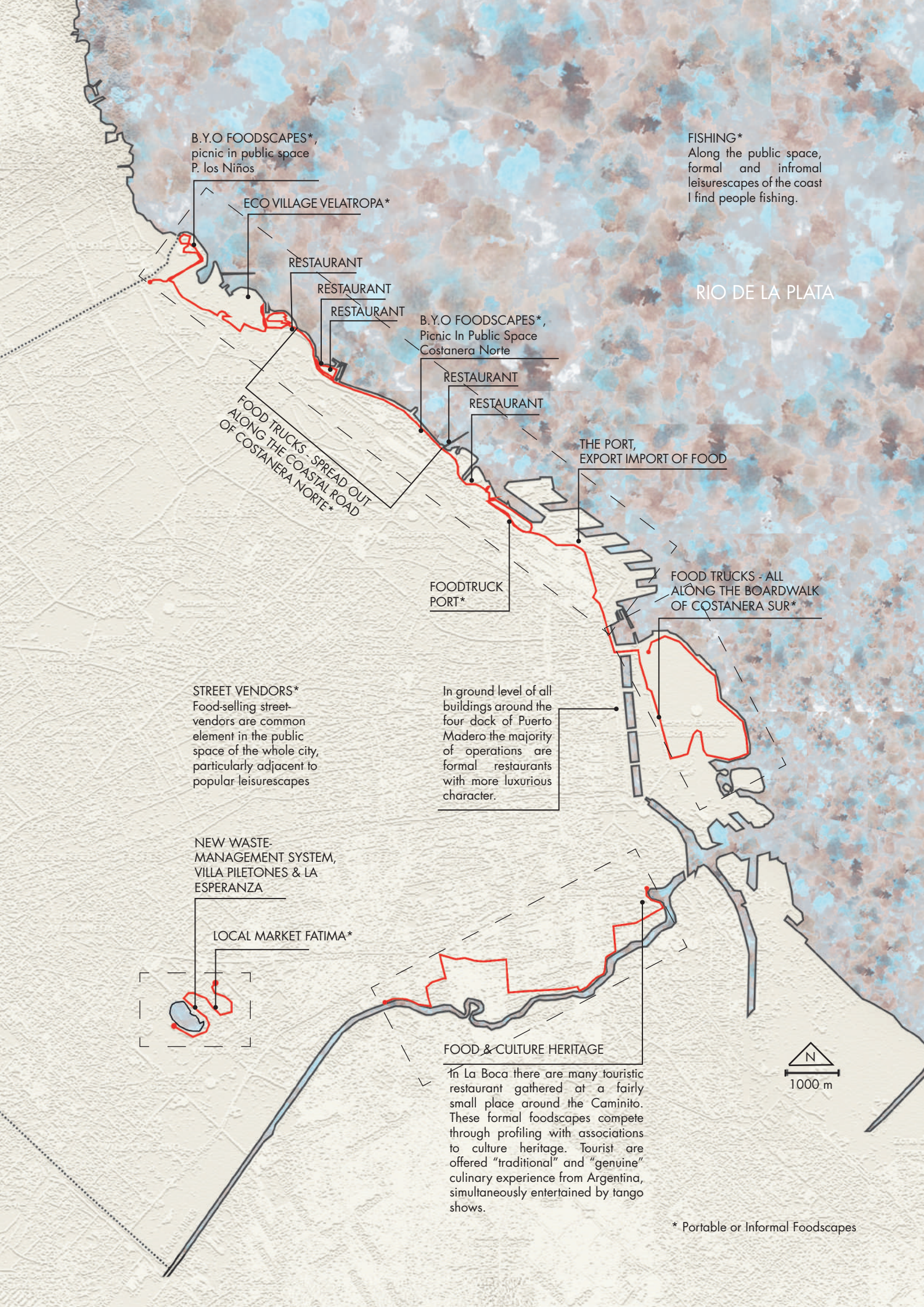
*Food is part of the Argentinian culture and national identity. The history of immigration from Italy, Spain and Latin American countries is visible in the cuisine and culture around food. In this chapter envisagements from the waterfront connected to food is presented in what I choose to call foodscapes. Fragmented thoughts connected to findings: One can make, buy and eat food, further one can fish for, gather and grow food on ones own, foodscapes are part of ecosystems relying on biodiversity, contamination as implication of food production and waste. Food can easily be associated with discourses of environmental justice; quality and supply is not a certain part of every persons life. Urban foodscapes, formal and informal, can be used to raise questions of sustainability to extend the picture to more holistic ideas in urban development of Buenos Aires as well as elsewhere.*



## \_Finding Foodscapes







B.Y.O FOODSCAPES\*,  
picnic in public space  
P. los Niños

ECO VILLAGE VELATROPA\*

RESTAURANT

RESTAURANT

RESTAURANT

B.Y.O FOODSCAPES\*,  
Picnic In Public Space  
Costanera Norte

RESTAURANT

RESTAURANT

FOOD TRUCKS - SPREAD OUT  
ALONG THE COASTAL ROAD  
OF COSTANERA NORTE\*

THE PORT,  
EXPORT IMPORT OF FOOD

FOODTRUCK  
PORT\*

FOOD TRUCKS - ALL  
ALONG THE BOARDWALK  
OF COSTANERA SUR\*

STREET VENDORS\*  
Food-selling street-  
vendors are common  
element in the public  
space of the whole city,  
particularly adjacent to  
popular leiscuescapes

In ground level of all  
buildings around the  
four dock of Puerto  
Madero the majority  
of operations are  
formal restaurants  
with more luxurious  
character.

NEW WASTE-  
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM,  
VILLA PILETONES & LA  
ESPERANZA

LOCAL MARKET FATIMA\*

FOOD & CULTURE HERITAGE

In La Boca there are many touristic  
restaurant gathered at a fairly  
small place around the Caminito.  
These formal foodscapes compete  
through profiling with associations  
to culture heritage. Tourist are  
offered "traditional" and "genuine"  
culinary experience from Argentina,  
simultaneously entertained by tango  
shows.

FISHING\*  
Along the public space,  
formal and informal  
leiscuescapes of the coast  
I find people fishing.

RIO DE LA PLATA



\* Portable or Informal Foodscapes



## \_Foodscapes: Eating Out in Public Space



### FOOD: TRADITION & TRADE

Loads of food trucks line the streets along the accessible path of the coastline offering a street food version of the typical Argentinian *parilla* (barbecue), basically grilled meat in bread with some additions. Argentina is internationally known for its meat. The large-scale flat lands of Pampas has been used for pastoral farming for ages. Most products of the meat and dairy industry is consumed domestically by the Argentinians themselves (Buenos Aires Herald 2014). The significant smell of grilled meat is profound here along Costanera Norte and Costanera Sur, but also along the restaurant-dense streets of the city. Historically and today, food has been one of the country's largest exports. Today, soy-bean meal (13 %) and corn (6.1%) top the list of the countries export (The Observatory of Economic Complexity 2015).



### STREET FOOD

*Asado*, is another word for barbecue in Argentina. Sunday is the most common day to gather for an asado with family and friends. Asado is part of many Argentinians everyday life. Informal foodscapes where people sell food from simple grills are common element along roads. Here we see such a grill from the area Fatima, close to Lago Soldati.



### FORMAL RESTAURANTS

In between the food-trucks along the coastline and in Puerto Madero one can find some more luxurious restaurants by waterscapes. Here we see the restaurant and private fishing club house (Club de Pescadores).



Chairs are put out and food is served in the portable foodscapes along Costanera Norte. Located on the other side of the well-trafficked road is the Airport Jorge Newbery.



Along the informal leiscscape/foodscape, Boardwalk Costa Salguero, people are fishing, swimming and hanging out.



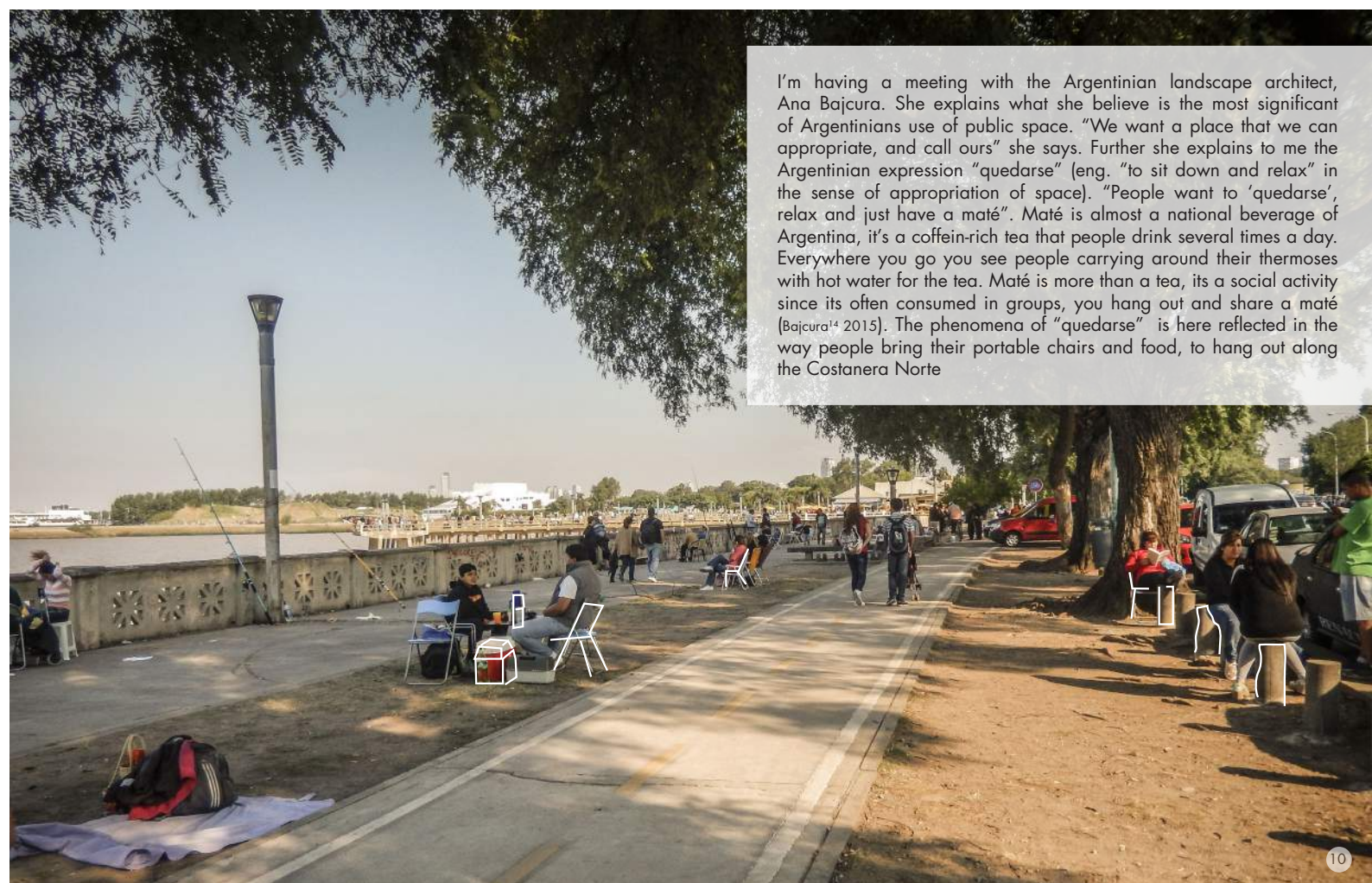
8

Informal foodscapes along the shores of Rio de la Plata. Left Parque los Niños, right people fishing



9

I'm having a meeting with the Argentinian landscape architect, Ana Bajcura. She explains what she believe is the most significant of Argentinians use of public space. "We want a place that we can appropriate, and call ours" she says. Further she explains to me the Argentinian expression "quedarse" (eng. "to sit down and relax" in the sense of appropriation of space). "People want to 'quedarse', relax and just have a maté". Maté is almost a national beverage of Argentina, it's a coffein-rich tea that people drink several times a day. Everywhere you go you see people carrying around their thermoses with hot water for the tea. Maté is more than a tea, its a social activity since its often consumed in groups, you hang out and share a maté (Bajcura<sup>14</sup> 2015). The phenomena of "quedarse" is here reflected in the way people bring their portable chairs and food, to hang out along the Costanera Norte



10

<sup>14</sup>Conversation with Ana Bajcura, Landscape Architect, Bajcura & Asociados, Buenos Aires; February 24th 2015



## \_Foodscapes: Portable Food



11



13

### STREET VENDORS

The appearance of food selling street vendors is common. Except for the formal foodmarkets people are moving around selling everything from coffee and medialunas (Argentinean croissant), to fruits, ice cream and other sweets. These vendors are of a more informal character.



12

Littering in Reserva Ecológica along the foodscape of Boardwalk Costanera Sur



14

### GARBAGE

Garbage as an implication of foodscapes affect the appearance of the public space, and cause major problems in the informal settlements where there's often a lack of waste management. In Los Piletones a waste management system has recently been introduced as a part of the sanitation program of Lago Soldati. Prior to sanitation the water-course basically worked as a garbage-dump. The deficit of public space also plays a role here, to enable introduction of waste-management several roads had to be widened and paved.



## \_Foodscapes: Biodiversity and Food

Many of the large-scale waterscapes of Buenos Aires are highly polluted. The days when porteños hustled the waterfront to swim in Rio de la Plata is long gone. Even though some people fish along the waterfront, eating the fish from porteno waters is not recommended and many restaurants in Buenos Aires get there "fresh fish" from waters far away from the capital. Before the sanitation program of the river Riachuelo started in 2007 it was classified as the second most polluted river in the world (World Bank 2014). When walking along the shore of the river one can still scent the smell of sulphur. What Saskia Sassen (2014) calls dead water definitely applies here. Contaminated land due to industrial activities is also common, particularly in the southern districts closer to the city-border and the river Riachuelo. Sassen's description of dead land is here highly associated and threats to the biodiversity and ecological system of the city (Stephenson 1998; World Bank 2014). These warnings of expulsion must be taken seriously and measures put in to minimize and mitigate environmental threats as such. Consequently this kind of environmental decline highly affect the inhabitants of the city, not only the inhabitants of informal settlements who's everyday life take place in these precarious landscapes, but also the supply of water and food.

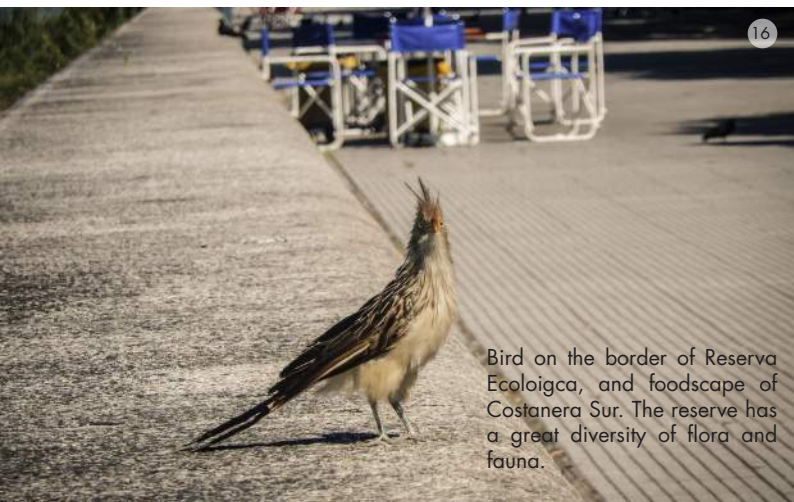
Ironically pesticides and organic wastes from industrial food production has contributed to the pollution of BAs waterscapes. Historically a lot of organic waste from slaughterhouses has been dumped in important waterstreams such as Cildanez and Riachuelo. Riachuelo is also called Rio de la Matanza (eng. "The Slaughter River") (Stephenson et al 1998; Silvestri 2013).

According to WHO's health indicators of sustainable cities measures have to be taken to enable food security and quality. Sustainable cities should favour "...accessibility and affordability of fresh food markets" to mitigate "...excessive concentrations of fast-food outlets – contributing to a shift towards diets high in sugar and salt, processed carbohydrates/oils, and animal products." (WHO 2012:3).

Human foodscape - Bird foodscape



15



16

Bird on the border of Reserva Ecológica, and foodscape of Costanera Sur. The reserve has a great diversity of flora and fauna.



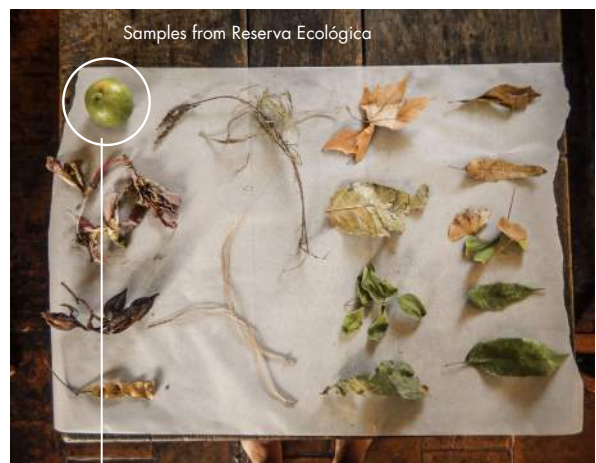
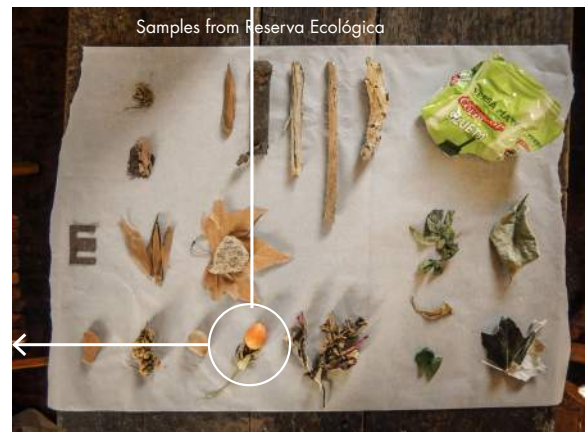
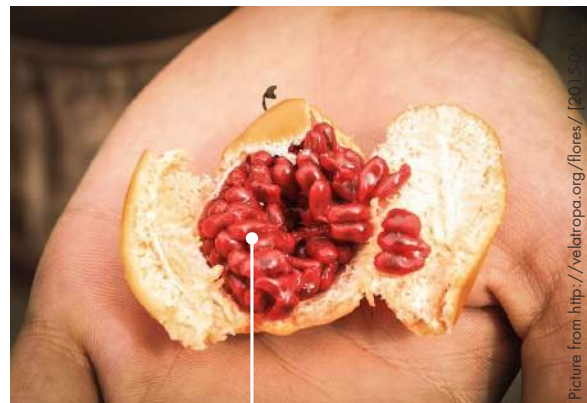
### DRUNKEN TREE

Palo Borracho (eng. "Drunken tree", in latin *Ceiba Speciosa*) is a very common tree in Buenos Aires. It's mostly used for ornamental purposes but the fruit contains silk-like fibres that sometimes are used for paper and ropes and from the seed one can extract edible vegetable oil (Beveraggi<sup>15</sup> 2015; Raggio 2015)

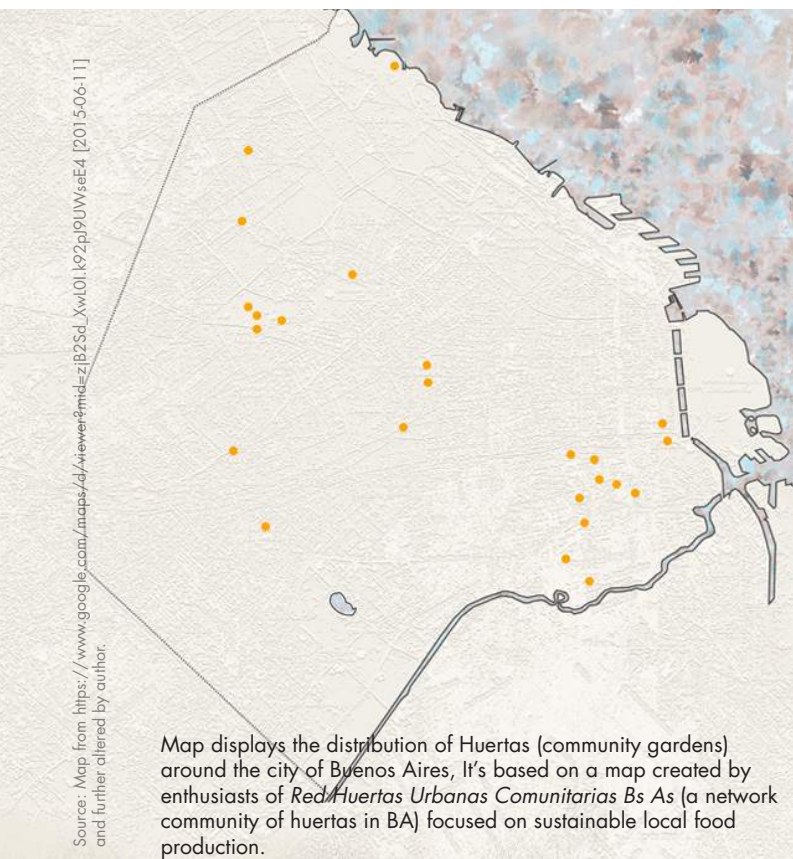
<sup>15</sup> Conversation with María Inés Beveraggi and Cecilia Raggio, Landscape Architects, Cuestion Paisajismo, Buenos Aires; February 27th, March 1st, March 7th, March 28th 2015.



## \_Foodscapes: Food of Gardens, Food of Streets







#### STREET TREES

A significant element of the streetscape in Buenos Aires is the great amount of urban trees. The heterogeneous supply of trees have several important functions; except pure aesthetics, the shadow and cooling-effect is one of the most substantial. Additionally, some of the street trees offer edible fruits such as citrus fruits, nuts, figs and peaches. Enthusiasts have created a webpage with fruit-tree map of the city to display the existence of free food in public space (available: <http://arbolesciudad.com.ar/>).

#### GROW FOOD - ECO VILLAGE

Located on the university campus, close to north ecological reserve (Reserva Ecologica Costanera Norte), is Eco village Velatropa. This informal settlements is of another character than the villas. Velatropa was established in 2007 and is an interdisciplinary experimental centre with a community garden. It's an open community that seeks alternative ways of sustainable living and human relationship to the planet. There aim is to state examples of how to hinge the urban and rural as well as local and global way of living (Velatropa 2015).



## \_Foodscapes: Appreciate What You Have - Socially, Biologically and Temporarily

What the maps couldn't give me, the transect could. The exploration of spatial and social situations have given me a more nuanced picture of Buenos Aires. Temporal and informal foodscapes of the public sphere could not have been perceived without fieldwork. Thus findings prompt me to consider and have in mind the following aspects for transformation of the site Lago Soldati:

- Food is an important part of Argentinian identity and culture.
- Foodscapes of public space are often temporal and portable
- Community gardens, Huertas, offer recreational, ecological and social meeting places where one can produce one's own food.

- Searching for food is a fundamental human activity.
- Foodscapes like Huertas can work as experimental and pedagogic platform.
- Measures to enhance biodiversity in cities is important for food-production.
- Local food production has positive social and ecological affects.
- Food has spatial and environmental implications.





Self-constructed garage in a semi-public yard, Villa 21-24.

1



## **SHELTERSCAPES**

*As in many cities around Latin America and other developing countries, informal settlements are evident parts of the urban fabric. In the city of Buenos Aires inadequate housing, lack of infrastructure, services and amenities as well as deficiency of public spaces are common problems of villas. The location of villas and asentamientos also follow the same pattern as described in Part 1 of this thesis; in precarious and hazardous landscapes such as; industrial plots, in-between spaces of large infrastructure-systems, along waterfronts and riverbeds. The topographic data reveals a very flat landscape around the whole city. Thus one of the most common environmental hazards for the inhabitants, of the formal as well as informal city, is flooding.*

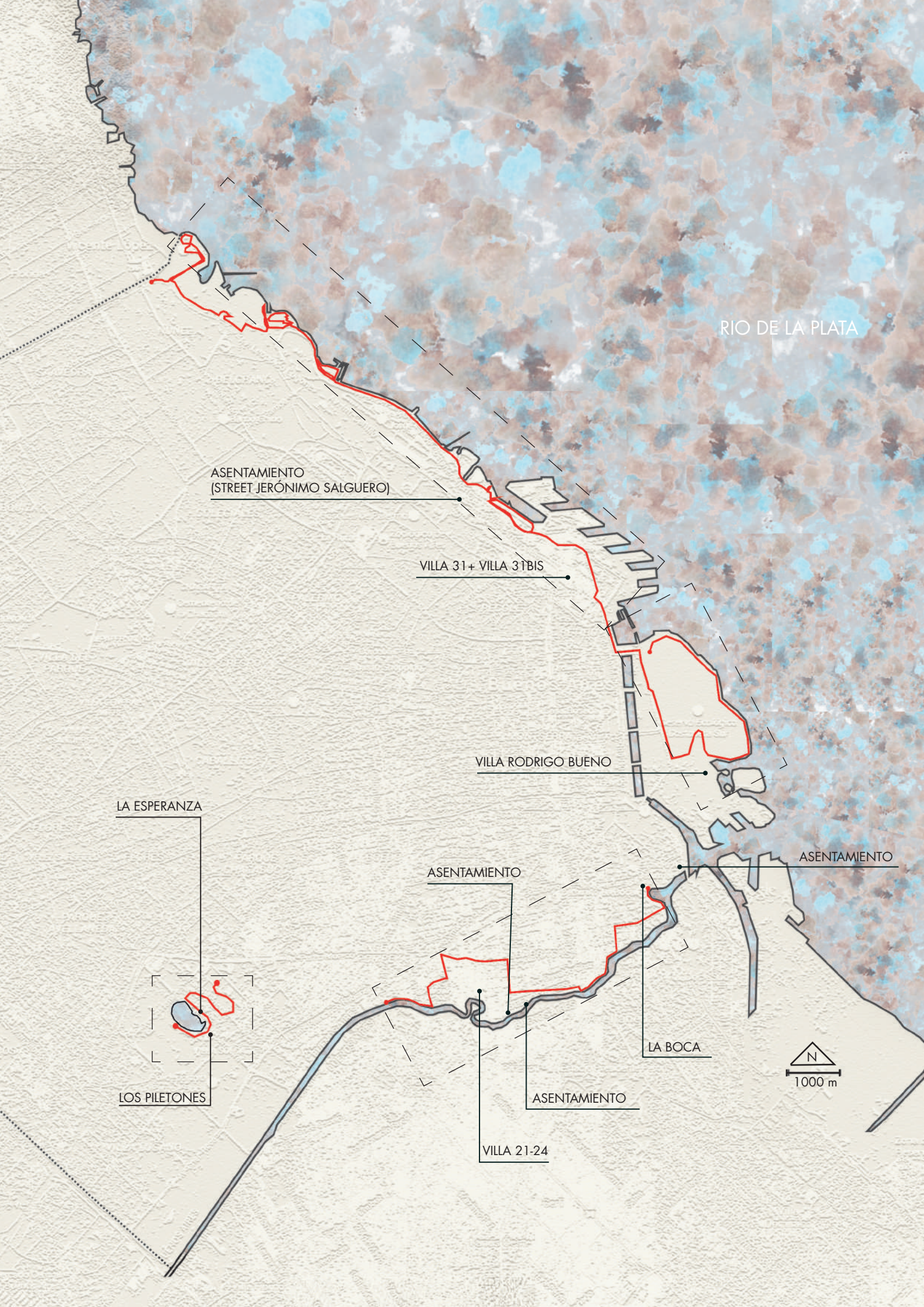
*In this chapter findings regarding informal settlements adjacent to waterscapes are presented and discussed.*



## \_Finding Shelterscapes







RIO DE LA PLATA

ASENTAMIENTO  
(STREET JERÓNIMO SALGUERO)

VILLA 31+ VILLA 31BIS

VILLA RODRIGO BUENO

LA ESPERANZA

ASENTAMIENTO

ASENTAMIENTO

LOS PILETONES

LA BOCA

ASENTAMIENTO

VILLA 21-24





## \_Shelterscapes: Living in the Left-overs



Football is a great part of the Argentinian culture, sometimes in parity with religion. In public space interventions in socio-economic deprived areas, such as villas, implementation of the classic football field seems to be rather the rule than the exception.

4



As part of an upgrading process of the villas, the government has launched a "colour"-program, where villeros can retrieve colour and construction material to increase the aesthetic quality of the façades.

5



6

### RAIN AND 'FRIED CHICKEN'

I'm walking around with some people from SECHI in Villa 21-24. When the thunderstorm and rain clouds are getting closer, one of the workers says it's time for us to hurry back to the office, if not, we are in the risk of becoming "fried chicken". I laugh and say something about the flashes. "No, no" the worker says, and explains to me that "becoming fried chicken" is slang in the villa for becoming subject of an assault, (basically anything bad such robbery, attack, violence etc.). When thunderstorm and heavy rain come to this villa all "good people" go inside leaving only the "bad guys" out on the streets.

High rates of crime and violence make it unsafe for outsiders to walk around in some villas. The crime rates both feed prejudices of villeros, as much as they are implications of their marginalisation. The dense urban constructions in the villa, with dark narrow alleys and lacking accessibility, contribute to the lack of safety.

### VERTICAL GROWTH

Villa 1-11-14 is considered one of the most problematic ones in BA. In contrast to other informal settlement the houses here often reach up to 6 levels which makes this settlement very densely populated. The inaccessibility due to its dense structure is contributing to extralegal activities (SECHI<sup>16</sup> 2015)

### MY STREETSCAPE, SOMEONE ELSE'S SHELTERSCAPE

Traces of homeless people such as mattresses and belongings are quite common to find when walking the streets of Buenos Aires. Uncountable times, during my two months in BA, I pass homeless people sleeping on the streets

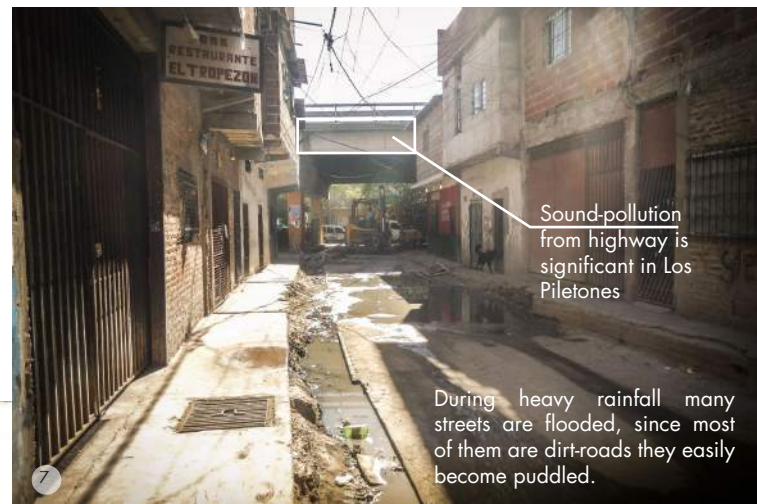


Sketchy map drawn prior to transect along Riachuelo. Possible route and existing villas and asentamientos along the water are marked out.



#### PRECARIOUS WATERSCAPES

Villa 21-24 is one of the largest informal settlements in Buenos Aires. Large amount of houses are situated along the riverbed of Riachuelo, these households are extremely vulnerable to flooding and the contaminated water of the river.

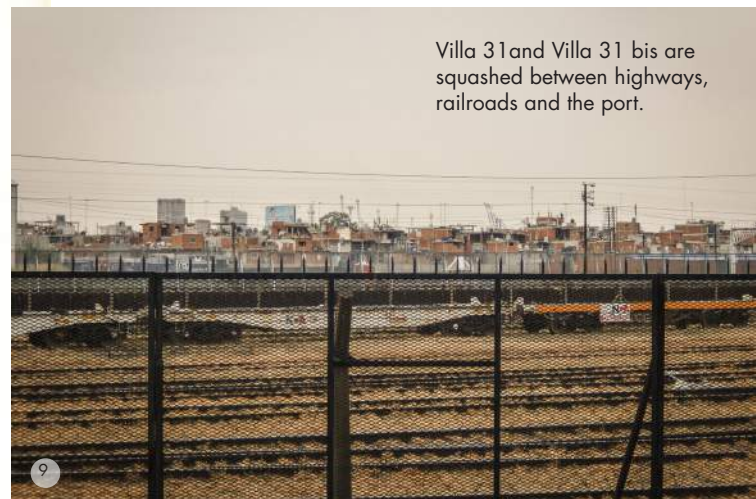


Sound-pollution from highway is significant in Los Piletones

During heavy rainfall many streets are flooded, since most of them are dirt-roads they easily become puddled.



Boat used for sanitation of Riachuelo .



Villa 31 and Villa 31 bis are squashed between highways, railroads and the port.



Picture from Google Maps then further graphically altered by author



## \_Shelterscapes: Transformative Landscapes



Lack of greenstructure is common in the villas, hence places of shadow and coolness during summertime. Here is the famous and beautiful Jackaranda tree in Vill 21-24.



### JACKARANDA

The Jackaranda (latin. *Jacaranda mimosifolia*) is a very common urban tree in the city. It is very popular thanks to its significant purple flowers. The flowers come two times a year and its spring flowering turn parts of the streetscape of Buenos Aires into a purple fiesta (Beveraggi<sup>17</sup> 2015; Raggio 2015).



Plants for public space intervention in villa 21-24



### THE SELF-CONSTRUCTED CITY

Many inhabitants of the villas have built their own houses. The notion of "D.I.Y" is everyday life in these settlements, and the creative solutions found here are plenty. A couple of weeks before this picture was taken, one could see the whole Lago Soldati from this point now the buildings have expanded vertically blocking the sight.



11



Before



During intervention

14

### GREEN INTERVENTION

I'm participating in public space intervention in villa 21-24 organised by SECHI. Together with the neighbours and governmental representative we plant the small yard. The intervention is directed to increase vegetation for ecosystem-services, in this area that often suffer from flooding. The neighbours want the whole yard to be paved, but the architect explains the benefits with having permeable materials such as vegetation with lawns, trees and bushes, instead of hard surfaces, since the water always has to go somewhere. They show us the small, clogged, wells that work as wastewater-management. They ask us why we can't fix the wells. The architect says it's another department that work with sewage, therefore there's nothing they can do. Later, one of the neighbours proudly present how she has paved her own private patio to minimize the damages during heavy rainfall, and explains that she's benefited a lot from this investment.



## \_Shelterscapes: Evolution Matters - From Informal to Formal



### \_La Boca: a Model Path from Informality to Formality

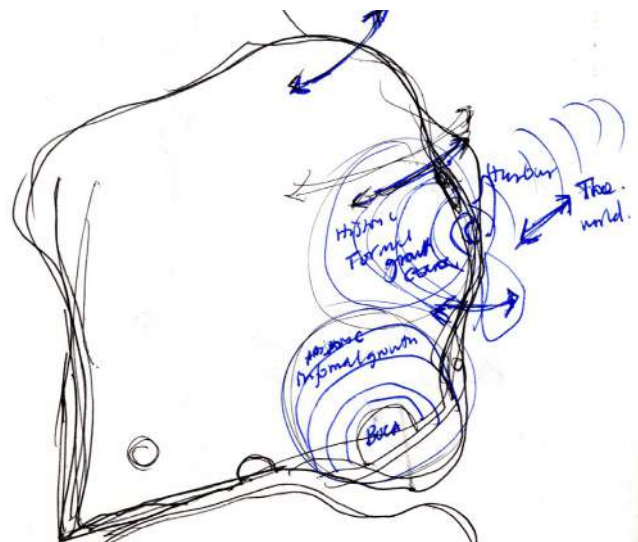
La Boca is a neighbourhood in Buenos Aires, situated in the south-east close to the old port and the river Riachuelo. Some say the name of La Boca comes from it being located at the river-mouth of Riachuelo (mouth = boca in Spanish) others say it derives from the genovese neighbourhood Bocadasse, a heritage from the Italian immigrants that constituted the majority of the inhabitants when the neighbourhood was established (Buenos Aires Ciudad 2015c).

La Boca is an implication of the large wave of immigration to Buenos Aires in the late 1800's. The closeness to the port and the agglomerations of industries and warehouses along Riachuelo made La Boca the centre of informal growth. The district became a poor working-class neighbourhood inhabiting immigrants mainly from Italy, Spain and Armenia and labourers (Silvestri 2003). Consequently, during the shift to the 1900's, the city of Buenos Aires was expanding at two centre-point, one around the historical, colonial centre (the formal city) and the other around the harbour and Riachuelo, with the informal settlements of La Boca (the informal city) (Janches<sup>18</sup> 2015).

Despite the fact that one can find both new and old traces of informality in the area today, La Boca has consolidated through the years. It is still a rough neighbourhood (petty crime is very common) but also one of the largest tourist attractions of the city with its famous football stadium of Boca Juniors and the colourful street Caminito. In recent years a culture centre, Usina del Arte, has been established here. Additionally, the famous art gallery PROA attracts people from outside La Boca.

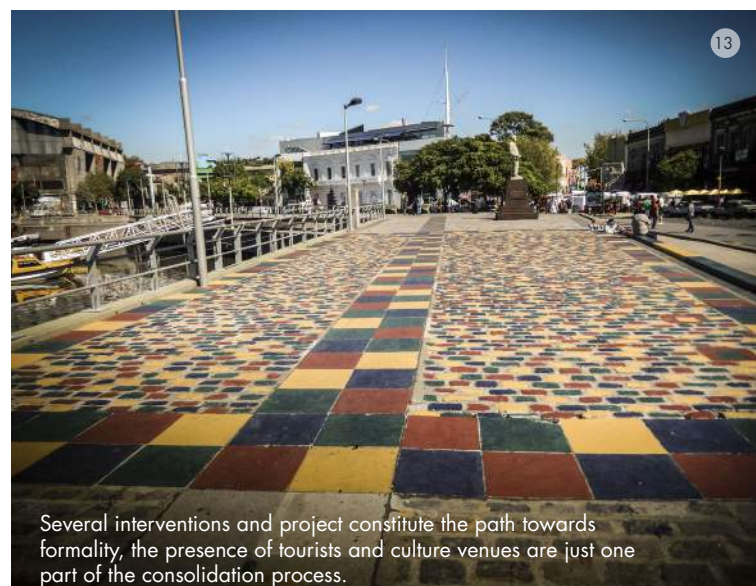
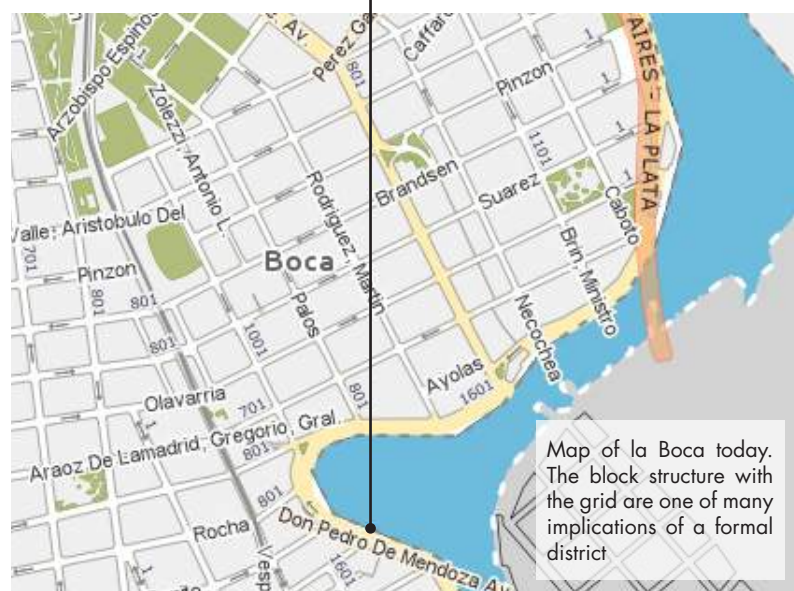
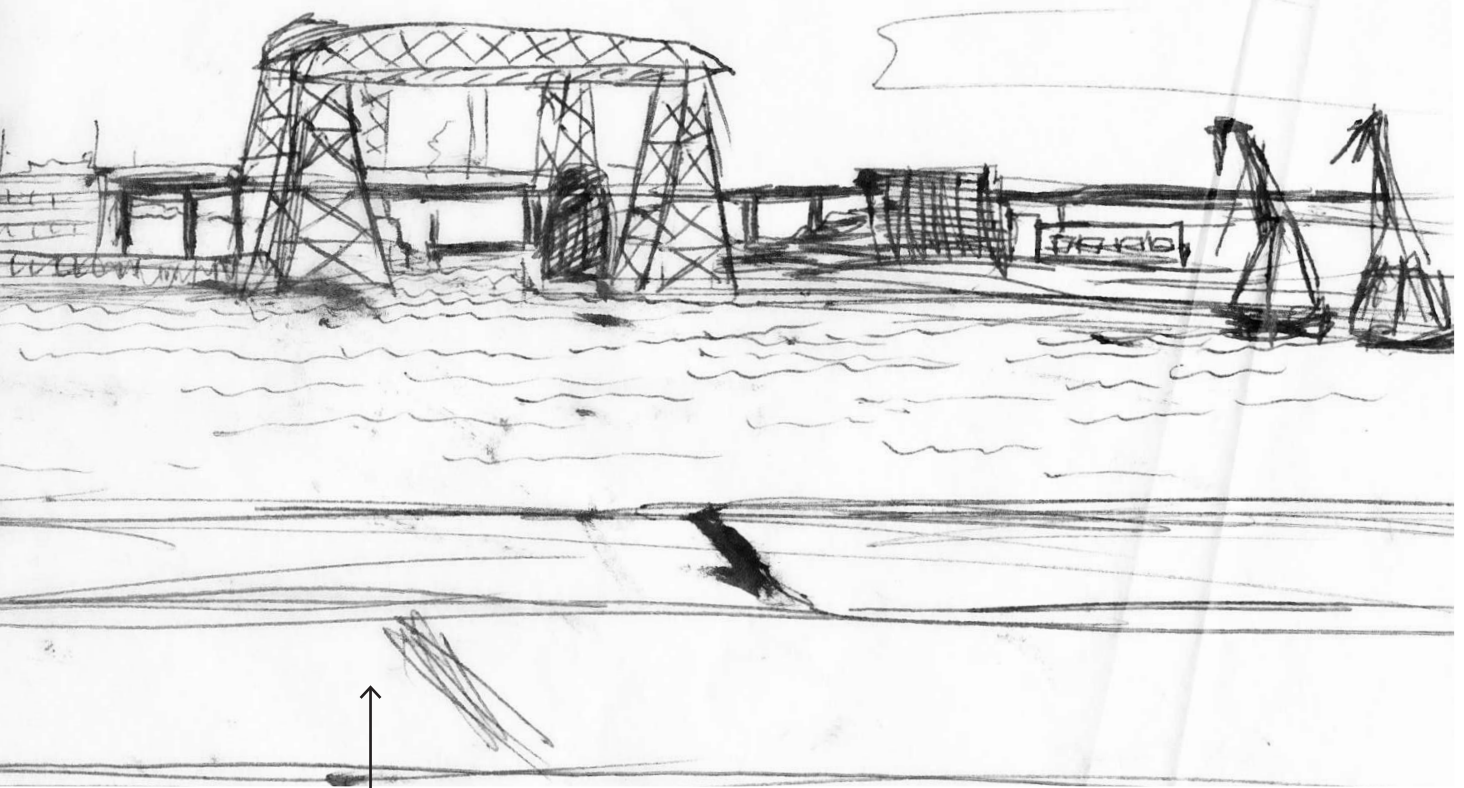
### LA BOCA THE OLD CENTRE OF INFORMALITY

Sketch of Buenos Aires expansion during late 1800's to early 1900's. The city developed around to centre-points, the formal historical centre and the informal centre of La Boca.





Sketch from the riverside of La Boca with famous landmark, Puente Transbordador (eng. Transporter Bridge).

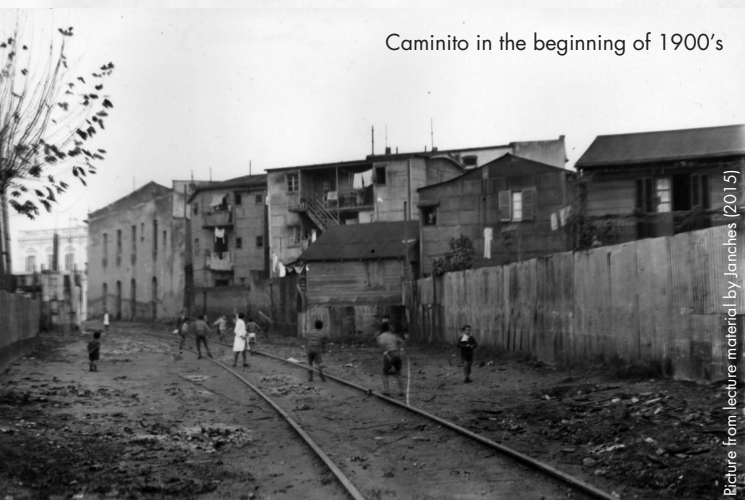


Several interventions and project constitute the path towards formality, the presence of tourists and culture venues are just one part of the consolidation process.





Caminito in the beginning of 1900's



Picture from lecture material by Janches (2015)



Caminito today

Picture from <http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/aciudad/barrios/taboca> [2015-08-26]



Sketch of informal settlements below the highway bridge in la Boca



#### COLOUR UP!

The colourful streetscape of El Caminito prompt thoughts about aesthetic up-grading. El Caminito give the feeling of being a set piece, one wonders what is hidden behind. Set piece or not, the tourists love it and the aesthetic up-grading certainly adds to the attraction.

#### MODEL PATH?

Outside the tourist area: Un-coloured house in la Boca reveals some of the decay of the area. The consolidation of La boca is a model-path in the sense of illustrating the possibility of integration the formal with the informal towards what Gouverneur call "Hybrid"-cities (2014). La Boca is still a very poor and problem-weighted area, but lessons can be learnt from the development of this area when trying to bridge the fragmentation between villas and the formal areas in Buenos Aires.



14



15



## \_Shelterscapes Under the Water



Many informal settlements are situated along the riverbed of Riachuelo. Through intervention of "Parque Costero de Riachuelo", new leiscuescapes are constructed along the riverside to enable public access to the waterscape. The government have replaced some inhabitants to get access to the land. Other than new public spaces, the project is a mean to protect inhabitants from the polluted river water as well as minimizing domestic waste dumping in the river (Buenos Aires Ciudad 2014).

In the light of climate change, Buenos Aires suffer from increased sea and river levels, rising temperature and precipitation. These effects, along with increased frequency of extreme events like flooding caused by heavy rains and storm surges, as well as droughts are the primary climate-induced hazards for the city (Mehrotra et al 2012).

Floods have become more frequent in the low-lying coastal zones since 1960 when the south Atlantic anticyclone was displaced southward bringing an increased frequency of easterly winds over Rio de la Plata. South-eastern winds cause pressure on the waterscapes around Buenos Aires. These local storms, known as "sudestadas" can last from a few hours to two or three days, with strong winds from the southeast that push water towards the interior of the river and cause floods along the low Argentinean bank (Mehrotra et al 2012).

Comprehensive measures as well as local interventions and mitigations have to be taken to minimize the social and ecological disasters that are consequences of lacking environmental governance in Argentina. On a city level, efforts to further implement perspectives of socio-ecological urban development could be advantageous. Public space interventions with focus on landscape resilience could be used to enhance social coherence, protect valuable landscapes from squatting, and work as pedagogic platforms for climate change.



## \_Shelterscapes: Weak Environments, Creative People

What the maps couldn't give me, the transect could. The exploration of spatial and social situations have given me a more nuanced picture of Buenos Aires. Thus fieldwork prompt me to consider the following aspects for transformation of the site Lago Soldati:

- Informal settlements are often situated within hazardous and precarious landscapes. In the BA villas due to the landscape characters, most common risks are flooding, closeness to rivers and streams, closeness to heavily trafficked roads and noise, air and ground pollution.
- Precarious housings, deficiency of basic infrastructure, services, amenities and public space contribute to further pollution and endeavour of social and ecological conditions in the villas.
- The lack of green-structure have negative influence on everyday life, social activities and biodiversity, on a local and city scale.
- The informal settlements are generally small scale neighbourhoods, with small and low houses. Put aside the problems with overcrowding, the morphology of the villas seldom enable much vehicle traffic. A focus on sustainable transportation with walking and biking paths as leading infrastructure, when "urbanising"/transforming, could be a great opportunity due to the existing spatial conditions.
- The stigma of being a "villero" have marginalizing affects. Though within the villas there are sometimes a strong sense of community, seldom found in the formal city. This sense of community should be encouraged and utilised to better the socio-ecological conditions in the villas.
- Inhabitants of the villas have often built their home by them-selves, and creative solutions found here are plenty. Here live founders of the self-constructed city. The opportunity to engage and involve these driven people in transformation of their own neighbourhood should definitely be taken.



## PART 3: TRANSFORMING



*In the third part of this thesis I want exemplify how site-specific findings, from fieldwork here and along waterscapes around the Buenos Aires, can be applied as possible drivers in future development. With the previously mentioned findings as a basis I present two possible scenarios of transformation for the area of control, Lago Soldati.*



In this section I would like to illustrate how transareal findings originating from transects through the Buenos Aires waterscapes, can be drivers for future urban transformation. On the basis of the mappings presented on the previous pages I will now discuss two possible scenarios. The first, proposed as a doubt 'Let us Alone?', sketches out how business as usual would perform on site - it transforms, but not in a controlled way but resulting in the opposite: uncontrolled expansion of informal settlements. The second, formulated as an invitation 'Let us Play, Grow and Dwell!' stands for an alternative to business as usual, creating new spaces for leisure, food and shelter, combined into a proposal for site interventions that together might be able to set up a promising transformation career. The design proposal is only treated briefly to exemplify how the findings can be used in site-specific, small-scale and short termed interventions of the area of Lago Soldati, thus my proposal can be seen as a springboard for future and more far reaching interventions. The intention is to offer small scale and short term interventions enabling transformation starting already tomorrow.







La Esperanza

Los Piletones

NORTH

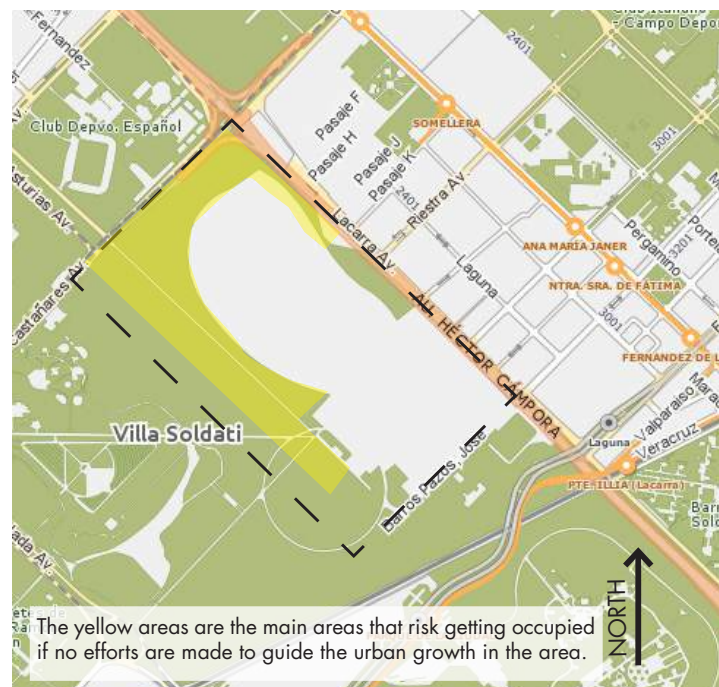




## Business as Usual, uncontrolled expansion

This scenario is presented to emphasise the nature of informal growth, its rapid and unpredictable expansion. If no interventions are done to protect the open spaces around Lago Soldati and Northern part of Parque Indoamericano, it is very likely that the settlement La Esperanza expands in these direction. Deficiency of affordable housing and the vulnerable economic situation in Argentina suggests an increase of poverty among Argentinians and perhaps a similar increase of informal settlements as during last major crisis in 2001-2002. An addition of informal housing will put higher pressure on the relief basin Lago Soldati. In this scenario contamination due to domestic waste could reoccur and the sanitation efforts be in vain.

Further informal expansion on precarious and contaminated grounds are neither in tune with social nor ecological sustainability. Should the villas around the watercourse expand there's a risk that less open and public spaces are accessible for the existing inhabitants of the villas. The possibility to use the land for other purposes in the future, such as formal housing or leiscurescapes, are limited if squatting occurs.



The yellow areas are the main areas that risk getting occupied if no efforts are made to guide the urban growth in the area.

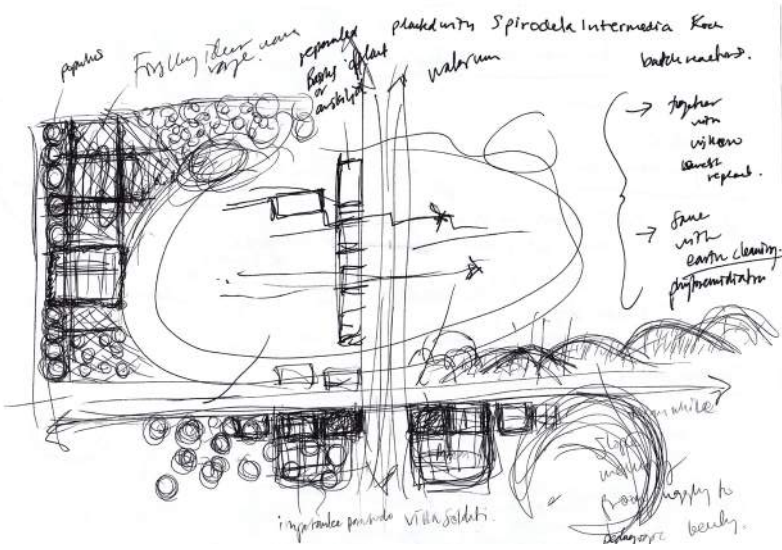


View over lago Soldati and its surrounding open spaces





## \_Scenario 2 "Let Us Play, Grow and Dwell!"



Sketches from design process

## New Spaces for Leisure, Food and Shelter

This design proposal has been inspired by my experiences and understandings of Buenos Aires and the villas. Additionally the ideas from Gouverneur's Informal Armatures, about protecting land by using it, lay the foundation of this proposal, as do the concepts of socio-ecological urban development. The proposal consists of several small scale design interventions that aim at creating different uses of the open spaces adjacent to Lago Soldati. These interventions are based on arguments from my findings of leiscapes, foodscape and shelterscape.

The strategic proposal is explained through written and visual material, first in a brief written introduction followed by illustrations and finally all design measures are described in an organisation scheme. As with the nature of the self-constructed city, this proposal has a short time-frame with focus on hands-on interventions and flexibility. Therefore it is not written in stone exactly where each intervention is going to be materialised, just that they should be. Flexibility and sensitiveness towards what the future may bring is essential, here presented in a combination of site-programming and site-editing with an aim of engaging the community in the overall transformation of their neighbourhood.

Some of the open spaces around Lago Soldati are divided into smaller parts, with a future block structure in mind. The land division is marked by gravel-roads on the same places as future road-structure. Each block can further be divided into smaller plots enabling various temporal uses of the land. Some plots are decided in a "top-down" manner where phytoremediation and sanitation of land is proposed as well as plantation of fruit

trees suggested. Other plots are kept free initially to enable participatory design where the inhabitants of the villas can engage and come with ideas of how to best utilise the land. For some of the intervention project ambassadors or "garden keepers" are hired or appointed from the villas. Accessibility is enhanced through the construction of bike and pedestrian lanes from north to south and west to east. Food production and community building is addressed with the establishments of "huertas" (community gardens for the villa dwellers). Programming and editing with a focus on quality leiscapes with gender perspectives are addressed in the suggestions for the northern part of Parque Indoamericano with inter alia an obstacle course and bike-schools. Implementation of various new plants and trees are suggested to enhance biodiversity as well as the provision of free food. With infill from the sanitation project of Lago Soldati and further urbanising projects within the villa, elevated hills are created and on top of these flowers and vegetation planted. The hills continue the BA city tradition of unwanted infill transformed into ecological assets and work as a symbol for change as well as functioning as interesting landscape topographies. Enhanced shelterscapes are addressed with the overall project in the idea of that living conditions are enhanced by these suggested public space interventions as well as the protection of land, enabling contingent formal housing construction. Additionally it's an essential part of the overall scenario that upgrading projects to facilitate basic needs of infrastructure and services within the villa continue parallel to the implementation of this design proposal.



## \_Observations From Site Delivering Ideas for Transformation of Leisure, Food and Shelterscapes



### FORCE OF NATURE

Contaminated earth, removed during sanitation, is piled up between Lago Soldati and Parque Indoamericano. On some of the hills vegetation has already started to grow. Further plantation of vegetation on top of the hill either with phytoremediating plants or encapsulation of the hills could create an interesting and playful element in the landscape around the lake.



### RECREATIONAL ROUTE

A pedestrian path is constructed around Lago Soldati, in this way public space and access is secured and the water-course as a recreational area enhanced.



### RECYCLE MATERIAL

There's a lot of leftover material that can be collected and recycled. A small-scale recycling station can provide for handicrafts, farming or repairs.



### LOCAL MARKET

Every Thursday there is a market around the plaza in the neighboring area Fatima. A mix of people from informal and formal areas come to sell and buy food, clothing and things alike.





## \_Mapping for Equality: "Let Us Play!"

On this spread some of the suggestions for leiscuescapes are visualised. To bridge barriers between the informal and formal areas, new bike and pedestrian bridges are proposed, one over the highway and one crossing Lago Soldati. The focus on sustainable transportation with bike lanes is an important part of this transformation strategy. An upgrading of the northern areas of

Parque Indoamericano with new playscapes i.e. obstacle courses or performative areas are suggested. Important to note is that these leiscuescapes should be implemented with the focus on gender equality, aiming at participatory processes with the girls and women of the villas, breaking free from the business as usual with football fields as the generic leiscuescape solution.



Involve consultant of gender perspective in planning. Engage women in the community and get to know what kind of physical activities that are popular, combined with perspectives of everyday life in the villa for upgrading projects.







Tomorrow?  
BIKE LANE



Today



Provide material and lessons for biking<sup>19</sup>

Tenure of small plots for farming in Parque Indoamericano

Possibly, planting of diverse species and good maintenance and management could lay the foundation for a new ecological reserve in the Parque Indoamericano?

<sup>19</sup> Picture from <http://stfrancis.school.nz/environmental/chaos-at-the-school-gate/> and further graphically altered by author



## Mapping for Equality: "Let Us Grow!"

On this spread some of the suggestions for foodscapes are visualised. By planting flowers on the earth hills (consisting of ablated contaminated earth from Lago Soldati) new landscape elements are added with both aesthetic and symbolic quality. Flowers help the life for pollinators important for the proposed Huertas, community gardens. Similarly the hills can be beneficial for possible implementation of beekeeping in the future. Small scale farming for the villeros sustainable foodproduction, local food markets and strengthening of community, the use of recycled materials from the area is encouraged.



Plant flowers with focus on attracting pollinating insects and plants with phytoremediation qualities. Pollinators benefit biodiversity and can help food production in Huertas.







Picture <sup>21</sup>



Picture <sup>22</sup>



Picture <sup>23</sup>

Innovate farming with  
recycled materials

<sup>20</sup> Picture from <http://www.orkin.com/blog/uncategorized/the-power-of-pollination/> [2015-08-27] and further graphically altered by author

<sup>21,22,23</sup> Picture from; <sup>21</sup><http://www.diyncrafts.com/6024/home/40-beautiful-easy-diy-flower-beds-brighten-outdoors/2>; <sup>22</sup> <http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/a-recycled-plastic-bottle-vert-152419>; <sup>23</sup> [http://yvonnesjordnara.blogspot.se/2015\\_04\\_01\\_archive.html](http://yvonnesjordnara.blogspot.se/2015_04_01_archive.html) [2015-08-27] and further graphically altered by author.



## \_Mapping for Equality: "Let Us Dwell!"

On this spread some suggestions on the topic of shelterscapes are visualised. Interventions with the aim of participatory methods and processes regarding land-use and employing villa dwellers are proposed. With inspiration by Gouverneur's (2014) "Garden Keepers" or "Stewards" it is proposed to involve villeros as ambassadors in; sanitation of both land and water, through phytoremediation<sup>24</sup> projects, park and public space maintenance and ideas of future land-uses. The overall aim is to empower the inhabitants and give them real influence of the transformation of their neighbourhood. The idea is that the synergy of all proposed interventions will increase the quality of the living conditions for the inhabitants of Los Piletones and La Esperanza.

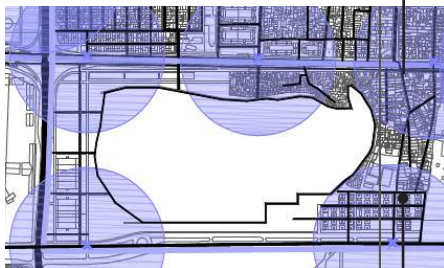
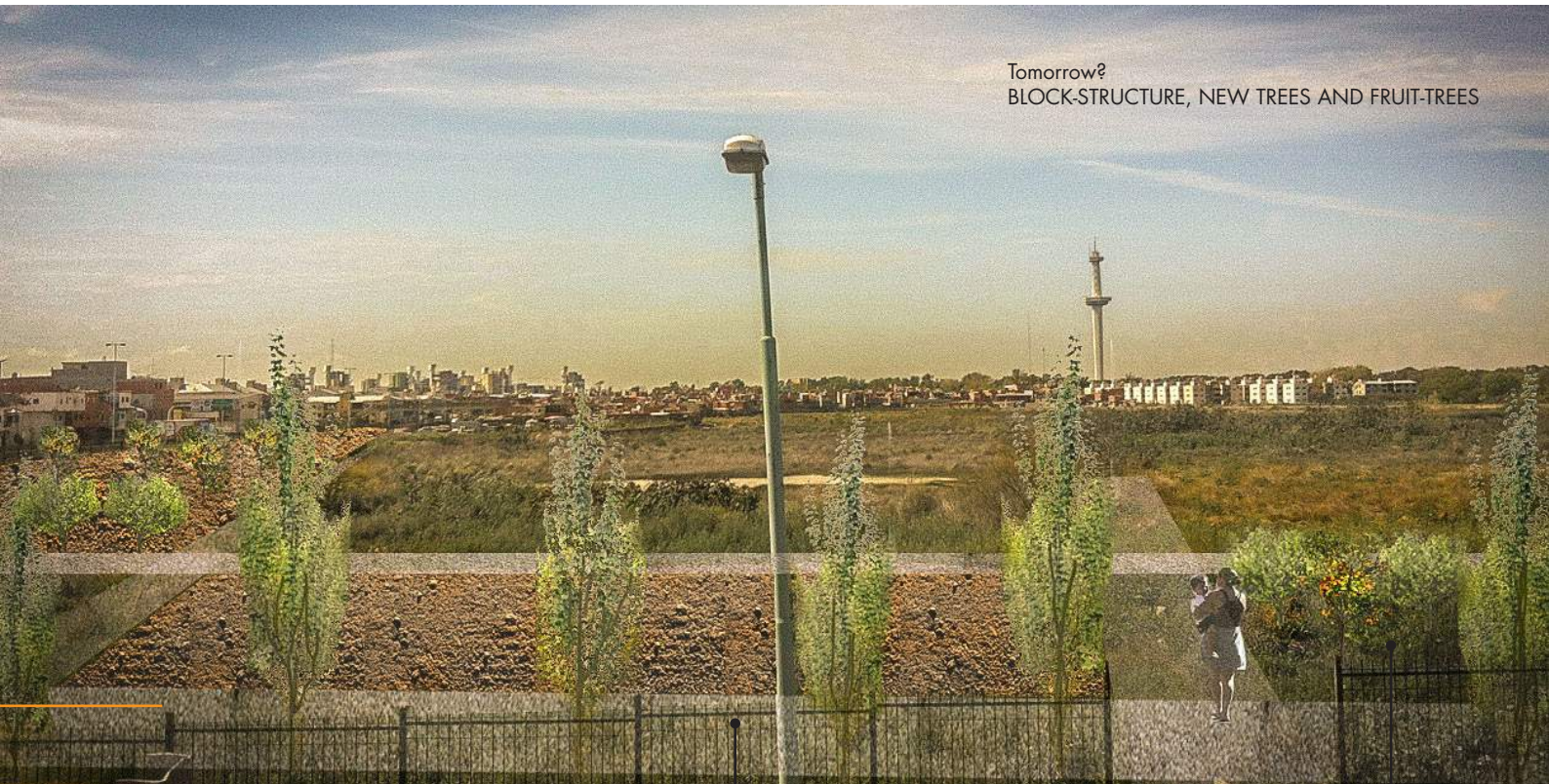


FOOD, PARTICIPATION, FLEXIBILITY, TEMPORALITY, SHELTER





Tomorrow?  
BLOCK-STRUCTURE, NEW TREES AND FRUIT-TREES



Blockstructure is based on a strategy-plan from Villa Soldati by Flavio Janches (BJC Arquitectos 2014). Picture by Janches (BJC Arquitectos 2014:54)



Picture <sup>25</sup>



Picture <sup>26</sup>

Fruit trees such as apple, walnut, pecan, lime, lemon, avocado and peach.

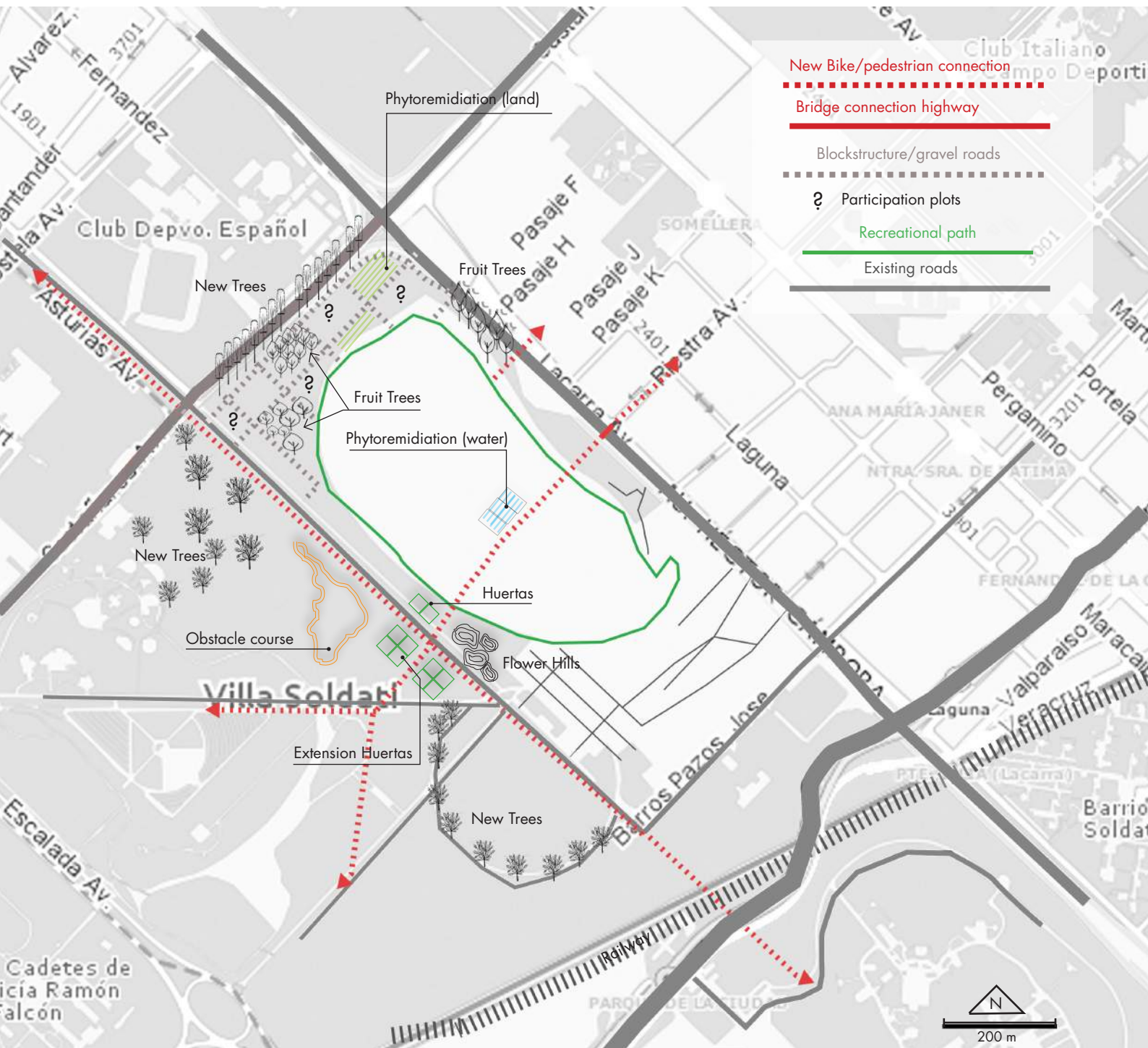
<sup>24</sup> Phytoremediation is the use of vegetation to take up contaminants from polluted soil or water. A sanitation process is realised by the plants which absorb the pollutants into the plant-body. By harvesting the phytoremitating plants, pollutants are taken away from site (Ansari et al. 2015)

<sup>25,26</sup> Picture from; <sup>25</sup>[http://www.harvesttotable.com/2009/07/how\\_to\\_grow\\_apples/](http://www.harvesttotable.com/2009/07/how_to_grow_apples/); <sup>26</sup>[http://www.gartenbauvereine.org/texte/merkinfo/m\\_walnuss.html](http://www.gartenbauvereine.org/texte/merkinfo/m_walnuss.html) [2015-08-27] and further graphically altered by author



## \_A Matter of Accessibility: Bridging Barriers

With this map I want to illustrate where the physical interventions can be materialised, in particular where accessibility with bike and pedestrian paths can help bridge urban barriers surrounding the area of Lago Soldati. A conclusive scheme of all design measures, both of physical and programming character are presented in the following pages.





## \_Suggested Organisation Scheme

In order to get a better understanding of the strategies and design measures I here present a suggested organisation scheme. My experience has been that organisations working in the villa are doing interventions very segregated from each-other. I here suggest some organisations that could be involved for each design-measure in an attempt to bridge the professional segregation towards interdisciplinary approach

<b>What?</b>	<b>FLOWERHILL</b> Plant colourful flowers on the landfill-hills created by ablated earth from Lago Soldati. Phytoremediation with plants directly planted or encapsulate the hills, add earth and plant on top. Landfill from continued urbanisation projects within the villa can be gathered and formed as hills in e.g. northern area of P. Indoamericano	<b>BLOCKSTRUCTURE</b> Create block structure of open space around the lake. Lay foundation for future roads with gravel-roads. Divide some plots into smaller ones. Decide the use of some, leave others open for discussion with villa inhabitants (flexible for needs and wishes)	<b>PARTICIPATION PLOTS</b> Some of the blocks and smaller plots within are earmarked to engage the community in what they think should happen with the land. Temporal activities on these plots are welcome	<b>PHYTOREMEDIATION PLOTS</b> Some of the blocks are planted with local species for phytoremediation. Suggestion of species e.g. <i>Tagetes minuta</i> L. and <i>Bidens pilosa</i> L. <sup>27</sup> On some plots conventional sanitation of land might occur on others phytoremediation	<b>FRUIT TREE PLOTS</b> Some of the blocks are planted with fruit trees, species found around the city e.g. lime, mandarin apple, peach, plum avocado, walnut and pecan
<b>When?</b> (Today, 2 to 6 months, 6 months to a year, more than a year, in the far future)	Today	In 2 to 6 months	Parallel to project with block structure and on going. 2 to 6 months and henceforth	Parallel to project with block structure and on going. 2 to 6 months and henceforth	Some trees planted today and others parallel to project with block structure and on going. 2 to 6 months
<b>Why?</b>	Beautify with colourful vegetation; attract pollinating insects, symbolism from burden (contaminated earth) to asset (beauty and ecosystem-service). Create interesting, elevated landscape element in a very flat landscape	Facilitate management of large open space. Encourage community involvement. Secure land for possible formal housing-construction in the future	Enhance participatory design and planning. Assure local recognition and understanding of plot structure and land use	Sanitation of land, protect land with use, aesthetic feature if eye-catching species are used. Enable pedagogic elements of ecosystem-services	Grow and provide free food, spatial features, secure land by use and facilitate places of shade.
<b>Who?</b>	Government representative/project leader (e.g. SECHI worker or consultant via SECHI). Appoint one "Hill-ambassador" from La Esperanza or Los Piletones. Invite neighbours to choose and plant seeds.	Road and block-structure based on architect Flavio Janches work in <i>Plan Urbano Integral</i> (BJC 2014). Plan and physical intervention by SECHI or other governmental department.	Government representative (SECHI), appoint ambassadors from Los Piletones or La Esperanza to each plot-project	Involve research projects on phytoremediation, project could be led by professionals from Faculty of Agronomy, University of Buenos Aires. Gov. representative, Ambassadors from the villas, invite neighbours to plant and harvest plants.	Government representative. Involve neighbourhood schools. Involve organisations of permaculture, e.g. Velatropa Eco-Village, interchange of Schools within the villas, visit and learn from people in Velatropa. Report fruit trees and inform about "La ciudad nos regala sabores".

<sup>27</sup> Based on research report by Salazar et al (2014).



<b>What?</b>	<b>PLANT TREES</b> Plant trees along the borders of the area, especially along the car roads. Some phytoremediation trees such as <i>Populus spp.</i> <sup>28</sup> Local species found in the city such as <i>Ceiba speciosa</i> , <i>Jacaranda mimosifolia</i> and <i>Peltophorum dubium</i> <sup>29</sup>	<b>OBSTACLE COURSE</b> Create new elements in the northern part of Parque Indoamericano. Focus physical movement and gender perspective. Obstacle course is an idea that can be materialised with either very temporary or more permanent design	<b>HUERTAS</b> Establish community garden on the land between Lago Soldati and Parque Indoamericano (close to the settlements, but not too close to the watercourse). Use as much recycled material as possible	<b>RECYCLE STATION</b> Encourage recycling by create a station where building material etc. can be put in for use by others. Continue with workshops of recycling and invite neighbours to take part.	<b>BIKE LANE/BRIDGE</b> Construct east-west accessibility with bike and pedestrian lane along Av. Asturias, prolong lane with bridge over to Parque Ciudad. Open up or "put fences differently" in west part of the park to make possible bike-lane and public access. Bike lane north-south, construct bike and pedestrian bridge over Lago Soldati connect with bike-lane in same direction through P. Indoamericano.
<b>When?</b> (Today, 2-6 months, 6 months to a year, more than a year, in the far future)	Today and henceforth	In 6 months to a year	In 6 months to a year	In 2 to 6 months	In 6 months to a year
<b>Why?</b>	Continuous sanitation of land with phytoremediation trees. Spatial qualities, spaces of shadow and biodiversity	Gender perspective to encourage girls to appropriate public space. Enhance physical activities, especially among girls. Break free from the "Business as usual" with football fields. Make the park more attractive. Ensure land for leisurescape	Strengthen community. Focus socio-ecological sustainability and pedagogic platform in growing food creation of meeting place and recreational area. Enhance biodiversity	Encourage recycling, economic sustainability, free or very cheap material can be provided.	Enhance accessibility with sustainable transportation between formal and informal settlements. Encourage biking among villa inhabitants. Rethink the role of P. de la Ciudad and give public access. Recreation features of travelling over water
<b>Who?</b>	Government representative, invite neighbours to plant trees, or plant with school classes.	Consultant gender perspectives, Government representative, involve user group of girls from the villas in the analysis and design	Consultant permaculture or involve university program from Facultad Agronomia (FAUBA) working with formation of Huertas in the city. Promote community garden among the inhabitants of the villa. Host workshops on urban farming, start with tips for small scale farming at home to invite interested people to be part of a community garden. For instance each "manzana" (block structure in the villa) can have a garden.	Government representative, recycling artist for workshops, appoint and educate ambassador from the villa to work at the recycle station, inhabitants of villa, particularly kids combine arts and handcrafts with recycled materials	Government representative. Hire inhabitants of the villa for the road and bridge construction. Connect to and favour extension of network in the southern districts of the city.

<sup>28</sup> Based on research report by Guerra et al (2011).

<sup>29</sup> Conversation with María Inés Beveraggi and Cecilia Raggio, Landscape Architects, Cuestion Paisajismo, Buenos Aires; February 27th, March 1st, March 7th, March 28th 2015.



<b>What?</b>	<p><b>PHYTOREMEDIATION WATERSCAPE</b> Establish phytoremediation projects for the water in Lago Soldati. Within special water basins or vats, local water plants such as <i>Spirodela intermedia Koch</i><sup>30</sup> can grow and support continuous sanitation of the water. The basins can preferably be connected to bike bridge or smaller footbridges to enable easy harvest and sample-taking</p>	<p><b>BIKE SCHOOL</b> Arrange leisure biking lessons for the inhabitants in the villa, encourage events and explorations by bike. Encourage activation of new bike lanes. Consider establishing lend-station for Eco-Bici in connection to the park. Similar promotion of other leisure activities that benefit from the new bike lanes such as running, skating and rollerblading could also be arranged.</p>	<p><b>PARK UPGRADING &amp; MAINTENANCE</b> Parallel to upgrading of the P. Indoamericano (with focus on the northern part adjacent to Lago Soldati) some inhabitants of the villa can be hired and educated to work with maintenance in both P. Indoamericano and P. de la Ciudad. Its essential to acknowledge the importance of these parks as some of the largest green spaces in the city, and their significance as such, especially for the southern areas of Buenos Aires.</p>	<p><b>EXTEND URBAN FARMING</b> If pilot projects with community gardens are successful and extension of urban farming could be made to invite other neighbouring (e.g. Carillo and Fatima) districts to grow their own food. Open space around Lago Soldati or tenant of ground in the north part of P. Indoamericano could facilitate for more huertas. Further, small scale beekeeping could possibly be introduced.</p>	<p><b>FORMAL CONSTRUCTION</b> If these suggested public space interventions and programs are successful, as well as the parallel upgrading of basic infrastructure and services within the villas, then some of the protected plots could be used for construction of formal and public facilities preferably with socio-ecological connotations e.g. butterfly house, library, culture house.</p>
<b>When?</b> (Today, 2-6 months, 6 months to a year, more than a year, in the far future)	In 6 month to a year	In 6 months to a year	In 6 months and henceforth	In more than a year	In the far future
<b>Why?</b>	Enable research of phytoremediation, ensure continuous sanitation of water in Lago Soldati. The basins should be placed so that water are filtrated through, they're also used as boundaries for the growth of the water plants to ensure open water areas as well.	Offer free leisure activities, enhance physical movement among villa inhabitants, and encourage appropriation of the new bike-lanes and the park.	Enhance attractivity of the parks, enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services provided by well functional green spaces, provide some working places, and enhance connection between the villas and the surrounding public spaces.	Strengthen community; grow food, focus socio-ecological sustainability and pedagogic platform in growing food creation of meeting place and recreational area. Enhance biodiversity	Meet housing needs, formal housing can help consolidation of the informal settlements.
<b>Who?</b>	Involve research projects on phytoremediation, project could be led by professionals from Faculty of Agronomy, University of Buenos Aires. Gov. representative, Same ambassadors as land phytoremediation project, invite neighbours to plant and harvest plants.	Government representative, invite neighbours to plant trees, or plant with school classes.	Consultant in green maintenance, government representative and some villa inhabitants.	Similar to pilot project, further engagement in the city wide network of huertas (Red Huertas Urbanas Comunitarias Bs As) should be encouraged	Government or official institutions, focus on Public access, or affordable housing.

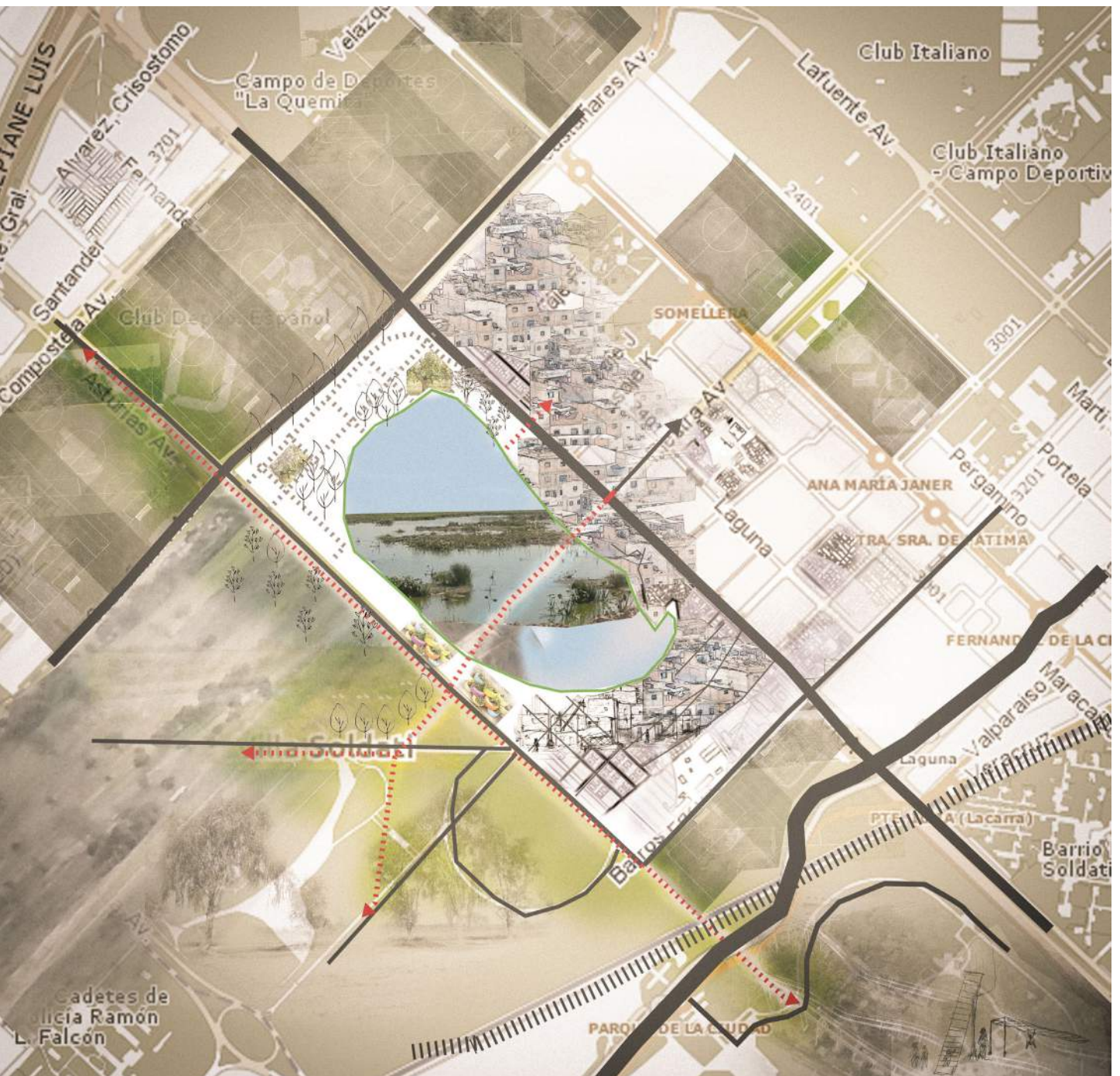
<sup>30</sup> Based on research report by Basílico et al (2013).



## \_Mapping for Equality: Area of Effect...

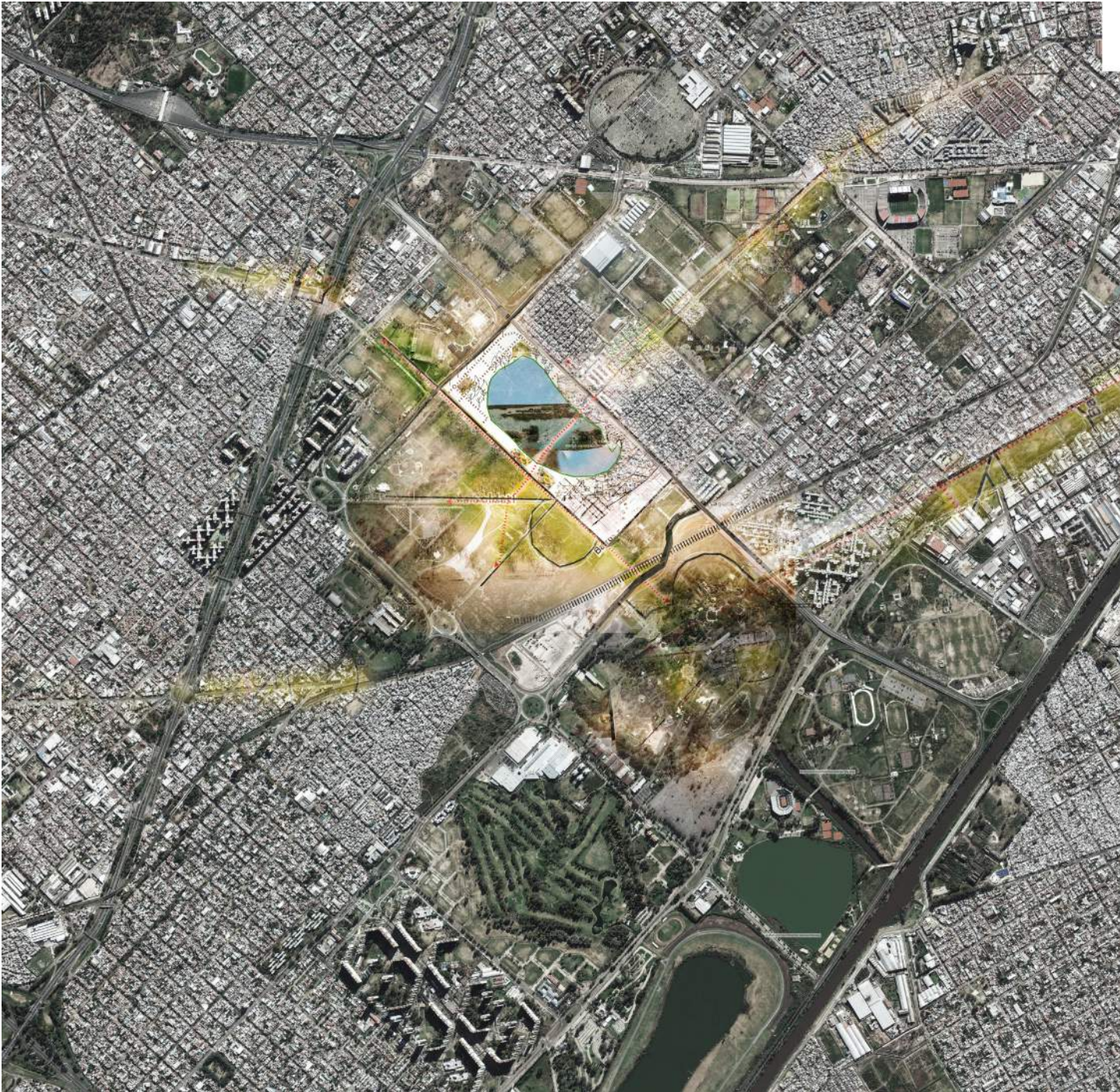
To enable the physical area of effect to extend further, it's favourable with a synergy of other interventions such as upgrading of amenities, services and houses within Los Piletones and La Esperanza, as well as a general extension of the bike-lane network in southern areas of the city. In combination with large-scale planning of i.e. bike network, the area around Lago Soldati can be part of a larger corridor stretching from central parts of the city, through formal and informal areas, out in

the fringes of the Autonomous city. This proposal has a short time-frame to match the natural process of informal growth. The idea is to provide a strategy starting with interventions and site-editing already "tomorrow", engaging inhabitants of the villas in the transformation process. The area of control is in this case the area around Lago Soldati, but a similar work method and approach to site-transformation as used here, can be applicable on other informal settlements around the city.



Artistic impression of vision for design strategy with mixed representations





Artistic impression of vision for design strategy, the design strategy in synergy with other interventions could help extend the physical area of effect



## PART 4: REFLECTING



In the last part of this thesis I've gathered selected reflections from the process of working with this study. As with the overall disposal of this thesis, emphasis is put on discussions and critique about the process and methodology. Some reflections concerning trans-areal travelling and exchange is also presented. Ultimately, this section ends with some suggestions of future research.



This study is constructed and presented in a way that does not normally fit into traditional academic research; my voice as author and designer has a significant position throughout the whole thesis. In contrast to traditional academic manners, where focus lie on presenting work in a seemingly objective perspective, this study put emphasis on the subjective and qualitative appreciation of landscape and site. The deviant transect has helped bridging the theoretical field with the practical, in triangulation of literature studies, my personal experience as a designer and fieldwork methods. Merging the seemingly different fields of academic tradition and design work has been a challenge. Nevertheless, in relating on-site prompts with theoretical research the translation into off-site findings has gained more weight and importance.

I set out to investigate landscapes of informal settlements and their relation to the formal city. With pre-studies and site-theory of site construction by Burns and Kahn (2005), I planned fieldwork along waterscapes in Buenos Aires to help disentangle some of these spatial relations. Struck by the inadequate representations of landscape, both the large-scale waterscapes and informal settlements, my work was re-directed towards spatial-aesthetic appreciations of these landscapes. Thus the main part of this study consists of deep-mappings of site-specific qualities; as instrument for knowledge production as well as part of a design process. Though resulting in a design strategy, the most significant part of this study concern spatial-aesthetic appreciations of both formal and informal places. The work with experiential mapping has revealed site qualities and inequalities related to landscape. Accordingly a method also described as *research by design*. Instead of resulting in a fixed master plan ('business as usual' procedure in landscape architectural practice), emphasis has been on negotiation with existing site qualities, with the design approach of site transformation and site-editing. Moreover, the spatial-aesthetic appreciations do not only display inequalities, the mappings become a tool for future urban interventions that can integrate formal and informal areas, a puzzle-piece towards a more equal urban development. Landscape representations are powerful instruments.

In this thesis I've tried to address the opportunity with mappings as a part of bridging the formal with the informal. Landscape representations are not solely the root of the problem nor the whole solution, though it plays a role in the game of urban fragmentation. My intention is not to totally change the rules of this game; my intention is just to stress the importance of breaking free from 'business as usual', so that when we play, we try to play with the motto of 'accepting fragmentation, without promoting isolation'.

## \_Deviant Transect – Testing of Methods

Working with the deviant transect has been both very challenging and rewarding. The investigatory nature of the method, combined with the fieldtrip to a different continent and culture, made it rather difficult to know; (1) what to be attentive about and equally (2) how to collect materials. My itineraries cover rather large areas, therefore most transects were made by bike. Despite the initial aim of using as many techniques as possible for material collection, I predominantly used photos, video and sound recordings. It was a great experiment to undertake fieldwork in another country, with a different culture and language. When working in Buenos Aires, communication and literature studies was mostly in Spanish (a language I thought I managed on an intermediate level prior to fieldtrip, but soon got to know my deficits in). Moreover the fact that I was doing most of the fieldwork alone restricted both on-site explorations as well as synthesising of material after the fieldtrip. Aspects such as security during transect became rather significant, particularly in a city like Buenos Aires where inequality and social instability make it very common with robberies and assaults towards tourists. Even though I left most valuables back home before starting a transect, considerations about my safety and security restricted the investigations at times. As I most often did my investigations alone on unfamiliar grounds, I had to bear in mind being an easy target when walking or exploring with a rental bike, camera and sound recorder. Consequently, the most significant reflection of using the deviant transect is that the method benefit from being performed in groups. As mentioned, the absence of "co-travellers" or "co-transecteurs" has been a struggle both in fieldwork as well as in analysing site experience and materials. In addition, if the deviant transect is performed in interdisciplinary teams, I believe participants can merit and reach even deeper understandings of site.

The method of deviant transect challenges the designer to go further in searching for site-specific qualities, it encourages the "transecteur" to be experiential; when deviating on-site, when collecting and analysing materials as much as in communication and translation of off-site findings. In the analysing process of this thesis, I've found it rather challenging to *find* the actual findings. The reasons for having difficulties with apprehending the prompts, and their connection to generic as well as site-specific discourses, is in my case two folded; (1) I had few pre-determined concepts and rules for collection of materials (i.e. take a photo every 5 minutes in certain directions, only collect samples from the ground or make a video and sound recording once an hours) and (2) the lack of co-workers during



transect and post travel discussions. Luckily, discussions of on-site experiences with my supervisors helped me determine the findings and guide the work forward. When I started the fieldwork I had decided some concepts for collection of photographs (in a wish to communicate a sequence of photos representing the actual travel through the landscape, I shot 4 photos at each spot I found 'interesting'; one straight forward, one of the ground material, one to the right and one to the left). It turned out that many places qualified as 'interesting' ones, and when looking back and reflecting about the fieldwork I find that my concepts rather quadrupled the amount of photo material than help delimit it. In addition to this rule I had an idea of filming only on 'particularly interesting' spots. As I set out on fieldwork with limited ideas of what I was actually searching for, these 'particularly interesting' places, as in the case of photos, turned out to be sufficiently. Climate and weather conditions (over 30 °C and burning sun), the fear of insulting people when documenting as well as insecurity of safety situation, made the video sessions rather stressful. Consequently this contributed to a lack of quality of most of the video material (i.e. blurry and to rapid panning). When it came to samples, I had no idea of what kind of samples to collect, thus I had no pre-determined concept for this work. Therefore, collection of samples were made very randomly, and in the end the amount of samples turned out surprisingly manageable. Though trained as a landscape architect, with sketching as a main instrument, I rarely used this tool when transecting. The amount of tools and techniques used when transecting is simply overwhelming if one doesn't restrict oneself to just a few.

Relating to the topic of material collection, when drowning in material to sort out and analyse, the intention of wanting to capture and understand 'everything' can have the opposite effect. Here the benefit of starting from something particular (i.e. prompts from transects) can help guide the work forward. Similarly, the restrictions through concepts for material collection leading to manageable volumes, can benefit the work of site construction and site narrative. The way we are trained as landscape architects with comprehensive and interdisciplinary perspectives contribute to broadness that sometimes cause difficulties in identifying the most relevant aspects found on site. When transecting, restrictions with concepts and rules or embracing randomness can both be valuable decisions, however the method calls for an awareness of transect choices and their effects on findings and perception of site. I first got to know about the deviant transect through reading, to further understand it I engaged in discussions with one of the design researchers behind it, my supervisor Lisa Diedrich. Looking back, I could have merited by doing some "test-transects" on small areas, to try out some techniques and procedures.

However, the deviant transect is a constant try-out, it promotes deviation on-site as well as in process and technique.

## \_Trans-areal Findings: Landscape Architectural Practice

The cooperation with Argentinian professionals as well as selected findings can be entitled trans-areal. As emphasised by Kutzinski et al (2012), in the text about Humboldtian science, knowledge is generated when crossing boundaries of disciplines as well as cultures. Through the professional, trans-areal and cross-culture exchange I've apprehended some differences in the role of the landscape architect. In Argentina, the landscape architect rather have the position of a garden designer, focused on small scale interventions and vegetation, in contrast to the Swedish and European version who are trained to work with comprehensive and interdisciplinary projects as well as small scale systems. Similarly, it seems to be rather unusual with a holistic and interdisciplinary perspective in projects and among urban professionals, as well as connections between the theoretical and practical field. Moreover, when investigating informal settlements in Buenos Aires, in particular the area of Lago Soldati, I was confronted by the lack of graphical representations in official documents as well as Argentinian planning publications. This finding fuelled my ideas of working with landscape representations, with focus on graphical visualisations. My wish is that this thesis adds to the conversation of representation and how to graphically visualise research.

## \_Collecting Oppositions

The point of departure for this thesis was my interest in the connection between landscape architecture and informal settlements. Given my education as landscape architect, focus in the representation and site-construction has been in relation to landscape. The complexity of systems at work certainly goes beyond the landscape architectural field, but touching upon all factors is unreasonable given the time and framework of this thesis project. However, I've tried to incorporate other disciplines and perspectives in; (1) the theories part with economic and historical explanations; (2) the extensive amount and variation of visual material (analogue and digital, artistic and sometimes comic-strip like visualisations); (3) personal stories and voices from the fieldwork to embody people and realities (occasionally with humorous implications); (4) the focus on socialscapes





Conceptual illustration of transecting Buenos Aires waterscapes

(with leiscapes, foodscapes and shelterscapes), to depict ephemeral and temporal dynamics, and as a mean to reveal connections between social, ecological and economic aspects of landscape, as much as relations between global and local phenomena; (5) the notion of site transformation, trying to disentangle site-specific qualities to employ as drivers for site transformation and site-editing in opposition to generic design solutions; (6) organisation schemes for the transformation strategy to emphasise the opportunities in crossing boundaries between disciplines and organisations. As stated in the introduction of this thesis, a motive with this study is to question generic procedures and solutions of research and practice of landscape architecture, with an experiential sense to break free from 'business as usual'. Thus, the previously listed efforts can additionally be regarded as antitheses to; (1 & 6) segregation of disciplines; (2) the legacy of positivistic research as the most respected; (3) traditional academic writings; (4) reductionism; (5) master planning.

## \_Gazing forward

Conclusively, I would like to tap back to the research question of this thesis:

How to achieve a spatial-aesthetic appreciation along the waterscapes of the socio-economically fragmented city of Buenos Aires?

With the combination of texts (theories, histories, titles, captions and stories) and visuals (photos, maps and sketches) I've tried to communicate my experiences and understandings of the waterscapes of Buenos Aires. These appreciations are based on a selection of material from my fieldwork, that I've found most significant. These are appreciations as part of my (the designers) construction of site. It is made from a personal and external perspective. I, as a Swedish designer with my personal experiences and ideas, understand Buenos Aires from another

perspective than would perhaps a local do. I've travelled and experienced the landscapes of Buenos Aires from the outside, it is neither my country nor my culture, trying to understand phenomena and realities that are less visible or perhaps taken for granted by people on the inside. Additionally, my otherness in terms of class, with my background in the upper middle-class, has been significant, particularly when doing fieldwork in the villas.

This study has highlighted connections between inequality and landscape through the focus on processes and methods for site-specific design, as a mean to contribute to a more equal urban development. Furthermore with this study as springboard for future research, I would like to pose three questions; one with trans-areal connotations regarding contemporary landscape realities, issues for both South American as well as European professionals:

Rather than using generic design solutions in 'upgrading' interventions of informal settlements, could a site-specific approach contribute to a more sustainable and participatory transformation of these areas?

The other; as an outside perspective on local procedures in Buenos Aires and on the topic of organisation, it could be interesting to see if urban integration processes could benefit from more collaborations between organisations and professionals, putting aside political and disciplinary rivalry:

How to re-organise towards interdisciplinary and inter-sectional work teams for urban integration projects in Buenos Aires?

Finally on the topic of mappings, further research on relations between landscape representation and equality is motivated. A research question could be formulated accordingly:

How can landscape architectural practice, in terms of construction of landscape representations, contribute to an urban development striving for equality?



## GERUND - THE CONTINUOUS IN TRANSECTING

The way of working with research as design has been very challenging as well as rewarding, on both a professional and personal level. As the title implicate, despite of finalizing this thesis for examination, the work with this project is continuous, it is never finished. As with the theories of Humboldtian science, it is open work; I keep on founding, am still finding, am yet transforming and will continue reflecting...



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By political and personal reasons these interviewees prefer not to be mentioned by name. Information collected from studies in office and fieldwork  
February 23rd 2015 to April 5th 2015

## ILLUSTRATIONS

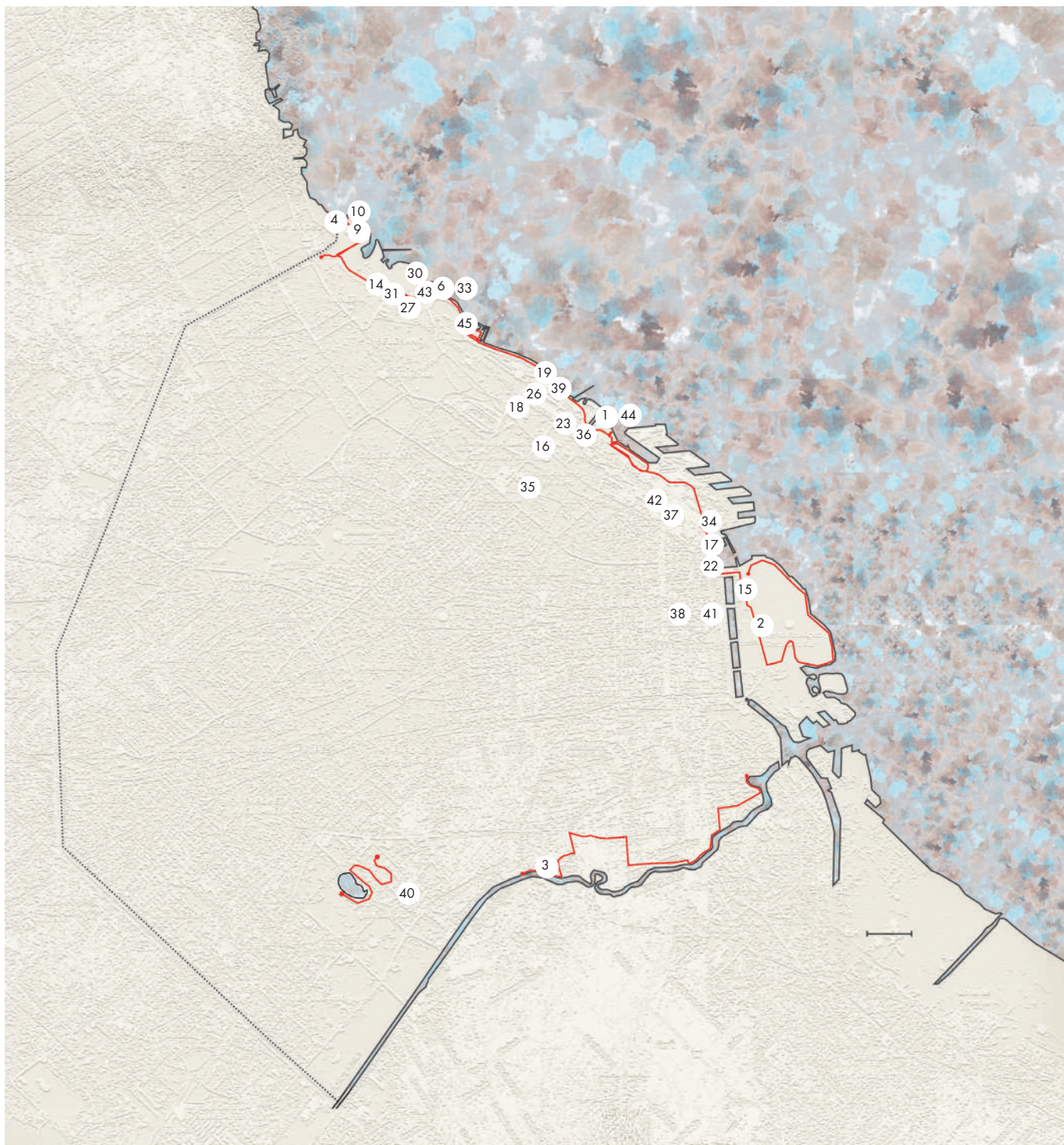
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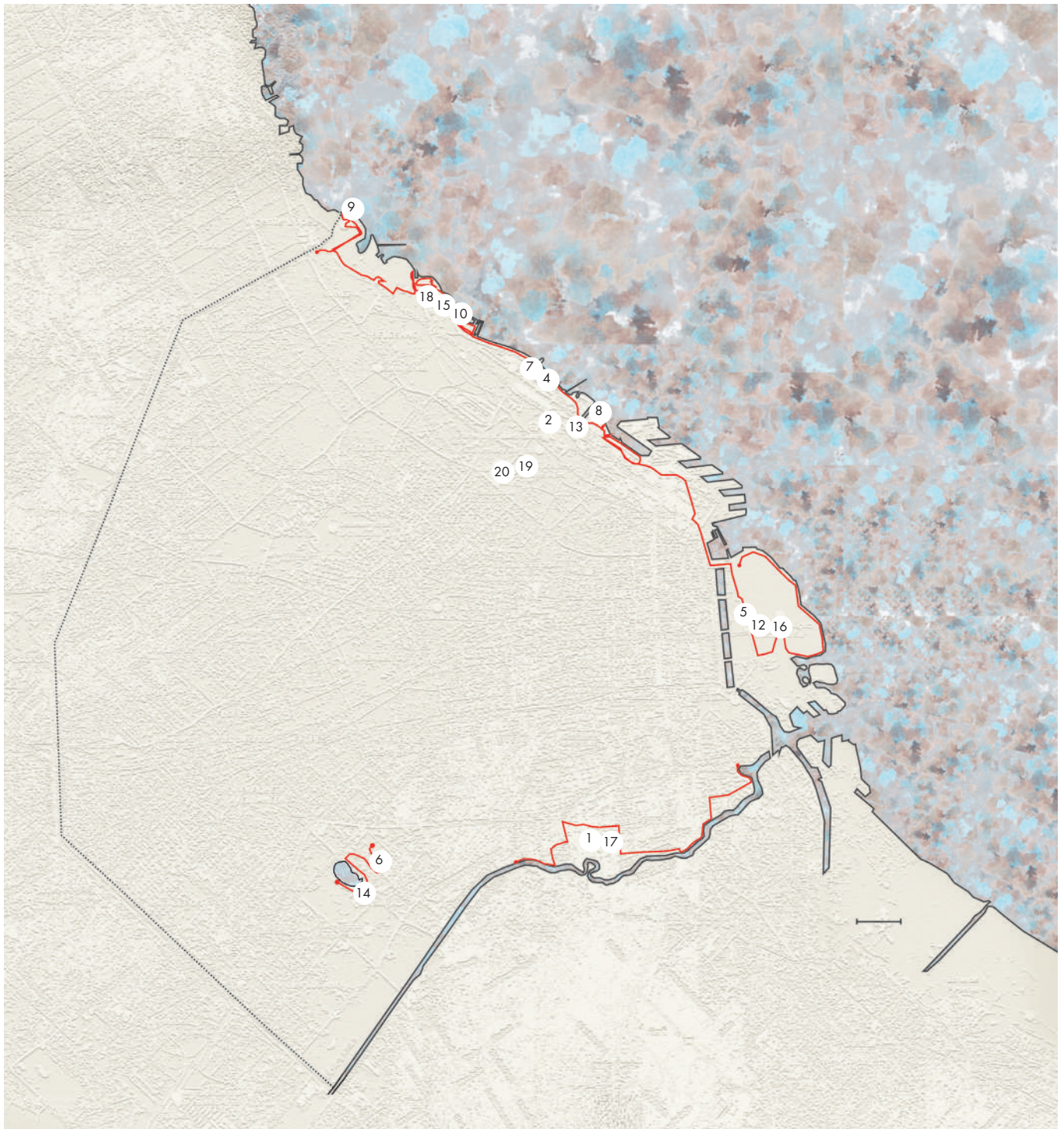
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