

# THE PERIURBAN LANDSCAPES IN THE SUBREGIONAL PLANS ABOUT THE ANDALUSIAN SPRAWL: ACHIEVEMENTS, LACKS AND CONTRADICTIONS

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The presence of the landscape in the territorial policies of the Autonomous Community of Andalusia seems an unquestionable fact, above all because the close relationship between the quality of life and state of its landscapes has been assumed in all of them. Therefore, it is hardly surprising the proliferation of academic works about this issue and the methodological advances in its study, regulation and administration. However, and being more specific, it turns out necessary to deepen more in the analysis about the periurban landscapes of the Andalusian sprawls, since these are the more lived, impoverished and threatened as a result of being the most affected by the process of the territorial changes which have been generating in these fields, in a quicker and more intense way, during the last two decades.

In order for us to approach to the meaning of these situations, it will be considered here as a hypothesis that the state of the landscapes in the periurban peripheries is a sign of the state of the territory, so it seems basic a good reading of its landscapes to any diagnosis about it. Thus, it is understood that all the changes emerge in its territorial matrix in a dialectical way: as manifestations of chaos in the actual dynamics against the order and harmony that territorial policies pursue as an objective. From this perspective, we will deal firstly with a theoretical approach to the urban peripheries, in general, seen as a field of creation of new emergent spaces that still must be defined; secondly, and in a more specific way, it will be assessed the state of the urban peripheries in the Andalusian sprawls, analysing the proposals about it that appeared in the sub-regional plans and the echo of these plans in the municipal policies:

— The theoretical approach to urban peripheries in general as emergent spaces starts from their most significant images and the identification of their components. The territorial matrix of the new spaces is defined and specified to this purpose, as it is understood that this matrix, along with the uses of the soil that are being developed over it, represent the best starting point to base a dynamic characterization of these landscapes. Thus, there have been

taken shape some landscapes organized through territorial matrixes in which discontinuity, fragmentation and mess —characteristic of a city made of vague pieces and with changing and unstable limits— prevail. In fact, we are witnessing to a process of vague metropolitanization that generates a new developed space with no structure but the references and landmarks remaining from the past. A more specific approach to the assessment of landscape in the periurban zone of the sprawl completes this characterization. There are used some categories of assessment that, despite their generality, turn to be very effective to give meaning to the main components of the territorial matrix of the periurban spaces:

- The central city, dominated by the historical heart and its respective expansion area. This is a heterogeneous field in which preservation, degradation and recovery of its landscapes coexist.
- Suburban crown, formed by industrial and residential areas distributed in a radial way. The sordidness of the landscape defines them under the alibi of the Athens Charter.
- Periurban crown, a broken and slippery space. This landscape is defined by the multiplicity and juxtaposition of its components (residential areas, industries, road links, spaces without an apparent use, equipment, farming) Everything fits in these areas, except for what the city does not want in a double process of flight of its problems and expulsion of what it wants to move away.
- Rural-urban crown, where the features of rural landscape can be still recognized in spite of the growing establishment of urban uses. Frequently these uses generate a degrading effect since they just coincide with those that the city needs to move away.

— In accordance with the second objective of this work, a specific approach to the actual situation of the landscape in the Andalusian sprawls is suggested. For this purpose, we recognize the achievements of different academic and technical works about the Andalusian landscapes. These works mean a capital of knowledge that, implicitly or explicitly, can be detected in the treatment of the landscape in the Sub-regional Plans for the Territorial Regulation of the Andalusian Sprawls.

There are three plans (Urban Sprawl of Granada; Bay of Cadiz; and Urban Sprawl of Seville) that have been chosen as examples for several reasons. In a negative sense, they highlight the difficulties that the development of these plans is finding in those territorially more complex fields. This can be seen in the two formers since they do not answer to a global, shared and balanced project for the metropolitan areas but to an attempt of territorial adjustment between the heterogeneous and contradictory decisions of municipal planning; whereas the plan of Seville had not arrived to the stage of advance at the beginning of 2006. In a positive sense, these plans have generated a wide dossier of studies among which some of them specifically devoted to the landscape are included.

As the drafting of the Territorial Planning of the Urban Sprawl of Seville has proved, those plans seem to be the most effective instrument to put order among the diverse manifestations of disorder that are taking place in these spaces. It is a disorder basically ethic and aesthetic, but also political, administrative, economical, ecological and social.

We put special emphasis on the landscape in the Urban Sprawl of Seville. In the whole of the Andalusian Community, this area represents one of the most dynamic spaces territorially regarded and, therefore, one of the most changeable and deteriorated from the point of view

of the landscape. Today, this Urban Sprawl in Seville constitutes one space more and more chaotic, as a result of the confluence of a quick and uncontrolled urban growth and the lack of a plan capable of coordinating the municipal policies. Thus, in a context of conflicts and territorial tensions among administrations, the landscape is not only a warning of the territorial state but also a catalyst of proposals aimed at securing one more harmonic and slow evolution in this field. In fact, the concern for the landscape has been marking a wide trajectory from the first Proposals for the Coordination of the Municipal Policies in the Urban Sprawl of Seville, to the document submitted to the public information by the Ministry of Public Works in November of 2007. In accordance with a first reading, the document seems to have committed to a more unitary view of the Urban Sprawl, since it admits its complexity and the chaos of an urban growth more and more difficult to assume and administer. In any case and regardless of the definite drafting of the plan that will be approved in June of 2008, it seems evident that the prominence that the metropolitan landscapes have gained as fundamentals of the cultural identity of the urban sprawl in Seville is already an irreversible fact.

— Finally, the landscape seems to increase its prominence on a municipal scale as an essential component of its territorial policies. However, several contradictions can be found between the theoretical discourse and the practice in this prominence. The references to the landscape are usually a by-product of the sustainable development, another term to use in the media, a corrupted word as other words related to patterns of development that combine without any problem what is qualitative and what is quantitative. In the local world, the theoretical discourse of the municipal plans included in their informative reports mixes growth and economical logic along with environmental, social, ethic and aesthetic considerations. Therefore, the terms «sustainable development», «eco-development», «comprehensive development», «human development», etc. sometimes hide a factual pattern that can be defined as reverse development because of the negative consequences over citizens who lose their quality of life when their daily landscapes deteriorate.

As an example of this problem, we have chosen some municipalities from the field of the three sub-regional plans quoted before, since we consider them a good referent of the way the Andalusian municipal administrations bear in mind their landscapes. Two of them —GPUO of Granada and GPUO of Chiclana— are referred to municipalities of urban sprawls that have their supra-municipal plans definitively approved. The third one, referred to some municipalities of the urban sprawl in Seville, is a sample of municipalities integrated in fields in which, until now, the definitive approval of their respective sub-regional plans has turned out impossible.

The situation of the municipalities in the Aljarafe Cornice, located on the first metropolitan crown of the urban sprawl in Seville, is especially relevant since contradictory situations are being generated there because of the coincidence of the most outstanding landscape values of all this field with the most intense and destructive process of urban growth. The fact is that it was here where the value of the landscape started to be into account very soon. For instance, elements that must be conserved and protected appear already in the GPUO of Castilleja of Guzmán (1976). However, when the urbanistic pressure rose in the whole area, various municipalities decided to requalify the soil, even in several zones that had been protected by the Special Plan of Protection of Physical Environment in the Province of Seville,. Thus, in

the informative reports of the municipal plans that are presently being written, the landscape appears as a fundamental element in all of them; but, in practice, the facts show a definite bet for the property growth. To quote only some predictions about the increase of housing appeared in those plans: Almensillas 1749%, Bormujos 68%, Palomares 178%, Mairena del Aljarafe 83%, Tomares 66%, Valencina 379%. Such a shocking figure represents a pattern of development that could be labelled as adverse since they go against the quality of life of all the citizens. Because of that, some organizations, that base upon the regulations of the Plan of the Territorial Organization of Andalusia (POTA), are objecting to the predictions of these plans. At the same time, since the POTA —limiting the possibilities of growth until a 30% of population and a 40% of housings— was sanctioned, the tension between the autonomous administration and the local one is stronger and stronger.

— To conclude, the growing visibility of the landscape in the territorial policies of Andalusia is an unquestionable fact. However, there have been some important contradictions between theories, social aspirations and administrative practices. In Andalusia, these contradictions appear with all their harshness, above all because they here conflict not only with the interest of social agents, but the management of the diverse administrations.

In the local administration it is the property growth almost the only process of territorial configuration of the metropolitan municipalities, which causes an increasing rift between the theoretical discourse that occurs in the diagnosis of the informative reports about urbanistic plans, and the reality of an excessive and unjustified growth of urban soil. This growth, at least when we see how it affects the citizens, the environment and their existential landscapes, can be described only as an adverse development.

And finally, the POTA seems to commit to a pattern of control of the most intense urban growths that nowadays are deteriorating the landscapes of the most dynamic fields in the Andalusian territory. However, in the beginning of this new stage tensions are being generated above all between the regional administration and many municipal administrations. This situation considered, this work points out the need for collaboration as the only direction to follow since we believe that it is the best way of guaranteeing, at a medium and long term, a landscape of quality in the urban sprawls in Andalusia.