

## **Introduction**

### **1. Goals**

This thesis attempts to critically assess territorial management and planning practice in Galicia. In order to achieve these goals, attention is focused on two main issues: the characteristics of the current administrative territorial structure and, particularly, contemporary key spatial plans and policies (Fig 0.1). The temporal scope of this research revolves around the 1950-2004 period (Fig. 0.2). The late 1950s coincide with the introduction of modern territorial planning in Galicia. On the other hand, 2004 marks a change of government in Galicia: the end of the ‘Fraga administration’ (1989-2004), characterised by a series of specific and defining planning issues.

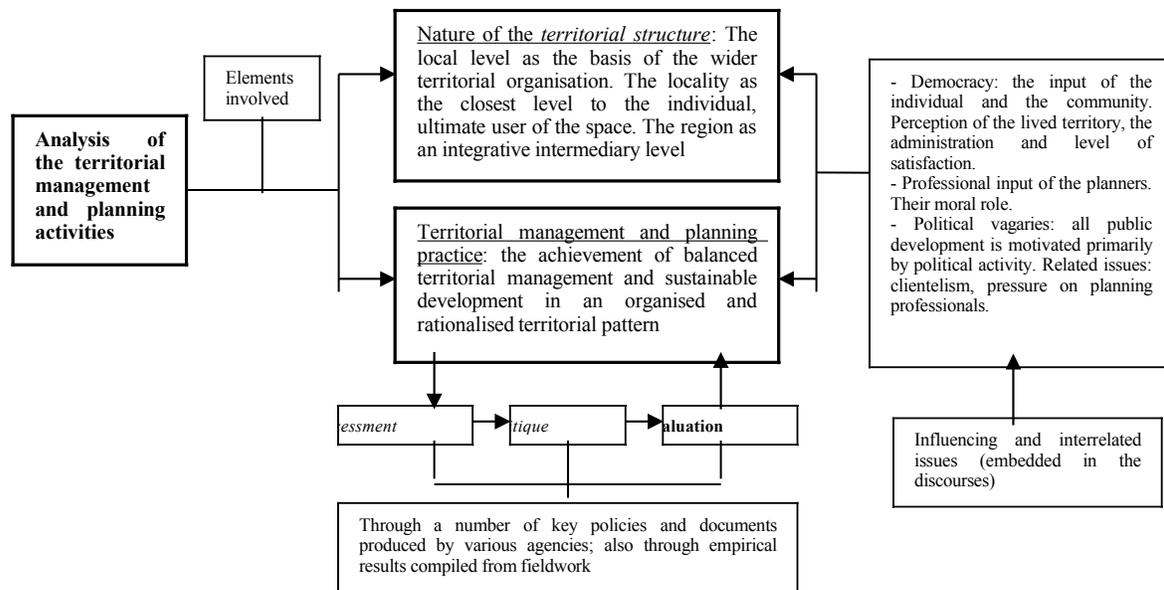
Territory sustains reality. Indeed, “the territorial structure represents the framework of the economic and social organisation in any society and it constitutes one of the basic elements of the cultural landscape” (O’Flanagan, 1996: 146). On the other hand, spatial policies and plans are both contemporary tools through which territory is effectively managed. As Reckie (1975: 1) asserts “In the general sense ... planning is forward thinking on the making of advance arrangements, usually in the light of experience, for known or anticipated needs ... People have been planning since the beginnings of civilisation”.

A number of relevant issues are included in this analysis of Galician reality, since they influence and shape territorial management and planning practice. These issues encompass the impact of the contributions of politicians and professional planners, alongside the role that individuals and local communities play in the design, delivery and implementation of territorial policies and plans. This thesis examines key regulations that directly affect the individual as the ultimate user of space. These regulations include: social inclusion, territorial accessibility and provision of services and infrastructures, environmental management, and economic development.

The channels for the coordination of [territorial] decision-taking are represented by the current political structure: political parties, unions, civic and cultural communities and associations, and the different sorts of institutional organisations ... This [panorama] raises the need for having rational alternatives so these factors can be reasoned. Here it is our [Geographers/Planners] professional task (Souto González, 1985: 340).

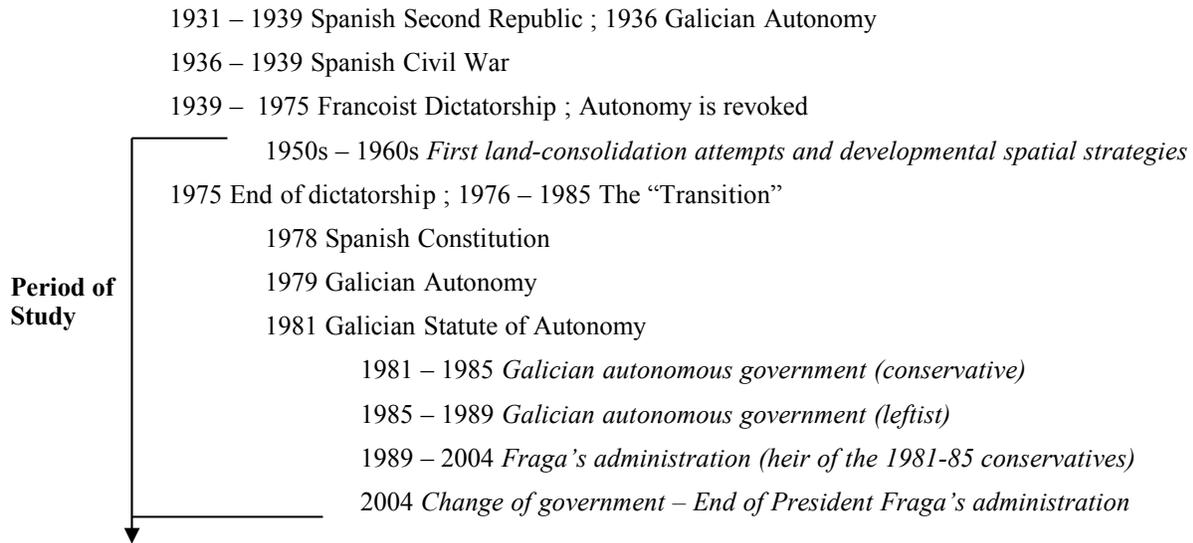
Consequently, it has been necessary to consider the main current debates on territorial management and planning in Galicia, because these debates influence political and professional activity regarding territorial management and planning. Furthermore, it has also been necessary to examine the popular perceptions of territorial management and planning practice, its administration, in addition to the mechanisms of civic involvement in the processes of design, development and implementation of the spatial policies and plans.

**Figure 0.1** Conceptual framework of the research



Source: Author (2004).

**Figure 0.2**                      **Temporal scope of the research**



Source: Author (2007).

The key issues addressed in this thesis are:

- The functions of the most relevant official territorial administrative tiers, since they constitute the spatial framework and reference for the most crucial spatial developments.
- Recent or proposed changes in such structures intended to optimise the effectiveness of administrative territorial assets.
- The main features in present administrative territorial activities, such as plans, policies, reports and their revisions, which identify possible shortcomings or problems. This involves three key facets:
  - Firstly, special focus on local levels and community participation/involvement in the decision-taking and territorial policy design processes as an expression of democracy.

- Secondly, examination of the relationships between promise and performance: comparing what was envisaged in the policies, approached in theory through the relevant plans, and what really is or was accomplished.
- Thirdly, critical assessment of the overall feasibility of such spatial plans and policies.

## **2. Structure of the thesis**

This thesis is divided into six main chapters and final conclusions, followed by glossary, bibliography and appendix. Following this introduction, chapter one focuses on the methodological aspects of the research and its main aims. A wide variety of source material is addressed, including a select bibliography, cartography, Internet references, official plans and policies, and data generated by fieldwork. Fieldwork involved primarily the completion of questionnaires and interviews in the municipality of Bueu. The case study area of Bueu is first introduced in this chapter, although fieldwork is analysed throughout the thesis and, most particularly, in chapter six (see also p. 6).

Chapter two contains the literature review. This begins with an introduction to the general theory and evolution of territorial management and planning thought in Galicia. It is completed with a discussion on the moral role of the planner, the ultimate decision-maker and the impact of the European Union in the territorial management practice.

Chapter three summarises the historical processes responsible for the formation of the Spanish state and its contemporary territorial organisation. Galicia's characteristics, distinctiveness and its current territorial administrative pattern are highlighted. These issues provide a necessary insight on the powers and faculties of the autonomous Galician administration.

Chapter four discusses the nature of the Galician territorial management practices, studying their origins, evolution and current debates. This is done in chronological order, encompassing four main stages: its origins in the 1950s ('growth poles'), the failure of the 'growth poles' (1970s), 'counter-urbanisation' (1980s), and the existing debates on a renewed 'garden city' (1990s onwards).

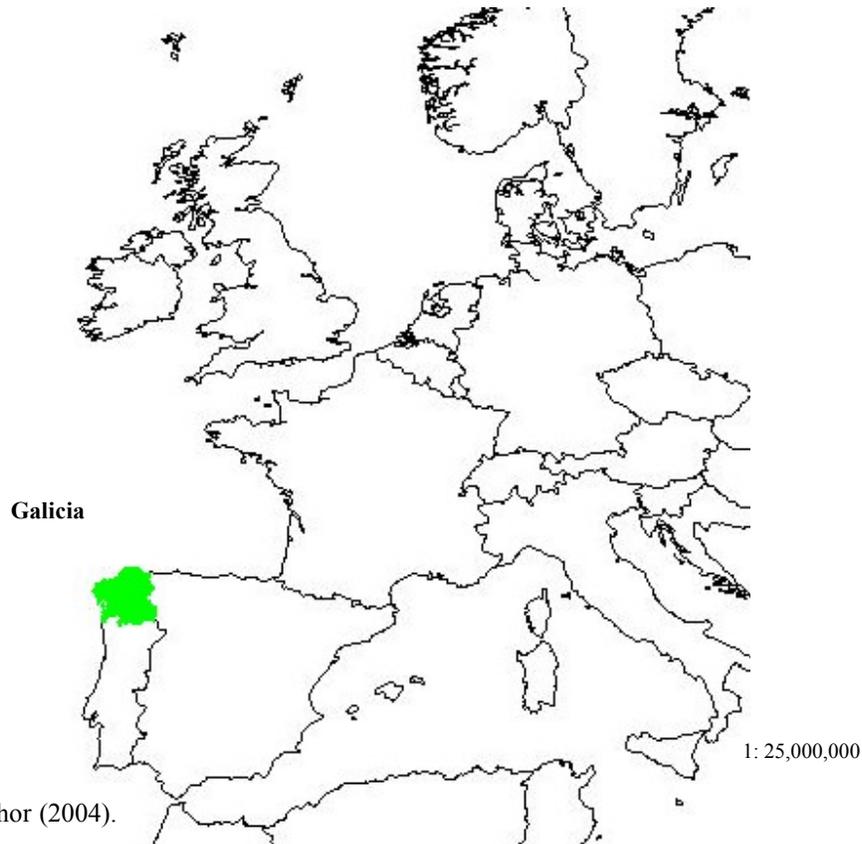
In chapter five, attention is focused on a number of key territorial policies and their implementation, such as *Lei de Adaptación da do Solo a Galicia* – LASGA (1985), *Lei do Solo* (1997, 2000), and *Plan de Desenvolvemento Comarcal* – PDC (1996). This involves an analysis of the processes of territorial management, policy-making and policy delivery. In order to achieve these goals, an assessment on the roles that the individual, community and the Galician administration play in the territory is carried out.

Chapter six deals with the case study area, Bueu, in full detail. This is the chapter where the impacts and implications of current local policies and plans are discussed,

including the *Normas Subsidiarias del Planeamiento* – NSP (1988) and the *Plan Xeral de Ordenación Municipal* – PXOM (2004). A detailed analysis of a questionnaire survey is presented in this chapter. This allows for a discussion between the promise and the performance; in brief, between the theory of the plans and policies and the views of the actual users of the territory.

Final conclusions to the thesis are to be found after chapter six. These conclusions are followed by a glossary, bibliography and appendix. The glossary features non-English terms and acronyms used throughout the thesis. The appendix includes a non-official *comarcal* (regional) map, basic statistical data, a summarised history of Galicia and a copy (in English) of the questionnaire used in Bueu.

**Figure 0.3**                      **Galicia in the European context**



Source: Author (2004).