



AESOP 2025
CONGRESS

Istanbul, 7-11 July



TRACK_04

GOVERNANCE

STREAM 2:

8.JULY (TUESDAY)

Crossing boundaries and enabling the conversion of military land into social housing. The case of Spain

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Introduction

Theme: Examination of the complex challenges inherent in the **public-public partnership** established by the Spanish government in 2023 between SEPES and the Ministry of Defence.

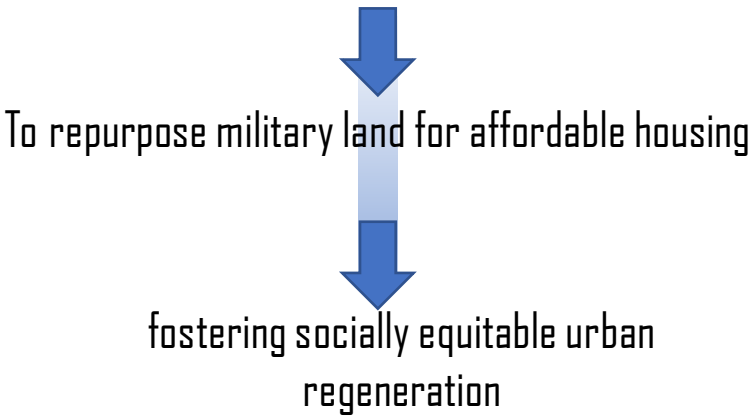
Hypothesis: The redevelopment is possible by

- *Enabling specific institutional aspects of planning governance* (i.e. the rules, laws, and procedural requirements)
- Possibilities opened by *community practices and actors (co-)operating* within these structural settings.

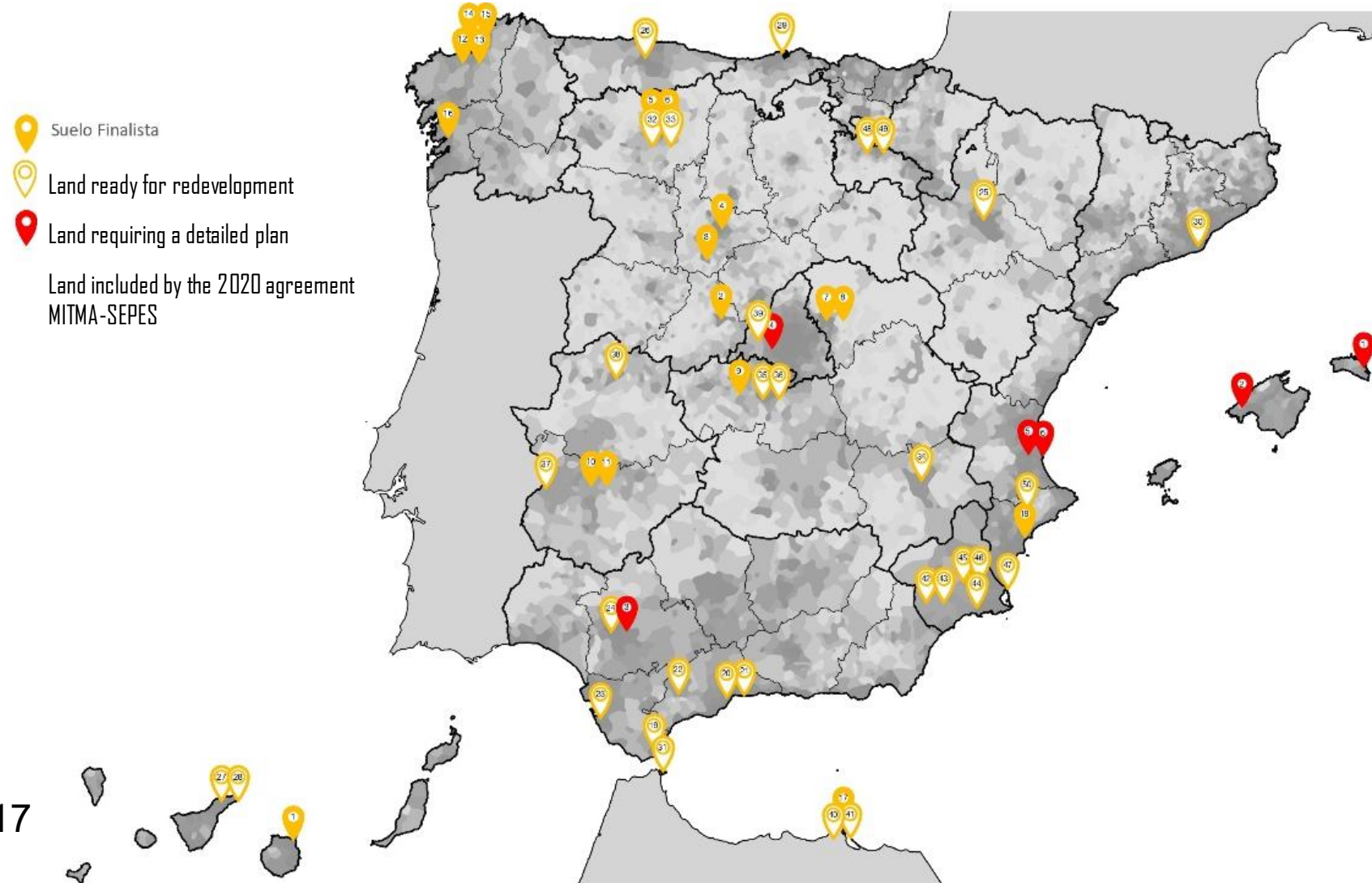
Goal: By scrutinise the case of *Valladolid's La Rubia barracks*, the research uncovers the *complex interplay between the stakeholders involved* if ways forward are to be found in challenging the *institutional capacity to achieve the public interest*.

Introduction

2023 public-public partnership



- **How much land?**
8.25-million-m² MoD land (**50 assets**)
- **How many new housing units?**
19,876 affordable housing units
- **Where?**
34 municipalities within 15 of Spain's 17 Autonomous Communities
- **Estimated public investment?**
€620 million.



Theoretical framework

'Institutional capacity' in relation to the management of former military land

↳ the capacity of public administrations to effectively manage resources, coordinate actors and plan for the long term land-use of territories

- ↳
- Fragmentation of powers between administrations
 - Rigidity of regulations on state property and urban planning
 - Absence of mechanisms for citizen participation in decision-making

What is 'public interest'?

- **Challenging to define** (Moroni, 2004)
- Interchangeably use of the concepts of '*public good*' (Deneulin and Townsend, 2007) and '*common good*' (Mansbridge, 2013)

↳ An essentially contested concept, "vague, imprecise and open to political manipulation" (Jade, 2017, 2)

Theoretical framework

Public interest should ...

ensure that redeveloping military land *responds to collective objectives* (e.g. provisioning public equipment and services, affordable housing, promotion of cultural and social activities, ...)

BUT

Priorisation of a mercantile logic driven by the search for fiscal profitability or market-oriented real estate operations (Christophers, 2018)

Constrains. political (need to focus on short-term political goals) & *financial* (e.g., stability pact, insufficient public funding)

Tensions with local communities

overlooked opportunities to address social needs or spaces of high strategic and symbolic value have been privatised (Camerin, 2021).

Methodology

Approach: *Case study methodology*

Research approach that involves an in-depth, multi-faceted investigation of a single case to gain a comprehensive understanding of a specific phenomenon within its real-life context



to *examine the changes* occurred *after* the launch of the *PPP* in *2023* (*La Rubia barracks, Valladolid*)

Reasons for selecting this case study

- 2023 PPP has generated *poor interest* in the national and international literature
- *Controversy* generated in the local public arena → conflict with spatial plan and current agreements/ procedures
- *Data access* and to keep updating the situation about La Rubia barracks

Methodology

Semi-structured interviews (January to April 2025) → Valladolid City Council, SEPES, local grassroots association “La Rubia”

Roundtable “Barracks in transformation: an opportunity for the La Rubia neighbourhood” 24th April 2025
Cuarteles en transformación: una oportunidad para el barrio de La Rubia

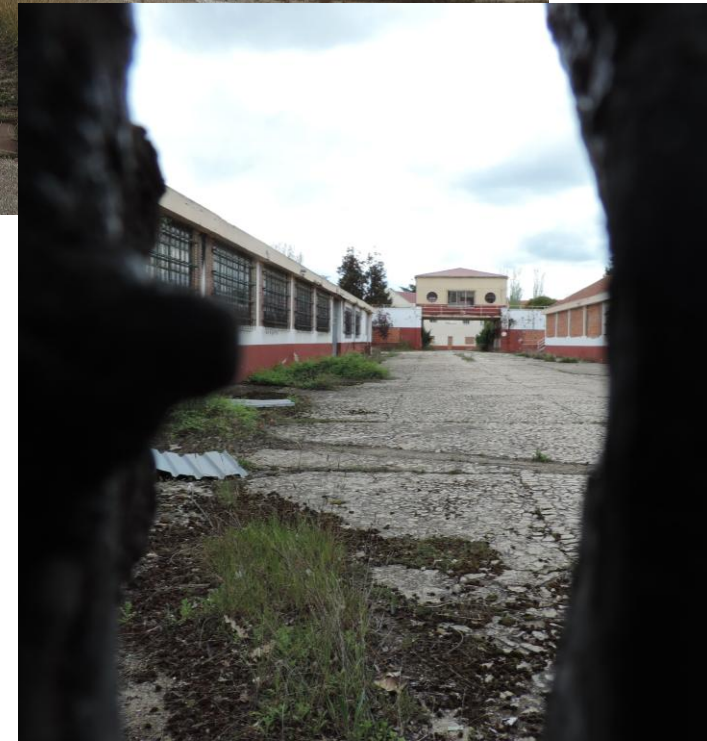
Desk-based research

Relevant legislation and other policy documents (e.g., the 2020 general master plan, the so-called *Plan General de Ordenación Urbana* in Spanish; PGOU), including meetings from the executive and deliberative Valladolid City Council, and other material from media outputs.

Case study analysis

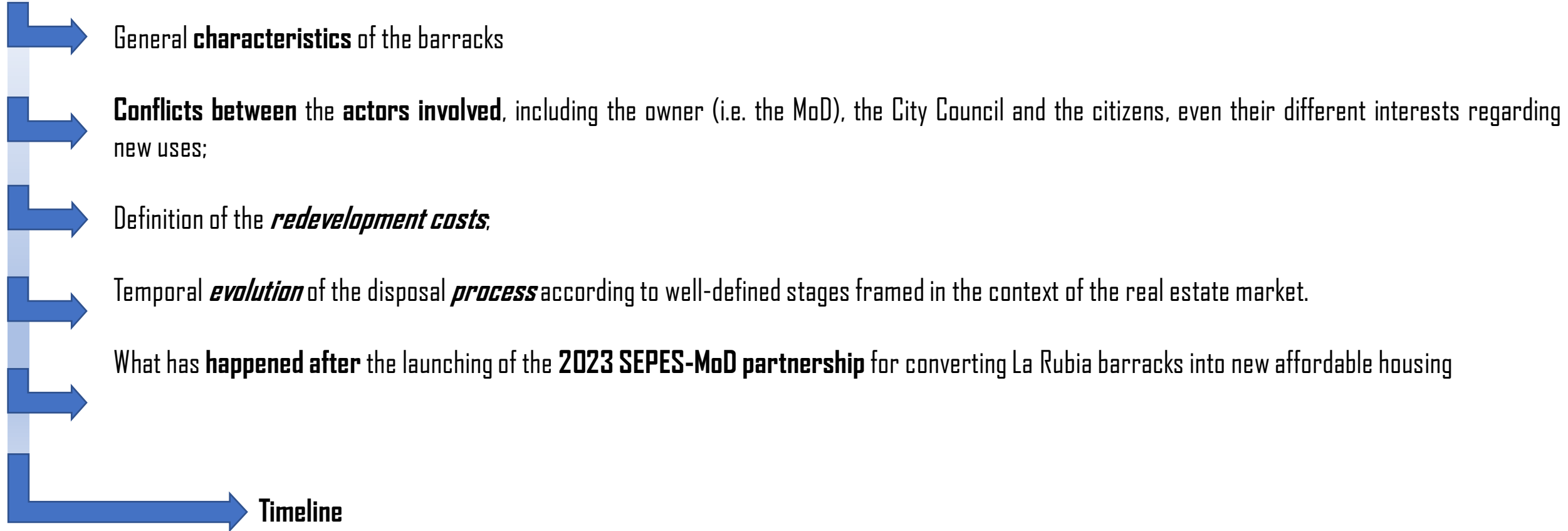
Case study analysis



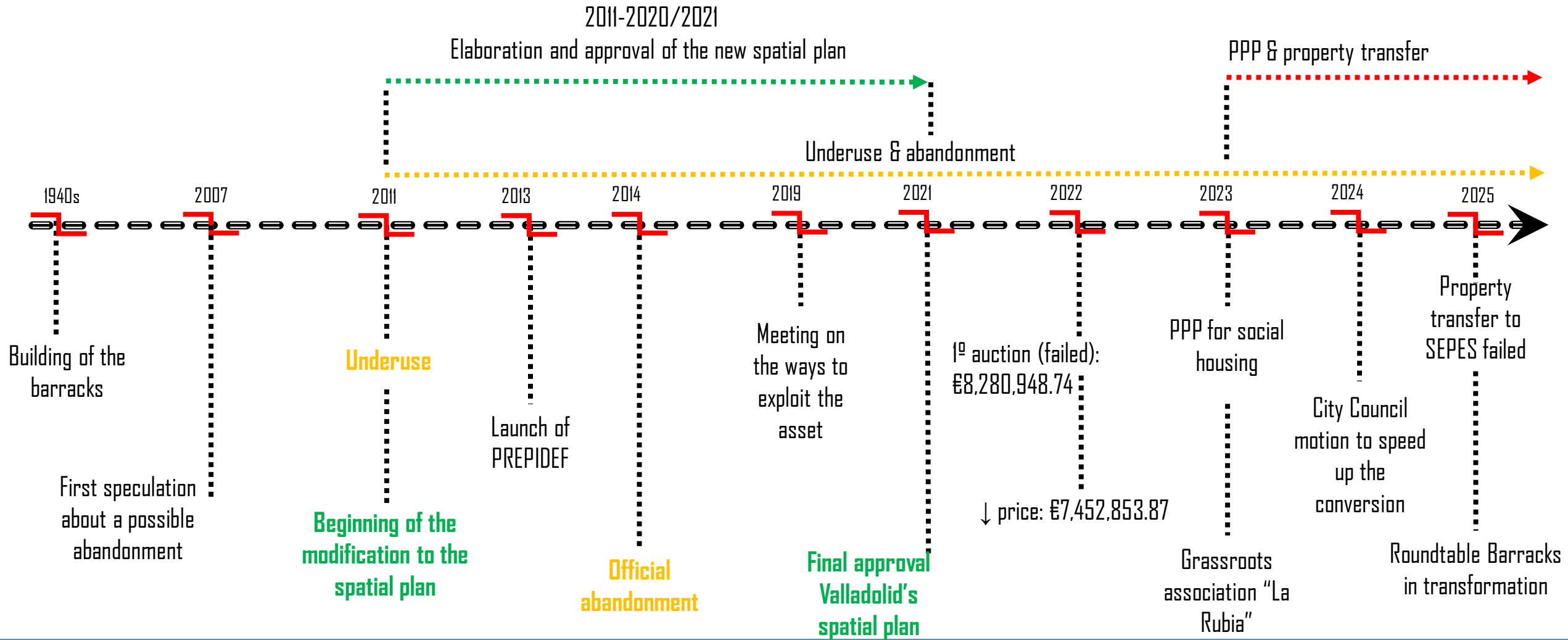


Case study analysis

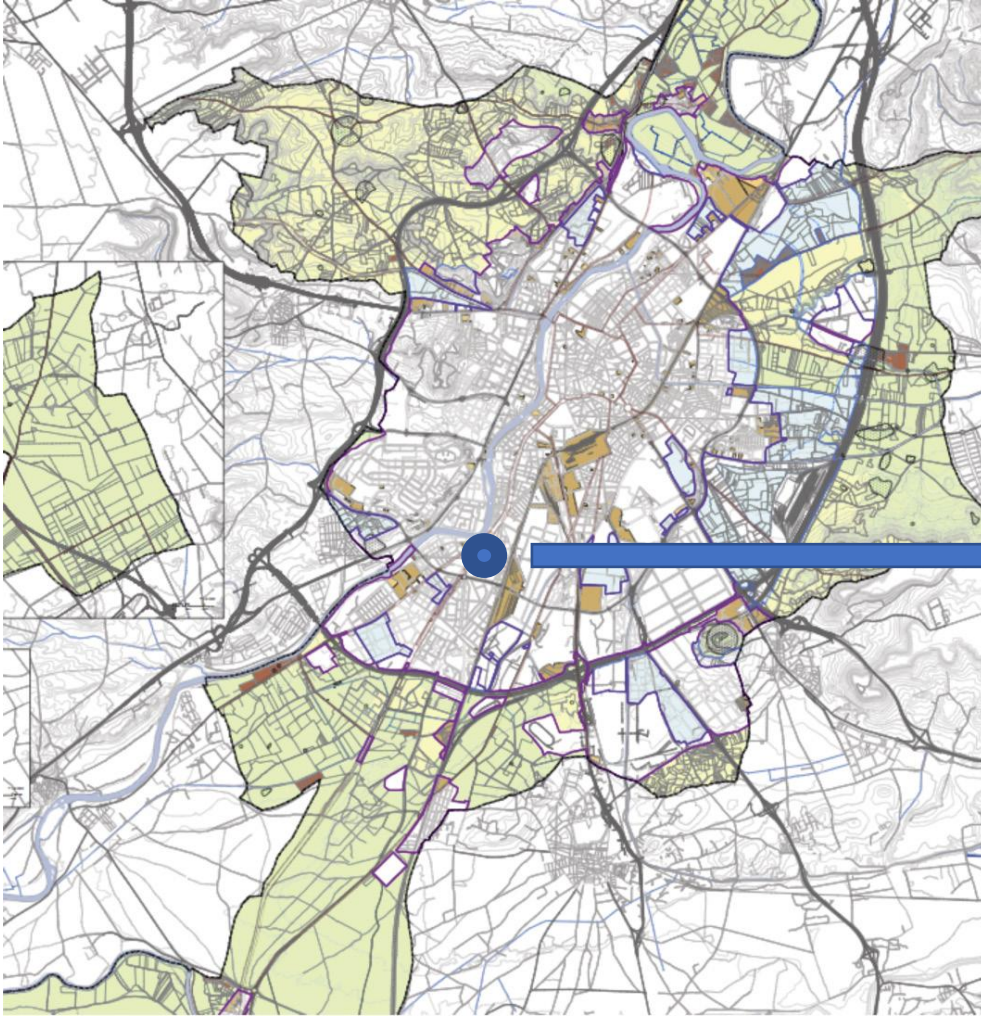
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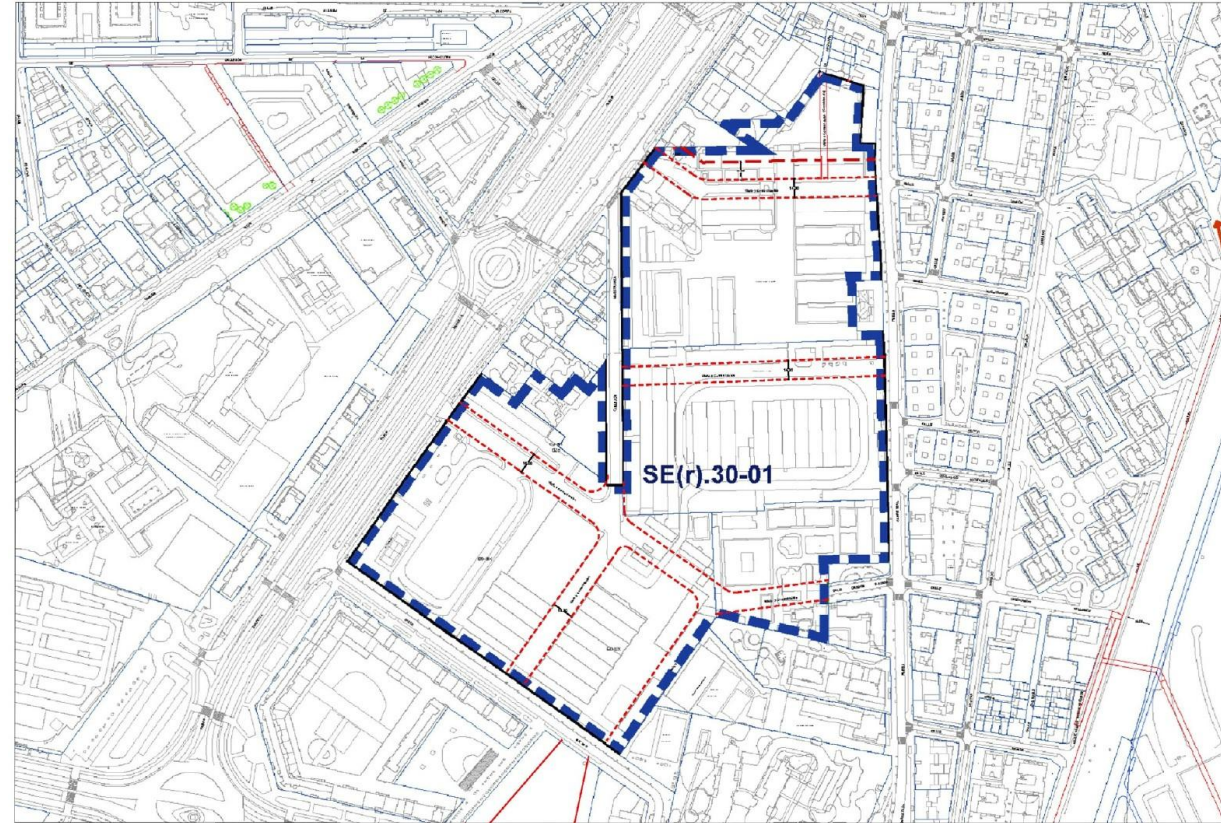
Timeline



Case study analysis



2020 spatial plan classified the barracks as *suelo urbano no consolidado* (unconsolidated urban land) "SE(r).30.01 Acuartelamiento La Rubia" and as a *sector con ordenación remitida* (sector with remitted development)



The 2023 PPP: what's next?



Cuarteles en transformación: una oportunidad para el Barrio de la Rubia

Javier Izquierdo – Senador GPS y portavoz de vivienda y agenda urbana
Ignacio Zarandona – Concejal de Urbanismo y Vivienda, arquitecto
Federico Camerin – Experto en patrimonio militar, urbanista (UVA)
Manuel Iglesias – Representante de la asociación vecinal La Rubia
Marina Jiménez – Profesora de rehabilitación urbana (UVA) y moderadora

Fecha: 24 de abril

Hora: 19:00 h

Lugar: Salón de Actos de la Escuela de Arquitectura

ORGANIZA

COLABORAN:



Conclusion

1. A step forward towards a better understanding of how SEPES-MoD partnership can expand its capacity

to better act in the field of affordable housing in connection
with *previous situations*

Challenging intertwine between institutional capacity and public interests materialised through the guidelines of spatial planning tools

2. Lack of effectiveness in the institutional capacity to achieve the redevelopment of La Rubia barracks

The introduction of the SEPES-MoD partnership has

blocked the previous procedure

BUT

opened new paths towards reaching a more appropriate
public interest

Conclusion

3. The institutional capacity demands that the *public sector assumes the role of supervisor*

→ A significant degree of *freedom for action*, but this action *needs effectiveness*

→ Having the *capacities is not* equivalent to executing them or making use of them

→ The Spanish government should be *capable of creating* efficient and effective *public policies* to address the problem in question

4. *Absence of proactive planning* in the SEPES-MoD partnership

→ *Opaque and non-participatory processes* that have apparently obscured the public interest

5. Urgency to *enhance institutional capacity*

- More *flexible regulatory* frameworks
- Establish *inter-administrative collaboration* mechanisms
- New tools ensuring *transparency* and *citizen participation*

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Thank you!
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