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# Historicizing the circulation of urban policies through career paths analysis: Barcelonian experts and their role in redeveloping Buenos Aires' Puerto Madero

Historizar la circulación de las políticas urbanas mediante el análisis de las trayectorias profesionales: los expertos barceloneses y su papel en la reurbanización de Puerto Madero, Buenos Aires

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**Abstract:** This article addresses various issues of urban policy circulation, focusing on the Puerto Madero redevelopment project and in exchanges between experts and politicians from Barcelona and Buenos Aires. I emphasize the relevance of national states in processes that merge economic, political, and technical projects. Second, I argue that conflicts are relevant parts of those processes. Third, I show career paths analysis as a relevant tool for analyzing and historicizing these processes. In so doing, I aim to demonstrate why and how local experts chose to learn from Barcelona. In sum, I focus on recent history and argue that both career paths analysis and a substantive consideration of the state in these processes can enrich recent policy mobility literature.

**Keywords:** Urban Studies; Urban policy circulation; Experts; Puerto Madero; Argentina-Spain; 20th Century.

**Resumen:** Este artículo analiza procesos de circulación de políticas urbanas a partir del proyecto Puerto Madero y una serie de intercambios entre expertos y políticos de Barcelona

y Buenos Aires. En ese marco, se enfatiza la relevancia de los Estados nacionales en procesos donde se entremezclan proyectos económicos, políticos y técnicos. En segundo lugar, se argumenta que los conflictos son parte inherente de estos procesos. En tercer lugar, se muestra que el análisis de trayectorias es una herramienta útil para abordar e historizar estos procesos y entender por qué los expertos locales deciden ‘aprender’ de Barcelona. En resumen, el artículo se enfoca en un episodio de historia reciente y argumenta que el abordaje de trayectorias y la consideración del estado en estos procesos pueden enriquecer recientes debates sobre la movilidad de las políticas.

**Palabras clave:** Estudios urbanos; Circulación de políticas urbanas; Expertos; Puerto Madero; Argentina-España; Siglo xx.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The past decade has witnessed an upsurge in academic interest in the mobility, transferal, and flow of urban policy and planning models, ideas, and techniques (Harris/Moore 2013). In this context, this paper analyzes exchanges between various actors from Buenos Aires and Barcelona during a period of intense political and economic reform in Argentina (1989-1992). I analyze a specific urban policy circulation process between states, cities, and experts connected to an initial redevelopment project designed by Barcelonian urbanists, which sought to revitalize the industrial area of Puerto Madero (170 hectares), a formerly neglected portland in the heart of Buenos Aires.

Unlike similar recent port redevelopment experiences in a number of cities, which often rely on substantial public financing or access to credit, the Historic Puerto Madero Corporation (CAPMSA) —a semi-public entity tasked with developing a financial, regulatory, and physical plan that would secure the development of the port— received no public resources aside from the land transfer, which required it to generate its own revenue to cover operating costs. Thus, since its inception, CAPMSA has sold approximately \$257.7 million worth of property and invested \$113 million in public works, with an overhead of about \$92 million, including management fees and other operating expenses. Land prices escalated from \$150/m<sup>2</sup> in the early 1990s to \$1,200/m<sup>2</sup> in 2013, and the project has attracted considerable private investment in addition to the state’s land transfer. The built area covers approximately 1.5 million square meters, and according to Garay et al. (2013) triggered more than \$2.5 billion of private investment, with a present value exceeding \$6 billion.

In this paper, I briefly highlight certain theoretical debates on the mobility of urban policies and models, taking into account both policy mobility and planning history literature and focusing on a period (the recent past) largely overlooked to date. Second, in order to contextualize these exchanges in the Puerto Madero case, I pinpoint their economic, political, and technical significance for both local and foreign experts. This allows me to emphasize different scales of exchange, and highlight the role of state (at its national and urban levels) in these processes while avoiding isolating these

exchanges as purely technical. Third, I focus on the main conflicts that took place between local actors in reaction to the Barcelonian proposals, and stress that circulation processes may include controversial moments as well as modifications necessitated by local contextual factors. Fourth, I analyze some political and technical career paths of local and foreign experts involved in those exchanges as a means of analyzing and historicizing the circulation process and highlighting the relational nature of ‘exporters’ and ‘importers’. I show that the links between local and Barcelonian experts began before the proposal of the Strategic Plan for Puerto Madero, but within different political contexts. The analysis of career paths also allows me to highlight the role of individuals in transferring urban policies and plans, and to introduce a historical perspective in grappling with why and how local actors choose to ‘learn’ from the Barcelona experience in a context where other port redevelopment experiences and public-private partnerships were available, such as the London Docklands and the Inner Harbor of Baltimore, among others (Hall 1988). Finally, I conclude the paper by pointing to both the relevance of the state and individuals in urban policy circulation processes, stressing how career paths analysis is a suitable way for historicizing these processes and avoiding a presentist bias.

My approach is historical and narrative-based (Abbot 2001), and the analysis is based on national and municipal documents, resolutions, decrees, declarations, laws and projects of law, urban projects and plans, architecture and urbanism journals, environmental information, newspapers articles, and interviews with key local and foreign actors. As Nasr and Volait (2003: xxv) assert, “in order to write a history of city building, to be able to contextualize this process and explain how it came to be and how it evolved in the way it did, it is usually necessary to write a history of the flows of actors and ideas”.

This, however, supposes a series of methodological challenges. As we seek to analyze an urban policy circulation process highlighting the relevance of both personal contacts and broader relations between states and cities, it is necessary to anchor the primary and secondary sources as well as the stakeholders under analysis, including politicians, consultants, and experts from both Buenos Aires and Barcelona, as well as from Argentina and Spain. Also, career paths analysis of experts involved in these processes demands taking into account their educational, political, and technical route as well as the contacts they made. Thus, it was necessary to gain access to sources that initially were not related to Puerto Madero project. While the main exchanges between Barcelona and Buenos Aires around the Puerto Madero project were developed between 1989 and 1991, we also need to anchor the period under analysis by taking into account the career paths of both local and foreign experts. Thus, we need to go back to the 1970s to explore the conduits that created the conditions for the Puerto Madero project, as well as the relational nature of both ‘importers’ and ‘exporters’.

Official documents are designed to tell stories that smooth out contested histories and give linear accounts of success. Also, ‘public biographies’ and interviews involve seamless post-facto rationalizations in which ambivalence, multiple motivations, di-

lemmas, and failures are concealed (Chamberlain/Leydesdorff 2004). As Larner and Laurie (2010) point out, it is necessary to combine and compare accessible materials with the more private stories that make up personal biographies and careers. Thus, we proceeded to mix the aforementioned interviews with multiple primary sources relating to the different stages and stakeholders involved in the Puerto Madero project, seeking to reconstruct the relational character of the processes under analysis.

## 2. PERSPECTIVES ON URBAN PLANNING CIRCULATION

In tracing the process through which urban planning ideas and models transfer, circulate, and operate in various contexts, my analysis by necessity extends beyond national borders. It focuses on the interchanges between cities, states, and experts, and transcends concepts such as “influence”, which suppose an unidirectional exchange from one context to another. According to Harris and Moore (2013), a recent academic interest in the travel, transfer, and flow of ideas and techniques central to urban policy and planning models has involved coverage across a range of themes and spatial forms. Many disciplines such urban planning history, architectural history, cultural geography, urban studies, cultural sociology, political science, cultural anthropology, globalization and postcolonial studies, and international development studies have analytically approached this problematic. Different fields of ‘theory/analysis’, such as actor-network theory, interpretive policy analysis, and works on ‘mobilities’ and ‘circuits of knowledge’ suggest diverse methodologies for analyzing the flow of policy ideas and practices (Healey 2013). In these, a number of academic concepts and terms attempt to engage these processes: ‘policy transfer’ (Dolowitz et al. 2000), ‘policy mobility’ (McCann and Ward 2011), ‘urban learning assemblage’ (McFarlane 2011), ‘policies in motion’, ‘fast policy transfer’ (Peck and Theodore 2010), ‘spaces of circulating knowledge’ (Robinson 2011), ‘circuits of knowledge’ (Roy 2010), ‘urban policy tourism’ (González 2011), travelling ‘assemblages’ of ideas, ‘carriers’ and ‘adaptors’ of ideas, ‘networks and communities of practice’, ‘travelling technocrats’, and ‘transfer agents’, among others.

This paper intervenes in these debates in a number of ways. First, it critiques a presentist bias in the recent literature while introducing career paths analysis as a useful tool for historicizing urban policy circulation processes and focusing on an historical period (the recent past) largely overlooked to date. Second, it goes beyond the focus on North-North circuits of exchange common to many analyses, focusing on other circuits. Third, it emphasizes the role of individuals in circulatory processes while also taking into account the broader (political and economic) context within which circulation and exchange occur. In so doing, it takes into account the role of individuals (in analyzing the different career paths of experts) as well as the state’s relevance in those processes (looking at both formal agreements between Argentina and Spain, and Buenos Aires and Barcelona), as well as national and local government involvement in the Puerto Madero redevelopment project.

A controversial issue in the policy mobility literature is the supposed novelty of those processes. According to Jacobs and Lees (2013) policy mobility scholarship is overwhelmingly presentist—even the recent past is a historical period largely overlooked to date—. Although exhibiting new forms and flows in the present period, Healey (2010) stresses that the flow of planning ideas and techniques across national boundaries is not a new phenomenon. Also, Harris and Moore (2013) challenge the restricted historical focus in much of these works, with their limited analyses of urban policy circulation prior to the early 1990s. They point to a rich tradition within planning history of exploring and documenting the trans-urban travel of planning ideas and models over the last 150 years. Despite the aforementioned controversies around novelty, planning historians, such as Ward (2010) and King (2003), have been tracing these processes across a range of historical periods.

Another bias in the policy mobility literature is related to the circuits under analysis. While recognizing the multidirectional flows of ideas, there is a strong focus on North–North circuits of exchange. Other studies further advance a geographical broadening of the scope of planning studies. Planning historians such as King (1990) have analyzed the introduction of planning under conditions of colonialism from the perspective of the exporters. Placing the periphery at the center, Nasr and Volait (2003) illustrate the variety of ways in which local and foreign actors and concepts have interacted in developing countries, exploring the transfer of models from the perspective of those who import them. Other researchers such as Healey and Upton (2010) focus on how mobile planning ideas interact with local, or place-specific, material and intellectual milieus to create unique expressions of planning activity.

Latin American scholars have also analyzed international exchanges and the presence of foreign architectural and urban planning experts (such as Bouvard, Forestier, Jaussely, Hegemann, and Le Corbusier, among others) in Latin American cities during different periods, combining intellectual cultural history (Gorelik 2007) with urbanism and architectural history approaches (Novick 2003; Liernur and Pschepiurca 2008; Liernur 2008; Almandoz 2007; Ballent 1995; Ribeiro/Pechman 1996; Oyarzún 1991). Some works have taken into account ‘retro-transference’ processes in relation to “the eventual influence of the experiences of these experts in the so-called New World on their doctrines as well as on their later careers” (Novick 2003: 266). Also, diverse studies have analyzed the circulation of urban ideas within South America in previous periods (Gomes 2009), pointing to the previous internationalization of the urban policy field.

Focusing on the period under analysis in this article, Brazilian researchers have critically analyzed how Barcelonian experts circulated within cities such as Río de Janeiro and Sao Paulo during this time (Arantes, Vainer/Maricato 2000; Ferreira 2005; Lima Junior 2010). Other researchers have analyzed different relations between Barcelona and Latin American cities focusing on participatory and decentralization policy circulation (Robin/Velut 2005) while Baiocchi and Ganuza (2014) have focused on how participatory budgeting travels, noting that the circulation and translation of an

idea transforms it. As many researchers have shown, circulation processes do not flow unidirectionally from ‘core’ to ‘periphery’.

From another approach, Jacobs and Lees (2013) emphasize that individuals—or transfer agents—play a relevant role in the circulation of policies. McCann (2013) also takes into account those actors that carry models from place to place, such as cadres of experts, consultants, gurus, and activists. In the same vein, Larner and Laurie (2010) argue that no attention has been paid to the mid-level technocrats who designed and enacted various privatization strategies and techniques. Thus, they take into account the different career paths of engineers “to demonstrate that a closer focus on embodied agents of change would make valuable contributions to efforts to unpack the diverse geographies of neo-liberal globalization” (Larner/Laurie 2010: 219). Planning researchers are also interested in planners as actors, and the role of agency (Healey 2010) in forming different constellations. Planning historians have intensively analyzed relations between foreign planners and local experts. As Nasr and Volait (2003) argue, the rediscovery of actors is framed within a broader (re)emergence of the individual in the social sciences, in reaction to overdetermining structural explanations.

This approach does not aim to “denigrate larger trends, structural frameworks and broader movements [...] rather it is to anchor the latter within the multitude of other actors”. In sum, “structure and agency are not contrasted, but complexified and integrated” (Nasr/Volait 2003: xxii). Planning historians have also analyzed diffusions of planning knowledge that focus on the experiences of individual planners and personal connections, taking into account broader forces such as economic aid and technical assistance (Ward 2010). In fact, in his typology of the international diffusion of planning ideas, Ward (2003) asserts the relevance of power relationships between the importing and exporting countries. In the same vein, King (2003: 7) argues that we need to consider transnational economic and political processes in which some nation-states, at different points in history, “exercise some hegemonic influence within the system of states or territories as a whole”.

### 3. RESITUATING THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN CIRCULATION PROCESSES: SPANISH AND ARGENTINIAN RELATIONS

Inter-urban policy mobilities have tended to be discussed as linking cities in ways that work outside or around more ‘traditional’ international structures, institutions, and pathways (McCann 2013). By contrast, this paper suggests that many of these connections work in, through, and with the aid of national states. As such, before analyzing specific exchanges among experts, planners, and politicians from Buenos Aires and Barcelona on the Puerto Madero redevelopment project, it is useful to avoid analyzing it in isolation and contextualize its political and economic framework. Doing so can help us to understand the relevance of national states in these processes as well as the growing importance of urban planning and policy exchanges

between cities in Spain and Argentina, especially in light of the more substantive exchanges in earlier decades between Argentina and other countries such as France, Great Britain, and the United States.

From the Spanish perspective, the quincentennial celebrations of Columbus' arrival to America (1492-1992) were simultaneously linked to earlier changes in Spanish foreign policy (Del Arenal 1994). Those changes included the entry of Spain to the European Union and new linkages between Spain and Latin America. These new links were materialized in multiple ways. From 1983 to 1992, international cooperation between Spain and Argentina materialized in an unprecedented amount of bilateral agreements across a variety of topics such as politics, economics, culture and science among others (*Consejo Argentino para las Relaciones Internacionales* 2000). Raúl Ricardo Alfonsín, President of Argentina between 1983 and 1989, was ideologically close to Felipe González, the President of the Government of Spain. Both of them had ties to the social democratic movement and its ideology, and González was very well versed in Latin American issues, as he had previously been a representative of the International Socialist Movement in the region (Pedrosa 2013). At the same time, the Spanish transition to democracy prior to this period functioned as a role model for the Argentinean transition towards democracy, as it did for many Latin American countries (Jajamovich 2011).

Economic exchanges constituted an important part of the relationship between Argentina and Spain. Spanish investments played an important role in the privatization of Argentinian public industries during the 1990s. These industries included services such as water supply, gas distribution, transport services, telecommunications, and electric energy, among others (CEDEM 2001).

At a technical and political level, Barcelona and Buenos Aires reinforced their previously subnational cooperation. During those years, the City of Buenos Aires also initiated cooperation activities with other Spanish municipal and regional governments, such as Madrid and Andalusia, respectively. Moreover, in 1982 Buenos Aires became part of the Ibero-American Capital Cities Union, headed by Madrid. The simultaneous and international presence of different city governments from Spain in Latin American cities (such as Santiago de Chile, Sao Paulo, Río de Janeiro, Bogotá, Medellín, Montevideo, Quito, La Habana, and México D.F.) was also closely tied to competition among them to expand their markets and influence abroad (Novick 2009; Jajamovich 2012).

As quoted earlier, Ward (2003) asserts the relevance of power relationships between importing and exporting countries. The wider relationship between Argentina and Spain —among other issues to be developed in Section 5— allows us to understand why, in an international context of multiple and available port redevelopment experiences (such as London and Baltimore), local experts and politicians chose to learn from Barcelona. But, if the relationship between Spain and Argentina shaped the parameters of the exchanges between Barcelonian and local experts, it did not determine it. As we will see, local actors regularly contested the proposals of the foreign experts.

#### 4. EXCHANGES AND CONFLICTS AROUND THE PUERTO MADERO PROJECT

According to Peck (2011: 21), “the mobilization of favored models and preferred practices presupposes, and in fact requires politically structured fields of ongoing ‘experimentation’ [...] [and] ongoing and ‘grounded’ forms of institutional ideological restructuring”. Following this observation, it is necessary to analyze the local political and economic framework in which exchanges with foreign experts are situated and to interrogate the problems they seek to solve.

Since 1989, during Carlos Saúl Menem’s tenure as president of Argentina, economic and political reforms, notably the privatization of national industries and services, were enacted to push for greater integration with international markets. Accordingly, the City of Buenos Aires, whose mayor was appointed by the president of the country, was also implementing a privatization program (Mignaqui/Elguezabal 1997). It was in this context that the Historic Puerto Madero Corporation (CAPMSA) was created as a semi-public entity, tasked with developing a financial, regulatory, and physical plan that would secure the development of the port (Poder Ejecutivo Nacional 1989). CAPMSA could mediate jurisdictional problems because it incorporated local and national government agents, forming the role of national and urban state in this urban policy circulation process. Moreover, it presented a public-private model of urban management closely related to the economic policies pursued under Menem’s presidency.

As Temenos and McCann (2012) argue, actors look for policies that can be helpful practically but also politically. The Puerto Madero redevelopment project was part of a wider strategy seeking to avoid the urban sprawl characteristic much of Buenos Aires’ suburban expansion (Garay 2007). After the creation of CAPMSA within the context of political and economic reform —as well as the aforementioned growing presence of public and private Spanish capitals in Argentina—, local authorities from Buenos Aires commissioned a master plan for Puerto Madero to a Barcelona firm. Mayor Carlos Grosso made several trips to Barcelona, which at that time was completing its own port redevelopment and becoming a flagship of ‘best practices’ (McNeill 1999; Balibrea 2001; Monclús 2003; Marshall 2004; González 2011). It is important to note that the Puerto Madero master plan commission was developed prior to the hosting of the Olympic Games in Barcelona.

Cities draw on a range of resources in the process of developing and legitimizing urban development strategies and urban policies (McCann 2011). Local authorities in Buenos Aires set up cooperation agreements with Barcelonian experts, reactivating a previous agreement signed in 1985. This accord was referred to the ‘European Associate Consultants’ (CEA) —formed by Joan Alemany and Joan Busquets. Jordi Borja, who ran Urban Technologies of Barcelona, a public-private Barcelonian enterprise committed to the exportation of urban technology (TUBSA), collaborated on the proposal. In July 1990, they proposed their plan, the ‘Strategic Plan for Historic Puerto Madero’ (PEAPM). In the PEAPM’s introduction, Borja (1990) positioned



the plan as the first phase of broader cooperation, which was intended to reinforce links between Buenos Aires and Barcelona and their respective enterprises and experts. Furthermore, he argued that a Spanish-Argentine partnership could command the urbanization of Puerto Madero.

The PEAPM addressed the issues of: links between the city and the river; the green space supply; the port as an expansion of the city center; the provision of residential and commercial uses; and the adaptive reuse of warehouses, respecting architectural heritage and accessibility issues, among other issues (Consultores Europeos Asociados 1990). This project offered a high intensity of residential and commercial land use as a means of attracting investments and ensuring the project's economic viability, thereby orienting the proposal to a specific and exclusive socioeconomic group. Linkages to public-private partnerships were also developed within the proposed engineering management component: an administration system with public initiative and control (setting the priorities, timing, and scale of operations) and private involvement and financing. Another relevant break from previously proposed projects for the area was the political and institutional support behind this proposal, which outlined the role of both national and local state in this process.

Nasr and Volait (2003) argue that the implementation of plans can represent as much of a local choice as the introduction of foreign urbanistic precepts. Far from disregarding local demands, PEAPM's organizational structure and management scheme followed the guidelines established by CAPMSA. In this structure, they emphasized the predominance of mechanisms for issuing and selling land, drawing from other international experiences, and excluded alternative leasing mechanisms and the possibility of intervening directly in the construction or rehabilitation of buildings. As such, tailoring general lessons to the specific concerns of Buenos Aires, the PEAPM argued in favor of a combination of sale systems and land grants.

According to Temenos and McCann (2012) policies 'imported' from other places by local policy professionals or provided in packaged form by policy consultants arrive with an imprimatur of excellence, 'world class' prestige, and an established track record. Despite this, the Barcelonian proposal generated public resistance and led to changes within the local context, thereby establishing a series of discussions on the links between plans and projects, public and private actors, and foreign and local actors, among other issues. As I have pointed out, urban policy circulation processes can become mired in multi-scalar conflict.

According to Healey (2010: 14) "sometimes, local actors in situations in which outside aid and expertise have been provided argue that external advisers have failed to understand local specificities". In this case, the 'Central Society of Architects' (SCA) contested the legitimacy of the roles of foreign experts. In defense of their organizational interests, the SCA criticized the lack of involvement of local architects and the absence of a citywide comprehensive plan that included the Puerto Madero project, proclaiming that the PEAPM was dominated by real estate interests (Keselman/Del Franco 1991). Thus, it recommended pausing the process in order to review the pro-

gram, project, and implementation strategies through consensus building and broader participation. Architects and designers had criticisms with respect to the project and wanted to participate in the initiative through a public competition.

At the same time, a group of urban planners postulated that the functions of the port should be guaranteed and that the area should be mainly for administrative and recreational functions—residential functions should be included in a complementary fashion (Suárez 1990; Gorelik 2007)—. Other critical perspectives proposed a metropolitan park for the whole area, and a variety of critiques were published in important newspapers such as *La Nación* and in architecture magazines associated with the SCA. Congressional opposition parties also criticized the Barcelonian plan.

Nasr and Volait (2003) stress that such conflicts of interest and visions develop themselves in the fulfillment of some projects, the alteration of some plans, and the blockage of some proposals. In fact, due to all the criticisms and the conflicts generated because of the Project, the Barcelonian master plan was abandoned. Because of this, local architects were subsequently involved, and in July 1991 the SCA organized a competition of ideas through the City Council of Buenos Aires (Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires and Sociedad Central de Arquitectos 1991). According to Baiocchi and Ganuza (2014) the translation of an idea, the realignment of meanings and interests as new allies were brought on board, changed it in some aspects while maintaining others. Thereby, while the coverage of land use was reduced (from 3.000.000 to 1.500.000 square meters in floor area), the SCA no longer supported the need for a broader plan. The combination of sale systems and land grants was also left behind in favor of simply prioritizing sale systems. Grosso-Garay Management joined the SCA for the project, while leaving the PEAPM behind and while strengthening the participation of private capital in the city. This perspective was legitimized by involving local architects and by retaining the main provision of the Spanish consultancy: a management system with public initiative and private funding. Paradoxically, a more participatory process seems (in this case) to result in a more gentrified project.

## 5. HISTORICIZING CIRCULATION PROCESSES THROUGH CAREER PATHS ANALYSIS: HIGHLIGHTING THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUALS AND NETWORKS

As previously stated in Section 3, exchanges between Buenos Aires and Barcelona were taking place alongside other political and economic exchanges between Argentina and Spain, pointing to the relevance of national states in these processes at different but entangled scales. Political and technical career paths analysis of local and foreign experts involved in these exchanges provides another means to analyze this process, stressing the role of individuals in the circulation of policies. It also allows for the historicization of urban policy circulation processes in understanding why and how local actors chose to ‘learn’ from the Barcelona experience. As Ward (2011: 74-5) states, “past develop-

ments within and between territories make some mobility more or less likely”. In fact, contacts between local and Barcelonian experts began many years before the PEAPM, albeit within different political contexts. This section provides a detailed discussion of key figures’ connections, travels, and relationships to the development.

Jordi Borja (mentioned above) took part in the PEAPM. Previously, his involvement in the Barcelonian left forced him to seek exile in Paris between 1962 and 1968 where he studied sociology, geography, and urbanism. During the beginning of the 1970s, Borja was a member of transnational academic networks that included such Latin American institutions as the Regional and Urban Planning Commission of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences. In fact, Borja worked in Santiago de Chile at the Interdisciplinary Center of Urban and Regional Development (Pontifical Catholic University of Chile). Moreover, he mixed academic analysis with a strong commitment to and participation in urban social movements in both Santiago de Chile and Barcelona (Borja 1975, 1976). During the 1980s, when Spain was undergoing a process of democratic transition, he worked in the Barcelona Municipal Government as Deputy Mayor (1983-1987) and as the Executive Vice-President of the Metropolitan Area Government. He also occupied a range of internationally-oriented positions such as International Relations Delegate (1987-1995) and President of de Argentine-Hispanic Technical and Scientific Cooperation Commission (Borja 2012).

These networks developed during the 1970s included many Latin American planners and urban researchers. Those networks continued to operate into the 1990s, albeit under different political forms. Within these networks, Borja knew Oscar Yujnovsky, an urban researcher that years later —during the democratic transition in Argentina— would become the International Cooperation Deputy Secretary, a position which he began to use in establishing agreements with the Spanish government. Given this, in the 1980s Borja returned to Latin America as an expert and consultant in decentralization and citizen participation, heading the ‘Argentine-Hispanic cooperation program for democracy in Latin America’ (Borja 1987, 1988; Borja *et al.* 1987, 1989). A few years later, during the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, Borja continued visiting Latin America as a consultant, promoting strategic urban planning in many cities while leading TUBSA, the aforementioned public-private enterprise committed to the export of Barcelonian urban technology. As I have previously examined in Section 4, Borja was also involved in the Puerto Madeiro project as the leader of TUBSA. After leading TUBSA, in 1995 Borja opened his own consultancy firm ‘URBANTC — Jordi Borja. Urban Technology Consulting’ participating in the establishment of strategic plans across Latin America (González 2011; Borja 2012). As Larner and Laurie (2010: 219) stress, “as different forms of expertise begin to travel so too do they mutate”.

Alfredo Garay’s career path is related to Borja’s. He became an architect in 1975; was a member of left-wing Peronist movement during the 1970s; and went into exile after the 1976 coup d’état in Argentina. He first sought exile in Belgium, where he studied urbanism, and later moved to Mexico where he worked as a planner and knew

other experts such as Jordi Borja. With the end of the dictatorship and the beginning of the democratic transition, Garay returned to Argentina and started working as the public works undersecretary in local governments of the Province of Buenos Aires. During that period, he focused on issues such as land access and housing for the poor, and joined the faculty of the University of Buenos Aires' Department of Architecture and Urbanism. Meanwhile he took part in different academic activities, seminars, and publications organized by the Regional and Urban Planning Commission of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) (Garay 1988, 1991). He also published articles in books edited by Jordi Borja and supported by the aforementioned 'Argentine-Hispanic cooperation Program for democracy in Latin America' and CLACSO (García Delgado/Garay 1989). During the 1990s, he became the Urban Planning Secretary of the City of Buenos Aires, where he played an important role in the Puerto Madero Project.

As can be seen with both Borja and Garay, career paths were entangled and marked by active political associations, time in exile (accruing social and cultural capital as a result), professional migrations, incumbencies in local governments and universities, and a specific knowledge of political mobilization that would evolve from social movements towards a specific way of understanding planning as a participatory process. In the 1990s, participation in both cases became more closely linked to the participation of private capital in urban management.

As I pointed out, career paths analysis helps us to better understand both the general role of individuals in the circulation of policies, and why and how local experts chose to learn from Barcelona. It allows us to historicize urban circulation processes — avoiding a presentist bias— and to elaborate on previous contacts between foreign and local experts whose technical and political career paths are similar and entangled. As such, it enables us to clarify how both Borja and local planners and social researchers utilized previous contacts, showing the relational nature of both 'exporters' and 'importers'. These processes were parallel to the aforementioned broader relations between Spain and Argentina —developed in Section 3— allowing us to give a more complete explanation of why and how local planners and politicians chose to learn from Barcelona even when other port redevelopment experiences in other cities —such as London and Baltimore— were readily available.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

As planning history has shown, the travel, transfer, and flow of ideas and techniques central to urban policy and planning models are not as new as some 'presentist' literature might argue. Prior to the Puerto Madero redevelopment project, exchanges in urban planning knowledge and policy in Buenos Aires took place with France, and later with Great Britain and the United States. Exchanges between Argentinean and Spanish experts, consultants, and politicians were a relative novelty in this local context.

The shift in focus can be attributed to multiple factors tied to different and entangled scales and stakeholders. Connections between Barcelona and Buenos Aires as well as between Argentina and Spain were built by both formal organizations as well as individual and more informal relationships, demonstrating the role of individuals but also the relevance of the state in the circulation of policies. If recent literature on policy mobilities has stressed their circular nature, moving beyond linear schema where policies travel from one place to another or between two places (McCann 2011), this paper has shown that we cannot abandon the role of the state in these processes.

On the one hand, while discussing a presentist bias in recent literature, this paper has presented career paths analysis as a way to historicize urban policy circulation processes. This allowed for a mapping of the pre-existent networks of experts as well as the relational nature of both 'exporters' and 'importers', exemplified by Jordi Borja's and Alfredo Garay's links to a Latin American network of planners and urban researchers such as the Regional and Urban Planning Commission of CLACSO. Those previous links reemerged within different contexts and help us in understanding why locals chose to 'learn' from Barcelona, as well as the relevant role of individuals in the circulation of policies.

On the other, during the democratic transition, Spain modified its foreign policy consequently increasing its ties to Latin America and Argentina through political, economic and technical exchanges. Thus, the Puerto Madero Project, analyzed as a policy circulation process and contextualized within broader exchanges, goes beyond urban planning issues merging politics, economy and technical know-how. Thus, this paper showed that cities are not the only stakeholders involved in this process: both national states and personal contacts played a relevant role.

As shown in section 4, local planners and politicians were looking to develop and to legitimize specific urban strategies and urban policies within a context of economical and political reforms. However, as opposed to a form of static and unidirectional exchanges, I have shown how the Barcelonian proposal for the Puerto Madero was contested and modified in response to local context. Conflicts were thus also an integral part of this process. Also, far from an active emitter and a passive receptor, circuits of urban policy circulation were multiform. The Buenos Aires-Barcelona exchanges analyzed in this paper were parallel to others such as those aforementioned between Buenos Aires-Madrid and Buenos Aires-Andalucía.

Cochrane and Ward (2012) suggest that thinking in terms of policy mobilities is a profoundly geographical enterprise. Grounded in the Puerto Madero case and the aforementioned career paths analysis, my argument focused on the fact that it is also a profoundly historical enterprise where individuals, networks, and the state (in its national and urban form) all play a relevant role.

Although different researchers analyze this urban policy circulation process as an extension of urban models and policies that increase socio-spatial inequalities within the city, this does not preclude the possibility of urban policy circulation processes

resulting in positive urban and social outcomes. Other circulation processes may promote spatial justice and inclusive cities, thereby making these processes an area worthy of further study.

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