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## **INCLUSION AND EMPOWERMENT IN PUBLIC ART AND URBAN DESIGN**

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## Address:

Pau Gargallo, 4. 08028 Barcelona. Tel + 34 628987872  
mail: aremesar@ub.edu  
<http://www.ub.es/escult/Water/index.htm>

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# INCLUSION AND EMPOWERMENT IN PUBLIC ART AND URBAN DESIGN <sup>1</sup>

Antoni Remesar, Xavi Salas, Samuel Padilla, Danae Esparza  
Cr Polis. Universitat de Barcelona  
contact: aremesar@ub.edu

## Abstract

To involve citizens in developing the processes of city making is an objective that occupies part of the agenda of political parties in the context of the necessary renewal in representative democracy. This paper aims to provide some answers to the following questions:

- Is it possible to overcome the participatory processes based exclusively on the consultation?
- Is it possible to “train” residents to take an active role in decision-making?
- How can we manage, proactively, the relationship between public actors, technicians and politicians, in a participatory process?

We analyse the process development for creating the Wall of Remembrance in the Barcelona neighbourhood of Baró de Viver, a work of public art, created and produced by its neighbours, in the context of a long participatory process focused on changing the image of the neighbourhood and the improvement of public space.

This result and this process have been possible in a given context of cooperation among neighbours, local government and the research team (CR-Polis, Art, City, Society at the University of Barcelona).

The development of a creative process of citizen participation between 2004 and 2011 made possible the direct management of decision making by the residents on the field of the design of public space in the neighbourhood. However, the material results of the process does not overshadow the great achievement of the project: the inclusion of a neighbourhood in taking informed decisions because of their empowerment in public space design and management of their remembrances.

## key words

Civic Participation, Public Space, Public Art, Civic empowerment

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#### Resumen

Involucrar a los ciudadanos en el desarrollo de los procesos de hacer ciudad es un objetivo que ocupa parte de la agenda de los partidos políticos en el contexto de la renovación necesaria de la democracia representativa. Este documento tiene como objetivo proporcionar algunas respuestas a las siguientes preguntas:

- ¿Es posible superar los procesos de participación basados exclusivamente en la consulta?
- ¿Es posible “entrenar” a los residentes para que asuman un papel activo en la toma de decisiones?
- ¿Cómo podemos gestionar de forma proactiva, la relación entre los actores públicos, técnicos y políticos, en un proceso participativo?

Se analiza el desarrollo del proceso de creación del Mural de la Memoria en el barrio barcelonés de Baró de Viver, una obra de arte público, creado y producido por sus vecinos, en el contexto de un largo proceso participativo centrado en la mejora de la imagen del barrio y la mejora del espacio público.

Este resultado y este proceso ha sido posible en un contexto de cooperación entre el gobierno local, los vecinos, y el equipo de investigación (CR-Polis, Arte, Ciudad, Sociedad de la Universidad de Barcelona).

El desarrollo de un proceso creativo de participación ciudadana entre los años 2004 y 2011 hizo posible la gestión directa de la toma de decisiones por parte de los residentes en el campo del diseño de los espacios públicos en el barrio. Sin embargo, los resultados materiales del proceso no deberían eclipsar el gran logro del proyecto: la inclusión de un barrio en la toma de decisiones informadas gracias a su empoderamiento en el diseño del espacio público y en la gestión de la memoria.

#### Palabras clave:

Participación ciudadana, espacio público, arte público, empoderamiento ciudadano

#### Resum

Involucrar els ciutadans en el desenvolupament dels processos de fer ciutat és un objectiu que ocupa part de l'agenda dels partits polítics en el context de la renovació necessària de la democràcia representativa. Aquest document té com a objectiu proporcionar algunes respostes a les següents preguntes:

- És possible superar els processos de participació basats exclusivament en la consulta?
- És possible “entrenar” als residents perquè assumeixin un paper actiu en la presa de decisions?
- Com podem gestionar de forma proactiva, la relació entre els actors públics, tècnics i polítics, en un procés participatiu?

S'analitza el desenvolupament del procés de creació del Mural de la Memòria al barri barceloní de Baró de Viver, una obra d'art públic, creat i produït pels seus veïns, en el context d'un llarg procés participatiu centrat en la millora de la imatge del barri i la millora de l'espai públic.

Aquest resultat i aquest procés ha estat possible en un context de cooperació entre el govern local, els veïns, i l'equip d'investigació (CR-Polis, Art, Ciutat, Societat de la Universitat de Barcelona).

El desenvolupament d'un procés creatiu de participació ciutadana entre els anys 2004 i 2011 va fer possible la gestió directa de la presa de decisions per part dels residents en el camp del disseny dels espais públics al barri. Però els resultats materials del procés no haurien eclipsar el gran èxit del projecte: la inclusió d'un barri en la presa de decisions informades gràcies al seu empoderament en el disseny de l'espai públic i en la gestió de la memòria.

#### Paraules clau:

Participació ciutadana, espai públic, art públic, empoderament ciutadà

## Introduction: From housing to urbanism

The right to adequate housing has been formally recognized by all regimes, democratic or corporate, which have developed social housing policies or subsidized housing to solve the serious situation created by the mass arrival of waves of immigrants to the industrialized cities that offered better employment opportunities.

Much has been said about the impact made by the principles of modern architecture - the famous functional segregation of the city- in the management of urban territories and on the attempts to solve the problem (among other measures with the work on minimum housing<sup>2</sup>).

But in many cases, the functional segregation is dwarfed by spatial segregation and it is not a consequence of the application of modern principles, but because of the dynamics of the land market: land far from the city, often rural, is cheaper and therefore more accessible.

Proposals for garden cities, linear towns, in early twentieth century, were spatially segregated from urban centres to those who sought to serve. Hence, these models include transport systems (in particular rail or tram) as key elements of their articulation.

If the theoretical models looked for the solution of spatial segregation, which was fulfilled in some of the developments for middle classes, the case analysed here clearly demonstrates that spatial segregation was one of the ideological elements in the formulation of the new neighbourhoods. This spatial segregation based on a relatively deficient built environment (poor materials, lack in the execution of the work ...), was based on several principles:

1. **Remoteness** from the centre is the first and essential.
2. **Isolation** of the area or neighbourhood because the transport network does not reach there.
3. **Deficits in urbanization**: from the lack of basic services (electricity, sewerage, health and even education), to a chronic shortage of equipment in a minimum design of public space (lack of asphalted streets, of lighting, of public spaces including qualified green space, of symbolic elements of identity reference ....).
4. **Reduction of urban functions** in the neighbourhood just to one: being a bedroom suburb<sup>3</sup>.

Following Lefebvre (1971; 1975) we can state that the practice of spatial segregation produces the outskirts, heterotopias, the spaces of difference. In any case, the difference "is incompatible with the segregation that is its caricature. Who says 'difference' says relations and therefore proximity - relations perceived and

2 Vid. GATEPAC, 1932, 1933

3 The storyline of this introduction reshapes the content of the exhibition "On the Margins" developed at the Museum in the City of Almada (Portugal) between 6th of October 2011 and 8th of January 2012. This exhibition was organized by the museum and by our research group, establishing the parallels and differences in the development of the suburbs of Baró de Viver in Barcelona and Pica Pau Amarelo in Almada. [http://www.m-almada.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=cmav2&xpgid=agenda\\_detalle&agenda\\_detalle\\_qry=BOUI=53947810&agenda\\_titulo\\_qry=BOUI=53947810](http://www.m-almada.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=cmav2&xpgid=agenda_detalle&agenda_detalle_qry=BOUI=53947810&agenda_titulo_qry=BOUI=53947810). You can also view a video about Baró de Viver for this exhibition [http://www.ub.edu/ubtv/ubtv\\_veurereg.cgi?G\\_CODI=02075&G\\_US\\_CODI=170707](http://www.ub.edu/ubtv/ubtv_veurereg.cgi?G_CODI=02075&G_US_CODI=170707)

conceived - and also insertion in a double spatiotemporal order: near and far “ (...) “The separation and segregation break the connection. They constitute a totalitarian order, whose strategic objective is to break the concrete totality, destroying the city. Segregation complicates and destroys the complexity” (1971:139)

In summary, these neighbourhoods are born outside the city, built and developed as suburbs and, as such, receiving for many years a differential treatment: abandonment. Being part of the city, these neighbourhoods, become the best cases of invisibility for the rest of the citizens. At worst, they are stigmatized and segregated, and definitely perceived as dangerous zones. (Harvey, 1990)

The restoration of democracy, in Catalonia, means that the new city councils, regardless of territorial policies of a general character, have an obligation to reverse the processes previously generated, making these neighbourhoods in what they should have always been: a specific part of the city. Some authors have labelled this process as remedial urbanism (Font, 1999) while others consider the strategic nature of these actions, as the basis of a cohesion policy deployment (Borja, 1988, 2001 and 2009; Bohigas, 1985).

In either situations the reversion of the processes has involved:

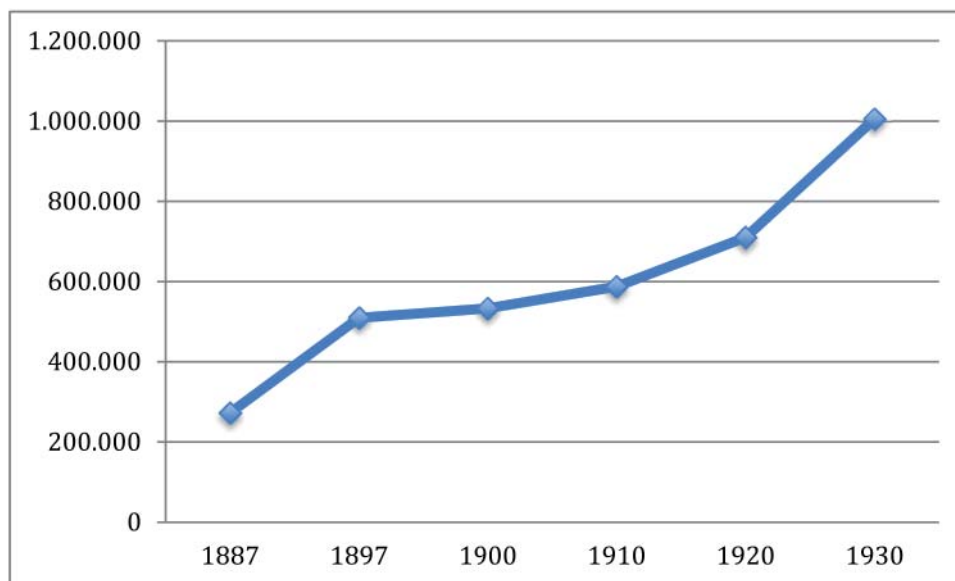
- To bring centrality to these territories, coordinating with the urban area which has expanded over the years.
- To connect the area by introducing fundamental improvements in the mobility network of the municipality.
- To bridge the urbanization gaps, if not the building, with an active policy of improving infrastructure, facilities and eventually qualified public spaces.
- To introduce the functional diversity in the neighbourhood, providing a certain centrality.

These neighbourhoods, losing little by little their invisibility, become accessible, become, in short, a neighbourhood of the city. This is the case of Baró de Viver neighbourhood in Barcelona, which we present here.

### **Baró de Viver: a short history**

As in other European cities, Barcelona's industrial growth generated job opportunities, taking place great waves of interior migration. Thus, the city doubled its population between 1888 (year of the Universal Exhibition) and 1900 and double it again in 1930, reaching one million inhabitants.

Although the Reform and Expansion Plan by Cerdà (1859) was gradually unfolded, the city was not able to provide, neither by quantity nor by price, enough housing to accommodate all this population. There thus emerges the phenomenon of infra-housing, either by overcrowding flats on rent, and either by extending shantytowns in different parts of the city. Both the municipality (with the creation of the Institute of Social Housing [Instituto de Vivienda Social] subsequently Municipal Housing Institute [Institut Municipal de l'Habitatge]) as the central government tried to



Barcelona: Evolution of the population from 1887 to 1930. To point out the enormous increase in population between 1910 and 1930

alleviate this situation. Influenced by various European experiences, especially the French law “Habitations à Bon Marché, (1894)<sup>4</sup>, in 1911 is approved the first Cheap Housing Act [Ley de casas Baratas], aimed primarily at workers and promoted by the Institute of Social Reforms [Instituto de Referomas Sociales], to be followed by the Homes Act [Ley de la Vivienda] (1921) that expanded its objectives to middle classes. These laws are the start of State intervention in urban planning, although the impact was relatively small and may not fully address or solve the problem.

No wonder that, already during the Second Republic, the GATEPAC (Architects and Technicians Group for Contemporary Architecture), raised again solutions to the problem that shortly were cut by the war in Spain.

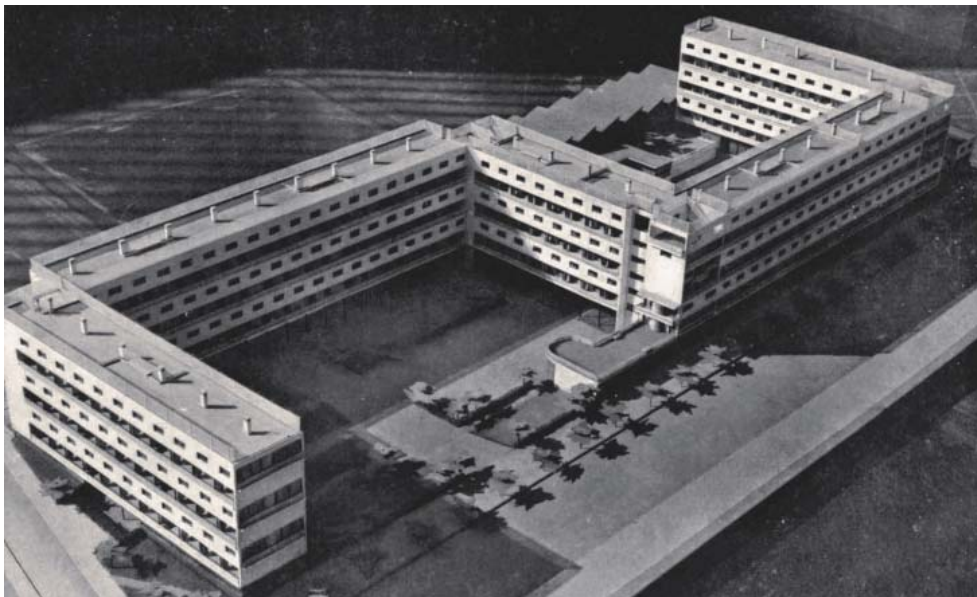
During the Franco era, the population of Barcelona became doubled in less than 30 years, and the problem persisted despite various attempts for a solution (by planning with the Regional Plan, 1953 and the General Metropolitan Plan, 1976; with the Law of Limited Income Housing, [Ley de vivienda de renta limitada] 1954, the various National Plans for Housing, [Planes Nacionales de Vivienda] the Social Emergency Act [Ley de Emergencia Social] of 1957, the plans for the Suppression of shanty,[Planes para la suppression del barraquismo] etc.).

But it is not until the restoration of democracy in Spain that municipalities strongly addresses the problem and, in the case of Barcelona, the city can host the 1992 Olympic Games, with the total eradication of shanty towns.

The neighbourhood of Baró de Viver began its history in 1929 with the construction of 381 cheap houses<sup>5</sup>, on land in the municipality of Santa Coloma, by the initiative of Barcelona Mayor Dario Romeu, Baron of Viver. The official inauguration took place in 1930. <sup>4</sup> About the influence of the French law on the development of the Spanish rules, see Castrillo, 2003 <sup>5</sup> Designed by architect Xavier Turull; he was designated by the Patronat de l’Habitatge de Barcelona, to house migrant workers families, at the juncture of the Universal Exposition of 1929.

place on 31th of March 1931, when the neighbourhood was renamed Francesc Pi i Margall (president of the First Spanish Republic), name that was retained until the fascist troops entered Barcelona, when it was renamed Baró de Viver.

The dispute over jurisdiction of the strip of land located on the right bank of the Besòs river can be traced back to 1714. As a result of the military victory of Felipe V on the Catalan troops and the surrender of the city of Barcelona on 11th of September 1714, the day after the Generalitat de Catalunya was abolished, together with the Council of Barcelona and the nobility, and their properties seized. The fact that Felipe V had jury the constitutions of the Parliament of Catalonia 1701-1702, shortly before the autochthonous authorities change sides in the War of Succession, allowed him to claim the right of conquest and close down the obstacles which until then had opposed with some success to the full implementation of current absolutist trends increasingly widespread in the field of the XVIII century European monarchies .

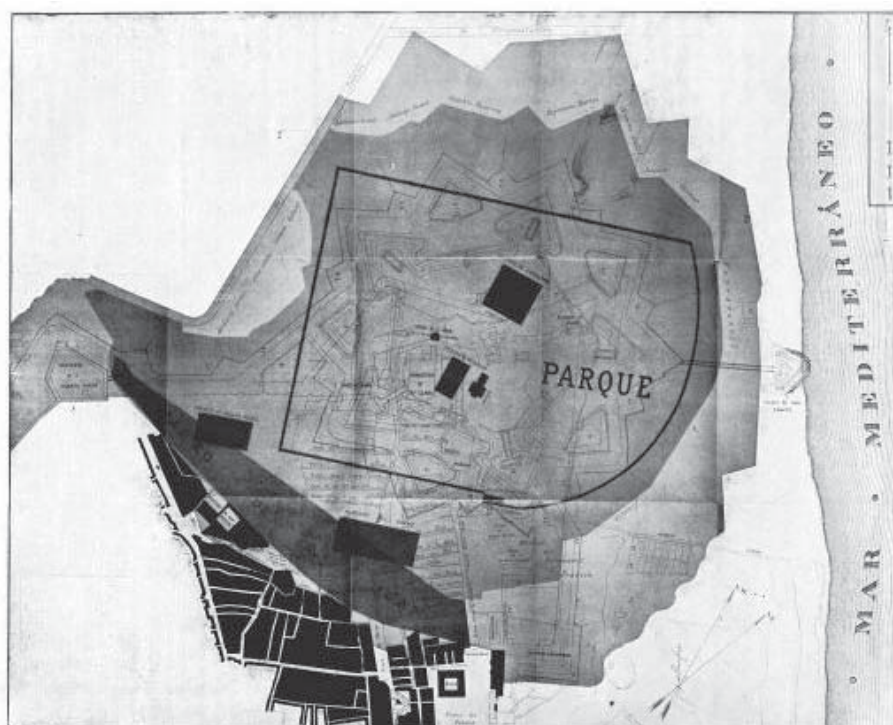


Photomontage of the “Casa Bloc” GATEPAC, 1933. One of the most interesting experiments on the implementation of minimum housing (Source Revista AC. Arquitectura Contemporánea. Barcelona: 1933, año III, num.11, p.24.)

By the New Plant decree, published in Catalonia on 16th of January 1716 and the posterior Real Célula 1718, Felipe V shaped a political system that excluded the representation of Catalan society and reinforced the preeminence (already characteristic of the functioning of institutions in the Principality along seventeenth century) of the military authorities over the civilians, assigning, systematically, the government of the “corregimientos” (substitute demarcations of “veguerías”) to army officers of the king. The provincial government was based on the dualism between Captain General and Royal Audience (sited in the Diputación House), where the warhead was both Captain General and president of the civil court. Assembled, constituted the Royal Agreement and in the practice, the military tended to reduce the Audience to the condition of a consultative body. The pronounced tensions



between the two authorities did not change the eminently exogenous and the tonality always repressive of the government apparatus in the Principality until the end of the term of absolute monarchy (final intermittently between 1808 and 1833). The New Plant will turn Barcelona into a fortified place. For this reason it was built a new citadel, whose construction supposed, as noted by Cerdà (1859), “then were demolished two thousand houses which formed eighteen streets, and part of another eleven<sup>6</sup> ... The site of the civil city was then reduced to an intramural perimeter of 6.051 meters enclosing an area of 2.064.854 square meters”. What was the loss for Barcelona?. With the same data used by Cerdà we see that, Barcelona lost 115.748 square meters, ie 5.3% of urban area. But, we can state this was not the worst loss.



*Indicación de los sucesivos emplazamientos del barrio de la Ribera, la Ciudadela y el Parque actual.*

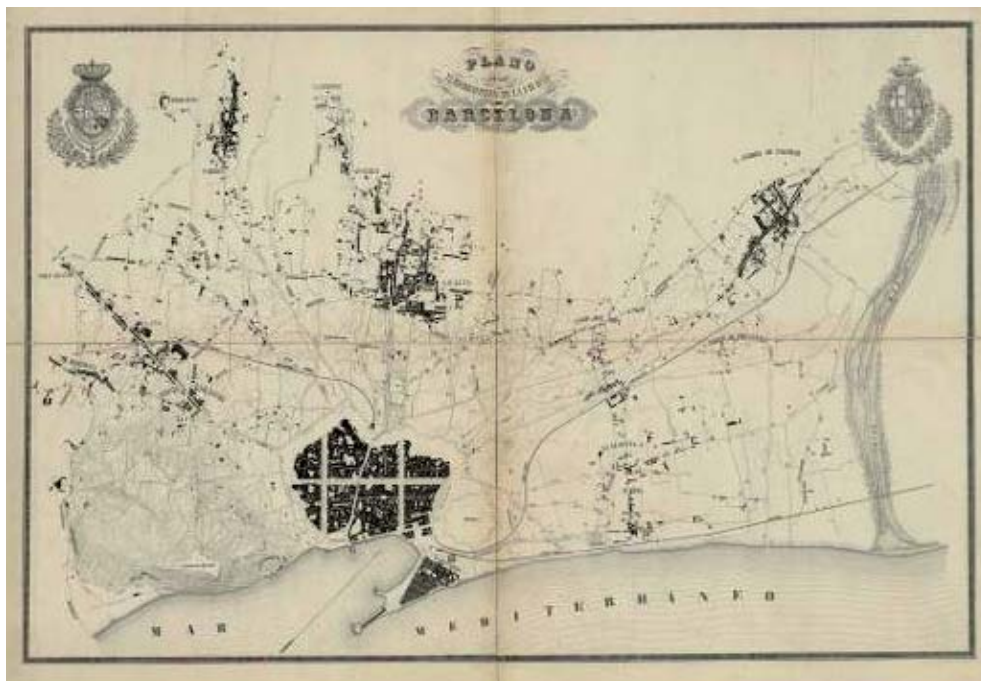
Area occupied by the Citadel on the destroyed neighborhood of La Ribera. (Source: Rubió y Tudurí, N.M. 1927)

Indeed, to turn Barcelona into a fortified city, two consequences emerge crawling for almost 250 years. First of all, the decree established a safety area around the walls of the city, where it was forbidden to build. Second, the decree fostered the municipal fragmentation of the different towns and villages in the plain of Barcelona. For years, but especially in the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, Barcelona lived drowned within its walls. It boosted the development of the neighboring cities: Gràcia, Sant Martí de Provençals, Sant Andreu, Sants. Land was available for the implementation of industry, tax costs were lower than in Barcelona, etc.

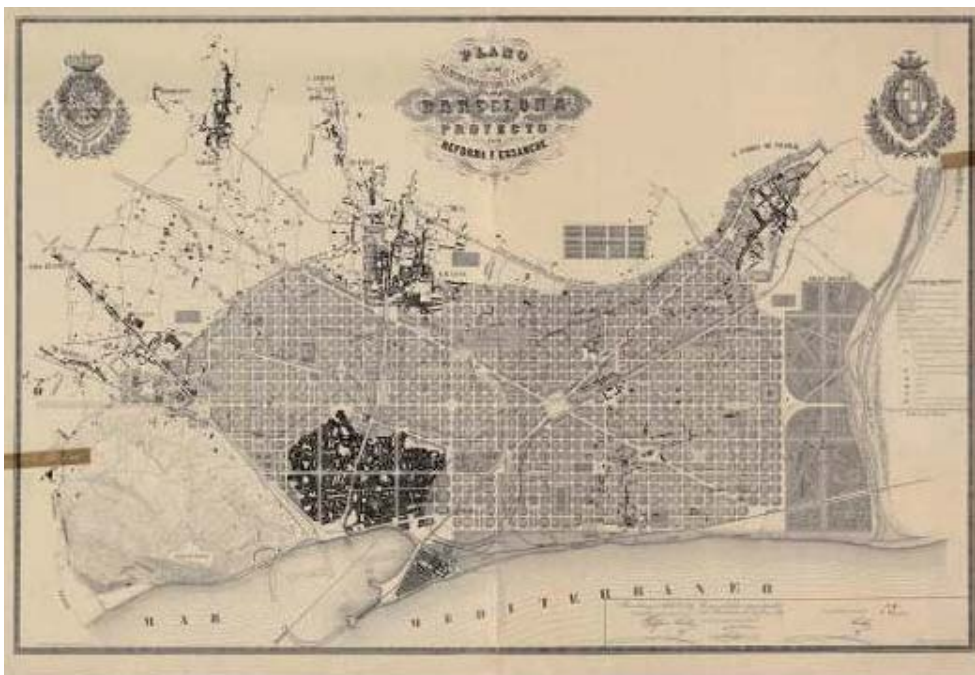
<sup>6</sup> It may seem that the data provided by Cerdà are exaggerated. Recently, Hernandez Cardona (2001) stated that “The construction [of the Citadel] launched in 1717, required the demolition of part of the Ribera neighborhood (800 houses, 3 convents, 3 chapels, 2 hospitals, 1 parish.” He also states that “This process of militarization of the city was completed by Montjuïc castle reform started in 1753”.



The remodeling of the old Born market as provincial library revealed the archaeological discovery of the well preserved ruins of the destroyed city bit in building the Citadel.



The topographic map by Cerdà (1854) explains perfectly why the Barcelona walled panoramic position could not grow due to the limitations of military authority. To note the security zone will be the subject of extension projects (Source: [Mapa digitalizado por Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya]. Barcelona: 1855. Registro RM.267959.

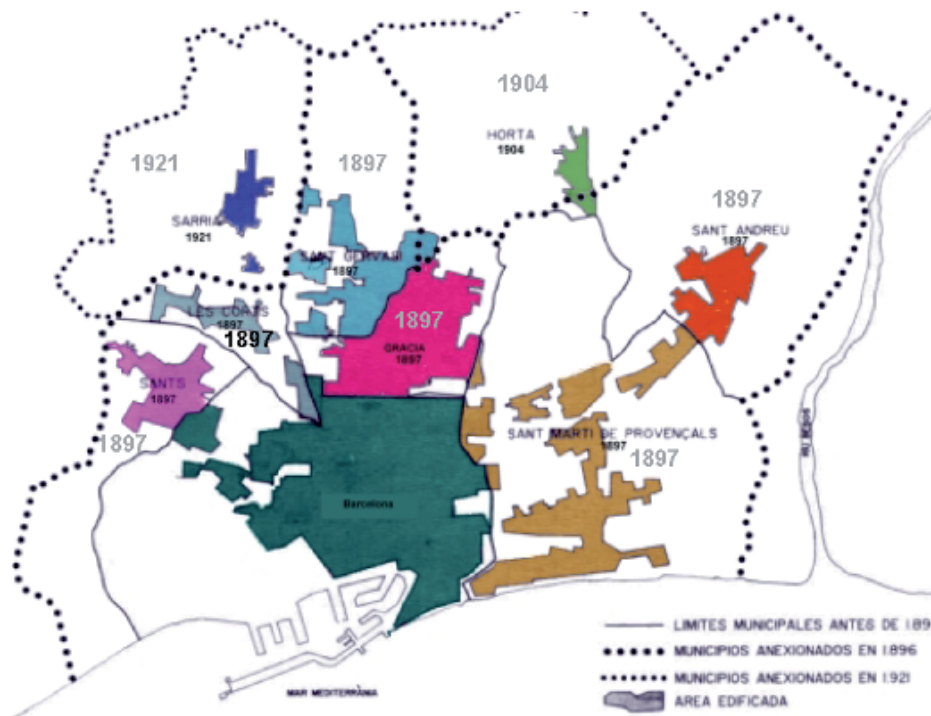


Reform and Expansion Project of Barcelona by Ildefons Cerdà (1859). It can be seen as respects the limits of the municipalities surrounding the city, with the exception of Sant Martí and Sant Andreu. (Source: [Mapa digitalizado por Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya]. Barcelona: 1859. Registro RM.84360)

When, in the mid-nineteenth century popular movements in Barcelona match of the bourgeoisie will to enhance the possibilities of the city, it raises the question of the “Eixample”. This extension supposed, first of all, the abolition of the punishment for the city to be a fortified city, leading to the demolition of the walls and it is a chance to occupy the area of military security in the plain of Barcelona. At the same time, reversing the historical anomaly of military control over the city and its development and facilitates to create a civil and constitutional governance. In the background of this process there is an idea, and a will that the city “returns” to its natural limits, between the Llobregat and Besòs rivers, between the sea and the mountains of Collserola. Cerdà’s project already includes these expectations designing the “new city” as far as the Besòs river. Subsequently, various decrees of annexation (especially the 1897) will shape the current city limits.

City boundaries with the two rivers were not solved. The border of Llobregat still occupied by the municipality of Hospitalet and the Besòs Strip, occupied by Santa Coloma and Sant Adrià. The Official State Gazette publishes, on 4th of January 1944, the Decree of 17th December 1943, providing for the segregation of “Baró de Viver” and “Bon Pastor” from the municipality of Santa Coloma. This way, Baró de Viver is officially annexed to Barcelona on 1st of January 1945.





Map showing the different annexation stages of the municipalities in the Barcelona's Plain



Aerial view of the neighborhood, c.1940. Source: Arxiu del Patronat Municipal de l'Habitatge de Barcelona





Location map with the shanties and caves in Barcelona. At the top right, the neighborhood of Baró de Viver (Source: AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA. Emplazamiento de barracas y cuevas. Barcelona: 1945. Arxiu Municipal Administratiu de Barcelona.)

Located on the outskirts of Barcelona<sup>7</sup>, away from urban centres and even from manufacturing centres, the neighbourhood is configured as a village of one-story townhouses. Public space is poor, formed by the circulation streets and a kind of square. A village placed on the outskirts of the city.<sup>8</sup>

In its fight against the shantytowns in the 1950, the Barcelona's Municipal Patronage of Housing decided to build 20 blocks in the street Clariana, with a total of 486 apartments and two commercial blocks in order to house slum dwellers from the neighbourhood of the Somorrostro<sup>9</sup>. The new buildings adopt the type of multi-storey residential block and create a new urban fabric, organized as a continuation of the network of streets in Barcelona. This pattern coexists with the village built in 1929. However, as it was common during the Franco era, new homes suffer from a deficit of urbanization and facilities that the neighbourhood will not resolve until the 1980s.

7 The municipal government of Barcelona has a long tradition of "residential centrifugation", through its Patronat de l'Habitatge. In the 1920s, building, in Santa Coloma territory, the neighbourhoods of Bon Pastor and Baró de Viver. Later, using the technical tools of Regional Plan (1953), the construction of the housing estate of La Mina in the territory of Sant Adrià del Besòs

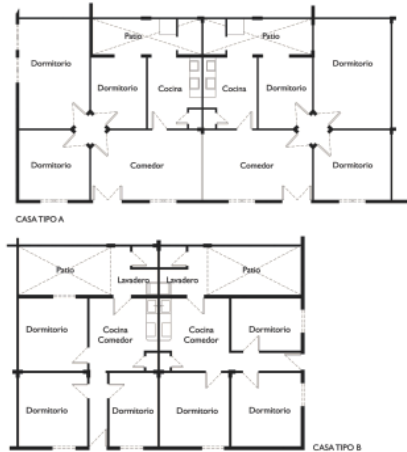
8 This river, one of the natural areas of the neighbourhood, very often overflows causing flooding. To highlight floods in 1937 and in 1943. Following the severe flooding in 1962, the river was channelled between walls of concrete (1973-1975), breaking the morphological relationship with its territory crossing industrial and residential areas which discharge their waste into the river, the Besòs was for many decades, an open air sewer, becoming considered one of the most polluted rivers in Europe and in 1999, the river undergoes a major refurbishment and re-naturalization, generating a big new public space: the Besòs River Park.

9 The Somorrostro was one of the slum neighborhoods of Barcelona. It was sited in the beach near the railroad yards and the power plant next to the Besòs River.

Much of the neighbourhood social activity takes place in the only open space that exists: the football field built in 1949 thanks to the land that the company Maquinista Terrestre y Marítima<sup>10</sup> offers to the Planning Commission of Barcelona.



Picture from a typical house built in the first phase of this neighborhood (Source: Tere Roca, local resident)



Plans of different original dwellings in Baró de Viver [authorship CR Polis]

The unfold of the Regional Plan (1953) represents the definitive isolation of the neighbourhood from the rest of the city. The neighbourhood is isolated from the urban context, bounded to the west by the river, to the north by rural land that over the years were to become road junctions, to the east by large factories like La Maquinista, the large railway yards from the corridor of the Sagrera and to the south by the industrial estate of Bon Pastor. Area with poor transportation - the first bus will not arrive until 1964 - Baró de Viver, is going to be in that place which, in the words of Josep M. Huertas, was the end of the world and it is not until 1983 that the neighbourhood remains attached to the metropolitan area by Metro.

Despite its isolation, the associational and demanding life of the neighbourhood is rich and intense. Under the 1964 Associations Act that allows the creation of neighbourhood associations to ensure better living conditions, it is founded the Neighbourhood Association, while arise several cultural and recreational associations: Sport Union Besòs-Baró de Viver bringing together several football teams, the wrestling club, chess association, pelota court club, the hockey on skates club. As usual in the Spanish context during the Franco regime, these associations will become the core of the protests and claims against the regime<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> La Maquinista Terrestre y Marítima is one of the major industrial companies in Barcelona. Founded in mid XIXth Century in the Barceloneta.

<sup>11</sup> In 1974 the district participates in the days of bus boycott because of the rising fares, the queues and the poor state of Santa Coloma road linking the district with the rest of the city.



The cheap houses neighbourhoods were away from city centre and poorly communicated, not only to this centre but the whole territory



1960 aerial photo that allows to appreciate the coexistence of the district from 1929 with new homes, 1958 (Source: Patronat Municipal de l'Habitatge de Barcelona)



1980 aerial photo showing the existence of the neighborhood from 1929, of dwellings 1958 and the foundations of the new "salon." (Source Patronat Municipal de l'Habitatge de Barcelona)

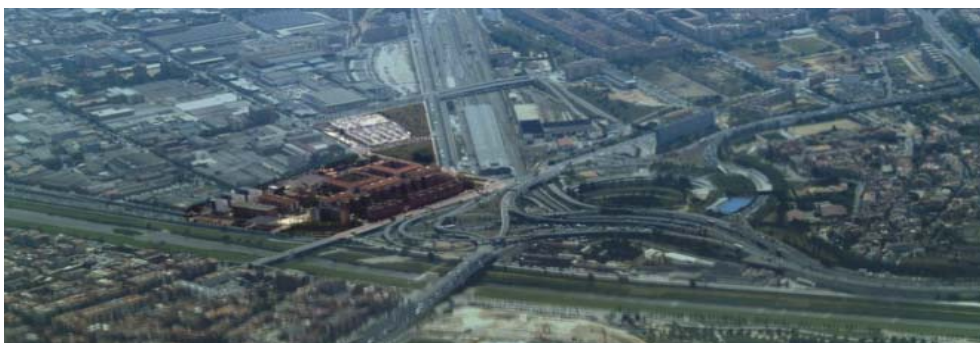




The “salon” coexisting with the last houses from 1929  
(Source: Patronat Municipal de l’Habitatge de Barcelona)

In 1983 a scandal breaks out in Barcelona. It is found that a significant portion of the housing estates built during the Franco era suffer from an illness of the concrete building structures, called aluminosis that threatens their structures and jeopardizes the life of their inhabitants. Baró de Viver is affected in the buildings constructed in 1958. The City of Barcelona, deploying the technical resources of the Metropolitan General Plan (1976), designs a PERI (Special Comprehensive Reform Plan) to be launched in 1986.

The PERI implies the complete renovation of the neighbourhood having a major impact, since it involves (1) the demolition of the old cheap houses and (2) the demolition of the blocks built in 1958. It begins the process of demolition and construction of new blocks to relocate the affected neighbours that will be implemented in 7 steps over a period of 14 years and finished in 1999. Public space of the neighbourhood was completely transformed, especially since the construction of the Hall, a huge building with interior garden authored by Emilio Donato, with the problem that the “salon” will be built on the old football field.



Aerial view of the neighborhood now. Boxed in between the river Besòs, the road junction of Trinitat and RENFE railway infrastructure in the Sagrera railroad corridor



The mighty works for 1992 Olympics, only residually affect Baró de Viver. The layout of the City belt road finally breaks down the contact with the river, but in the logic of infrastructure building in Barcelona, a large slab covers its layout through the neighbourhood. The Llosa will become a new public space equipped with sports facilities and a giant pergola generating a kind of Agora in the neighbourhood.

In 1992 were performed a series of renovations in the Hall renamed as Plaza de Baró de Viver and the Sources<sup>12</sup> square was urbanized. Despite the policy of “monumentalization of the periphery” enhanced by the City since early 1980 that involves providing neighbourhoods with symbolic elements necessary to qualify the urban environment, Baró de Viver remains one of the few neighbourhoods in Barcelona without a unique piece of public art in its territory.

The neighbourhood Association leads the residents’ claims to improve neighbourhood’s public space, which will be defined in the construction of the Plaza Pilar Miró 2007. Cultural dynamics grows and develops, and in 2004 the neighbourhood is able to design their own Gegant<sup>13</sup>, the Baronet, as the result of community work with young people.



La Llosa, legacy of the Olympic Games 1992, stands as one of the neighborhood’s public spaces.

The vindication dynamics of the neighbourhood continues, thanks to the existence of several municipal mechanisms (Community Plan, 2002; Action Plan for the District of Sant Andreu<sup>14</sup>) and as the result of the collaboration with the CR POLIS

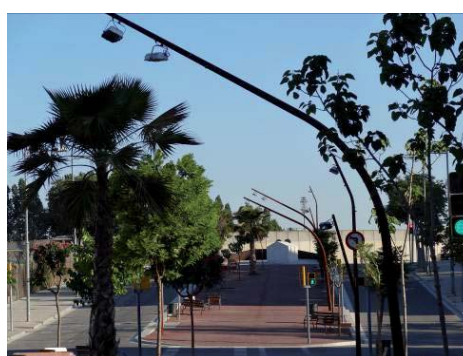
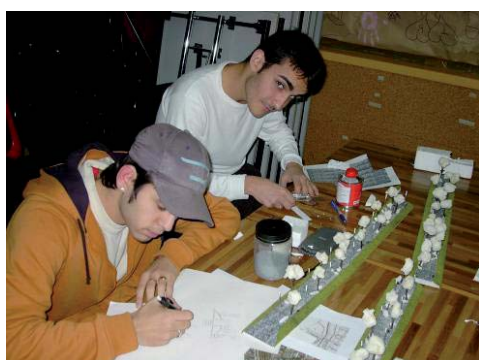
12 “The Sources Square” is a name given by neighbors because the urban design of this site is based in the installation of several iron fountains.

13 The “gegants” (giants) are part of the popular traditions of Catalonia. They consist of anthropomorphic representations of between 3 to 4 times the scale of the human body, made of wood, “papier mache” and clothing. The inside is empty, allowing carriers come within the giant and make it walk and dance.

14 Barcelona is organized in 10 districts and 72 neighborhoods. Sant Andreu is one of these districts and Baró de Viver one of the neighborhoods in the district.

from the University of Barcelona. Several participatory workshops that address the improvement of public spaces as a means of improving the image and identity of the neighbourhood were developed. The results are achieved with the construction of the Wall of Remembrance, initiated in 2010, the remodelling of the Rambla Ciutat de Asuncion, together with the Monument to Cheap Houses and the remodelling of the Plaza de Baró de Viver (unvelided February 2011).

The quality of Quality urban design and public art normalize the neighbourhood as a neighbourhood of Barcelona. Despite the achievements, the work is not complete, several projects are pending continuity: the renovation of the subway exit, including an area for skaters and urban orchards, the civic plaza and community centre<sup>15</sup>, the Urban Gallery devoted to graffiti. Now, Baró de Viver is not the end of the world and it is becoming a neighbourhood among the 72 neighbourhoods in Barcelona.



The first intervention of our research group in Baró de Viver was with a group of young people concerned about the “image” that had the neighbourhood. The development of creative workshops led, first, to the formulation of a work program on the whole neighbourhood that was subsequently extended to the Neighbourhood Association. Moreover, young people developed the idea of remodelling the street Ciutat d’Asunció as a Rambla. The central objective of the work was to provide the neighbourhood with a qualified limit space (the street is one of the urban limits of the neighbourhood) and capable of being attractive to the neighbours.

Several years later, picking up some of the ideas developed initially by the young group, the materialized Rambla (2011) including the “Monument to the Cheap Houses” (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2011)

Neighborhood basic data				
	Baró de Viver	Barcelona	Level of education	
Population	2.408.-	1.628.090	no schooling	23,3 %
Area (sqKm)	0,2	102,2	primary school	38,0 %
Density	10,457	15,926	professional education	21,2 %
Aging index	55,8	53,2	secondary education	13,4 %
Birth rate	12,5	9,1	university education	3,9 %
family income per capita	49,9	100		

<sup>15</sup> Just two months ago (April, 2012) was approved the public competition for the Centre and is now writing technical basis for a public competition to design the square.



## The wall of the Remembrance

The Wall of Remembrance comes from a participatory process, begun in 2004, focused on improving public spaces in the neighbourhood, in the context of the various regeneration processes developed at the request of residents by the City Council (PAM<sup>16</sup> 2008-2011) and the Generalitat of Catalonia (Neighbourhoods Act, 2010-2014).



Aerial views of Baró de Viver. Microsoft Corporation; Nokia. Bing maps [maps on line] Microsoft: Washington, updated 27th August 2012 [consulted on 27th September 2012] Available: <<http://www.bing.com/maps/>>

<sup>16</sup> PAM (Pla d'Acció Municipal). Municipal Action Plan that can be for the whole city and also for each one of the districts.

### The opportunity: from noise barriers to the mural of Remembrance

As noted above<sup>17</sup>, we began participatory processes in this neighbourhood in 2004. This process consists of different moments and stages, but in any case, the whole focuses on participatory development of projects for public space and public art (Salas, Xavier 2004-2012; Ricart, 2009; Remesar, A- Ricart, N 2010; Remesar, A-Pinto; A.J.- Ricart; N, 2010; Remesar, 2011; Remesar, 2012; Remesar, A; Pinto, A.J., 2012).

Year	Stage	Actors	Objectives
2004/ 2005	Starting the process	Young people from the neighbourhood /UB	To improve the image of the neighbourhood
2006	Expanding the Process	Young people from the neighbourhood seek the complicity of the Neighbours Association [Neighbours x UB]	The same objective, extended to the improvement of public spaces in the neighbourhood
2007	Generalization of the process	Presentation of results to all the neighbours, and starting negotiating with the District Administration	To extend the objectives of the process to most of the neighbours.
2009	Agreement neighbour, district, University	Fulfilment of a roadmap for implementing the projects demanded by neighbours [district x neighbours x UB]	Harnessing the opportunity cost for the implementing some projects: <i>Mural of Remembrance</i> and <i>Rambla Ciutat de Asuncion</i>
2010	Tripartite process of participation	Different groups of the neighbourhood and on many occasions [district x neighbours x UB]	Design of the <i>Mural of Remembrance</i> by neighbourhood process Design of the <i>Rambla de Asunción</i> by neighbourhood process
2011		"The Neighbourhood" [District x neighbours x UB]	Opening of the <i>Wall of Remembrance</i> Presentation of neighbourhood to the whole District: Exhibition <i>Baró de Viver talk in images</i> Opening <i>Rambla de Ciutat de Asuncion</i> and <i>Monument to the Cheap Houses</i> Opening of the refurbishment of the <i>Baró de Viver square</i>
2011	Local Elections	The ruling party lost the elections	Beginning of the Re-negotiation of ongoing projects with the new the district government
2011	<i>Nas Margens</i> Exhibition (Museum da Cidade Almada)	Direct participation of neighbours in the design of the exhibition departing from the <i>Wall of Remembrance</i> [neighbours x UB]:	To share the experience of the periphery by comparing neighbourhoods in Almada and Barcelona
2012	Fulfilment of some cases pending	The new district government pulls a public competition for the design of Civic Centre building and the Civic Plaza [neighbours, UB] (x) [District]	Neighbours participate in drafting of the tenders of competitions from the results of the previous process. BIMSA <sup>18</sup> run the development of competitions
2012	New challenges	Restart of the processes of participation concerning the management of the metro exit, [neighbours, UB] (x) [District]	Restatement of tripartite agreement and its development. Currently in progress

<sup>17</sup> We want to thank here for their collaboration in various stages of development of this process: M.Mariño, Iris Viegas, Núria Ricart, Nemo A. Remesar, Tomeu Vidal.



It is not the time to analyze the whole participatory project that can be followed through the above reference, but it is interesting to synthesize the phases of this long working process.

Baró de Viver, facing the road junction<sup>18</sup> of La Trinitat, suffered from significant noise pollution. Therefore, the neighbours demand to the District the installation of sound barriers that would reduce the level of noise. It was agreed an installation of over 150 meters long by 4 meter high noise barriers.

This facility provided an opportunity for the development of one of the initial project aims: improving the image of the neighbourhood by installing a public artwork, in this case, a work created by the neighbours.

We began a series of workshops with different groups (associations, schools, ...) whose results are shown in the Fourth Participatory Encounter in Baró de Viver. In this encounter is decided to carry out a Neighbourhood Memory Archive from the photos that neighbours can provide: A photo album of Baró de Viver from his birth to the present. For this reason we invite you to bring your photos, news clippings, writings, etc... you would want them to appear on the noise barriers (Salas, Xavier 2004-2012)

The call was a great success collecting over 4000 pictures and hundreds of documents. While we proceeded to the digitization of documents, it starts a new process: the creation of the narrative for the wall. What do you want to explain? How do you want to explain? We believe that this point is crucial to create an artistic work of this kind. The creation of a narrative might tend easily to reproduce the official narrative, whether that of the History of the city, cold and tendentiously objective, or that, hot and with hints of folklore, based on the personal memories and subjectivity. The decision was crucial and we chose to use the working method that we developed in our research: the combination of a time line with an atlas<sup>19</sup>, based on documents and photographs. This way: Finally, it was decided that it [the mural] would reflect moments of life in the neighbourhood that had special meaning for the inhabitants, with particular incidence in urban planning and everyday life, without pretension to tell a complete history. Did not want a "history of the neighbourhood" but reflect the moments and subjects that the neighbours thought they were more fundamental and recorded in popular memory as the flood of 1943, the snowfall of 1962, the construction of the giant of the neighbourhood or the fact that the athlete Albert Recuero, born in the neighbourhood, was selected for the 2004 Athens Olympics (Fabre, Jaume, 2011).

18 First it was thought to act in the sonic screens face front to the Trinity road junction, to draw the attention of drivers on the existence in that place of a residential nucleus of which most locals ignore the existence, with calls written with graffiti such as "Hello" or "We are here." But finally it was decided to focus on the face in front of the houses in the neighbourhood, to make it more visually pleasing. (Fabre, Jaume, 2011).

19 The time line should not be confused with a chronology, though chronology is in its base. It consists in arranging, temporarily the most relevant facts for a given territory. Facts of urban, social, cultural, environmental, associative dynamics type, and so on. From this unfold you can set the times that are considered most relevant to who builds the narrative. In parallel it is developed an Atlas, a set of visual or written documents that can be anchored at the points of the timeline. These documents give significance to temporal moments. If the timeline, as we conceive it, has its origin in certain interactive games, the Atlas, as we understand it, has its origins in the work by Cerdà (1859) for his studies for the Reform and Expansion Project of Barcelona.

The linear support facilitates the deployment of a temporal narrative, while, since not the whole noise barriers will not be used, the same support facilitates the continuity of the “history” in later times. In short, as pointed out by Carme Grandas: It is not simply a look back to how the area used to be over eighty years ago, but rather a stroll through the most important events that form and mark the identity of Baró de Viver. It looks back at the administrative segregation with the 1954 regional development plan and the changes with the large-scale urban projects as a result of the 1992 thoroughfares plan, to the area’s true driving force, its inhabitants, along with their festivals, associations and sports, the arrival of public transport and educational facilities, and more.

The photographs have other revealing details, showing changes in clothing, and hair styles and children’s games in the streets. They talk about the presence of women, from grandmothers running their homes and caring for extended families to working women and girls playing sport and studying. These details also talk about the times of the two dictatorships, the first illustrated with the construction of a group of dwellings called Baró de Viver, the second with an explanation of the social restraints on courting couples. There are also reproductions of official documents, showing the bombastic vocabulary and writing style of the Franco regime, obvious in the newspapers and especially in text headings and closings. Other documents reproduced are essential to understanding the post-war years: the ration books that people needed to buy food, clothes and other basic products for daily consumption. They officially disappeared during the celebration of the 1952 International Eucharistic Congress in Barcelona, though in practice they continued to be valid and were used for several more years.

The writing on the mural is not long, but rather the basic part of the work, linking the reproductions of documents and texts, becoming the leitmotif of the entire memorial. The inscriptions are short messages, a few lines of well-chosen words unravelling the history of the area, preserving it as a memory and keeping it for the future (Grandas, 2011).

Thus, a neighbourhood that had not benefited from the process of monumentalization of the periphery (Bohigas, 1985) gets its first work of public art, one of the few that, , are created from a structural civic participatory process in Barcelona.

But there is no possibility of sharing if we do not communicate. For this reason, after the inauguration, neighbours, district and research centre, we design a communication strategy for the District, organizing an exhibition with the title “Baró de Viver, talks in images.”

If Baró is not known in Barcelona, nor is it in its own district, the district of Sant Andreu. Here, to take the process of work (more than 4.000 photographs collected by neighbours) to the district Exhibit Hall was a major challenge. For nearly a month, the work done in the district was presented to all residents of Sant Andreu, with the implicit invitation to be shifted to the neighbourhood to see the wall of Remembrance in situ



As discussed, we began the working process with a group of young people concerned with the “image” of the neighbourhood.



The process resulted in young people to consider the necessary collaboration with other neighbourhood groups.



So, we started working together with young people and the Neighbourhood Association. Now the issue was the public space of the neighbourhood and its improvement, as the foundation for the makeover.



Through repeated creation workshops and forums with the rest of the neighbours, we reach a coordinated work on all public spaces of Baró Viver

The “remembrance wall” was not on the process. As we mentioned was a coincidence that led us to its development.

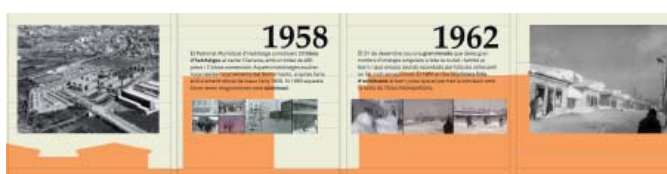
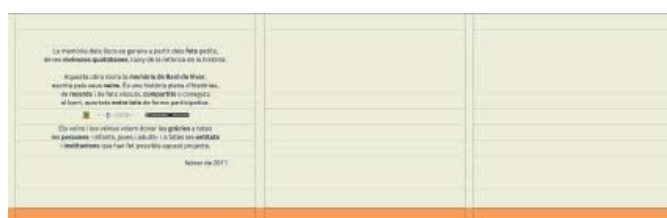
The linearity of the noise barriers allowed us to think about developing a “mural” How?. Using material that would provide residents, especially photographic material.

The picture became the raw material that allowed reflection on the “memory” of the neighbourhood. Various workshops were organized, especially with neighbourhood schools and neighbourhood forums in which participants in the process and all the neighbours brought their photos, coming to collect over 4000.

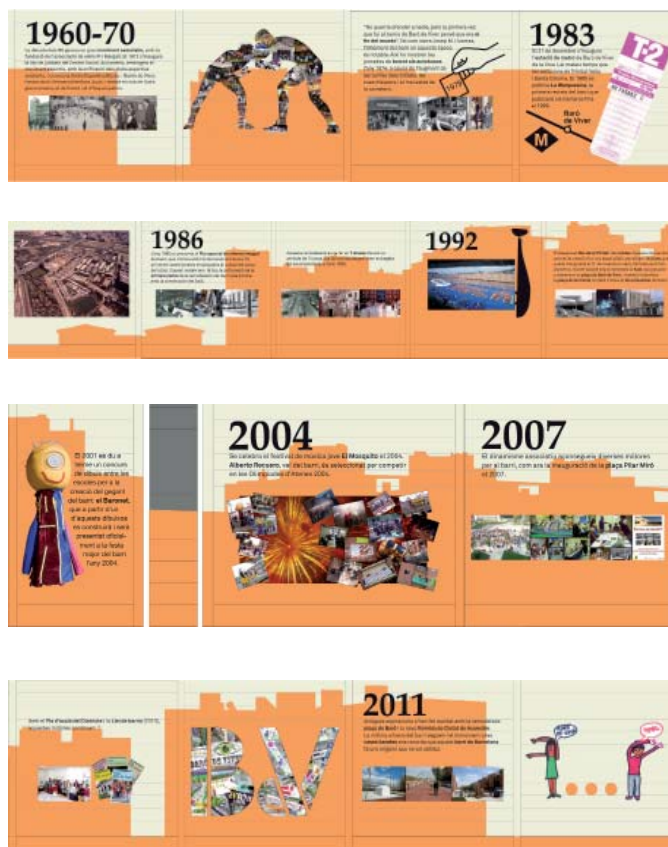
The selection of the photos was not easy. But, finally, we reached agreements. The photos were digitized so that we create a file of all material







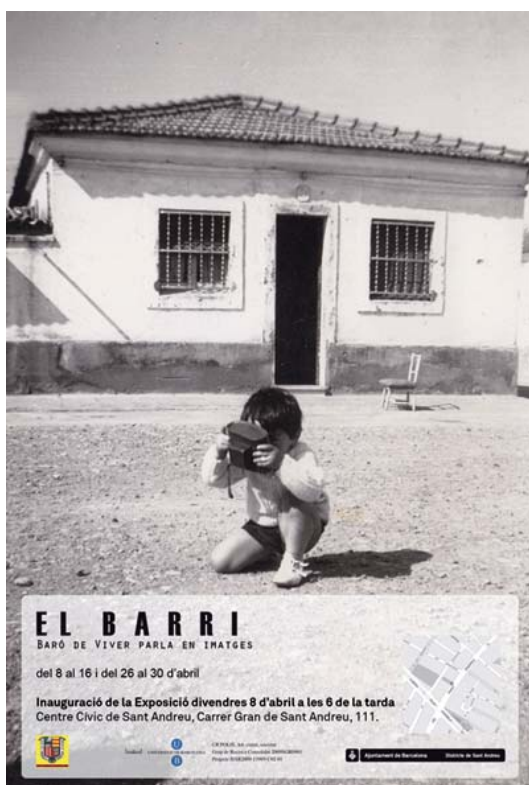
The mural is divided into two parts. One, bottom, painted which reproduces the profile of the neighbourhood establishing continuity across the surface.



The other combines image (photographic) and text. The narrative speaks of the neighbourhood from the perspective of the neighbours, of what they considered most relevant to contribute to this exercise in collective remembrance.



Once completed and unveiled the mural, we present it in the heart of the District, in an exhibition called "Baró de Viver, talks in images."



The aim of the exhibition was to introduce the rest of the district's residents the work in Baró and invite them to visit the Mural





The material in this exhibition, so concerns Baró, derived from the narrative of "mural"

## Theoretical considerations

We would like to note that our project meets the title of this work. With the Wall of Remembrance and the design for the Rambla de Asunción with its Monument to the Cheap Houses projects, we achieved to include neighbours in the urban decision-making processes, while empowering citizens in relationship to the projects for public space, public art and urban design.

The term empowerment has been extensively used in studies of business organizations and refers to the need to activate or enhance the involvement of employees within the company as parts of some co-management processes, with the goal of improve productivity.

Recently used in a broader context, especially in some approaches to the problem of governance within the context of the crisis of formal democracies.

The high rates of abstention, the increasing distance between citizens and policy makers, the abdication of responsibilities of the state apparatus in civil society, raised the need for new strategies to increase citizen involvement in the process of making political decisions and, thus, get to revitalize a democracy that is being emptied of political content.

Although the concept of power is directly related to its exercise, especially from the perspective of repression, however, the word has, at least in Latin languages, some meanings that must be explored in the context of research on governance. "Power is not only the exercise of domination, whether through physical brute force or by political domain. Power is also capacity and ability. I can or I can not do anything in relation to the capabilities that, genetically and culturally, have been identifying me and my way of being in the world" (Remesar, 2008:422)

With regard to these capacities and abilities, the exercise involves:

- Having the freedom to exercise them.
- Having the right to exercise them.
- Having the opportunity to exercise them.
- Having executive resources.

In a complex society like ours, their effective deployment depends not only on the legal -political framework that enables them (at the level of State, Region or Locality) but also depends on other factors that will enable its exercise.

First, it must be given conditions for dialogue between parties (in our case neighbours and local government). This dialogue often grows from the neighbourhood vindication that obliges the administration to listen to.

Second, if we want to move forward, towards a dialogue to achieve agreement and pact objectives, it is necessary to provide certain road maps that necessarily require the education and training of both neighbours, as technicians, and as politicians, in an on-going process.

If, as pointed out by Brandão (2010, 2011) the project of public space, requires a willingness of actors to share a foundational conviction: "On the city are interested both architecture and literature, cinema as geography, art and sociology, history and photography ... Because of that, summing all, the city is a diverse entity, but as a subject of design in itself is just one. Therefore, knowledge of the City can no longer exist to justify one or another of the disciplines that are devoted to it (even those that assign themselves the label of holistic) [...] The interdisciplinarity is mandatory,

because only from a single view angle approach, the life of the city escapes ... and this requires a different attitude so radical, that would require a re-identification” (Brandão, 2011: p.18). What is true for the field of disciplines is then valid for the field of urban stakeholders.



Each neighbourhood in Barcelona has its “representation” as a “giant”. The “Baronet” is the giant built by the Community Plan of Baró de Viver to represent the neighbourhood

In the case of citizen participation, as Merlin and Choay [1988 (2005)] point out the concept is ambiguous and nebulous. However, the European Council of Town Planners raises participation:

1. As a guarantee of environmental improvement in cities<sup>20</sup>
2. As a guarantee of territorial and social cohesion <sup>21</sup>
3. As a guarantee of change in the economic base of the city to allow its development in the context of the knowledge economy <sup>22</sup>

From our experience in the process in Baró de Viver there are three major fields of relations among the different actors that would enable to extrapolate the pattern of relationships, agencies and strategies for participatory processes.

20 Sustainability-integrating the economic, ecological and social change, based on the participation and commitment, will be a priority objective which will make all this possible. (New Charter of Athens 2003. The vision of the cities in the XXIst Century)

21 Cities are meeting places where social interaction is nurtured. The planning should strive to create a concept of neighbourhood to reinforce local identity, sense of belonging and human atmosphere. In particular, the smallest units of the city, the block, neighbourhood, or the “district” - must play an essential role in providing a framework for human contact and allow public participation in managing the urban program. At the same time, these cells have to deal with urban network of the city, to provide context for local action. To support local communities is a need for flexibility in decision-making (New Charter of Athens 2003. The vision of the cities in the XXIst century).

22 Another major challenge is the development of innovative processes of local democracy-seeking new ways to involve all social partners to increase participation and ensure the common interests of all groups. The participation of citizens provides a better understanding of their demands and can initiate a cultural evolution that leads to the acceptance of a variety of solutions to meet the different needs of different groups, while retaining a shared identity across the city (New Charter of Athens 2003. The vision of the cities in the XXIst century).



Participatory processes should aim to generate power within the meaning indicated above, to empower citizens to have ownership of their own city. Not as users or through use, but as citizens, able to entrust the processes of creation of forms, of space, of art.

Processes that are beyond the electoral cycle, that require agreements between citizens and parties. Slow processes of negotiation between neighbour, politicians and technical staff. Processes in which, not necessarily, the arguments and technical proposals from the local administration are the arguments and appropriate proposals for public art and urban design of the citizens.

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