

## BEHIND BARCELONA'S SUCCESS STORY Citizen Movements and Planners' Power

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**Economic restructuring** and deindustrialization have increased economic competition and pushed cities toward seeking more aggressive ways to effect economic development. The challenge facing cities—especially the older European and U.S. industrial cities—is to respond in ways that will foster economic development while at the same time maintaining or improving the quality of life for their inhabitants in general and the poor in particular.

The city of Barcelona seems to have been successful in transforming itself in a very short time from a “gray” industrial city in the midst of a deep economic crisis in 1980 to an international success story a decade later. Most important here, Barcelona’s city marketing effort was not accompanied by the neglect of its neighborhoods, increased social polarization, or geographic segregation, distinguishing it in this regard from most other cities. How was all this accomplished?

The common perception is that skilled political entrepreneurship and creative planning unleashed through the Olympics enough money, energy, and spirit of cooperation to do in ten years—with Barcelona preparing its bid as early as 1981—what would normally have taken a much longer time.<sup>1</sup> In this article, we will show that the foundations on which the Olympics grew were laid down during the preceding decade. The 1970s were without doubt the most turbulent decade in Barcelona’s post–World War II history, comprising the last years of Franco’s dictatorship of thirty-six years (known as “Franquismo”) and the difficult years of transition to democracy. It is important to note that Franco’s dictatorship was not an anomaly in the history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Spain, which was marked by an alternating succession of short democratic periods and longer military dictatorships. Franco’s exceptionally long, personal dictatorship came after the six-year Spanish Republic and the subsequent Civil War of 1936-1939. The result was the ruthless rubbing out of any form of public discussion and expression of



individual opinions. During the last years of Franco's life, with the emergence of a new generation that had not participated in the Civil War, it became possible for a modicum of debate to take place, especially at the local level, with collective consumption and planning problems becoming the major topics of discussion and debate. We will argue that during the 1970s, unique cultural, historical, and political circumstances gave rise to collective urban social movements on one hand and exceptional individual progressive planners on the other, synergetically creating the conditions on which the Barcelona of the 1980s could be built.

The synergy and the conditions on which it was predicated can be divided into two periods, before and after the death of Franco in 1975. During the first quinquennium of the 1970s, the end of Franquismo was in the air and the urban movements, which already in the late 1960s had begun to organize to demand the public facilities sorely lacking in their neighborhoods, acquired greater force and became part of the growing political opposition to the regime. In the planning arena, during these years a first version of the General Metropolitan Plan (GMP) of Barcelona was prepared and approved in 1974. This plan caused strong reactions on the part of citizen groups and especially property owners who saw the possibility for land speculation severely curtailed by the plan. While some of the changes requested by the property owners were conceded, the general features of the plan were maintained thanks to its defense by citizens groups.

The GMP of Barcelona, finally approved in 1976, marked the end of unbridled land speculation and the beginning of planning in the public interest. What is striking about this process is that it happened before a democratic administration took control of the city. Barcelona is, in fact, the only city in Spain where this change did not have to wait until the democratic administrations were in place.

The plan began to be implemented during the second half of the 1970s, as the slow and difficult period of transition to democracy unfolded, with the first local election taking place in 1979, after the general elections of 1977. During this uncertain and confusing time, the presence of a strong citizen movement made it possible to defend the plan against the old forces of speculation that wanted to build on lands the plan designated for public use. Equally important was the initiative displayed by the new planning director of the city of Barcelona, Joan Antoni Solans, appointed by the mayor of the "transition" period, who took advantage of the uncertainties in the urban land market to buy, at low prices, much of the land designated for public facilities in the GMP.

With the advent of democracy, a new planning director, Oriol Bohigas, quickly responded to the demands of the neighborhoods by seizing the opportunity offered by the newly acquired land and designed and built almost two hundred parks, plazas, schools, and other public facilities. It was at this juncture, when many of the needs of the neighborhoods were taken care of, that the city could turn its energy to solving its citywide needs—many contemplated in

the GMP—such as opening the city to the sea, completing its inner and outer beltways, and expanding its drainage and sewer systems—to create the Olympic Barcelona.

### BARCELONA'S URBAN DEVELOPMENT: A BRIEF HISTORY

Barcelona is the capital city of the autonomous region of Catalunya in Spain. Founded as a Roman colony in the fifth century B.C., Barcelona was able to quickly push out the Arab invaders from its territory in the eleventh century, becoming one of the most powerful maritime forces in the Mediterranean during the Middle Ages. Fiercely independent Catalunya became part of the unified Spain in the late fifteenth century, setting the stage for innumerable struggles during the next five centuries with the central government in Madrid.

In the midnineteenth century, Madrid gave permission to tear down the walls that encircled Barcelona, no longer considered necessary for defense purposes—a process that was repeated in countless other European cities. The subsequent plan of expansion, the *Eixample*,<sup>2</sup> prepared by the engineer Ildelfons Cerda', represents one of the most significant examples of early modern town planning. His scheme was the first use of "neoliberal" plans that restructured or expanded existing cities during the second half of the nineteenth century to accommodate the commercial, social, and representational needs of the new entrepreneurial class.<sup>3</sup> The *Eixample* became the framework within which the combined talents of Barcelona's turn-of-the-century modernist architects could flourish. Their buildings, most notably Antoni Gaudi's, made Barcelona renowned as *La Ciudad de los Prodigios*, or the City of Marvels.<sup>4</sup> This was also a city of intense class conflicts, a city with no nobility and commoners but of capitalists and workers, many of them anarchists and Marxists. The city was often rocked by episodes of revolt aimed at the church and the clergy.<sup>5</sup>

After the turn of the century, the idea of an *Exposicion Universal* that would act as a showcase of Barcelona's status as the prominent manufacturing center in Spain took hold. One of the most important architects of the modernist period, Josep Puig i Cadafalch, also a politician, supported the idea as a mechanism to improve the infrastructure of the city. While the main buildings of the *Exposicion* of 1929 were located on the mountain of Montjuic, the entire city benefited from a system of avenues, parks, buildings, and plazas built at this time.

With the advent of the 1931 republic, Cataluña was granted autonomy, inaugurating an intense, albeit short-lived, period of intellectual and artistic activity. The architects of this period became aligned with the ideas of the modern movement in architecture and urban planning that had swept Europe during the previous two decades. They formed the Grup d'Artistes y Tècnics Catalans per al Progres de l'Arquitectura Contemporània (GATCPAC). The leader of the group was Josep Lluís Sert, who was to become a major figure in the

history of modern architecture for his work in both Spain and the United States. GATCPAC prepared a plan for the Barcelona metropolitan area in 1934, the so-called Pla Macia' after the name of the president of the region. Le Corbusier, arguably the most prominent architect in the history of modern architecture and urban planning, collaborated with the young Catalan architects. Not surprisingly, the plan reflected Le Corbusier's ideas of functional separation of uses and the use of superblocks. But the plan remained on paper as the Civil War put an end to the creative impulses of this period. With the victory of Franco in 1939, Cataluña lost its autonomy and its connection to the European avant-garde, entering a twenty-six-year period of repression and obscurantism.

In the economic sphere, Franco pursued a policy of isolationism and autarchic policy until the year 1959, a year when the economy was liberalized, leading to an unprecedented period of economic growth during the 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>6</sup> As a result, many Spanish cities, especially those located in the industrial regions of the country, went through an unprecedented process of growth. At the end of that process, those cities had become large metropolitan areas, heavy players not only in the Spanish but also in the European context.

The areas of new growth followed three different patterns of development that even today define the structure of the residential peripheries of most Spanish cities. These peripheries constituted the cultural medium through which urban social movements developed.<sup>7</sup> We can distinguish three patterns of development:

1. Suburban developments based on nineteenth-century extensions with narrow streets that were massively densified, substituting, for example, the original two-floor small house with a rear garden located on a six-meter-wide lot with six or seven floor blocks of apartments. These changes led quickly to the appearance of functional and formal conflicts: lack of facilities due to the sharp increase in population, car access difficulties, and poor lighting and ventilation conditions.
2. The so-called marginal areas of urbanization, located in the extreme periphery of the city and illegally built. This pattern of urban growth had its origin in the 1920s—a period of high growth especially in Barcelona—and became significant in the 1950s in cities like Barcelona, Madrid, and Bilbao. These shantytowns lacked all public facilities and became a strong focus of urban conflicts.
3. The new housing projects, or *poligonos de viviendas*, most of them publicly promoted to house low-income families, appeared first in the 1950s and then mushroomed during the 1960s and early 1970s as the official answer to the housing shortage. As a consequence of the priority to house more and more people, the provision of public facilities for these projects was systematically neglected. Furthermore, the *poligonos* were often located in isolated settlements and poorly built with densities usually higher than 70 apartments per acre and as high as 150 in some cases.<sup>8</sup> It is not surprising that they generated the sharpest conflicts.

This continuous process of densification added a large residential mass to Barcelona and the surrounding municipalities, transforming the area into an integrated metropolis that grew by one and one-half million inhabitants between 1950 and 1980.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, this process of growth fostered “an incomplete urban periphery because of a lack of services, centrality and/or symbolism and image.”<sup>10</sup> The resulting progressive increase in social segregation and urban conflicts led to the urban social movements.

### URBAN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Manuel Castells, in his classic *The Urban Question* published in 1972, challenged conventional urban sociology that negated social conflicts and proposed instead a new definition of the urban problem based on the theory of “collective consumption”—goods and services directly or indirectly provided by the state—and/or urban social movements that, in the struggle to get their fair share of those goods and services, become the catalyst of the transformation of the social relations of society. Urban social movements, then, are not necessarily concerned with class or workplace issues but primarily with neighborhood concerns, that is, with the organization of the urban space shared by the members of a movement and involving conflict with the state over the provision of, access to, or defense of, urban services and housing.<sup>11</sup> They were, in other words, “the symptom of a process of social readjustment,” and the change necessitating readjustment was rapid urbanization.<sup>12</sup>

In Spain these movements, it should be remembered, took place in a particular political context, the final period of Franquismo until 1975, and of the transition to democracy during the remainder of the decade. Having to operate under those conditions, the Spanish movements faced many difficulties, but at the same time, the dictatorship served as a concrete and highly visible target for the opposition. Also, it should be mentioned that the repressive nature of the Franco regime weakened during the last years of the regime, possibly due to the political mobilization of workers, regionalists, and students, in addition to the urban social movements.<sup>13</sup>

In the Spanish context, urban social movements were characterized by (1) direct action and protest tactics focused on issues of collective consumption, (2) a grassroots orientation, and (3) a certain distance from political parties (clandestine until the midseventies).<sup>14</sup>

### THE BARCELONA CASE

In Barcelona, the neighborhood associations (*asociaciones de vecinos*) came about in response to everyday problems specific to particular neighborhoods, “to win a set of traffic lights, to have some running water in the houses,

to have drains, asphalt, to put an end to the dust and dirt in the streets.” These problems compounded “the already hard working conditions, low salaries and long hours spent commuting to work.”<sup>15</sup> At the end of the 1960s, the urban social movements grew quickly in parallel with the rapid urbanization and densification of the city, making visible the shortages of public facilities and the neglect of urban space in the new and old urban peripheries.

The initial forms of protest included the collection of signatures, assemblies, expositions, gatherings around sport or music events, symbolic inaugurations, and so forth. The habitual response of the administration was silence, leading to harder forms of struggle in a context where social liberties were non-existent. The lack of social liberties made organization difficult, but it

meant much more: getting the authorities to give us a set of traffic lights meant forty days of barricades and stopping cars coming into the district where four or five fatal accidents had taken place. And that meant clashes with the police. Demanding mains for the shacks in Torre Baro’ meant cutting off the motorways into Barcelona everyday, with everything that involved. It was a difficult time.<sup>16</sup>

Other forms of struggle included occupation of public spaces, human barriers, sequestering buses, and rent strikes.<sup>17</sup>

Protest actions in individual neighborhoods were not isolated actions; they were part of a wider protest movement at the city level. While the urban social movement generally acted separately from political parties, in Barcelona

at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s there existed an intangible network between the protests of the neighborhoods, the activities of the clandestine unions and the forbidden political parties, the university protests and the activities of professional organizations.<sup>18</sup>

Individual intellectuals and (still clandestine) politicians became involved as well. Surreptitiously backed by a significant portion of the press, the Barcelona social movement quickly became an alternative forum for the discussion of urban affairs.

By the early seventies, the scope of the neighborhood associations expanded to include urban planning issues such as the need for public facilities, especially areas for open space and parks, and opposition to “Partial Plans.” These *Planes Parciales* were a tool to supplement the existing 1953 Comarcal Plan—a plan that was too general and required Partial Plans and accompanying ordinances to be implemented.<sup>19</sup> These plans increased densities without a corresponding provision of public facilities—at times preempting spaces dedicated to public facilities—and had been used to satisfy the interest of speculators during the long administration of Mayor Josep Maria de Porcioles. His sixteen-year mandate (1957-1973) coincided with the huge demographic change mentioned above, and the partial plans became “the root of all speculation” by always allowing “increases in permitted building levels,

granted by an absolutely permissive government, even approving housing estates without preliminary partial planning.”<sup>20</sup> The result was

termitaries built by speculators under license from the Caudillo’s placemen, designed without paved roads, playgrounds for the kids, or other signs or thought for infrastructure or public space, quite often made of poor materials that started falling apart within a few years.<sup>21</sup>

The Barcelona of those years has been dubbed *Barcelona Grisa*, “gray Barcelona” and *porciolismo*, the abandonment of the city on the part of administrators in the hands of speculators.<sup>22</sup>

In 1973, twenty years after the adoption of the Comarcal Plan, Porcioles’s mandate ended, the result of an attempt to pass a partial plan that would have destroyed 4,370 homes. The neighborhoods involved came together to fight this threat, and the ensuing struggle culminated in a confrontation in city hall at the time the partial plan was to be approved. Before the meeting began, municipal functionaries occupied the seats usually reserved for the public to preclude the participation of protesting citizens. In response, the neighborhood associations occupied city hall, the facts were publicized, and the resulting scandal forced the central government in Madrid to depose Porcioles on the following day. The plan was stopped, and the neighborhoods involved came together to form an association called *Nou Barris*, “new neighborhood,” which many years later became one of the ten districts into which Barcelona was divided as part of the administrative decentralization of the city.

This episode is important as a sign of the weakening grip of Franquismo on the country, of the power of the Barcelona urban social movement, and of the expansion of its reach to include large-scale planning issues. It is within this atmosphere that the preparation of the GMP began.

### THE GENERAL METROPOLITAN PLAN

By the late 1960s, it had become clear that the 1953 *Plan Comarcal* needed to be updated. The new *Comarcal Plan*, initially approved in 1974 and finalized in 1976, was an exceptionally advanced plan.

That such a plan could be produced in a Spanish city still under the Franco regime is nothing short of miraculous. The political, social, and cultural rupture with the rest of Europe resulting from the Civil War had led to a cultural isolationism that truncated some of the planning experimentation that had aligned Barcelona architecture and planning with the modern movement.<sup>23</sup>

In the 1960s, however, a new generation of architects<sup>24</sup> opened “itself to the world and joined the rest of Europe.”<sup>25</sup> This cultural awakening was made possible by the weakening hold of the regime on the cultural life of the nation and the normalization of book and journal imports from abroad. Books by Lynch

(1960), Jacobs (1961), Chermayeff (1962), Eco (1962), Alexander (1963), Venturi (1965), Rossi (1966), and others led to a rejection of the doctrinalism into which the modern movement had fallen. U.S. publications introduced Barcelona architects to the criticism of the Urban Renewal program and to Advocacy Planning. Also, the ferment in European architecture schools, especially in France and Italy, led to an analysis and criticism of the political-economic context of planning and clarified “the social and political compromises that underlie much of the planning practice of an important portion of professionals.”<sup>26</sup> However, it was Italian planning of the 1960s that had the greatest influence on Barcelona architects, especially the “Piano Intercomunale Milanese,” the plan for the Milan metropolitan area, presented in the October 1967 issue of *Urbanistica* that provided, in its break with tradition, the most important disciplinary lesson for the team in charge of the Plan Comarcal.

Following the Piano Intercomunale Milanese, the Plan Comarcal rejected the traditional, architecturally based approach to planning to emphasize “*una política del suelo*” (meaning land policy, or perhaps more accurately the politics of land): “For the first time, there is a coherent plan that establishes intensities and densities of development . . . based on the introduction of legal controls that regulate the growth of the city.”<sup>27</sup>

The innovation of the plan at the political level can be narrowed to two elements: (1) it reduced the allowable densities from a potential of nine million people to four and one-half, and (2) it reclaimed land for public use by designating various parcels of land for parks, plazas, schools, and other public facilities.<sup>28</sup> About half of the land designated for public use under the previous plan had been used for speculative housing projects.

The plan, prepared by a team headed by an engineer, Albert Serratosa, an architect, Joan Antoni Solans, and an attorney, Miquel Roca Junyent, was first unveiled in 1974. During the same year, the *Corporació Metropolitana de Barcelona* was created as the entity that included Barcelona and twenty-six municipalities. It covered the same territory as the *Comarca*, but its new metropolitan reality was recognized and the plan became the GMP. A new mayor, Enric Masó, appointed to fill the post left open by the unceremonious dumping of Porcioles, had been in office only a few months when the plan was unveiled. Direct appointment of mayors, formally by the Spanish central government (but really by the dictator, among a short list of suggested candidates presented by the government), was the normal practice for the big Spanish cities during the Franco regime. In smaller cities’ nominations were controlled by the provincial governors. The mayor of Barcelona was also in charge of the *Corporació*.

The new mayor attempted to establish a dialogue with the neighborhood associations and made regular visits to the most degraded neighborhoods. However, when the new GMP was unveiled a few months after his inauguration, it was attacked by the *Asociaciones*, both because they felt that not enough areas had been designated for public use and because of the proposed



new thoroughfares—“a personal fixation” of the engineer Serratoas<sup>29</sup>—that would have cut through some of the historic neighborhoods, such as Gracia, and affected thousands of homes. There were many errors as well, with parcels designated for public use that the *Asociaciones* quickly discovered were being or had been already built upon. The 1974 plan became the vehicle through which the various citizen movements were agglutinated and consolidated, strengthening their resolve to obstruct further deterioration of their city.

But an even more powerful attack came from the landowners who saw the potential volumes to be built on their properties drastically reduced and/or their land designated for public use, sharply devaluing their properties. Even though the changes had become necessary to ameliorate the damages inflicted on the city by twenty years of *porciolismo*, the landowners closed ranks against the plan. This explains why the new plan was denounced by one of the main developers in Barcelona as “a socialist plan,”<sup>30</sup> or that a banker lamented in *La Vanguardia Espanola* that the loss of land value under the new plan could reach 500,000 pesetas. He also noted

that the planning process which has led to this plan is extremely curious, with no public involvement . . . has been a thing of very few people . . . an engineer with political aspirations; a recently graduated architect who has studied abroad, a lawyer, and very little more.

A little later he dubbed them “young messiahs” and a “fistful of technocrats.”<sup>31</sup>

The plan gave rise to such passionate conflicts that the central government decided “to substitute a conciliatory mayor with an intransigent one.”<sup>32</sup> The new mayor, Joaquim Viola, was a friend of Porcioles. As the plan was being revised, hundreds of building permits were released under the aegis of the 1953 plan, leading to “the unfortunate loss of parcels important for the future implementation of the GMP.”<sup>33</sup>

Landowners pressed for change to the new plan as well, and the new mayor, closely connected to the old power structure, was sympathetic to changes favorable to his cronies. Serratoso, “the father of the Plan,” was subjected to innumerable pressures and threats and had his children accompanied by bodyguards to school.

The neighborhood groups rose to the occasion and took to the streets, demanding the elimination of roads that cut through their neighborhoods, and the redesignation to public use of areas that had been changed to private use, such as the *Espana Industrial*, a huge complex of textile factories that had ceased to operate. They were supported by professional associations, such as that of the architects. The thoroughfares were eliminated. But many of the other objections of the *Asociaciones* were not met when the GMP was approved by Viola in the summer of 1976. The *Asociaciones* realized that their chances of success would be nil with Viola in power and turned their energies toward eliminating him from the scene. They demanded his resignation from

the king, the minister of internal administration, and the governor of Barcelona. Posters appeared on the neighborhood walls demanding his resignation.

In December 1976, Viola resigned, and a new “conciliatory” mayor, Josep Maria Socias, took his place. The battle for the plan continued through the courts, where the *Consejo de Estado* fixed some of the worst excesses of the approved GMP. The *Espana Industrial* site, for example, was redesignated parkland, raising the ire of its owner, who wished a coup d’état a la Chile upon Spain.<sup>34</sup> A few years later, Serratosa, commenting on the role that the neighborhood associations played in the revision of the GMP declared that they “were the real protagonists . . . in resisting the attacks on the most essential aspects of the plan on the part of powerful pressure groups.”<sup>35</sup> Much later he credited the citizens’ defense of the GMP for “permitting a bridge between technique and politics, which is one of the important impediments to planning, even today.”<sup>36</sup>

The new mayor Socias took the reigns of the city in the difficult years of transition to democracy. The first general election had taken place in 1977, but local elections had to wait until 1979. Until that time, Socias decided that to legitimize his government, he had to be more responsive to the neighborhood associations. His mandate allowed a relaxation of the tensions created by his predecessor, Viola, and a smooth transition to democracy. It was a time full of life, energy, and dynamism, when the most difficult problems of the city were discussed with the will to find solutions. One of the first tasks of the city was to find solutions to the most difficult demands for public facilities like schools and parks.

#### **PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION, MUNICIPAL ELECTION, AND THE DEMISE OF THE *MOVIMENTO DE VECINOS***

The mayor decided to hire the other “father” of the GMP, Joan Antoni Solans, as planning director. Together, they decided to acquire as much as possible of the areas designated for public use. On one hand, this attempt was extremely difficult, given the conditions of the public administration after decades of Franquismo, and “the moral and physical conditions” of Barcelona at the end of the Viola administration. On the other hand, the moment was propitious because the political context of the transition period had created a situation of diffuse fear among landowners that the country and the city were inexorably moving toward socialism and the requisition or expropriation of their property at low prices. The economic recession of that period and a scarcity of capital for developers helped even more to bring the price of land down. The availability of funds was greater than initially projected because a large portion of the necessary funds was made available from the central government. In the end, Solans was able to buy almost 221 hectares (approximately 500 acres) of land at a cost of 3 billions of pesetas: 86 hectares for parks and

gardens; 50 for forest land, 70 for school sites and other public facilities; and 15 for housing.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the great insistence of the *Vecinos* for municipal elections, they did not take place until four years after Franco's death. The Left won, and a socialist, Narcis Serra, was elected mayor of Barcelona. Many of the members of the *Asociaciones de Vecinos* and of the professional organizations that supported them either were elected to city council or entered the new administration. The two main tasks of the newly elected government were to reform its public administration and respond to the strong social pressure for the planning *recuperacion* of the city that had been expressed during the last years of the old regime and during the transition period and that had found expression in the 1976 GMP plan that was adopted by the new administration.

With the advent of democracy, a new planning director, Oriol Bohigas, immediately began the process of planning and design for the newly acquired land. He was the catalyst who brought together a large number of young architects who had entered the profession during the 1970s to design almost two hundred parks, plazas, schools, and other public facilities. Because of the recent approval of the GMP, Bohigas did not have to spend time to prepare a new plan for the city but could dedicate his energies to respond to the urgent need for new public facilities, especially new public spaces and services.<sup>38</sup> "Instead of working from the general to the particular, from master plan to local project, Bohigas inverted this usual procedure . . . he focused instead, as and where opportunities presented themselves." To respond quickly to citizen demands and to project an image of an efficient administration, Bohigas began to design and build first what could be done the fastest and the cheapest, seizing "not just local attention but also the international acclaim that helped fuel local enthusiasm . . . this shrewdly opportunistic strategy was then progressively escalated."<sup>39</sup>

It is at this time that the urban social movement in Barcelona—and other Spanish cities as well—lost much of its momentum, power, and membership. There are several reasons for this sudden change. First, the urban social movement lost its most important *raison d' être* with the completion of many of the needed projects. Second, it should be remembered that the demands of the *Vecinos* had been part of a larger political opposition to the Franco regime. Now, with the democratization of the political system in general and a socialist administration in particular—composed to a large extent of former members or sympathizers of the *Asociaciones de Vecinos*—opposition withered. It is not surprising then that throughout Spain urban political movements came practically to a standstill, and the *Asociaciones* decimated.<sup>40</sup> One of their hopes, that the new administration would install a more participatory form of democracy, remains unfulfilled. The president of the Federació d' *Asociaciones de Vecinos* Barcelona (FAVB), Carles Prieto, told a reporter in 1982 that "the political parties of the governing coalition have abandoned the *Asociaciones de Vecinos*."<sup>41</sup> Since then, the FAVB has been critical of all the Left administrations that have

continued to govern the city. Ironically, the FAVB continues to operate in offices and with funds provided by those same administrations.

The fate of the Spanish urban social movements and studies of other urban social movements have confirmed their contingent nature.<sup>42</sup> Hindsight has made it clear that Castells overestimated the long-term impact or endurance of the urban social movements. Certainly, social movements have not, as Castells theorized, fulfilled their supposed role as agents of social change or heralders of a new era. "It is possible," as Ceccarelli explains, "that urban social movements and the conflicts which accompanied them, far from predicting a new era, were the expression of the last and most conflictive stage of a process of change and readjustment to it."<sup>43</sup>

### CONCLUSION

The first thing that the new mayor, Narcis Serra, did when he took office was to respond to the needs of the neighborhoods. But as that process got under way, he expanded his sights to problems at the citywide level. When presented with the idea of the Olympics, he seized the opportunity. Thus began the process that led to the opening of the city to the sea, building a system of inner and outer beltways, and repairing and expanding its drainage and sewer systems, to name the most important projects. In 1984, the noted architectural critic Peter Buchanan wrote an article in the *Architectural Review*, entitled "Regenerate Barcelona," on nine of the most impressive parks and plazas being built at that time in Barcelona. In 1992, another article in the same journal, entitled "Barcelona Regenerated," described the changes brought about by the 1992 Olympics. Barcelona had been placed on the map, boasted the next mayor Maragall.

It would be tempting to ascribe, at least in part, the success of Barcelona's Olympics to a citywide and neighborhood participation process in its planning and implementation. But this is not the case. In fact, the FAVB lamentations about the lack of citizens' involvement in the affairs of the city are particularly sharp in their criticism of how the handling of the Olympics was a private affair between the "prince," and—as in the Renaissance—the "architects of the prince."<sup>44</sup> This criticism of the FAVB might be too harsh. The "Prince" in question is Pasqual Maragall, the mayor who inherited city hall from the first democratically elected mayor, Narciso Serra (who moved to the Ministry of Defense in Madrid) and with it, the organization of the 1992 Olympics. He had a mere ten years to obtain the financing, to plan, and to build not only the Olympic facilities but the infrastructure of the city that had been left in shambles after twenty years of *Porciolismo*. Relying on a handful of technocrats—mostly architect/planners and engineers who had emerged during the turbulent 1970s—he achieved what many doubted could be accomplished in such a short time. It is debatable whether a more participatory process would have

been possible without jeopardizing the timely completion of all the facilities necessary for the Olympics.

The dream of the FAVB and others for a more participatory form of government has not materialized.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, what is remarkable is that the city's attempt at city marketing—of which the Olympics were an essential ingredient—has not hampered, as is generally the case,<sup>46</sup> the pursuit of an ambitious social agenda. In other Olympic cities, such as Atlanta, for example, the promise of neighborhood regeneration has remained generally unfulfilled.<sup>47</sup> In Barcelona, the city took care of the neighborhoods first, as part of the overall strategy, established soon after the 1979 election, that sought the “homogenization of the city,” that is, “the creation of a balanced and integrated Barcelona, without segregation, with social and territorial equality for all its citizens.”<sup>48</sup> Such a strategy, established immediately after the 1979 election, did not materialize out of thin air but was the result of the legacy of the 1970s.

Not only did it bring balance in the provision of public facilities throughout the city, thus helping to integrate the marginalized neighborhoods, but it has also reversed the incipient tendencies toward segregation in the historic center and some of the peripheral areas.<sup>49</sup> Income inequality seems to be lessening as well. A recent survey has found that between 1985 and 1995, income inequality has decreased in the city.<sup>50</sup>

In June 1999, the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) awarded Barcelona its prestigious Gold Medal—the first time awarded to a place and not professionals—in honor of the city's “commitment to urbanism over the last twenty years” including its “mix of eye-catching landmark projects, small scale improvements to plazas and street corners, and the team work between politicians and urbanists.”<sup>51</sup> While the fruits have matured during the past twenty years, we should not forget that the seeds were sown earlier, that Barcelona's success in balancing economic development with the enhancement of its quality of life is based on what happened in the 1970s—on the courage and commitment of the *Vecinos* and the planners who labored under harrowing conditions for a better quality of life for all the people of Barcelona.

## NOTES

1. Peter Buchanan, “Barcelona, A City Regenerated,” *The Architectural Review* (August 1992). Llatzer Moix, *La Ciudad de Los Arquitectos* (Barcelona: Cronicas, Anagrams, 1994).

2. *Exiample* is the Catalan translation of *expansion*. Catalan is the official language of Cataluña. Franco, after his victory in 1936, made Catalan illegal and imposed Castilian (Spanish) on the Barcelonense. In this article, we will use the language as it appears in the literature used or as it was used in a particular period. *Ensanche* is the Spanish word for *expansion*.

3. Leonardo Benevolo, *The Origin of Modern Town Planning* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967). The most well known is Baron Haussman's plan for Paris, implemented during the reign of Napoleon III.

4. Robert Hughes, *Barcelona* (New York: Vintage, 1993).

5. Ibid.
6. Amador Ferrer and Oriol Nel·lo, "Barcelona: The Transformation of an Industrial City," in Salamom Lester, ed., *The Future of the Industrial City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).
7. Joan Busquets, *Barcelona* (Madrid: Editorial Mapfre, 1992). M. Solá-Morales, et al., *Las Formas de Crecimiento Urbano* (Barcelona: LUB ETSAB, 1974).
8. Amador Ferrer, *Els Poligons de Barcelona* (Barcelona: UPC, 1996).
9. Ferrer and Nel·lo, "Barcelona: The Transformation."
10. Busquets, *Barcelona*, 257.
11. C. Pickvance, "The Rise and Fall of Urban Movements," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 3 (1985): 31-53.
12. Stuart Lowe, *Urban Social Movements: The City after Castells* (London: Macmillan, 1986). Pickvance, "The Rise and Fall of Urban Movements." This contingent nature of urban social movements is reflected in the nature of social movements in the United States in the same period, seen as a reaction, not to rapid urbanization, but to urban restructuring, that is, the combination of urban renewal, gentrification, and highway projects that were aimed at creating the postindustrial city. See Susan Fainstein et al., *Restructuring the City* (New York: Longman, 1983; Cox, 1984). U.S. neighborhood movements were eventually successful in stopping urban renewal and freeway construction in their communities. See J. Mollenkopf, *The Contested City* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).
13. Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).
14. Jordi Borja, "Urban Movements in Spain," in M. Harloe, ed., *Captive Cities* (New York: John Wiley, 1977). Castells, *The City and the Grassroots*.
15. Manuel Naya, "The Neighborhood Associations," in Josep Lluís Mateo, ed., *Contemporary Barcelona 1856-1999* (Barcelona: Centre de Cultura Contemporània, 1996), 191.
16. Ibid.
17. Josep Huertas and Marc Andreu, *Barcelona en Lluita: El Moviment Urbà 1965-1996* (Barcelona: Federació d'Associacions de Veïns de Barcelona, 1996).
18. Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, "La lluita necessària," in *Barcelona en Lluita: El Moviment Urbà 1965-1996*.
19. The Comarcal Plan was prepared by a small group of planners with the city of Barcelona for the entire Comarca, an administrative unit that comprised twenty-seven municipalities, with Barcelona being the dominant city. While technically adequate, the plan could not resist the population pressure that followed its adoption and became quickly obsolete, merely a reference for the partial plans that ignored its guidelines.
20. Ton Salvadó and Josep Miró, "The Appendages of the City of Kidneys," in Josep Lluís Mateo, ed., *Contemporary Barcelona 1856-1999* (Barcelona: Centre de Cultura Contemporània, 1996), 143. This ability of landowners to modify plans in their interests confirms Borja's (1997) representation of the local state as weak and open to external domination of the propertied classes. This weakness is reflected also in the local government being "the least repressive sector of the state," Borja, "Urban Movements in Spain," 190.
21. Hughes, *Barcelona*; Howard Hughes is the flamboyant former art critic of the *New York Times*. We assume that he uses "termitaries" or termites' nest, to portray dramatically the high densities of those buildings.
22. Such a term is still used in contemporary Barcelona. For example, a recent interview of a Barcelona architect critical of the present administration had the title: "A Sort of Porciolismo Is Returning," in Beth Galí, "Vuelve una especie de porciolismo," *El País*, July 24, 1998. Cataluña section, 4.
23. Busquets, *Barcelona*.
24. In Europe, and particularly in Italy and Spain, architectural schools have generally also taught urban planning, and practically all architects consider themselves planners as well. In this article, architects will be considered, as in Spain, architect-planners. For a commentary on a similar situation in Italy, see Nico Calavita, "Viewpoint," *Planning* 50, no. 11 (1984).
25. Ricard Pié, "El Projecte Disciplinar: La Versió de 1974 Pla General Metropolità," in *Els 20 Anys del Pla General Metropolità de Barcelona*, 1996.
26. Ibid.
27. Joan Antoni Solans, "El Plá Metropolità," in Josep Lluís Mateo, ed., *Contemporary Barcelona 1856-1999* (Barcelona: Centre de Cultura Contemporània, 1996), 202.

28. Land for public facilities at the subdivision level was to be obtained through the subdivision process; at the neighborhood level, land for facilities was to be expropriated. Spanish legislation allows expropriation of land at below market value.

29. Josep Huertas, "El moviment ciutadà a Barcelona i l'aparició del Pla General Metropolità," in Amador Ferrer, ed., *Els 20 Anys del Pla General Metropolità de Barcelona* (Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Metropolitans de Barcelona, 1996).

30. Jan Antonio-Samaranch quoted in Huertas, "El moviment ciutadà."

31. Ramón Trias Fargas, quoted in Huertas, "El moviment ciutadà," 65.

32. Huertas, "El moviment ciutadà"; Andreu, *Barcelona en Lluita*.

33. Busquets, *Barcelona*.

34. Huertas, "El moviment ciutadà"; Andreu, *Barcelona en Lluita*.

35. Quoted in Huertas, "El moviment ciutadà," 68.

36. Albert Serratosa, "La Revisió del Pla Comarcal de 1953," in Amador Ferrer, ed., *Els 20 Anys del Pla General Metropolità de Barcelona* (Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Metropolitans de Barcelona, 1996), 14.

37. Joan Antoni Solans, "Barcelona 1977-1978," *ARQUITECTURAS BIS*, no. 3 (1979): 51-2.

38. Peter Buchanan, "Regenerating Barcelona: Projects versus Planning—Nine Parks and Plazas," *The Architectural Review* (June, 1984). Moix, *La Ciudad de Los Arquitectos*.

39. Ibid.

40. Castells, *The City and the Grassroots*; Pickvance, "The Rise and Fall of Urban Movements."

41. Quoted in Huertas, "El moviment ciutadà"; and Andreu, *Barcelona en Lluita*.

42. P. Dunleavy, *Urban Political Analysis* (London: Macmillan, 1980). Pickvance, "The Rise and Fall of Urban Movements." Lowe, *Urban Social Movements*. R. Fincher, "Defining and Explaining Urban Social Movements," *Urban Geography* 10 (1987): 604-13. Kirian McKeown, *Marxist Political Economy and Marxist Urban Sociology* (London: Macmillan, 1987). Mark Purcell, "Ruling Los Angeles: Neighborhood Movements, Urban Regimes, and the Production of Space in Southern California," *Urban Geography* 18, no. 8 (1997): 684-704.

43. P. Ceccarelli, "Politics, Parties and Urban Movements: Western Europe," in N. Fainstein and S. Fainstein, eds., *Urban Policy under Capitalism* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage), 264.

44. Federació d'Associacions de Vecins Barcelona (FAVB), *La Barcelona de Maragall* (Edicions Sibilla).

45. Eduard Moreno and Manuel Vázquez Montalban, *Barcelona, cap a on vas?* Index Barcelona, 1991.

46. Saskia Sassen, *The Global City* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991). John Eade, ed., *Living the Global City: Globalization as Local Process* (London: Routledge, 1996).

47. Steven French and Mike Disher, "Atlanta and the Olympics: A One-Year Retrospective," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 3, no. 3 (1997): 379-92.

48. Xavier Casas, "La Transformació del litoral del pla de Barcelona com a motor de la renovació de la ciutat," *Ajuntament de Barcelona*, April 19, 1997, 5.

49. Ibid. New housing projects publicly promoted by PROCIVESA (Promocio Ciutat Vella, S.A.) have broken up the social-age-income uniformity existing in the historic center, by making it possible for middle-class, upper-class, and younger families to live in an area that was dominated by a lower-class, older population. New housing projects near the sea have also pursued income integration, and in the urban periphery, programs are in place to avoid ghetto formation.

50. Oriol Ne. lo, et al., *La transformació de la ciutat metropolitana* (Barcelona: Area Metropolitana de Barcelona, Diputació de Barcelona, 1998), 120. We do not want to give the impression of Barcelona as the "City on a Hill." Obviously, problems in Barcelona persist. High housing costs are pushing the younger generations to seek housing in the more affordable towns outside of Barcelona. The FAVB is critical of how long the process of rehabilitation of some of the peripheral neighborhoods is taking, and others still lament the destruction of historic buildings in the historic center and of industrial buildings throughout the city. See Calavita, "Viewpoint." The point is that, all in all, Barcelona has done an excellent job in balancing economic growth and quality of life.

51. Barcelona City Council, "RIBA Awards Gold Medal to Barcelona," *Barcelona Bulletin*, no. 162, July 1999.