A NEW MASTER PLAN FOR THE "GRAN MADRID CAPITAL DE ESPAÑA" AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

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As was the case in the allied dictatorships of Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany, the attempt to impose a new order in the urban region of the regime's capital city was also an important issue of national concern in Franco's Spain. Madrid was to become the new capital city of the New State (*Nuevo Estado*), an expression of the transformed socio-political conditions. The new Master Plan had thus to overcome some of Madrid's chronic problems, such as a dramatic housing shortage among the poorest segments of society and the growth of informal settlements in the urban region. The intended solution was a "planetary system" based upon strong separations between inner city and new satellite towns, as well as between urban and rural areas. This paper critically discusses the proposed "new" order. Moreover, the contradictory manner of its implementation will be reflected upon. Looking back, there is an evident connection between the plan and the pre-war planning debate. From today's perspective, Madrid's uncontrolled urban growth into the surrounding region throughout that period (1940s and 1950s) can be understood more so as a consequence of the particular production conditions of the time than as an outcome of the new Master Plan.

Keywords

Madrid, Master Plan, Franco's Spain, new order, Europe

How to Cite

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A NEW LANDSCAPE FOR THE NEW STATE

On March 28, 1939, insurgent troops led by General Francisco Franco entered Madrid, the former capital city of the Second Spanish Republic. Only a few days later, on April 1, 1939, the end of the bloody and destructive Spanish Civil War, which had lasted almost three years (1936-1939), and the capture of the entire state was proclaimed. Thus began, in Spain, the history of one of the longest lasting European dictatorships of the twentieth century. The transformation of the socio-political conditions that ensued as a result of the coming into power of the insurgents also had tremendous effects on spatial policy. The political and economic role of the cities and rural areas as well as their relations changed fundamentally.

At the end of the Civil War, the new regime was confronted with tremendous challenges of reconstructing the nation. This extended beyond the reconstruction of the cities, infrastructures and industrial facilities that had been destroyed during the war.¹ The establishment of new institutions, the backbone of the New State, and the definition of an appropriate economic system for the new political conditions were likewise important. In this regard, the situation, in 1939, proved to be highly complicated. Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany, the old allies that had massively supported the insurgents throughout the Civil War, were preparing for the impending World War and unwilling to support the reconstruction of the New State. After their final defeat at the end of the Second World War, Spain's situation became increasingly exacerbated. Until the late 1940s, the nation experienced extreme political isolation and economic autarchy.²

In those years, the Franco regime focused on increasing agricultural production in order to supply the nation with food. However, this required the modernisation of a technologically backward agricultural sector. To achieve this, the newly established *Instituto Nacional de Colonización*, one of the most important institutions of the regime, launched a wide-scale internal colonisation process. Some 300 new towns (*pueblos de colonización*) were built between 1944 and 1969. These were settled with more than 65,000 families (some 500,000 persons), among which the available arable land was divided.³ Furthermore, new infrastructures, especially dams, were built with the aim of supplying an efficient irrigation system to the agricultural production, which was to be expanded. The new settlement structures resulting from the internal colonisation continue to shape the landscape of many regions, such as Extremadura and Andalusia, significantly.

In the new economic system of early Francoism, the rural regions decidedly moved into focus. The attention of the regime's urbanism policy turned to their reconstruction (Dirección General de Regiones Devastadas y Reparaciones) and new colonisation (Instituto Nacional de Colonización). Under the new conditions, cities played a relatively peripheral role at first. These maintained their importance as centres of political and military power. However, the internal colonisation and the associated internal migration to the newly established towns aimed to contain their growth.



FIGURE 1 Pueblo de colonización Vegaviana (construction 1954-1958) in Extremadura, 2015.



FIGURE 2 Area close to the La Minilla dam (construction 1946-1957) in Andalusia, 2015

THE MADRID MASTER PLAN (1941-1946): AN ATTEMPT TO ORDER THE URBAN REGION OF THE CAPITAL CITY

In the centralistic New State, the capital city was an exception. As was the case in the allied dictatorships, Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany, capital city planning was an especially important undertaking of national importance in Franco's Spain.⁴ One of the most important challenges was dealing with the belt of informal settlements in the region surrounding the city, which grew over the course of decades. This was considered hostile by the new rulers, whose official press described it as a "dirty, bleak, gruff and disgusting belt" just two weeks after the end of the Civil War.⁵ According to disseminated myths, Republicans went into hiding there following their defeat.⁶ In fact, until the early 1950s, some 400,000 persons lived in miserable conditions in 30 chaotically built settlements throughout the urban region (suburbios).⁷ Here, the Franco regime saw potential, dangerous rebellious herds directly on the outskirts of the capital city.8 In this settlement structure, which consisted in part of barracks-type buildings, "hybrids of urban and rural lifestyles"9 developed. For the planning of Madrid, this situation amounted to one of the largest hurdles that had to be overcome in order to build a capital city adequate to the new socio-political conditions. The incredibly difficult situation of the informal settlements in Madrid's metropolitan region was the result of a lengthy process of uncontrolled urban development. After the demolition of the city wall by Philipp IV and the determination of the new expansion area (ensanche) in 1860, the city grew according to two spatially separate and uncoordinated processes. The official city developed in the generous space of the new expansion. Due to the high property prices, these were only affordable for the middle classes and proved unsuitable for providing desperately necessary housing for the poorest social classes. These were forced to search for housing in the surrounding towns as well as newly built and constantly expanding informal settlements. In the space between the periphery of the new expansion and the border of the municipal territory, the so-called extrarradio, the city had grown independently of any planning coordination since the middle of the nineteenth century. Over the course of decades, several planning solutions to overcome this situation were experimentally developed but always failed as a result of lacking framework conditions for systematic implementation. After the coming into power of the insurgents, the professional community in the New State realised that the restructuring and renewal of the uncontrolled settlement structure of extrarradio and the surrounding communities was one of the most important steps towards a new ordering of the urban region surrounding the capital city. Beyond that, this incredibly difficult task proved to be an optimal stage of the vigour and capacity of the new planning institutions.

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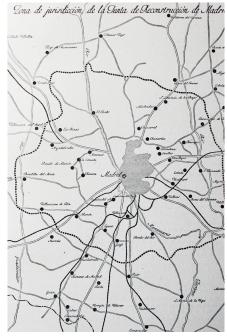


FIGURE 3 Informal settlement in the eastern outskirt of Madrid, approximately 1950.

FIGURE 4 The Junta planning area, 1940.

On April 27, 1939, just one month after the end of the war, a new institution was established: the Junta de Reconstrucción de Madrid, the council for the reconstruction of Madrid. Its task was to support the municipal administration with the reconstruction process and prepare a plan for the new capital city and its surrounding region. For the development of the new Master Plan, a new technical office directed by the architect Pedro Bidagor Lasarte was established. Bidagor had already been a prominent figure, during the Civil War, in the planning debates about the future of the capital city.¹⁰ The institutional framework conditions reflect the major state intervention in the development of the new plan. The central government aimed for the "reconstruction of the symbols [...] of the former Capitalidad Imperial," the imperial capital city character, but also on the development of Madrid as an industrial city.¹¹ The new institutional conditions could be recognised in one important planning change, the Junta planning area. The subject of the new plan was an area that comprised of the entire city of Madrid and 28 surrounding communities.¹² A population growth of up to circa four million people was intended for this metropolitan area.¹³ Therefore, the newly defined planning area expanded far beyond the municipal boundaries. This decision was justified by the strong influence of the capital city on the surrounding region. Furthermore, the former planning boundaries of the Ayuntamiento had proven, in the early twentieth century, to be one of main obstacles to previous attempts of steering the development of the settlement structure. In 1939, there was consensus in this regard within Madrid's planning community.

Under the direction of Pedro Bidagor, the Master Plan for Madrid was prepared from 1939 to 1941 and came into effect, in 1946, with the final version of the urban development law (*Ley de Ordenación Urbana de Madrid y sus alrededores.*)¹⁴. The new plan sought to steer the development of the settlement structure of the entire urban region. It was organised in a "planetary system".¹⁵ The basic scheme consisted of a central core, the inner city and nineteenth-century expansion (*ensanche*), still to be completed, as well as several satellite centres, which were to be embedded in three green rings. The scheme was characterised by clearly defined borders for building areas – both in the inner city as well as in the satellite centres. According to the official justification, a high standard of living was to be secured in the long-term for all residents through the strict regulation of the ratio of open to built areas. In fact, the plan was aiming at the separation of functions on a spatial scale and especially at the displacement of unwanted functions, such as housing for the poorest segments of society and industry, away from the inner city.

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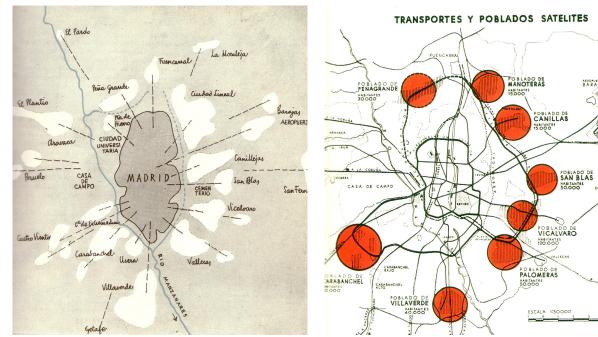


FIGURE 5 Plan for Madrid, basic scheme, 1953.

FIGURE 6 Plan for Madrid, satellite centres, 1953.

ENSIA

The growth of the inner city, which covered approximately 5,500 ha,¹⁶ was limited to 2,000,000 residents.¹⁷ Official institutions of the capital city and housing for the middle classes were to be concentrated here. Only few expansions of this inner city were planned, the most important of which would be located along the extension of the Paseo de la Castellana, the new Avenida del Generalísimo. A new urban quarter with a mixture of functions and new housing for 100,000 residents¹⁸ was to be built. The satellite centres, eventually for 20,000 to 200,000 residents,¹⁹ had to include new industrial facilities, housing for poorer social classes, who could not afford to live in the city centre, and for a section of the middle classes, who preferred rural to urban surroundings.²⁰ Some of these centres were to be developed ex novo, while some were to be developed by completing and adapting existing suburban settlements.²¹ All were to maintain a degree of independence from the city and be equipped with appropriate social infrastructure.²² They were to be located approximately five kilometres away from the city centre.²³ Eight satellite centres were to be built. These were to house approximately 320,000 residents.²⁴ The settlement structure was connected by a system of open spaces, namely afforested green rings and wedges.²⁵ In order to secure an efficient connection between the satellite centres and with the city centre, road and railway transport on a regional scale was redefined through concentric ring and radial streets.²⁶ From the perspective of the official urbanism policy, the inner core was the most important element of the "planetary system". However, in fact, the main challenge faced by the plan was how to replace the belt of informal settlements with new satellite centres.

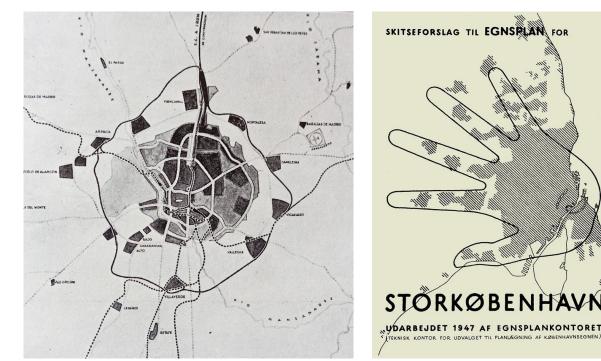


FIGURE 7 Plan for Madrid, proposal by Secundino Zuazo and Hermann Jansen, international competition of 1929.

FIGURE 8 Copenhagen Finger Plan, 1947.

THE EUROPEAN DISCUSSION OF NEW PLANS FOR THE METROPOLITAN REGION

The basic scheme, especially in regard to the radio-centric structure with green wedges and rings, was based on suggestions that were widely discussed by urbanism professionals around 1910, such as in the context of the Wettbewerb Groβ-Berlin (Greater Berlin competition) 1908-1910 and the Allgemeinen Städtebau-Ausstellung (General Urbanism Exhibition) in Berlin 1910, two events in which Hermann Jansen was directly involved.²⁷ The question regarding the organisation of a chaotically expanding metropolitan region played a major role in these events.²⁸ Green spaces (wedges or rings), rings and radial streets as well an active decentralisation policy were considered ordering elements.²⁹ All of these characteristics of metropolitan urbanism were discussed and perfected further after the First World War. They were reflected in Josef Stübben and Paul Wolf's publications, but also in the Anglo-Saxon garden city debate.²⁶ Decentralization was also an important issue in Fritz Schumacher's book on Cologne's Master Plan³¹ and in Gustavo Giovannoni's seminal work "Vecchie Città ed Edilizia nuova" (1931), which appeared in Mussolini's Italy.³² When comparing the new Master Plan to the Plan for Madrid suggested by Secundino Zuazo and Hermann Jansen, in 1929, the continuities are apparent.³³ This applies mainly to the fundamental scheme with its inner core, which was limited in growth, and surrounding satellite centres as well as the design of a North-South axis through the extension of the Paseo de la Castellana.

The international references of the Master Plan for Madrid, developed under the direction of Bidagor, were not limited to the past. In those years, plans for steering urban growth on the metropolitan scale were discussed and developed in several European cities. Well-known examples from this time period include the Greater London Plan (1944) and the Copenhagen Finger Plan (1947). Similar to the Master Plan for Madrid, these focused on limiting the city centre in favour of polycentric growth and clearly-defined green spaces. The obvious coherence with the contemporary international professional discussion makes the contrast between the real content of the plan, the suggested forma Urbis, and its propagandistic patina, emphasising Madrid's role as a capital city (Capitalidad), even more obvious.³⁴

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UPHEAVAL OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND SHARPENED CONFLICTS BETWEEN REGIME'S PLANNING INSTITUTIONS

One of the problems that prevented the plan's systematic implementation was already inherent to its nature. The Plan General provided a basic scheme on the metropolitan scale, a land-use plan and a number of references to the ideal urban structure in individual sections. These were not, however, binding and could be changed during the implementation process.³⁵ While the Junta was responsible for preparing the plan, a new institution, *Comisaría General de Ordenación Urbana de Madrid*, was established with the 1946 law, and commissioned with the implementation of the plan.³⁶ This was to be achieved through supervision of the building activities but also with the preparation of partial plans (planes parciales) and the provision of developed areas³⁷ for new projects.³⁸ With that, the Comisaría had the final say regarding the plan's fate.

The institutional framework conditions for implementing the Master Plan for Madrid seemed optimal at first glance. Two state institutions, the *Junta* and the *Comisaría*, were responsible for preparing and implementing the plan. Both were subordinate to the Interior Ministry until 1957. However, this synergy was only profitable during the first phase, between 1946 and 1954, as long as Pedro Bidagor, who had directed the preparation of the plan, was in control of its implementation.³⁹ During this period, the *Comisaría* was directed by Francisco Prieto Moreno. Bidagor was its technical director.⁴⁰

This changed abruptly in the mid-1950s, when the constellation of actors within the institutions responsible for the plan and their power relationships fundamentally altered. A process of international openness had begun in the late 1940s, which resulted in the agreements with the USA and the Vatican in 1953.⁴¹ The political effects of this process were reflected, in 1957, in the most comprehensive government restructuring of the Franco era and the rise of the Opus Dei technocrats.⁴² This transformation led to the retreat of the public hand from steering not only economic, but also urban development. An important product of the changing political situation was the "Stabilisation Plan" of 1959, which indefinitely cemented the end of autarchy's production conditions.⁴³

The upheaval of socio-economic conditions led to a restructuring of the Comisaría and, finally, to the renunciation of the plan's goals. In the mid-1950s, as a result of the failed internal colonisation, but also of the increasing industrialisation, Madrid experienced mass immigration from rural areas, which sharpened the already existing dramatic housing shortages. As a response to this problematic situation, Francisco Prieto Moreno was replaced as director of the Comisaría, in 1954, by Julián Laguna, a property developer in the real estate company Alcázar.⁴⁴ Laguna was to accelerate the construction of new, affordable housing for the poorest social classes through direct and fast action. To achieve this, vast areas were dispossessed, between 1954 and 1958, in the context of the so called "Plan Laguna".⁴⁵

Most affected were the slum areas on the edge of the city centre, whose residents had to be resettled, but also open areas, which were intended for the construction of the green rings according to the plan.⁴⁶ The selection was justified on the basis of the comparatively low costs and attractive location. Furthermore, the expropriation process for open spaces progressed much faster than that for built areas. In those years, several partial plans were prepared and authorised that strongly contradicted the designations made in the Master Plan. Examples included the plans for Villaverde, Carabanchel Bajo, Fuente del Berro and El Paraíso, which extended into areas intended, according to the plan, to become green areas.⁴⁷ As it became obvious, in 1956, that the activities of the *Comisaría* systematically contradicted the plan, Pedro Bidagor resigned his position as technical director. The significant state intervention in the planning of the capital city proved unable to guarantee efficient implementation of the Plan General de Ordenación de Madrid. At the end of the 1950s, it became apparent that the Plan General de Ordenación de Madrid. At the end of the new socio-political conditions. As a result, a new Master Plan for the capital city was prepared and adopted in 1963.

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THE LEGACY OF THE MASTER PLAN WITHIN THE MADRID METROPOLITAN REGION

In regard to the goals of the Master Plan for Madrid, the green rings and satellite centres should have provided a new order to the metropolitan region surrounding Madrid. In an urbanism context, this would have meant a renewal of the *extrarradio* settlement structure and the peripheral settlements of the metropolitan area (suburbios), which developed without any urban planning approach. The measures required included equipping them with necessary social infrastructure and the demolition of slum areas, whose residents would have had to have been resettled into new housing in the satellite centres. The system of afforested green wedges and rings would have set clear boundaries to the resulting settlement structures in terms of their growth. Today, not much remains of the "planetary system" intended by the Plan General de Ordenación de Madrid.

The implementation of these ordering approaches failed as a result of the contradictory production conditions of this time period. The public sector should have played the main part in the implementation of the plan, especially in regard to the production of new flats for the poorest segments of society. However, the lack of resources, in the 1940s and 1950s, prevented the development of an appropriate housing policy. In addition, the non-binding nature of the Master Plan led to acute conflicts between the actors and institutions of the regime responsible for its preparation and implementation. The contradictory position of the state institutions made it difficult to overcome the pressure of private owners and prevented the systematic steering of their activities according to the Master Plan.

The fate of the three green rings is paradigmatic in this sense. Shortly after the coming into effect of the plan, its realisation was prevented by the owners of properties that needed to be dispossessed. They resisted, as they recognised a potential appreciation of their properties as building areas.⁴⁸ Later, beginning in the mid-1950s, as massive migration from rural regions demanded increased housing construction, the *Comisaría General de Ordenación Urbana de Madrid* allowed construction on the partly already dispossessed areas of the green rings. Even the satellite centres, the other main element of the "planetary system", were never realised as such. In some intended locations, social housing settlements were indeed built. However, the fragmentation of these projects, which were often expanded over the course of decades, and the construction of surrounding green spaces contributed to the loss of the cohesive and independent character given to the satellite centres within the Master Plan. Today, these urban quarters are inserts in the fragmented and chaotic settlement structure of the Madrid metropolitan region.

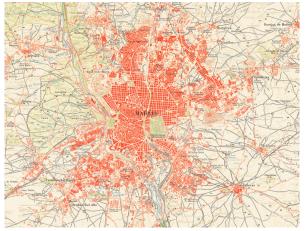


FIGURE 9 Built areas in the Madrid urban region, 1962.



FIGURE 10 Motorway M-30, the area of the first green ring in the Madrid Master Plan, 2016.

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Regardless of its limited implementation, the Plan General de Ordenación de Madrid significantly influenced the development of Spanish urbanism in the twentieth century. The planning of the capital city served as a model for other cities on a national scale. As a result, similar planning instruments were prepared in other cities – Bilbao, Valencia and, later, Barcelona – in the years that followed.⁴⁹ Finally, the Master Plan for Madrid served as the starting point for the development of the first planning law (*Ley del Suelo y Ordenación Urbana*).⁵⁰ In light of its obvious continuity with the European planning discussion of the first half of the twentieth century and its important role in the urbanism policy of the first phase of the Franco dictatorship, it seems inexplicable that the Plan General de Ordenación de Madrid continues to be largely unknown to the international scientific community.

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Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

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Endnotes

- 1 The reconstruction had begun in the territories under insurgent control by 1938. See Welch Guerra, Spanischer Städtebau und Herrschaftssicherung unter Franco.
- 2 See Bernecker, Geschichte Spaniens im 20. Jahrhundert, 219-220.
- 3 Lejeune, Fondazioni, poetica rurale e modernità, 5.
- 4 On Mussolini's Rome, see Bodenschatz, Städtebau für Mussolini: Auf dem Weg zu einem neuen Rom; Cremaschi and Ernesti, Probing the Region, 59-74. On Hitler's Berlin, see Reichhardt and Schäche, Von Berlin nach Germania; Bodenschatz, Nationalsozialistische Neugestaltungspläne für Berlin.
- 5 Madrid necesita sitio. Cited in Dieguez Patao, Un nuevo orden urbano, 148.
- 6 See Dieguez Patao, Un nuevo orden urbano, 164.
- 7 Ibid. In 1950, the Madrid urban region had a population of 1,685,425 people. Comisaría, Planeamiento urbanistico de Madrid, 9.
- 8 See Dieguez Patao, Un nuevo orden urbano, 164.
- 9 Pelka, Stadt als Raum sozialer Praxis, 138.
- 10 See Sambricio, On Urbanism in the Early Years of Francoism, 122.
- 11 Ureña, Arquitectura y urbanistica civil y militar en el periodo de la autarquia, 108.
- 12 Ministerio de la Gobernación, Decreto de 1.º marzo de 1946.
- 13 Comisaría, Planeamiento urbanistico de Madrid, 9. Also Terán, Historia del urbanismo en españa III, 238.
- 14 Ministerio de la Gobernación, Decreto de 1.º marzo de 1946.
- 15 Comisaría, Planeamiento urbanistico de Madrid, 12.
- 16 Ibid., 14.

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- 17 Toledano, Los projectos parciales del Plan Bidagor, 61.
- 18 Comisaría, Planeamiento urbanistico de Madrid, 31.
- 19 Toledano, Los projectos parciales del Plan Bidagor, 61.
- 20 Junta de Reconstrucción de Madrid, Plan General de Ordenación de Madrid, 18.
- 21 Comisaría, Planeamiento urbanistico de Madrid, 12.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Ibid., 27.
- 24 Ibid., 26.
- 25 Ibid., 21.
- 26 See Ibid., 16-18.
- 27 See Sonne, Ideen für die Großstadt.
- 28 On the academic and professional discussion on urbanization processes during the 19th and 20th century, see Kress, Urban Ruralities or the New Urban-Rural Paradigm.
- 29 See Bodenschatz et al., Stadtvisionen 1910/2010, 29-233.
- 30 See Terán, Historia del urbanismo en españa III, 239-240.
- 31 See Schumacher, Köln.
- 32 See Giovannoni, Vecchie città ed Edilizia nuova. For more on the specific contribution of this work to the contemporary European profession discussion, see also Bodenschatz, Städtebau für Mussolini, 407.
- 33 Before the Civil War, from 1935 to 1936, Pedro Bidagor was employed by Secundino Zuazo and was familiar with his Madrid projects. Terán, Historia del urbanismo en españa III, 240. On the 1929 Madrid international competition, see Sambricio, Madrid, vivienda y urbanismo, 257-278; Medina Warmburg, Projizierte Moderne, 225-242.
- 34 See Terán, Historia del urbanismo en españa III, 241.
- 35 See Ministerio de la Gobernación, Decreto de 1.º marzo de 1946.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Between 1946 and 1963, some 100,000 apartments, both privately funded and in the context of social housing policies, were constructed on 9,200 ha. Ayuntamiento de Madrid 2015.
- 38 Galiana Martín, Comisaría 'versus' plan, 38.
- 39 Ibid., 39.
- 40 In 1946, Francisco Prieto Moreno took over the direction of the Comisaría from Pedro Muguruza, who had served as Comisario during the first months. Galiana Martín, Comisaría 'versus' plan, 39.
- 41 See Bernecker, Geschichte Spaniens im 20. Jahrhundert, 220-230.
- 42 See Ibid. 230-231.
- 43 Ibid., 233.
- 44 Galiana Martín, Comisaría 'versus' plan, 42.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 See Galeana Martín, Comisaría 'versus' plan, 41-45.
- 47 Toledano, Los projectos parciales del Plan Bidagor, 68.
- 48 Dieguez Patao, Un nuevo orden urbano, 173.
- 49 Terán, Historia del urbanismo en españa III, 237; Prieto Moreno, Presentación, 4.
- 50 Ley de 12 de mayo de 1956 sobre régimen del suelo y ordenación urbana.

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Image Sources

Figure 1. Photograph by Piero Sassi 2015.

Figure 2. Photograph by Piero Sassi 2015.

Figure 3. Source: Comisaría. "Plan de creación de núcleos satélites," Gran Madrid no. 11 (1950), 6.

Figure 4. Source: "Organismos del Nuevo Estado," Reconstrucción no. 2 (1940), 3.

Figure 5. Source: Comisaría. "Planeamiento urbanistico de Madrid," Gran Madrid no. 23 (1953), 13.

Figure 6. Source: Comisaría. "Planeamiento urbanistico de Madrid," Gran Madrid no. 23 (1953), 27.

Figure 7. Source: Jansen and Zuazo, "Anteproyecto del trazado viario y urbanización de Madrid," 15. Doc. In: Anteproyecto del trazado viario y

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