Conflicts of Border Territories in Terms of Territorial Planning: The Interplay between Extremadura and Andalusia

Ainhoa Maruri Arana[1*)], Maria Teresa Perez Cano[2)]

[1*)] Department of Urbanism and Territorial Planning, Technical Superior School of Architecture, University of Seville, Reina Mercedes Avenue, nº2, 41012 Seville, Spain, amaruri@us.es; 0000-0003-3183-1475
[2)] Department of Urbanism and Territorial Planning, Technical Superior School of Architecture, University of Seville, Reina Mercedes Avenue, nº2, 41012 Seville, Spain, tpcano@us.es; 0000-0002-4470-0872

https://doi.org/10.29227/IM-2025-02-02-119

Submission date: *2025-04-04* | Review date: *2025-05-06*

Abstract

In Spain, one of the origins of territorial imbalances stems from the historical weakness of territorial planning legislation compared to purely urban planning, highlighting the shortcomings of a model that has not enjoyed an adequate comprehensive territorial approach, either in practice or in regulations. Territorial and urban planning powers are ceded to the 17 Spanish regions, but they are influenced by sectoral elements, which are the exclusive jurisdiction of the state if they affect more than one Autonomous Community, as is the case of the maritime-terrestrial public domain, the hydraulic public domain, or the planning of major infrastructure. This further complicates the issue of territorial planning, compounded by the fact that the consolidation of its legislative framework was fraught with numerous difficulties, requiring almost two decades, and, as previously mentioned, was not achieved equally across the regions. Currently, the approach to drafting legislation does not adapt to new demands, socioeconomic changes, or national or European proposals. It would be necessary for legislative proposals regarding territorial and urban planning to keep pace with social evolution, streamlining approval and management processes and providing real solutions to the many problems they entail. The fact that each Autonomous Community has different legislations, with different names and planning instruments, makes it difficult to achieve complete territorial cohesion and balanced development in Spain as a whole, since challenges that require this scale to achieve a comprehensive view: environmental, social, and cultural aspects, are not addressed. Territories should be resilient to natural or health disasters, while also being safe, accessible, and energy-efficient. To achieve this, planning instruments must guarantee these minimum standards. Specifically, the areas most sensitive to this situation are those located on regional borders, as is the case between Andalusia and Extremadura, which will be discussed. The research will reveal that the territory and its structural elements do not understand administrative boundaries, but are continuous. Ultimately, on both sides of the dividing line, there are two ways of managing and protecting these areas, which creates a conflict where they meet as internal borders. Therefore, the research is framed within a differentiated territorial-administrative context, both regional and provincial, which leads to unequal efforts when it comes to developing territorial and heritage protection policies, among others. The subject of this paper will be to understand the legislative framework regarding the Land Law, the Territorial Planning Law—and their regional and subregional plans—in order to analyze the existing discrepancies between the legislative framework of the two regions, Extremadura and Andalusia, and to identify their vulnerabilities in the border area in order to address the situation through some improvement proposals.

Keywords: *Territorial Planning, Extremadura, Andalusia, Law*

1. Introduction

One of the origins of the territorial imbalances in Spain is due to the historical weakness of legislation on spatial planning as opposed to purely urban planning, making clear the shortcomings of a model that has not enjoyed an adequate comprehensive territorial approach, either in practice or in regulations [1]. The competences for territorial and urban planning and cultural heritage issues are ceded to the 17 Spanish regions, unless they are of a sectoral nature, which are the exclusive competence of the state if they affect more than one Autonomous Community, as is the case with issues such as the public maritime land domain, the public hydraulic domain or the planning of large infrastructures [2]. This further complicates the issue of spatial planning, in addition to the fact that the consolidation of its legislative framework had numerous difficulties, which took almost two decades, and, as has been mentioned on previous occasions, did not take place equally in the regions. The fact that there is different legislation in each Autonomous Community, with different names and planning instruments, prevents the achievement of complete territorial cohesion and a balanced development of the Spanish area as a whole, since it does not address challenges that require this scale in order to have a complete vision: environmental, social and cultural aspects. Precisely, the places most sensitive to this situation are those located on the borders, since the territory and its structuring elements do not understand administrative boundaries, but are continuous. However, on both sides of the dividing line there are two ways of managing and protecting these areas. In other words, it can generally be concluded that regional delimitations do not respond to historical, landscape or heritage criteria, which means that there is a conflict in their meeting at the border.

A further problem is that the way in which legislation is drawn up is not adapted to the demands of the new generations, to socio-economic changes or to national or European proposals. With all this, it would be necessary for the new legislative proposals on territorial and urban planning and heritage to keep pace with social evolution, speeding up the approval and management processes and providing real solutions to the many problems that they entail [3]. Furthermore, territories should be resilient in the face of

natural disasters - for example, the Barranco del Pollo flood in some municipalities in Valencia - or health catastrophes - for example, the Covid crisis - while at the same time being safe, accessible and energetically viable [4]. To this end, it is the instruments discussed below that must guarantee these minimums.

Therefore, to expose the problems in territorial planning in Spain, two border Autonomous Communities of the country have been chosen: Extremadura and Andalusia. As seen in Fig. 1, these territories are located on the south-west of Spain, in the frontier with Portugal. The administrative context, both regional and provincial, is differentiated, which leads to unequal work when it comes to the development of territorial and heritage protection policies, among others. Therefore, it is necessary to know the legislative framework in terms of the Land Law, the Spatial Planning Law -and its regional and sub-regional plans- and the Heritage Law in order to know the existing discordances between the legislative framework of the two regions, Extremadura and Andalusia, and to identify their vulnerabilities in order to face the situation.

Fig. 1. Map of the territorial context of the Autonomous Communities that are going to be analysed. Source: own elaboration based on the data of the Geographical Institute of Spain.

2. LISTA and LOTUS laws. Guidelines

The Land Law is a law that regulates, for the entire state territory, the basic conditions that guarantee equality in the exercise of rights and in the fulfilment of constitutional duties, related to land and a sustainable, competitive and efficient development of the urban environment [5], becoming the cornerstone of urban planning law. In the case of town planning legislation, there is advanced and complete legislation, beginning in 1956 with the Law of 12 May 1956 on the Territorial and Urban Planning Regime, and continuing with Royal Decree 1346/1976, of 9 April, approving the revised text of the Law on the Territorial and Urban Planning Regime, which became the Consolidated Text of 26 June 1992, making it unnecessary, at first, for the regions to have their own town planning regulations. This national legislation was a complicated situation as a large number of precepts were declared null and void and unconstitutional. Therefore, from this moment on, it was indicated that the regions were responsible for approving urban planning legislation -whose competences had been assumed in the respective Statutes of Autonomy-, without significantly affecting those related to territorial planning [2], a matter in which, for example, Extremadura was not very developed. All this changed the situation of the urban planning tradition, which is currently based on the 17 regional legislations and on a basic state legislation: Texto Refundido de la Ley de Suelo y Rehabilitación Urbana, approved by Royal Legislative Decree 7/2015, of 30 October [5]. It includes the conditions for the regulation of planning instruments by the regions, such as the basic conditions of equality (art. 1), the guarantee of transparency and public participation during the drafting of plans (art. 4), the weighing of the effects on the environment and the economy, guaranteeing their evaluation and monitoring as well as coordination with state legislation (art. 22) or the obligation to guarantee sustainable territorial and urban development (art. 3). It also includes the need for a balanced and strategic vision of towns and cities in relation to their territory [2].

This law also proposes legal changes in spatial and urban planning that must be assumed by the Autonomous Communities, which must make structural reforms in their original approaches, mainly in three areas [4]: regulation by the new state law of a new land regime scheme that simplifies the land classification scheme, integration of territorial and urban planning in a single legal body, and generalisation of post-activity control. With all of the above, the law seeks a trend towards the elimination of previously existing and not always necessary- administrative obstacles and a greater simplicity of the regulations in order to achieve greater transparency [4].

In Andalusia, after its Statute of Autonomy, Organic Law 2/2007, of 19 March, on the reform of the Statute of Autonomy for Andalusia, which includes in its article 56 the exclusive competences in urban and regional planning. After the assumption of these competences, Andalusia achieved in the first years important achievements in urban development, mainly on an urban scale. Therefore, at this early stage, the territorial scale becomes the pending subject of Andalusian planning and forces municipalities to look beyond the municipal limits [6].

Legislation on territorial matters began in Andalusia with the 1994 Law on Territorial Planning in Andalusia –in spanish *Ley de*

Ordenación del Territorio Andaluz, LOTA–, which was followed, years later, by the 2002 Law on Urban Planning in Andalusia –in spanish, *Ley de Ordenación Urbanística de Andalucía*, LOUA–. This last law underwent 16 modifications, and after almost 20 years of being in force, it was necessary to revise it [3]. For this reason, the new Law for the Promotion of Territorial Sustainability in Andalusia – *Ley de Impulso para la Sostenibilidad del Territorio de Andalucía*, LISTA– was approved, which does not address the joint planning of the urban and territorial scale, producing a separation between the two [6], but it does regulate territorial and urban planning in a single text, repealing the previous LOUA and LOTA, as requested by the state law TRLSRU. The LISTA wants the whole scheme of planning, management and intervention in territorial development to be continuous, starting with spatial planning and ending with building or land use. In other words, the competences of the municipalities in urban planning matters must be developed under the umbrella of territorial planning [4].

In the other case that concerns us, through the Statute of Autonomy of Extremadura, 'spatial planning, urban planning and housing' [7] are assumed as exclusive competences. However, it was the region that took the longest to take steps towards the development of a legislative framework along these lines, since it was not until 2002 that Law 15/2001, of 14 December, on Territorial and Spatial Planning in Extremadura –in spanish *Ley del Suelo y Ordenación Territorial de Extremadura* (LOTEX), came into force [8]. However, in response to the context created by the 1992 Revised Text, Law 15/2001, of 14 December 2001, on Sustainable Land and Territorial Planning in Extremadura –in spanish, *Ordenación Territorial y Urbanística Sostenible de Extremadura* (LOTUS)–, was approved. This established the spatial planning system for Extremadura. However, currently, what is in force is Law 11/2018, of 21 December, on Sustainable Territorial and Urban Planning in Extremadura (LOTUS), which also unifies the legislation on territorial and urban planning in the same law, as requested by Royal Decree 7/2015, making Extremadura a reference when it comes to incorporating precise strategies to achieve sustainability in an effective manner.

Both laws, both the LISTA and the LOTUS, seek to respond to the Sustainable Development Goal 11 of the 2030 Agenda, which seeks to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable [9]. Previously, and after all the international baggage, some Autonomous Communities had already included sustainability as one of the bases for territorial and urban planning, such as Law 7/2002, of 17 December, on Urban Planning in Andalusia (LOUA), which proposes the achievement of a sustainable and cohesive development of cities and territory in social, cultural, economic and environmental terms, with the fundamental objective of maintaining and improving quality of life conditions.

Later, with the Land Law 8/2007 of 28 May, which states that land, in addition to being an economic resource, is also a natural, scarce and non-renewable resource, integrates the concept of sustainability in territorial and urban development. After this legislative shift, the Royal Legislative Decree of 7/2015, of 30 October, which approves the revised text of the Law on Land and Urban Rehabilitation [8], is currently in force. However, as previously mentioned, it is the regions that have competences in the field of spatial and urban planning, i.e. they are the ones that have to incorporate sustainability into their territorial tools, and this is what the Communities that are being worked on in this case are doing.

3. Regional and Sub-Regional Spatial Planning

The tools that the previous laws have to organize the territory are the plans. Reviewing the above, in the second article of the Land Law of May 12, 1956, certain planning figures are approved, such as: the National, Provincial and Municipal Plan. That is to say, there was a will to propose a legislative framework on a national scale, but after the 1978 Constitution, all these competences were decentralized. Also, article 6.2 of the 56 law states that regional plans may also be formulated for several municipalities of the same or different provinces, which doesn't occur. Furthermore, the integration of the levels of territorial and urban planning and development in one proposed by Royal Legislative Decree 7/2015 is not new, since the previous laws of 1976 and the Consolidated Text of the Land Law of 1992 already articulated in a unitary manner the planning system starting from the National Plan, downscaling to the Coordination Master Plans, which should have been the basis of the general or structural urban planning, the General Urban Planning Plan [4]. This scheme has been assumed by some regional legislations, but the problem arises because the transfer to the Autonomous Communities of urban and territorial competences produced diverse results, due to the fact that these matters are extremely complex and the coexistence of State and Autonomous Community competences makes it confusing.

We find ourselves in one of the most decentralized schemes that exist in the European Union, in which it is not possible for there to be a State Spatial Plan [1], if the territories don't come together. This poses a problem in objectives such as territorial rebalancing from a social, economic, environmental or patrimonial point of view, which would have to be solved from the regional level with the disadvantages that this entails. In addition, sometimes the different models of management, operation and provision of public services are not adapted to the new territorial realities in aspects such as socioeconomic progress, the distribution of the population and its activities, or the availability of the resources, activities and services required. This leads to necessary modifications in the ways of organizing and administering the territories, which could favor the optimization of the institutional performance of the State of Autonomies [10].

For its part, the Decalogue for the good practice of spatial planning in Spain states that spatial planning must unify, homogenize and develop in a precise manner the set of actions that, when coherently executed, are the means to achieve the proposed end of spatial planning [11]. However, in Spain, there is no homogeneity or unification either in legislation or in planning, since each Autonomous Community draws up its plan according to its own criteria and needs, but even within the regions, the subregional plans, for example, are not related to the regional plan, because they have been previously approved, as is the case in Andalusia, or because the regional plan does not exist, as is the case in Extremadura.

The holistic perspective of territorial problems and their solution through the plan is complicated in administrations trapped in watertight compartments and with sectorial perspectives of the territory. Collaboration and coordination between administrations is essential for the proper functioning of the whole; both from the vertical perspective (between the different governmental levels) and horizontal (between the various sectoral policies and between these and territorial planning), with the aim of promoting solidarity and spatial equity [10].

In the case at hand, the examples of regional and subregional planning in the Autonomous Communities of Andalusia and Extremadura will be analyzed to see if they have any points in common that would favor cross-border cooperation between the two, especially to propose solutions for border territory conflicts. The definitions of the different hierarchies of regional planning are set out below in generic terms, according to [1]:

- Guidelines and Plans at regional/autonomic level: they represent real Strategies that contain binding resolutions for the other planning instruments, although they are also simply suggestions.

- Subregional Guidelines and Plans; they have many of the attributes of the previous Guidelines and Plans, however, their territorial scope is smaller and is generally defined by their physical and functional uniformity, or by a prior delimitation of an

administrative nature.

- Territorial Plans, Projects, Programs and Regional Interest Zones, all with a strong sectoral focus: they are functional entities that organize and incorporate actions for certain specific sectors. They can refer to the entire regional region, to the local level and even to more specific areas.

In addition to this, regional legislation on land use planning may incorporate other planning figures, such as the Plans of Incidence on the Spatial Planning of Andalusia –in spanish, *Planes de Incidencia en la Ordenación Territorial* (PIOT)–, as regulated in the repealed LOTA and in the current LISTA, in its article 48:

"Plans with an Impact on Spatial Planning are considered to be those sectorial planning instruments and sectorial strategies of the Regional Government of Andalusia which, by reason of their content and scope, and in accordance with the specific applicable legislation, have a direct impact on the relationships and activities that take place in the territory and, therefore, their preparation and processing must be carried out in accordance with the provisions of this law."

In addition, this law defines in its Article 39 the object and purpose of the Spatial Planning Plan, which must serve to contribute to the unity and integration of the Autonomous Community and a balanced development, as well as to the specific objectives of the internal and external territorial articulation of the Autonomous Community and the geographical location of activities and land uses, in accordance with the socioeconomic growth, the available capacities in the territory and the safeguarding of nature and of the historical and cultural heritage. Article 43, for its part, sets forth the objectives of the Subregional Scope Plans, which must promote in their environment the correct, logical and balanced use of the territory and its natural resources; and establish the territorial framework for the creation, evolution and coordination of the policies, plans, programs and projects of the Public Administrations and public agencies, in addition to the implementation of the activities of individuals with an impact on the territory. In addition, it includes that the scope of the plans must include the set of municipalities, complete and contiguous, which due to their physical, functional and socioeconomic properties, constitute a consistent area of territorial organization, as the LISTA mentions in its 43rd Article. This is interesting, since it proposes coordination between municipalities, which could be a solution, at an interregional scale.

In this sense, in general, in Andalusia to date only one Spatial Planning Plan *–Plan de Ordenación del Territorio de Andalucía*, POTA– (Fig.2) has been approved, published in the Official Gazette of the Junta de Andalucía on December 29, 2006, which responded to the Spatial Planning Law of 1994, of January 11. In the plan, the spatial relations that reinforce the unitary understanding of the territory are strengthened, contributing to the territorial cohesion of Andalusia. An interesting element is that the POTA proposes two ranges of zoning: four large Territorial Domains –Sierra Morena-Pedroches, Guadalquivir Valley, Sierra and Betic Valleys and Coastal– and 32 territorial units. The first can be considered as subregional areas based on the physical environment and historical processes of great interest. The latter, however, are units whose delimitations are based, for the most part, solely on the economic functionality caused by urban centrality [12]. This effort is interesting, since it allows receiving information on the territory and serves as a reference to characterize structuring elements and main activities of important areas.

The POTA also points out the importance of involving neighboring regions and Autonomous Communities in the planning and management processes –development, monitoring and evaluation– that have an impact on them, including in their corresponding procedures consultations and, if appropriate, the request for a report on the considerations and possible incidents that have occurred. In all circumstances, appropriate procedures should be established for the necessary cooperation in matters of supra-regional strategic interest [13]. However, it is not carried out in an effective manner, as sought here.

Specifically, in the specifications required for the Sierra Morena-Pedroches Territorial Domain, it is indicated that this will be key in the collaboration programs that the Regional Government of Andalusia implements with the Autonomous Communities of Extremadura and Castilla-La Mancha, based on the analysis of the challenges and possibilities of Andalusia's neighboring territories in shared territorial, economic and environmental terms, as reflected in the decisions regarding external integration [13].

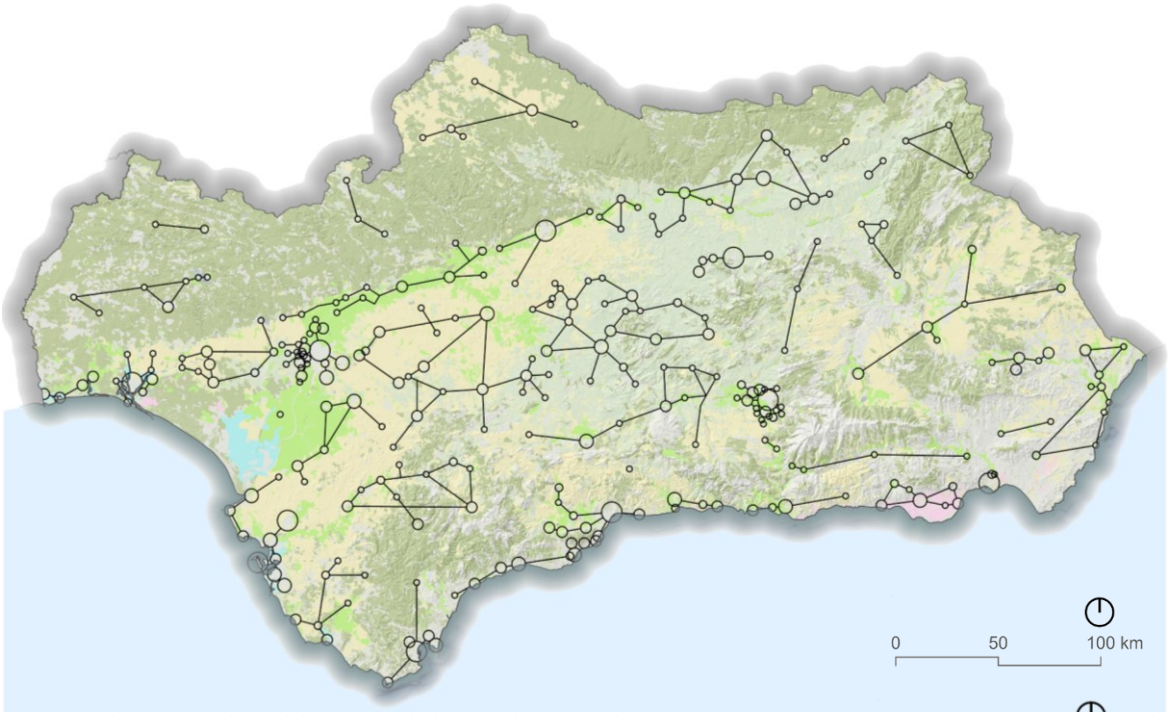

Fig. 2. Network of cities in the Andalusian Spatial Planning Plan of Andalusia *–Plan de Ordenación del Territorio de Andalucía* –over the topographical data. Map of the Spatial Planning Plan of Andalusia *–Plan de Ordenación del Territorio de Andalucía*, POTA. Source: own elaboration based on the data from Spatial Reference Data of Andalusia and the website of the Andalusian regional government [15].

At this point, it is important to underline that the Andalusian Regional Government is doing a revision to that territorial plan in order to actualize it and adapt it to the new challenges the territory is facing. This new document is called Bases for reflection - Review of the Andalusian Territorial Planning Plan (*Bases para una reflexión - Revisión del Plan de Ordenación del Territorio de Andalucía*) [14], and is seeking to involve the society in the analysis and diagnosis of the Territorial Plan andalusians want for the future.

In the case of Extremadura, since its constitution as an autonomous region, it has had an outstanding evolution, since in the early years no great steps were taken towards territorial planning, but since the beginning of the new century, an active policy has been pursued in this area, incorporating some novel measures within a legislative framework of reference [8].

The second Article of the Law 15/2001, of December 14, 2001, on Territorial and Spatial Planning of Extremadura, summarizes that spatial planning is a public duty assigned to the Autonomous Community and other relevant Administrations. The initial Spatial Planning Law of Extremadura, the LSOTEX, in its Article number 47, established the spatial planning system based on two key instruments: the Spatial Planning Guidelines and the Territorial Plans, with the aim of ensuring rational planning and organization of the territory. In addition to the above, the article included the Projects of Regional Interest as operative instruments to make visible the execution of actions with an evident physical projection or supramunicipal function. This resulted in a context of planning tools on a territorial scale at the regional level and other smaller-scale areas in which municipalities may join together for functional, economic or social reasons to carry out joint planning, also known as subregional planning. In the legislative framework, the territorial reality of Extremadura is treated in a special way, including important aspects such as depopulation or the size of its municipalities [8].

Article 48 of this law defines the Territorial Planning Guidelines as those which define the elements of the organization and structuring of all or part of the territory of Extremadura.. Subsequently, in Article 54, it states that the Territorial Plans are understood as those whose objective is the integral or sectorial definition of the basic elements that structure a specific geographic area, developing for it the management criteria established, where appropriate, by the Spatial Planning Guidelines. In no case may the territorial scope be less than municipal..

Since the approval of this law, numerous territorial plans have been developed, but the Spatial Planning Guidelines have not yet been approved for the whole territory, which indicates that it still has a long way to go. However, the interest placed in this matter in recent years is evident, since it has come to approve new legislation Law 11/2018 or LOTUS and the Advance Document of the Guidelines.

The new law, Law 11/2018 of December 21, 2018 on Sustainable Territorial and Urban Planning of Extremadura (LOTUSEX), includes the previous protection figures of the Territorial Management Guidelines and Territorial Plans, to which are added development instruments such as the Rustic Territorial Plan and Special Territorial Management Plan and direct intervention instruments such as the Regional Interest Projects.

In this new law, in its 17th article, the Spatial Planning Guidelines are redefined as the spatial planning instrument for the whole of the autonomous community. They define the elements of the organization and structuring of the entire territory of Extremadura. For its part, Article 19 states that the Territorial Plan is the instrument of planning and land management in supramunicipal areas, developing, where appropriate, the criteria established for this purpose in the Spatial Planning Guidelines, to which they will be hierarchically subordinate.

The main problem comes because territorial planning should be correlated with plans at higher scales. In this case, and as shown in Table 1, Extremadura has approved Territorial Plans without regional planning, without the Management Guidelines and, of course, without State planning. The same occurred in Andalusia, which approved subregional plans prior to its Territorial Management Plan in 2006.

The following tables summarize the Management Plans approved to date in both Autonomous Communities, starting with Andalusia (Fig. 3) and continuing with Extremadura (Fig. 4), also showing them in cartographies.

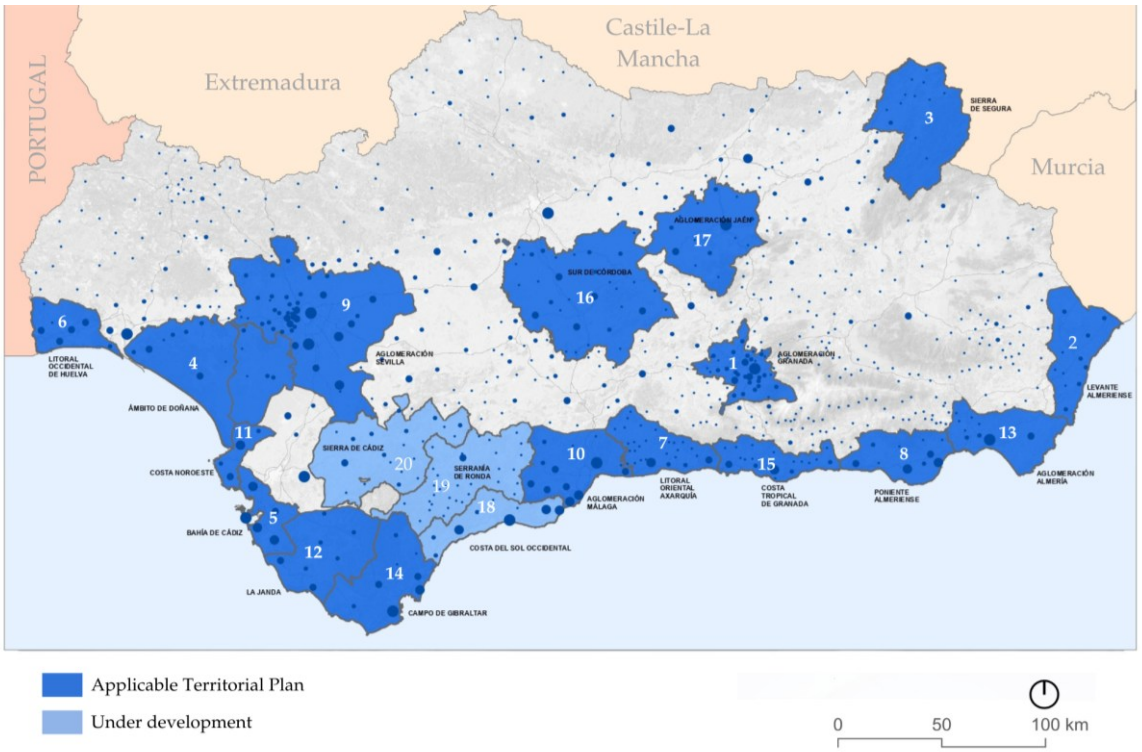

Fig. 3. Map of the Subregional Spatial Planning Plan of Andalusia. Source: own elaboration based on the map from the Ministry of Development, Territorial Articulation and Housing of Andalusia [16].

Tab. 1a. The context of the territorial planning plans in Andalusia. Source: own elaboration based on the information of the laws and plans.

Regulations		Planning tools	Area	Publishing
Law 1/1994, of January 11, 1994, of Spatial Planning of the Autonomous Community of Andalusia (*Ley de Ordenación del Territorio de la Comunidad Autónoma de Andalucía*, LOTA) –derogated– Law 7/2002, of December 17, 2002, on Urban Planning in Andalusia (*Ley 7/2002, de 17 de diciembre, de Ordenación Urbanística de Andalucía*, LOUA) –derogated– Law 7/2021, of December 1, 21, for the promotion of the sustainability of the Andalusian territory (*Ley 7/2021,de 1 de diciembre, de impulso para la sostenibilidad del territorio de Andalucía*, LISTA)		Andalusian Territorial Use Plan (*Plan de Ordenación del Territorio de Andalucía*, POTA)	Regional	BOJA nº 250 of 29/12/2006
		Regional Guidelines for the Andalusian Coast (repealed and applicable only in part).	Litoral	BOJA nº 40 of 05/18/1990
	1	Territorial Management Plan for the Granada Urban Agglomeration	Subregional	BOJA nº37 of 03/28/2000 Modification approved BOJA nº6 of 11/01/2005
	2	Territorial Management Plan of the West of the province of Almeria	Subregional	BOJA nº 119 of 10/10/2002 Modification approved Order November 7, 2007, BOJA nº 226 of 11/16/2007
	3	Territorial Management Plan for the Mountain Saw de Segura of the Province of Jaen.	Subregional	BOJA nº 188 of 30/09/2003
	4	Territorial Management Plan for the area of Doñana	Subregional	BOJA nº 42 of 03/02/2004
	5	Bay of Cadiz Spatial Planning Plan	Subregional	BOJA nº176 of 08/09/2004
	6	Territorial Management Plan for the Western Coast of Huelva	Subregional	BOJA nº 136 17/07/2006 (Modification under development Order of June 18, 2013. BOJA nº 183 of 18/09/2013)
	7	Territorial Management Plan for the Eastern Costa del Sol-Axarquia in the province of Malaga.	Subregional	BOJA nº192 of 03/10/2006
	8	Spatial Planning Plan for the East of Almeria	Subregional	BOJA nº57 of 03/24/2009
	9	Territorial Management Plan for the Seville Urban Agglomeration	Subregional	BOJA nº132 09/07/2009 (Modification in process) Order of August 6, 2021. BOJA nº155 of 12/08/2021)
	10	Spatial Development Plan for the Urban Agglomeration of Malaga	Subregional	BOJA nº 142 of 07/23/2009
	11	Territorial Management Plan for the Northwest Coast of the province of Cádiz	Subregional	BOJA nº97 of 19/05/2011
	12	Territorial Management Plan of La Janda (Cádiz)	Subregional	BOJA nº248 of 21/12/2011
	13	Territorial Management Plan of the urban agglomeration of Almeria	Subregional	BOJA nº2 of 04/01/2012
	14	Territorial Management Plan of Campo de Gibraltar	Subregional	BOJA nº 54 of 03/19/2012
	15	Spatial Planning Plan of the Tropical Coast of Granada	Subregional	BOJA nº 21 of 02/01/2012
	16	Territorial Management Plan for the South of Cordoba	Subregional	BOJA nº 57 of 03/22/2012
	17	Territorial Management Plan of the Jaén Urban Agglomeration	Subregional	BOJA nº 214 of 03/11/2014
	18	Territorial Management Plan for the Western Costa del Sol	Subregional	Under development (Formulation Decree Decree 143/2017, of August 29, BOJA No. 174 of 11/09/2017).
	19	Territorial Management Plan for the Mountain Saw of Ronda	Subregional	In preparation (Decree 180/2021, of June 15, BOJA nº 116 of 06/18/2021)
	20	Territorial Management Plan for the Mountain Saw of Cadiz	Subregional	In preparation (Decree of formulation Decree 200/2021, of July 27, BOJA No. 146 of 30/07/2021)

As can be seen in the table, the Andalusian community has a Spatial Planning Plan that applies to its entire territorial scope, and subsequently Subregional Spatial Planning Plans that depend on the previous one. Finally, in a sectorial manner, the Andalusian

Coastal Protection Plan has been developed, which is only partially applied, and the Spatial Planning Plan for the Western Costa del Sol, the Serranía de Ronda or the Sierra de Cádiz is being carried out. From this, it can be deduced that the Andalusian community focuses its attention on the subregional planning of areas around the main agglomerations of the coast, leaving aside areas that need these tools such as those in the north, in contact with other Autonomous Communities in which, on many occasions, they are mountainous areas with problems of demographic loss, although it can be seen that this trend is changing with the two Subregional plans that are being prepared.

Extremadura, however, has only carried out subregional planning -called Territorial Plans- and Projects of Interest. Similarly to other Autonomous Communities, in Extremadura it also seems that the development of its territorial policy shows certain moments of greater intensity. Thus, between 2008 and 2009, the first three Territorial Plans were approved and are still in force (see table 2):

Tab. 2. The context of the territorial planning plans in Extremadura. Source: own elaboration based on the information of the laws and plans.

Regulations		Planning tools	Area	Publishing
Law 15/2001, of December 14, 2001, on Land and Territorial Planning of Extremadura (*Ley 15/2001, de 14 de diciembre, del Suelo y Ordenación Territorial de Extremadura*, LSOTEX) –derogated–	1	Territorial Plan of La Vera	Subregional	DOE nº 230 of 27/11/2008
	2	Campo Arañuelo Territorial Plan	Subregional	DOE nº 230 of 27/11/2008
	3	Territorial Plan for the Area of Influence of the Alqueva Dam	Subregional	DOE nº 181 of 18/09/2009
	4	Mountain Saw of Gata Territorial Plan	Subregional	DOE nº96 of 22/05/2017
	5	Jerte Valley Territorial Plan	Subregional	DOE nº73 of 15/04/2019
	6	La Serena Territorial Plan	Subregional	DOE nº113 of 15/06/2021
	7	Territorial Plan for the Ambroz Valley, Lands of Granadilla and Las Hurdes	Subregional	In preparation (Decree of formulation DOE nº 146, of 22/12/2007)
	8	Villuercas-Ibores-Jara Territorial Plan	Subregional	In preparation (Decree of formulation DOE nº 120, of 24/06/2010)
	9	Tentudía-Sierra Suroeste Territorial Plan	Subregional	In preparation (Decree of formulation (DOE nº120, of 24/06/2010)
Law 11/2018, of December 21, on Sustainable Land and Urban Planning of Extremadura (*Ley 11/2018, de 21 de Diciembre, de Ordenación Territorial y Urbanística Sostenible de Extremadura*, LOTUS)	10	Territorial Plan of La Siberia	Subregional	In preparation (Decree of formulation DOE nº 120, of 24/06/2010)
	11	La Campiña Territorial Plan	Subregional	In preparation (Decree of formulation DOE nº 120, of 24/06/2010)
	12	Rivera de Fresnedosa-Valle del Alagón Territorial Plan	Subregional	In preparation (Decree of formulation DOE nº 120, of 24/06/2010)
	13	Tajo-Salor Territorial Plan	Subregional	In preparation (Decree of formulation DOE No. 25, 06/02/2019)
	14	Territorial Plan of Sierra de San Pedro	Subregional	In preparation (Decree of formulation DOE nº 60, of 27/03/2019)
	15	Territorial Plan for Merida and surrounding municipalities	Subregional	In preparation (Decree of formulation DOE nº 39, of 02/27/2023)
	16	Territorial Plan for Riberos del Tajo-Plasencia	Subregional	In preparation (Decree of formulation DOE No. 106, of 05/06/2023)

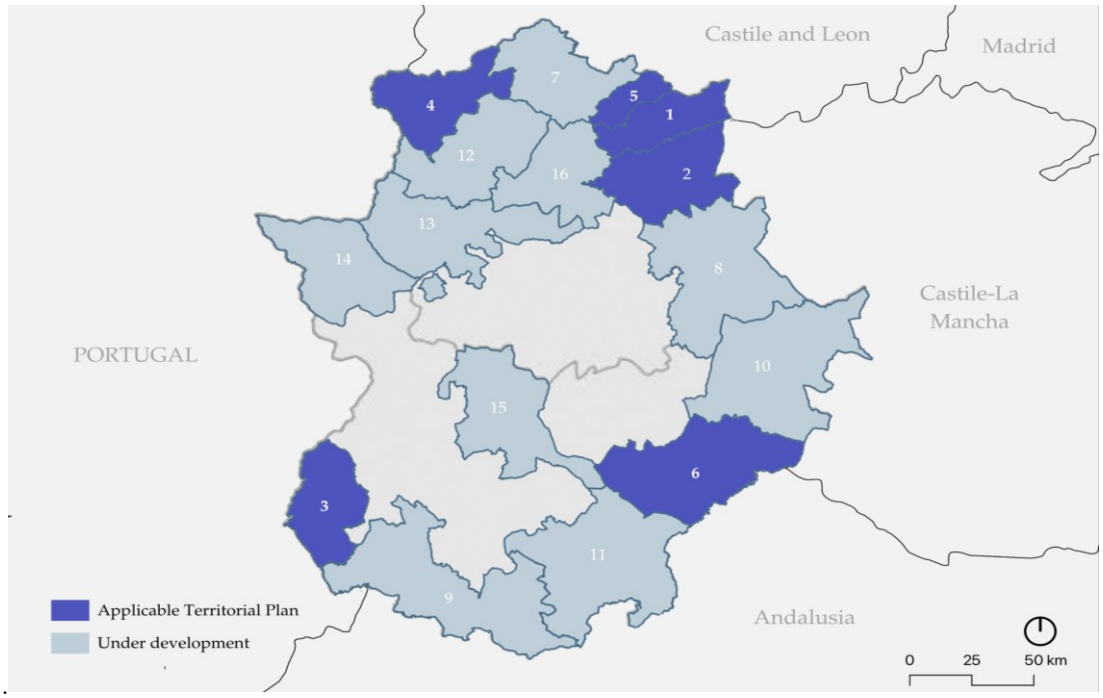

Fig. 3. Map of the Subregional Spatial Planning Plan of Extremadura. Source: own elaboration based on the Territorial Information System of Extremadura [17].

3. Conclusion

As shown, both Autonomous Communities have very different territorial planning contexts and strategies, mainly because there is not a national guideline for them, as a General Plan for Spain was never approved, and now would need the cooperation of all the regions for it. For example, in Extremadura, there is not a regional plan, but the choice of the development of subregional plans responds to the need to provide certain specific areas of the Extremadura territory with planning instruments due to their qualities, resulting in a sort of crown on the perimeter of the region, away from the large cities of Badajoz or Cáceres and filling the spaces in contact with other Autonomous Communities or Portugal. It is noteworthy that, in both cases, they put the focus of the territorial planning in important aspects of them: while in Extremadura a solution is sought for areas with smaller populations, in Andalusia subregional planning is oriented to the large cities and their metropolitan areas or to the coast, creating a total inequality with the northern areas, especially sensitive because they are in contact with other Autonomous Communities, have areas of great depopulation, and are in a mountainous physical context. It is hard to understand the little attention paid to these areas in comparison with Extremadura, which, identifying its sensitive areas, seeks to reinforce planning in those border areas. However, to date, subregional planning in the work area is non-existent.

In view of all the above, it is necessary to insist on the urgent need for the Community of Extremadura to approve its Spatial Planning Guidelines, since without them there is no point of continuing to develop Territorial Plans without a general vision of the needs of the territory. Therefore, the Advance Document that is in development, needs to become a reality.. Andalusia, for its part, should focus its attention on subregional plans in northern territories, which need special attention and planning, because of their vulnerable but crucial context. And even though this region has a general strategy, the document dates back to almost 20 years, and the plans should be kept up to date, and thats why the new document they are developing, the Bases for reflection - Review of the Andalusian Territorial Management Plan, is so necessary, in order to review some of those plans since they were approved with the previous LOUA/LOTA and LSOTEX laws, or some subregional plans were approved before the regional one was published. But not only the regional scale should be actualised, but also de subregional scale is in need of a update.

Finally, they should be resilient to changes in society and facilitate cooperation between them and the rest of the neighboring Autonomous Communities, making it possible to exceed the principle of territoriality by enabling the exercise of competences with unity of action, exceeding the territorial limits of each region.

References

1. De la Cruz Mera and M.I.Madurga Chornet, “Los Instrumentos de Ordenación del Territorio en España. Estudio comparado de la legislación y los instrumentos vigentes”, Ciudad y Territorio. Estudios territoriales, Vol. LI, No 199, (2019) pp. 175-200.
2. S. Hernández-Partal, “Los Los instrumentos de Planeamiento Urbanístico en España: estudio comparado (I)”, Ciudad y Territorio Estudios Territoriales, 52(205), (2020), pp. 613-642
3. S. M. Martín Valdivia, “El nuevo modelo de urbanismo andaluz. Reflexiones sobre la ley 7/2021 de impulso para la sostenibilidad del territorio en Andalucía”. Revista de urbanismo y edificación, (48), 2 (2022).
4. E. Martín Herrera, “Nuevas propuestas y forma de entender la ordenación del territorio y el urbanismo en Andalucía. El Proyecto de Ley de Impulso para la Sostenibilidad del Territorio de Andalucía (LISTA)”, Alzada, (121), (2021), pp.22-33
5. Royal Legislative Decree 7/2015, approving the consolidated text of the “Land and Urban Rehabilitation Law “ art1
6. J. Seguí-Pérez, “La experiencia del planeamiento municipal en Andalucía, una reflexión sobre los planes generales de ciudades en los años 80 y su evolución: un viaje entre la complejidad y la esperanza”, Ciudad y Territorio Estudios Territoriales, 55(217), (2023), pp. 919-926.
7. Organic Law 1/1983, of 25 February 1983, on the “Statute of Autonomy of Extremadura”.
8. E. Rando-Burgos, “Sostenibilidad, territorio y avance de las políticas territoriales en Extremadura”. Ciudad Y Territorio Estudios Territoriales, 54(213), (2022) pp.757–776.
9. United Nations “La Agenda 2030 y los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible: una oportunidad para América Latina y el Caribe (LC/G. 2681-P/Rev. 3)”, Santiago, (2018).
10. J. Farinós, Dasí, “La cooperación horizontal de carácter territorial entre Comunidades Autónomas. Un reto para la política de ordenación del territorio y para el modelo de organización del Estado”. In J. Farinós, J. F. Ojeda & J. M. Trillo (Eds.), España: Geografías para un Estado posmoderno, Madrid/Barcelona: AGE/Geocrítica, (2019) pp. 187-218.
11. E. Rando Burgos, “Régimen jurídico de la gestión territorial”, Valencia, Tirant lo Blanch, (2020).
12. F. Zoido Naranjo, “Ordenación del territorio en Andalucía: reflexión personal”, Cuadernos geográficos de la Universidad de Granada, 47(2), (2010), pp. 189-221.
13. Decree 206/2006, of November 28, BOJA No. 250, of December 29, 2006 “Andalusian Territorial Management Plan”
14. Decree 127/2024, of July 16, BOJA No. 140 of July 19, 2024 “Bases for reflection - review of the Andalusian Territorial Management Plan”
15. Google. (n.d.). Plan de Ordenación Territorial de Andalucía Accessed: march 28, 2025, [Online]. Available from https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/organismos/fomentoarticulaciondelterritorioyvivienda/areas/ordenacion/pota/paginas/plan-pota.html
16. Google. (n.d.). Planes subregionales. Accessed: march 31, 2025, [Online]. Available from https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/organismos/fomentoarticulaciondelterritorioyvivienda/areas/ordenacion/planes-subregionales.html
17. Google. (n.d.). Title of map. Accessed: april 3, 2025, [Online]. Available from http://sitex.gobex.es/SITEX/planeamiento#