



Article

Land Squandering in the Spanish Medium Sized Cities: The Case of Toledo

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Abstract: A process of land squandering began in Spain in the mid 1990s until the great crisis of 2008. The intensive production of urban land affected the Spanish medium-sized towns. They were characterized by their compact nature and then they underwent an intense diffuse urbanization. However, in some cases there had been previous examples of urban sprawl. In this article, we study one of them, the unique and historic city of Toledo, in the Centre of the Iberian Peninsula. We will show how the city has experienced the land squandering and has been extensively widespread throughout the hinterland, consisting of their peripheral municipalities. We will also check how Toledo has had a previous internal dispersion process in the last quarter of the 20th Century through the called *Ensanche* (widening). We will use the urban estate cadaster as a fundamental source for evolutionary and present analysis of the city and its hinterland. The field and bibliographic work complete the methodology. The final conclusion is that there have been remarkable urban increments in Spanish medium-sized cities such as Toledo, in external and peripheral districts, under the logic of speculation and profit, resulting in a disjointed space.

Keywords: urban geography; urbanism; urban growth; medium-sized city; suburbanization; Spain

1. Introduction

The processes of urban growth have been usually associated with large cities and coastal towns with great influence in the sector of tourism. However, the interior medium-sized cities have also taken part of morphological and territorial transformation processes. These urban entities have been of undoubted scientific interest, however, there is not absolute consensus with its definition. Roger Brunet, given such complexity, came to define them as UGO, standing for Unidentified Geographic Object [1].

The term of medium-sized city has its origins in France [2]. In the Spanish context, early work on medium-sized cities dates back to the 1980s [3–5]. They tried to clarify some of the most significant features of these cities in Spain and, although no definition is required, it can be noted how the size of the population was the best exponent for the definition of this urban reality.

Also, the problems arising around Barcelona and Madrid and the complex territorial articulation of their metropolitan areas will lead to a reflection that places medium-sized cities as elements of territorial cohesion [6]. Over the years, they are associated with positions of urban equilibrium and conceived as more urban spaces, having more apprehensible scales for their citizens [7,8].

With the turn of the century, the term intermediate city was almost generally accepted. Then, a new door of debate on the problems of conceptualization was open, medium-sized cities had been affected by intense processes of change that inevitably forced to study the urban hierarchy within the international context influenced by the complex logic derived from globalization. Thus, intermediate

cities are characterized by the role played in the territory not only regarding the capacity to articulate their environment but also regarding the influence that they generate and the relationships that they are able to establish with other spaces. In short, it must be highlighted their role as carriers of goods and services to those cities and/ or rural municipalities on which they exert influence. In addition, their ability to connect different levels of networks (at a local, national, and even international level) is remarkable [9].

The definition of intermediate cities with their clear vocation of intermediation, left the quantitative criteria behind to conceptualize from the explanation of qualitative, economic, functional and territorial factors, where the capacity to organize more balanced urban systems with a higher quality of life is essential [10].

The most recent studies on medium-sized cities have been approached from different perspectives (scattered and oversized growths-in most cases-which leave the traditional compact city model aside) that share one thing in common: the model of diffuse city. However, the term is not subject to a concise definition. On the contrary, and it is the same as with the concept of medium-sized cities, this reality associated with urban sprawl does not have a clear definition since their building density, the morphological typologies, the intensity of use and/or the possible territorial effects to which urban dispersion refers are unknown [11].

This phenomenon has been characterized from different terms that come to represent a similar reality: city-region [12], urbanized field [13], diffuse city model [14], city sprawl [15], no city [16], inefficient city [17]. The explanatory processes that derive in this situation are also complex and are hidden under vague terminologies: Urban Sprawl [18], Counter-urbanization [19], and Suburbanization [20].

Defining and specifying its characterization is complex. However, it is a structural process that reorganizes the urban form from the displacement of population and activities to the periphery of the cities. In Spain, it has been strengthened, among other factors, by the modernization of the production system, the use of new technologies, the continuous increase of accessibility, the availability of land with more competitive prices, the widespread use of private vehicles, and the change in demand preferences [21].

Thus, it can be corroborated how the urban growth has spread to the periphery of the medium-sized cities in the last decades [1]. An intensive process of urbanization at the expense of neighboring rural municipalities [22] has taken place in most of them. The trend in these nuclei and areas is the progressive occupation of the territory, which takes part of the residential function, until recently reserved to the central city [23]. Large urban areas that have substantially modified the structure and the characteristics of the medium-sized cities and their peripheries have been formed.

The new logic of urbanization that appeared in recent decades in these cities has altered its traditional, compact, intense, and dense structure. They have given way to new forms, extensive territorial and more scattered structures, accompanied by morphological, functional and social transformations [24].

Chronologically the existence of two very distinct stages can be emphatically stated: an initially exaggerated growth that begins to be noticed in the middle of the 1990s and the first years of the 21st century, called by some authors “the prodigious decade of urbanism” [25] or “urban tsunami” [26]; and a second phase where the model that had been raised years ago comes to an end by its own unsustainability, leading to a deep economic crisis that eventually burst in 2008 [27].

Since the 1980s, and primarily between 1990 and up to the 2008 crisis, an intense process of dispersed urbanization affecting medium-sized cities occurred in Spain [28]. There are recent dynamics related to the real estate boom and the increasing artificialization of soil in 2000 [29]. In fact, the nearby municipalities now play a residential function that is associated with the increase in daily movements between home and place of work [23]. We must also add urban planning that encouraged the expansive growth based on considering large tracts of land as urban and thus encouraging urbanization [30].

The result has been that these cities have gone from more or less continuous, and compact structures, especially in the interior and provincial capitals, to others more dispersed and discontinuous that extend over their respective urban areas [31]. It is a new model of residential production that has resulted in a dispersed urban territory [32]. The model of suburbanization has deeply permeated with the growth of cities towards its peripheries. In medium sized cities we can see urban decentralization, peri-urbanization, and the formation of low density frames, analogous to the processes of soil expansion and consumption [23]. Thus, a supra-municipal city is created, generated by the sum of fragments without continuity in its urban fabric [33]. This recent growth in diffuse medium urban areas has meant a strong intake of soil and considerable environmental consequences [34].

This process of speculative urban growth related to neoliberal capitalism is of great interest for the above-mentioned scholars focused on urban studies [35–38]. Spain is a good example of it within the urban sciences in recent years and the phenomenon has been analyzed as a whole. There have been studies since the end of the 20th century [39], which already had a concern about urbanism that would be applied in the 21st century and some recommendations were given but they were not applied [40]. On the other hand, there was a process of appropriation of the incomes of the soil in the neo-liberal Spanish city, which resulted in land squandering [41] and, after the crisis, there was a profit topography characterized by its modern ruins [42] and serious social and territorial consequences [43]. Lois, Piñeira and Vives deeply, synthetically and completely describe this urbanization process that has taken place in Spain in the last decade of the 20th century until the great recession that began in 2008 [44]. Today, scholars proclaimed the necessity of overcoming this model of building [45].

More specifically, they also tried to understand the expansion of the urban peripheries and new spatial forms that are generated in the Spanish cities [46] and the challenge of sustainability that has been generated [47]. In a concrete way, the dynamics of the area of concern to this research, the *Ensanches* (widening) are studied by Coudroy de Lille [48]. In Spanish urbanism *Ensanche* is an extension of the first comprehensive planned development outside of the historic centre and its proximity in each city, although chronologically the first and authentic *Ensanches* are of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, in cities like Toledo, characterized by its atony, become much more contemporary phenomena.

In addition, case studies have been spread in order to understand the process of a more extensive and specific way. A case study is a research approach that facilitates the exploration of a phenomenon within a specific context using a variety of sources of data [49]. These studies are mainly focused on the large metropolitan areas of Spain, with a great interest in those of Barcelona [50,51] and Madrid [52,53]. There are also essays based on large cities within the Spanish urban system. Thus, Díaz Parra [54] discusses the growth of Seville as a production of a commodity for the logic of neo-liberal capitalism and Escolano, López, and Pueyo study the case of Zaragoza [55] in the first fifteen years of the 21st century as an example of neo-liberal urbanism and urban fragmentation. Case studies of medium-sized cities as Albacete [56] or Burgos [57] have also been published.

In this article we study the medium sized city of Toledo, with a population of 83,741 inhabitants in 2017 [58], and a diffuse growth that has spread to the municipalities that surround it. How has the land squandering taken place in the medium-sized cities of Spain, as in the case of Toledo? This is the first research question. The first objective of the research is to analyze this process. But, immediately, a question about its novelty came out. Before the recent process of diffuse city we referred to a model that characterized the medium sized cities as compact [31]. Was it always this way? In other words, did the Spanish medium-sized cities have examples of urban dispersion before the recent diffuse urbanization process towards the peripheral municipalities? Did compact but, at the same time, equally unconnected growth occur? These are the second and third research questions. These research questions are answered in the second part of the article: a case study of the so-called *Ensanche* of Toledo. Through this example, it can be observed that a speculative urban growth had already resulted in Toledo in fragmented spaces.

Toledo is located at latitude 39°51'24" North and longitude 4°1'28" West, in the center of the Iberian Peninsula, in the so-called South Plateau and about 70 km south of Madrid, capital of Spain. It is inserted within the autonomous community of Castilla-La Mancha, an inner region characterized by low demographic density and relatively stable population dynamics in recent decades. One of its most notable features is that the distribution and size of cities have not allowed the establishment of a regional capital capable of organizing the rest of the urban nuclei [59]. This derives its status as an acephalous region and the great influence of Madrid on the territory of Castilla-La Mancha, especially striking in the case of Guadalajara and Toledo (autonomic capital) [60].

In such a way, Toledo, standing as a medium-sized city with a status of regional administrative center, belongs to an urban agglomeration of higher level (Madrid), has a high tourist attraction derived from its declaration as a World heritage City by UNESCO and organizes a wide rural area [61].

To understand the dynamics of urban growth in Toledo, it is necessary to take into account different peculiarities of geographic type, historical type-related to the multiple archaeological finds [61], and legislative type. Regarding the first, the Tagus river is the main key to understand the actual configuration of the current space. Around it, you can notice up to four types of landscapes: historic center, the peri-urban area called "Los Cigarrales", Las Vegas del Tajo, and the northern spaces [58].

Legislative-type reasons are directly linked to the absence of territorial planning that allows an orderly connection to the city of Toledo. In this sense, it is worth highlighting the disarticulation in the urban development of the city by the lack of a model of growth coherently managed from the different urban planning plans that they have had in Toledo" [62].

The structure of the article fits the presented speech: an introductory part, a second part analyzing the dispersion of Toledo towards their peripheral municipalities, and a third part studying the *Ensanche*.

The article is located in the current research on the medium-sized cities and in the processes observed in their central core and respective urban areas.

The inclusion of the paper in the special issue "Land Squandering and Social Crisis in the Spanish City" is perfectly justified by observing the changes that have taken place as well in the urban area of Toledo as in the central city. These morphological transformations have been derived from the different economic, social and political processes that have been developing in the Spanish context in the 21st century.

In addition, the tendencies appreciated in the city of Toledo and its hinterland coincide with the dynamics given throughout the national territory, observing a period of growth that ends in 2008. Currently, there is an open discussion around the problems caused by a model that has been unsustainable in most cities in Spain.

2. Methodology

The research starts from the study of the growth of the city of Toledo in relation to the urban morphology. For the analysis of the urban sprawl of Toledo and the municipalities that are in their area of influence has been proceeded to the analysis of indicators that allow to study the evolution of the soil that has been urbanized and/or constructed. The importance is not exclusively confined to the main city (Toledo) but it is intended to observe the dynamics, derived from the processes of suburbanization, given in the municipalities that make up the suburbs. This has established a 30-km hinterland around the central city that allows us to know the area of urban sprawl. The analysis unit of the study has been the municipality, as long as it is considered as the basic local entity of the National Territorial Organization. The use of this unit allows us to study the added behavior of the city suburbs of Toledo. However, there are also some difficulties arising from the great variety in terms of area and population existing between municipalities.

Other factors that can determine the study are also highlighted. In this case we refer to the importance of the situation of the elements studied with respect to the main routes of communication, the proximity to Madrid and/or Toledo. From the temporal point of view, the period 2000–2016 has

been selected, which has been analyzed from different perspectives. In order to establish similarities or differences, the variables have been analyzed separately around two completely distinguished moments: a first cycle originating from the beginning of the 21st century and culminating in the year 2008 with the crash of the economic crisis that same year and a later period until the year 2016. In these two phases, very adverse behaviors can be distinguished in the real-estate sector and in the construction of cities. The particularly abrupt recess caused by the crisis of the year 2008 led to a huge change from the predecessor period, giving way to a new cycle defined by completely inverse features, that is, a time of absence of dynamics in contrast with a growth excessive in most cases. The methodology allows us to analyze what happened throughout the period according to the unequal behavior of two periods that have the same number of years but are incomparable in turn by the logics carried out.

The objective of studying the whole period (2000–2016) around the built surface and surface not built is to verify the differences between the hectares of land that have been urbanized and those that were urbanized and materialized in the practice, that is to say, those that were actually built.

Thus, the variables used have been population, surface of built urban areas and surface of urban area without building. The first one has been obtained from the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics, while the remaining ones have been downloaded from the website of the land registry.

The cartography of the first part of the work shows a series of intervals that aim to reflect the different behavior of the municipalities. This always establishes a negative value and an increase ranging from: moderate growth rates 0–50, high growth 50–100 and very high growth more than 100). Summary-tables have also been used to introduce the data that have been believed to be most significant.

The analysis around the *Ensanche* of Toledo allows us to analyze the temporal evolution of the shaping of the widening over the period from 1950 to the present, as well as the structuring and uses of its use. To show such results, cartographic representation has been proceeding. Taking for granted, the methodology has been completed with fieldwork and a bibliographical review.

The article is located in the current research on the medium-sized cities and on the processes observed both in its central areas and in their respective urban areas.

3. Results

3.1. The Urban Area of Toledo: An External Dispersion

Toledo is located at latitude 39°51'24" North and longitude 4°1'28" West, in the center of the Iberian Peninsula, in the so-called South Plateau and about 70 km south of Madrid, capital of Spain. It is inserted within the autonomous community of Castilla-La Mancha. The city of Toledo has actively participated in the process of urban growth that has spread to the outskirts of Spanish medium-sized cities in recent decades [63]. Thus, there has been an intense urbanization in their neighboring municipalities. This section discusses this aspect through demographic data and the evolution of the surface built between 2000 and 2016 by the land registry. To study the outskirts of the central city we choose to establish a hinterland of 30 km and we take into consideration all its municipalities.

From the demographic point of view, and in response to Figure 1, the most populous municipalities of the province of Toledo in the year 2016 correspond to the capital city and Talavera de la Reina, with a population of 83,459 and 84,119 inhabitants respectively. This is a reality that does not represent the vast majority of the municipalities of Toledo, which do not exceed the number of 5000 inhabitants (175 of a total 204). Immediately thereafter, the major municipalities are concentrated in the hinterland of the 30 km of Toledo and in the North area with respect to the capital city, adjoining with the province of Madrid.

Table 1 shows the municipalities 30 km away from Toledo that have acquired rates of population variation over 50% between 2000 and 2016. Up to 18 of them meet this premise with percentages ranging from 65% of Recas to 605% of Barciencia. In fact, a total of 9 municipalities have seen their

population doubled or more in the last 15 years. The demographic dispersion in the urban area of the medium-sized city and capital of Castilla-La Mancha, Toledo, is evident.

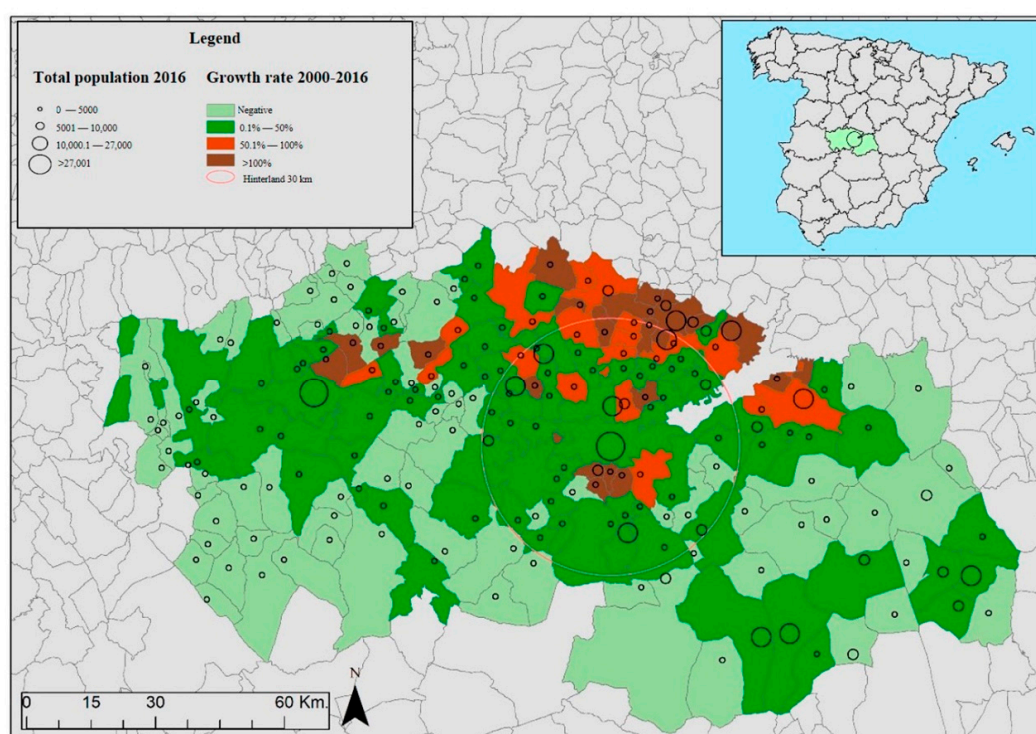


Figure 1. Total population in 2016 and growth rate in the province of Toledo by municipalities for the period 2000–2016. Source: INE [58] and self-elaboration.

Table 1. Municipalities of the urban area of Toledo with a growth rate exceeding 50% between 2000 and 2016 Source: INE [58].

Municipality	Population 2000	Population 2008	Population 2016	Variation Rate 2000–2016 (%)
Barcience	111	481	783	605
Chozas de Canales	1002	3485	3710	270
Burguillos de Toledo	965	2399	3092	220
Magán	1137	2738	3225	184
Yuncos	3760	8623	10,613	182
Cobisa	1618	3645	4186	159
Argés	2477	5178	6093	146
Cedillo del Condado	1542	2520	3680	139
Layos	268	444	625	133
Lominchar	1198	1735	2365	97
Yuncler	1855	3161	3648	97
Numancia de la Sagra	2555	4448	4734	85
Palomeque	483	878	876	81
Villamiel de Toledo	477	812	857	80
Novés	1545	2500	2707	75
Nambroca	2603	3415	4524	74
Olías del Rey	4287	6413	7357	72
Recas	2614	3498	4309	65

One of the variables that can help to realize the effects of urban sprawl is the surface of built and unbuilt urban plots. The used information has been extracted from the cadaster [64]. So, it has been selected for Toledo and its area of influence, 30 km, the area of urban plots, both built and unbuilt, for the years 2000, 2008 and 2016 in order to identify the dynamics occurred before (2000–2008) and after the crisis (2009–2016). In Figure 2 the results are mapped. You can see how the surface of urban plots has varied considerably in the two periods mentioned. Between 2000 and 2008 a strong growth of the

surface built in the central core of Toledo and its Northern and Southern peripheral municipalities takes place. With respect to the period, 2009–2016, the dynamic presents different features. There are many more municipalities with negative rates, a direct result of the effects of the crisis, although some still keep growth rates, although they are lower.

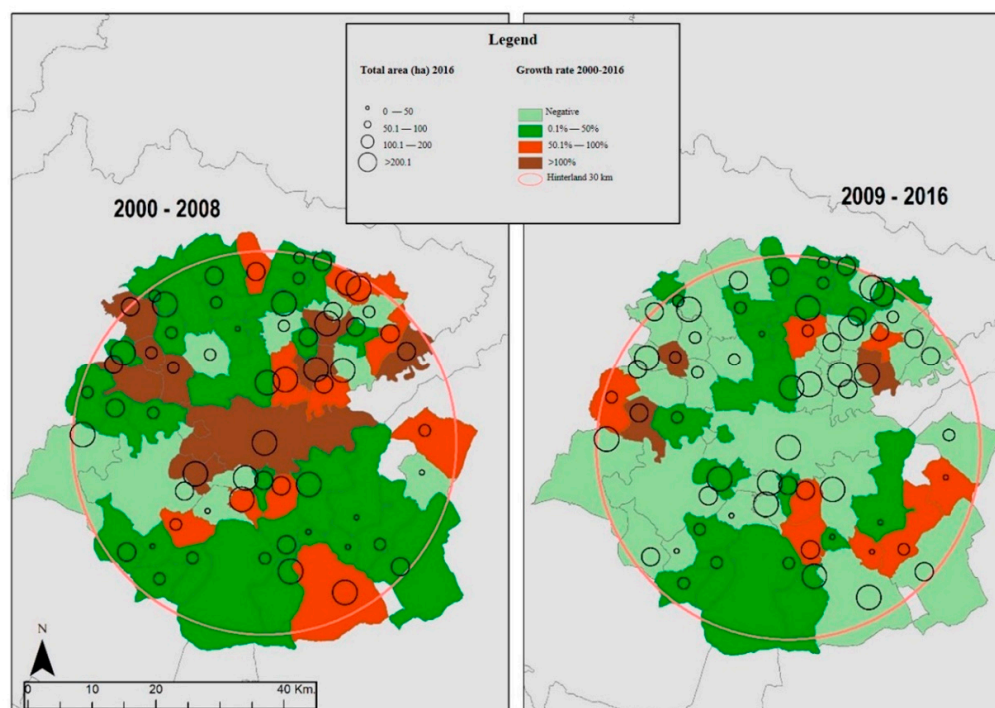


Figure 2. Growth rate of the built surface in the municipalities of the urban area of Toledo between 2000–08, and 2008–16. Source: Land Registry [64] and self-elaboration.

From Table 2 we can see the importance that the hinterland acquires as a whole with respect to the city of Toledo. The group of municipalities located within thirty kilometers, both in built-up areas and unbuilt surface for the three years analyzed represent a clear superiority to the central city. As for temporal evolution, in the year 2000 we can see the overall trends associated to the time with the greatest growth, thus grouping a total of 7900 hectares between built and unbuilt areas. Of course, the role of the urban area is much more significant with respect to the city of Toledo (15% hectares of built-up area and 21.3% hectares of unbuilt surface compared to 85% and 78.7%). Indeed, the percentages of the hinterland always exceed, in greater or lesser extent, the central city. However, in 2008 Toledo managed to increase 19.7% of hectares of built-up area and 22.2% of hectares of unbuilt areas with respect to the previous year. In 2016, the capital shows back descendant dynamics, losing 5.8% of the built-up area, but tripling the corresponding hectares with the plots (17.4%). The analysis of the data shows one of the symptoms of the change in the model of compact city to the sparse urban area.

Table 2. Evolution of the built-up and unbuilt areas between 2000 and 2016 in Toledo and in its hinterland of 30 km. Source: Land Registry [64].

	Built-up Surface (Ha)						Unbuilt Surface (Ha)					
	2000	%	2008	%	2016	%	2000	%	2008	%	2016	%
Toledo	853	15	2376.6	34.7	2106.0	28.9	834.1	21.3	3553.3	43.5	1388.4	26.1
Hinterland	4827.4	85	4471.2	65.3	5191.4	71.1	3072.6	78.7	4613.3	56.5	3934.0	73.9
Total	5680.4	100	6847.8	100	7297.4	100	3906.6	100	8166.6	100	5322.5	100

Another important issue is related to the amount of built-up and unbuilt areas shown in Figure 3. One of the conclusions that can be extracted having a look to the map is that the amount of developable

surface generated in the period has been really excessive. If we look at the rate of variation of the built-up area for the period 2000–2016, we appreciate how five municipalities obtain values greater than 100%, this is the case of Burguillos de Toledo (106.27%), Toledo (146.90%), Novés (153.49%), Villaluenga de la Sagra (156.58%), and Barciencia (404.14%), a municipality that obtains a rate of 572.99% of the total area of urban plots (built and unbuilt) throughout the cycle.

But perhaps the unbuilt surface is really significant. Many municipalities have exceeded 100% of the rate of growth, but still the most striking are Layos 3,270% and Burujón 1,105%. Both greatly exceed 1000%! Barciencia (753%), Magan (642%), Guadamur (609%), and Villaseca de la Sagra (607%) are between 500 and 1000%. Below, but also with very high values, are Villaminaya (430.76%) Ajofrín (363.19%), Toledo (327.11%), Camarenilla (264.31%), and Escalonilla (228.85%). As a reference, Toledo has a growth rate of 66.5% of unbuilt surface and 146.90% of built-up area.

Ultimately, approximately half of the municipalities of the hinterland in Toledo within a radius of thirty kilometers exceeds growth rates of urban parcels higher than 50%, reaching really striking levels in some cases.

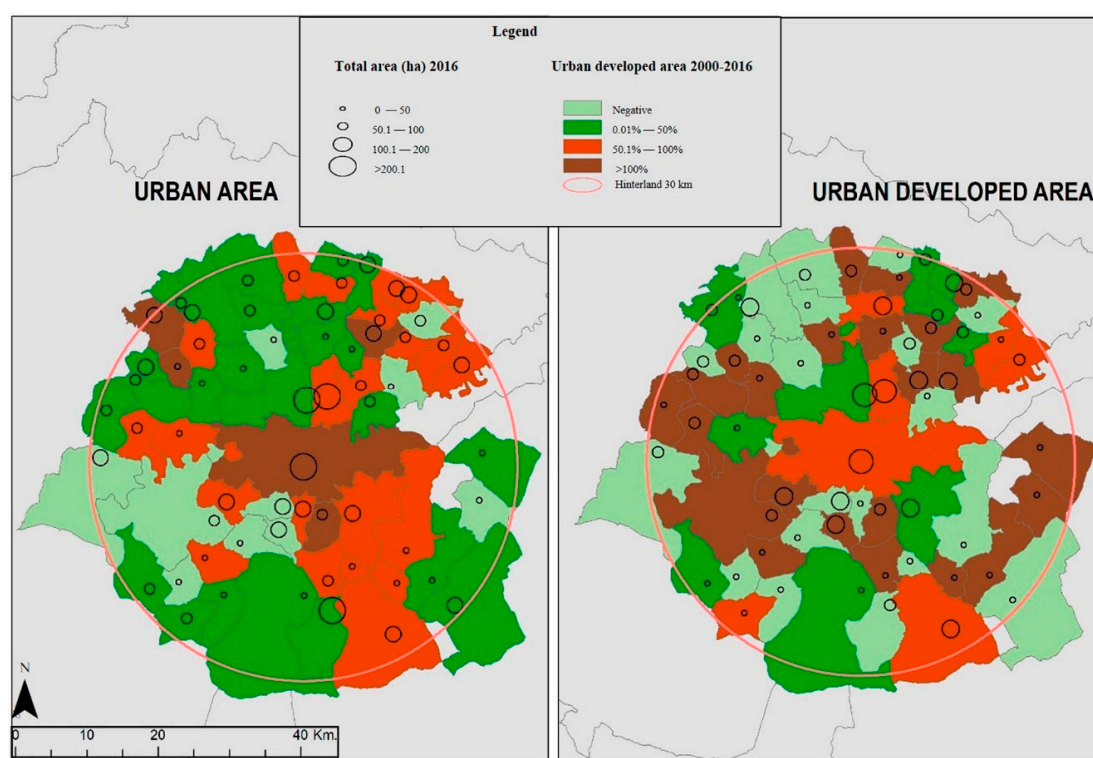


Figure 3. Total of urban area and urban developed area in 2016 and growth rates between 2000 and 2016 in the hinterland within a radius of 30 km in Toledo. Source: Land Registry [64] and self-elaboration.

This way of showing the urban sprawl from the indicators that have been analyzed (built-up and unbuilt areas) helps us to understand how the “urbanizing tsunami”, continuing with the metaphor of Gaja [27], has reached the heart of the Iberian Peninsula and has resulted in dramatic increases in the built surface of the urban area of Toledo, at the same time that it entirely applied the rule that everything is buildable [65] in a lot of their municipalities.

3.2. *Ensanche (Widening) of Toledo: An Internal Dispersion.*

The urban sprawl of Spanish medium-sized cities towards its periphery has resulted in a dispersed city in Toledo, both within the central municipality and in the peripheral municipalities. Changing from a central compact city to a scattered and fragmented urban area. However, Toledo already had a clear dislocation before the real estate boom and the intense urbanization process in the last years.

Since the 1960s and up to the most contemporary transformation beginning in the 1990s, the city, through two general plans of urban development, in 1964 and 1986, had already experienced an internal scattering process through the so-called *Ensanche* [66].

The emergence of a number of peripheral districts in the outskirts of Toledo takes place during this urban growth, and they completely lack the urban agenda typical of the Spanish *Ensanches* of the nineteenth-century. An urban planning was applied in a minority of cities [48] among which Toledo is not included. In fact, the Laws for *Ensanches* of the 19th-century responded to the needs of growth of the industrial city [48]. This requirement did not exist in Toledo. For this reason, the widening was not proposed. And the one which would be eventually created, many decades later, responds to the model of capitalist post-industrial town, and the speculative designs on the market.

The *Ensanche* of Toledo takes place in the northern part of the municipality, it started in the decade of 1960–1970, but it is mainly developed from the General Plan of 1986 (see Figure 4) and reaches its most extreme location, the neighborhood of Buenavista in 2008. It mainly covers Palomarejos, Santa Teresa, Avenida de Europa and Buenavista. It is located in the area known as Vega Baja, alluvial plain of the river Tajo downstream from the historic centre, until the slope that closes the Valley in the North. This is not a compact urban development, but a space built in different eras and interstitial spaces (see Figure 5). The expansion does not form a single planned set. On the contrary, it results from the sum of sectors situated in the Northern part of Toledo, built in a long temporal process and with a clear dispersion and fragmentation.

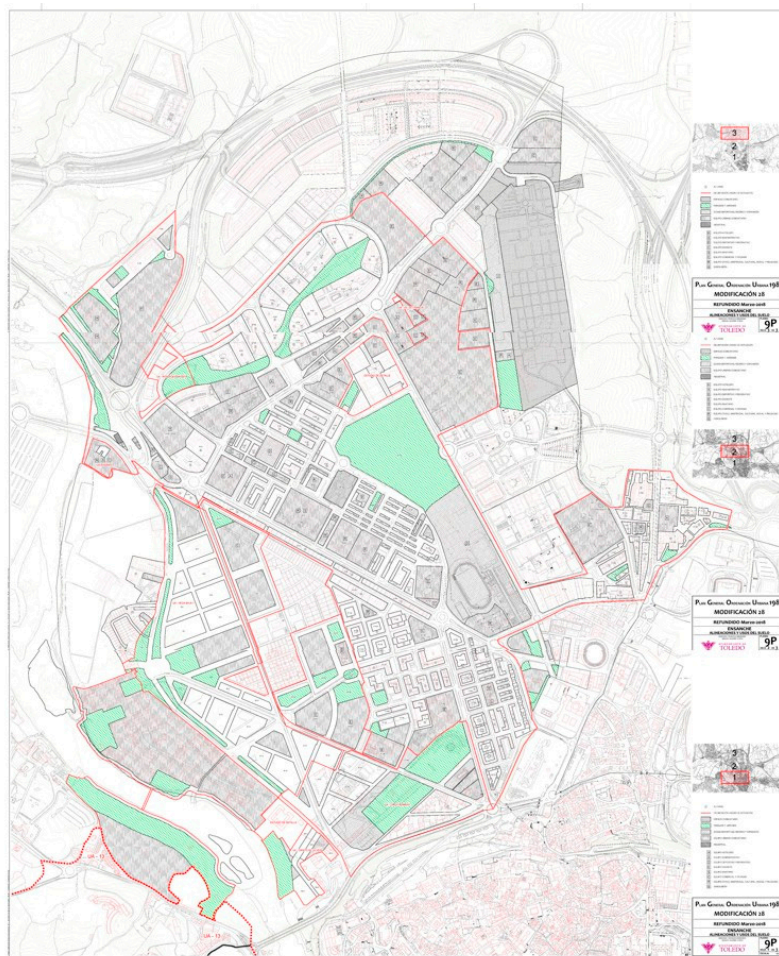


Figure 4. The *Ensanche* of Toledo in the 1986 PGOU. Source: City Council of Toledo [67] and self-elaboration.

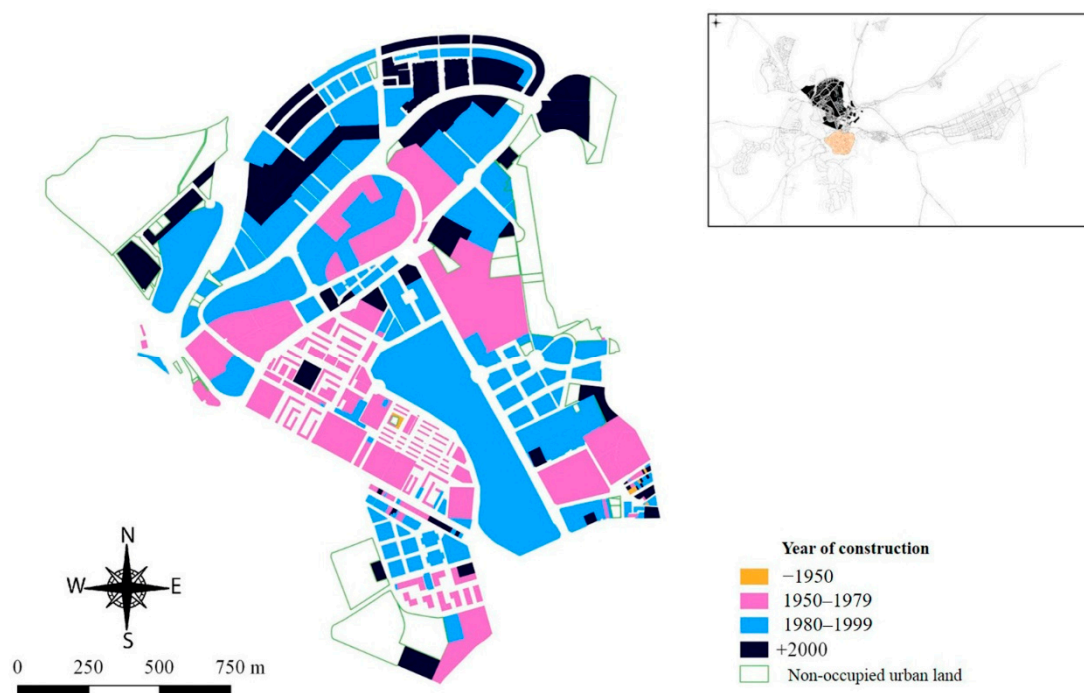


Figure 5. Year of construction of the real estate of the *Ensanche* of Toledo. Source: own elaboration based on CartoCiudad [68] and the land registry [64].

In this way, the *Ensanche* does not form a unit, but it is a mosaic of different neighborhoods. Chronologically, the first one is Palomarejos. It was created in the decade of 1960 with public housing in order to absorb the population living in substandard housing settlements in the municipality. Its volume of rectangular blocks, and small-sized households differs from the rest of the sectors of the *Ensanche*. Despite being a public performance, it was not executed as it was planned. Thus, Palomarejos is abruptly cut on its western side. It's a neighborhood locked up in itself by its own architecture.

Santa Teresa and Avenida de Europa, on the other hand, are sectors of towers of middle and upper-middle class, of mainly private housing constructions. They are expensive and speculative real estate products. However, urban problems appear again. Santa Teresa is also an incomplete neighborhood radically cut by the West. Here we find a wide interstitial space, today used as free parking outdoor. The aim was to make a great urban performance which included the presence of a department store. The autonomous Government stopped this process due to the emergence of important archaeological sites and social pressure [69]. The area known as *Avenida de Europa* presented a regular map, but with sloping topography. Despite the quality of the buildings, it is a clearly fragmented and unattractive neighborhood for passers-by from the rest of the city. Their volumes and forms gave rise to another differential unit in the contemporary landscape of Toledo, in the East of the *Ensanche* (see Figure 6).

Finally, the distant district of Buenavista is located in the North of the *Ensanche*. The duration of the process of urbanization has been extended (see Figure 5). It still possesses large empty building spaces. The interests of its builders and promoters have marked the times and the irrational urban fabric of this sector is out of all urban logic. A wide variety of building types and volumes are mixed together. The public spaces are disconnected and a great part of the built areas consists of common private spaces. It is also very common to find the typology of closed blocks of buildings. The sloping topography also contributes to the unstructured nature of this industry.

The fragmentation and disconnection of sectors forming the *Ensanche* lead to a variety of uses (see Figure 7). The dispersion, together with the residential character of well-off people of all sectors, except Palomarejos (just the opposite, a clear popular district), has resulted in the emergence of facilities, services and economic activities. Thus, urban substructures were formed, according to

Mierzejewska [70]. Santa Teresa, Avenida de Europa, and Buenavista are respectively structural and functional areas relatively uniform and autonomous, isolated and scattered fragments within the compact city of Toledo. Private investors, most of them promoters, led to the appearance of these substructures as multifunctional properties.



Figure 6. Panoramic view of the *Ensanche* of Toledo.



Figure 7. Main uses of the soil of the *Ensanche* of Toledo. Source: self-elaboration from Cartociudad [68] and the Land Registry [64].

4. Discussion

The urban landscapes of the 21st century have been the subject of intense scientific debate due to the deep morphological and structural modifications that have taken place throughout the national territory. This article is a case study through the urban area of Toledo and, in particular, a fragment of its urban structure: the *Ensanche*. For this reason, it presents the limitations derived from this fact. However, this is a significant case of this process in the medium-sized cities of Spain. Spanish cities have adopted the typical forms of urban sprawl by building the city based on certain parameters that have nothing to do with the precepts of the compact model where the limits of the city are well defined. The resulting space presents discontinuous and fragmented traits that, however, are related [25].

From the case studies, you can see the different manifestations of this mode in Spain. It is worth highlighting the studies on Spanish medium cities that have been analyzed around this debate, in different territorial areas, giving rise to a rich scientific literature: Castilla y León [71,72], Castilla-La Mancha [73–77], Catalonia and the provinces of Girona [78], Lerida [79,80], and Manresa [81], Santiago de Compostela [82], and Andalusia [83,84].

This profound change resulted in the transformation of the national territory, with greater or lesser intensity according to the different zones that have been questioned from multiple perspectives. The criticisms are related to a model that derives in territorial incoherence because there is no scheduled planning, together with a high consumption of urban land, an excessive mobility in terms of environmental pollution and higher consumption, and the increase in public spending by the scattered city [14,85].

Regarding the *Ensanche* of Toledo, it is noteworthy to point out its dispersed form because the buildings are separated from each other and with intermediate interstitial spaces. In addition, some of these fragments have not been finished and do not correspond to the previous planning. Its limits are incomplete and have unoccupied soil in its internal morphology. For this reason, the *Ensanche* of Toledo does not respond to the idea of a continuous urban development that characterizes the construction of the suburbs areas close to the historic city centre of most of the Spanish cities, in which there are no free spaces and a compact form of the buildings built. The *Ensanche* of Toledo gives rise to a dispersed area, with small urban sectors separated from each other, and fragmented, with incomplete sectors with disarticulated fragments and free spaces not occupied. It is a reality of dispersion and fragmentation different from that of the urbanization of the Anglo-Saxon cities [86] in the shape, since they are not single-family houses with garden but blocks of flats.

Thus, the alternatives follow the trend proposed by Oriol Nel·lo: “A Sprawl, specialization and banality must be opposed compactness, diversity and complexity, ie urban intensity. Against dispersion, intensity: this must be the first guide of the new policy.” [87] (p. 282).

5. Conclusions

A process of artificialization of land and extension of built-up areas qualified as a real estate boom took place in Spain from the decade of 1990 and until 2008. In the last decade, the economic crisis, just worsened by the outbreak of the called “real estate bubble”, has paralyzed the urban growth. Even so, the medium sized cities had already accumulated an urban sprawl that collides head-on with a past of compact central core. This dispersed urbanization, in fact, overflowed the central municipality in order to extend itself through the peripheral municipalities of their urban areas. It happened in the capital of Castilla-La Mancha, Toledo. With the case study we can answer the first question of the investigation: How has the land squandering taken place in the medium-sized cities of Spain, as in the case of Toledo? It has mainly taken place through a demographic growth and the construction of the suburbs areas in the peripheral municipalities in the period 2000–08. After the crisis, this dispersed urbanization of the central municipality to the peripherals has been paralyzed.

However, it has been shown, through the case study of Toledo, that in the peripheral districts of Spanish medium-sized towns, under the logic of speculation and profit, it occasionally resulted in a disjointed and morphologically impersonal space. This responds to the second main research question of the paper: Did the Spanish medium-sized cities have examples of urban dispersion before the recent diffuse urbanization process towards the peripheral municipalities? Yes, they had it. The so-called *Ensanche* of Toledo is a clear example of this inner dispersion. This name has its origin in the figure of the Spanish urbanism of the nineteenth century, very far away from the nineteenth-century paradigms, it is mainly a private and speculative growth. It does not fit a planned unit: the urban management plans of the city gave rise to a dispersed construction process lengthened in time and with a hodgepodge of architecture and volumetry. After discovering this fact, the third question of the investigation can be answered: Did compact growth but, at the same time, equally unconnected growth occur? Yes, that happened in medium-sized Spanish cities like Toledo. The final result has

been a fragmented urban fabric, sectors disconnected with respect to the rest of the city. Some of them remain unfinished. They have finally caused substructures within Toledo.

We have focused the debate on the scope of study of the article: Spain. The methodology can be implemented in other Spanish medium-sized cities. In other different international contexts, it would be necessary to find a source similar to the Spanish urban estate cadaster. The study provides an interesting case study within the urban studies of Spain and it can serve as a comparative example for other medium-sized cities in other national contexts. However, the particularities of the spatial planning framework have an important influence on the urban areas development mode. The differences of the compactness of European medium-sized cities are evident [88], as well as the way of expanding cities and the urban sprawl [89]. These differences make it necessary to analyze more cases to obtain a general understanding of the process. In this regard, this article provides a significant case study for the understanding of the dynamics of European medium-sized cities.

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