THE ART OF URBAN DESIGN IN URBAN REGENERATION

INTERDISCIPLINARITY, POLICIES, GOVERNANCE, PUBLIC SPACE

Antoni Remesar (ed.)
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© Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona
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www.publicacions.ub.edu
comercial.edicions@ub.edu

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**Acknowledgments**
This book has been possible thanks to the support of the research projects HAR 2011-14431-E and HAR 2012-30874 funded by the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness, Spain and the project 2009SGR903 funded by the AGAUR, Generalitat de Catalunya.

**Conflict of Interest**
The authors declare no conflict of interest.

**Cover Illustration**: A. Remesar, 2016

**ISBN** 978-84-475-3781-5

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INTRODUCTION

This volume contains the contributions presented at the International Seminar “CIT-IES. Interdisciplinary Issues in Urban Regeneration, Urban Design, Public Art and Public Space” organized by the POLIS Research Centre and the PAUDO (Public Art and Urban Design Observatory) network in December 2013.

The book traces the paths of economic and political theory concerning the role of urban regeneration processes, from an overview of the policies implemented in Europe to the achievement of their impact on job creation and local innovation policies. It addresses physical aspects of urban design processes, analysing an interdisciplinary project regarding the urban regeneration process of the riverfront of Lisbon, and proposes some ideas of how to deal with climate change in the construction of public space in cities. Finally, the book concludes with a reflection on the new modes of urban governance that can make an urban environment more liveable thanks to the involvement of neighbours reconverting their role, from consultive actors to active agents of the physical (urban design) and symbolic (public art) transformation of their community. Thus, the book confronts the reflection on urban regeneration, with contributions from disciplinary fields as diverse as Economics, Public Policy, Urban Design and Architecture, Landscaping and Public Art, pointing out the need for further interdisciplinary work, as a continuation of the work presented in the journal On the w@terfront and various competitive research projects that are summarized in the credits of this book.

In “Evaluating the Policies of Urban Regeneration in Europe”, Montserrat Simó develops an overview of the processes of urban regeneration in Europe, highlighting the relationships between implemented policies and the results obtained. The article considers the concepts of rehabilitation, renovation, revitalization and urban renaissance, often confused with the concept of urban regeneration. Simó argues that the concept of urban regeneration implies the existence of a strategy of urban transformation with integral vision and tries to answer the complexity of the phenomena giving a
multidimensional response. Urban regeneration implies that the actions carried out under this umbrella are aimed at transforming an area as a whole, viewed as a whole, hence its integral character. Integral means that in a complex reality and in an area that encompasses multiple problems, the solution should also be in the same line and, therefore, a complex solution must be provided. It would involve all aspects of the region: economic, physical, social and environmental.

In “Employment, Social Cohesion and Territory. Integrating labour market policies into urban regeneration processes in Catalonia: Treball als Barris case study”, Nemo Remesar explores the overall perspective of urban regeneration processes, focusing his attention on active employment policies and their impact on the territory, noting that although job creation has been considered, in many cases, a subsidiary goal of urban strategies related to urban regeneration processes, the current socio-economic context makes it necessary to further boost such policies and actions aimed at increasing the skills of residents in order to combat the growing problems of segregation and urban fragmentation. The text argues for a comprehensive approach. Urban regeneration processes must be understood from a comprehensive perspective, as they move beyond the goals, aspirations and achievements of urban reform and urban development. Thus, going beyond the spatial transformation, they are oriented towards socio-economic transformation and a change in forms of governance.

Through the texts by Montserrat Simó and Nemo Remesar we appreciate the importance of the Neighbourhood Law of the Generalitat de Catalunya.

In “Climate Change and Urbanism. A new role for public space design?”, Maria Matos and J. P. Costa provide an interesting insight into one of the problems that cities may face in the near future. Climate change adaptation has reinforced the urban agenda in recent years, as the inevitability of climate change impacts has progressively been recognised among climate scientists. In this context, the article discusses the possibilities of urban design and of public space design by analysing some experiences in different countries. Some examples of adaptation measures applied in the design of public spaces are already known. The positive effects of these measures can be gauged not only by their capacity to reduce local risks (more specifically, flood risk, considering the cases analysed here analysed), but also as beacons of new urban values aiming to face up to contemporary challenges. “Considering public space as an ideal interface for adaptation action, we argue whether the assessment of adaptation initiatives should consider: 1) if the design of a public space comprises adaptation measures and, from a reverse perspective, 2) if the application of adaptation measures comprises the design of a public space.”
Jordi Henrich, in “Campo das Cebolas – Doca da Marinha. A continuous system of pedestrian public spaces open to the city and the river”, presents a public space project conducted for the city of Lisbon. “We develop the proposal with instruments of public space – the design tool for urban quality – integrating the historical, the architectural, the landscape and the artistic and technical values in a synthesis and simplification trying to recover the urban context.” The project involves the articulation of existing public spaces in the city with the proposed new spaces in the regeneration of the river fringe – the riverfront – of Lisbon. This presentation includes the project report submitted to the contest by a Catalan-Portuguese interdisciplinary team in 2013.

Finally, in “Urban Governance and Creative Participation in Public Space and Public Art, or, Is it possible to creatively empower neighbours”, Salas, Vidal and I explore the possibilities of creative citizen participation in order to solve problems of public space, civic memory and urban governance. This work was developed “in the framework of the relationship between the concept of civic participation and that of urban governance, analyses the experience of citizen participation in the Barcelona neighbourhood of Baró de Viver. Two of the results of the process, the Monument to the Cheap Houses and the Wall of Remembrance, enable us to discuss the role of the relationship among technicians, politicians and neighbours in the context of specific project decision making”. It evaluates the results of a citizen participation process we held (2004-2015) in the Barcelona neighbourhood of Baró de Viver, cooperating with the neighbourhood associations and the District Council of Sant Andreu (Barcelona).

I do not want to close this introduction without making a brief mention of Anthony Bovaird and Pedro Brandão. The former, an economist and researcher on local policies and governance, always believed in the interdisciplinary project summarized in this book. The same can be said for the latter, an architect, whose work on interdisciplinarity is a reference point for those who collaborated in this book. Also, I am grateful to Prof. Zuhra Sasa, University of Costa Rica, and the trust shown in organizing, a couple of months before the completion of the CITIES Seminar, the Ibero-American Seminar “Interdisciplinarity in Urban Design” held at the University of Costa Rica. Finally, I thank all the researchers associated with the POLIS Research Centre and the PhD programme Public Space and Urban Regeneration at the University of Barcelona for their cooperation organizing and attending the CITIES event.

Antoni Remesar
Abstract:
This paper considers the possibilities for public art and urban design to implement civic participatory strategies. It starts with a short analysis of the implementation of the Francoist “Ley de Asociaciones” and its impact on the Urban Social Movements of the Spanish Transition till the present day.
In the framework of the relationship between the concept of civic participation and that of urban governance, it analyses the experience of citizen participation in the Barcelona neighbourhood of Baró de Viver. Two of the results of the process, the Monument to the Casas Baratas (Affordable Houses) and the Wall of Remembrance, enable us to discuss the role of the relationship among technic- cians, politicians and neighbours in the context of specific project decision making. Moreover, the paper analyses the role of “facilitator” that our team defends as a working attitude in the processes of citizen participation.

1 CR POLIS, Research Group Art, City, Society. Universitat de Barcelona.
Urban social movements, from dictatorship to democracy

Spain 1964, Manuel Fraga Iribarne, Minister of Information and Tourism, launches a massive propaganda campaign to commemorate twenty-five years of “peace”, presented as a great triumph of the Franco regime. The political discourse of the campaign tried to introduce a more conciliatory narrative – far away from the previous one of a “crusade” – intending to capitalize on the idea of peace associated to economic and social improvements due to the huge economic growth. The aim of the campaign was to leave behind the Civil War, exalting the virtues of an economic Development Plan that enabled the reactivation of the economy through industrialisation and the modernization of Spain (e.g. massive construction of the Seat 600) or the tourism boom, under the motto “Spain is different”.

Fig 1: Residents of the Roquetes neighbourhood working on the construction of the sewer. Archive of Planning, City of Barcelona

Fig 2: Streets without urbanizing in the new “dormitory suburbs” of Barcelona. Archive of Planning, City of Barcelona
Meanwhile, as residents of different neighbourhoods of Barcelona had to build their own sewer system, the Francoist mayor of Barcelona, José María Porcióles, celebrated July 18th as part of the “XXV Years of Peace” campaign, stating that:

The Movement, 2 within the national revolution of [19]36, has polarized two aspects of society – social and economic – which has allowed the miracle of those twenty-five years of peace and the possibility of moving resolutely towards the future on the basis of strong political institutions and hopeful and social structures increasingly prosperous and dynamic. In the external order, even the most reluctant to acknowledge it, the Spanish reality must support the prestige and strength of a nation that has found, in its historical roots, peaceful and noble expression of its desires and has regained the pulse and the authority that give it a respected place in the Western political environment (Porcióles, 1964).

Figs. 3 and 4: General Franco with the Mayor of Barcelona, J. M. Porcióles, looking at a model of the area of La Mina, at the “Barcelona 1974” Exhibition held in 1970. Archive, City of Sant Adrià de Besòs

The translation of these “hopeful and social structures increasingly prosperous and dynamic” led to speculative city planning that pushed the underprivileged to the outskirts of the city, to residential areas built according to the criteria of economic rationality of modern architecture, however, with large deficits of urbanization and a lack of infrastructures and community facilities.

2 The Movement was the name given during the Francoist era to the “unique party” coming from a conglomerate of right wing forces (Tradicionalist, Catholics, Falange, etc.).
Fig. 5: Satirical magazines became one of the media for criticising urban processes of the late Franco regime. Team Butifarra was a comic strip collective founded in Barcelona in 1975, around the homonymous magazine. Its members were Artur, L’Avi, Pere Lluís Barbera, José Briz, Susana Campos, Francesc Capdevila, Montse Clavé, Ricard Doler, Luis García, Alfons López, Antonio Martín, José Luis Mompart, Albert Parareda, Francisco Pérez Navarro, Manuel Puyal, Pepe Robles, Juanjo Sarto, Ricard Soler, Iván Tubau, Carlos Vila and Mari Carmen Vila.

Following Castells (1972), the areas of expansion of Spanish cities follow three different patterns of growth that “even today define the structure of the residential peripheries of most Spanish cities”. All these expansion areas are peripheral to the city centres and the wealthy districts of the city. “These peripheries constituted the cultural medium through which urban social movements developed”. The three patterns of development are:
1. Suburban developments
2. So-called marginal areas of urbanization located in the extreme periphery of the city and illegally built
3. New housing projects, or “polígonos de viviendas” (Castells, 1972)

Suburban development is based on nineteenth-century extensions with relatively narrow streets that were massively densified, substituting, for example, the original two-floor houses 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” (Castells, 1972). The marginal areas of urbanization had their 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”. Finally, the polígonos:3

[...] 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.

Because 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, poorly built, with densities usually higher than 70 apartments per acre, and reaching 150 in some cases. It is not surprising that they generated the sharpest conflicts (Castells, 1972).

In the maelstrom of the “peace” campaign, the Franco government enacts the Associations Act (Ley de Asociaciones), published in the Government Gazette on 28 December 1964. The Associations Act implied, on the one hand, a certain openness of the regime towards the participation of citizens in the development of Spanish politics through the representation of the “heads of families” in political structures and, on the other, a decompression of the harsh living conditions of civil society of the time. Moreover, the Associations Act enabled the configuration of a strong local movement that still endures today. Despite the regime’s rigid political control, the neighbourhood associations gradually set up an organized civil resistance to the regime and, along with the class trade unions (CCOO), established a political alternative.

3 “Polígono” is the name used in Spanish urban planning to refer to an intensive urban development. We can find “housing” and “industrial” estates. See: Ferrer (1996) and Blos (1999).
On account of the housing and demographic issues, some housing policies were developed and reflected in Urban Planning. The pressing urban reality awarded a major role to neighbourhood associations, such as the mainstream Urban Social Movement (Castells, 1973; Domingo – Bonet; 1998), in order to demand improvements to housing and the built environment and to claim an active role in the definition of the city’s development policies, geared towards new modes of production, from an industrial city to a services city. Thus, the role of these social movements became crucial in this period according to Castells:

[...] the coming of democracy in Spain cannot be attributed only to the urban movements. However, it was an essential component in creating a new political culture. Getting broad popular support for the democratic opposition and linking politics to everyday life; reaching middle class sectors and discrediting the only argument left to the defenders of Franco’s regime: it had improved living conditions, an argument that was, now, clearly refuted by the wave of protests by large urban sectors (Castells, 1986).

Some years later, after the 1992 Olympics, Calavita & Ferrer indicate the importance of a particular historical moment that corresponds to the middle years of the political process of the Spanish transition.

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 (Calavita & Ferrer, 2000).

Moreover, according to Jordi Borja (1973) the reactive role of the associations flourished due to:

(1) The need to reverse the living conditions of a large segment of the urban population
(2) The need to mitigate the role of private investors in the development of urban projects
(3) The need to promote more and better housing services, facilities and amenities

In this sense, the citizens’ reactions favoured the emergence of a kind of “advocacy planning”, in which several professional associations, including sociologists, archi-
tects and lawyers, neighbourhood associations and trade associations, started protest and reclaiming campaigns. The alignment of qualified technicians in the structures of neighbourhood associations allowed a series of actions aimed at paralyzing, and to improve and to provide social sense to, the planning proposals from the Administration, creating the basis of socially educated technicians that will be critical during the Spanish political transition, especially after the first municipal elections in 1979.4

> From civic participation to urban governance

As stated by Borja (1977) and Calavita & Ferrer (2000), urban social movements in the Spanish context are characterized by:

1. Direct action and protest tactics focused on issues of collective consumption
2. Grassroots orientation (Castells, 1973)
3. A certain distance from political organizations (clandestine until the mid-seventies)

Gradually, the legal and institutional framework of democracy faced a contradictory situation. On the one hand, local government, the closest to the citizens, implicitly recognized the importance of citizen participation in planning and urban design. Furthermore, this same administration would organize participatory processes to promote a wider citizen engagement in urban policy requirements ruled by the parties in the city government. But, during the political transition, we witness a gradual attempt to control neighbourhood associations – and other grassroots organizations – either through their systematic cancellation in political representation schemes, or the redirection of its activity through participatory regulations and the policies of community planning.

Therefore, while Barcelona gained international recognition through international awards for its public space policy, neighbourhood associations supported a major role in the development of the city’s urban policies:

4 Mayor Porcioles – designated by Franco and who ruled the city for more than fifteen years – could hardly imagine that his words, “Planning imposes [...] a profound change of behaviour, it requires the participation of all social forces, in an authentic intercommunication between administrators and administered that forces us and it binds us all. [...] People cannot continue to have a partial view of their problems. Need to have a complete and comprehensive knowledge of community needs and their assessment [...] Today we demand and require more direct and decisive participation in public affairs, which finds expression in citizen control, in delegated power, in conciliation, in the consultation and in information were already a reality in daily practice” (Porcioles 1970) could describe a similar programme even today.
[...] citizen movement is waiting for new projects, especially when the City Council has already announced that it prioritizes private initiative by the depletion of public resources. It should explicitly recognize the neighbourhood associations, and also the requirement for a participatory memory as a section over all development projects, cultural or social services (FAVB, 1997).

In this sense, Marco Marchioni appropriately pointed out that a society that calls itself and wants to be truly democratic:

[...] cannot really develop and deal with existing problems without genuine participation by all citizens. So at all levels, in all legislation, policy, etc. This society has to encourage, prepare, facilitate and develop participation. The existing problems, their severity, the social consequences of many negative aspects of certain processes in which society lives and those who cannot do without, require increasingly aware citizenship and more participatory (Marchioni, 1994).

Concurrently, the democratic transition highlighted the status of technicians or experts that had been part of the neighbourhood associations assuming, primarily, the role of facilitators. As local democracy was being consolidated, these technicians moved to serve local government and their role changed to that of mediator, a role that always implies a conflict between parties, so that technicians had to assume an intermediary role, that of conflict negotiation. In connection with this new status, Tom Angotty proposes the need to reconsider the figure of the technician within the planning process, reviewing some of the concepts of Davidoff (1965):

The planner isn’t solely a value-neutral technician; instead, values are part of every planning process. City planners shouldn’t attempt to frame a single plan that represents the ‘public interest’ but rather represent and plead the plans of many interest groups. In other words, planning should be pluralistic and represent diverse interests, especially minority interests.

So-called ‘citizen participation’ programmes usually react to official plans and programmes instead of encouraging people to propose their own goals, policies and future actions. Neighbourhood groups and ad hoc associations brought together to protest public actions should rightly do their own plans.

Planning commissions set up as supposedly neutral bodies acting in the public interest are responsible to no constituency and too often irrelevant. There is no escaping the reality that politics is at the very heart of planning and that planning commissions are political.

Urban planning is fixated on the physical city: ‘The city planning profession’s historical concern with the physical environment has warped its ability to see physical structures and land as servants to those who use them.’ Davidoff said that professionals should be concerned with physical, economic and social planning. In a line that was relevant to the founding of the Hunter College urban planning programme, he said, ‘The practice of plural planning requires educating
planners who would be able to engage as professional advocates in the contentious work of forming social policy’ (Angotty, 2007).

In this sense, the balance between technicians and citizens – as it was in the typical resistance situations during the dictatorship – broke quickly; often leaving the process of decision-making related to urban issues in the hands of politicians, if not in the hands of developers. But, as noted by Brandão (2005), this breakdown meant, also, the dominance of disciplinary visions on city making and, to a large extent, the emergence of a new theoretical and practical need: to return to the processes of city-making with an eminent interdisciplinary character.

In 1969 Sherry Arnstein proposed her famous “ladder of citizen participation”:

Arnstein’s ladder shows the clear distinction of what we can call, or not, participation, while denouncing some pseudo participatory processes. Since its publication, several authors have tried to organize the topic (Sanoff, 2000). Multiple experiences and processes have been developed worldwide in situations of different levels of urban and economic development and political awareness, especially since Rio’s summit, at least in terms of participatory budgeting. However, some of the problems identified by Arnstein forty-four years ago still remain and persevere (Salas, 2015; Padilla, 2015).

Among the arguments against community control are: it supports separatism; it creates balkanization of public services; it is more costly and less efficient; it enables minority group ‘hustlers’ to be just as opportunistic and disdainful of the have-nots as their white predecessors; it is incompatible with merit systems and professionalism, and, ironically enough, it can turn out to be a new Mickey Mouse game for the have-nots by allowing them to gain control but not allowing
them sufficient dollar resources to succeed. These arguments are not to be taken lightly. But nei-
ther can we take lightly the arguments of embittered advocates of community control – that eve-
ry other means of trying to end their victimization has failed! (Arnstein, 1969).

Despite this point of view, during the last three decades, several approaches have
been proposed to solve one of the problems inherent in this blockade of the real pos-
sibilities of participation. Formal democracy discredited, there is an awareness that it
is not possible to maintain the democratic system but by extending participatory de-
mocracy.

To surpass the gap between representative democracy and participatory democ-
rapy, the concept of governance has penetrated slowly as a real possibility. In spite of
no consensus on a definition of governance, Ascher (2004) proposed the following one:
“[...] a system of devices and modes of action that brings together institutions and rep-
resentatives of civil society to develop and implement policies and public decisions”. How-
ever, this definition overlaps that of Strategic Planning. Arantes (2002), when re-
viewing the role played by the Strategic Planning in urban development models in
Latin America, alerts us to its perils, because Strategic Planning tell us that:

[...] cities will only become privileged protagonists, as the Information Age promises them, if and
only if, they are properly equipped with a Strategic Plan, able to generate competitive responses
to the challenges of globalization (always in the general language of the prospectus), and that
every opportunity (even in the language of business) for urban renewal might be submit in the
form of a comparative advantage.

[...] as strategic planning is first and foremost a business of communication and promotion,
and needs to define a core, an identitary and powerful nucleus placed in the sphere of the Cul-
ture. What is now on sale is a new product, namely the city itself, needing an appropriate image
policy (Arantes, 2002).

For decades, the International Funding Bodies (IMF, IDB, etc.) pushed cities to im-
plement Strategic Planning to boost urban policies. So it’s not surprising that the UN
itself, or the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) promotes the benefits of
this form of planning:

1. Strategic planning provides a methodology which helps cities identify their
   strengths and weaknesses, while defining the main strategies for local develop-
   ment.
2. Strategic planning brings additional dimensions to technical planning and
   helps prioritise to efficiently allocate resources.
3. Strategic planning offers the possibility of involving a wider range of partners, especially from the communities and the private sector.

4. City Development Strategies build on understanding and developing all aspects of the city, integrating technical, environmental, political, social and economic interests in the same territory.

(UCLG, 2010)

While Strategic Planning, as a social contract and social process, entails a vision of the city in the long term, unfolding strategic guidelines and recommendations, which is called governance, in order to achieve its objectives,

[...] has to do with a particular style of government where the decision making process has a collective character, determined by patterns of interaction between the actors involved in this process, considering that players are not only public actors, but that private actors have a prominent presence throughout the process. This new way of exercising government is characterized by the cooperation between a large number of public and private actors in the formulation and implementation of public policies (UCLG, 2010).

This way, Freeman (2000) suggests some of the advantages of governance:

[...] as a network management system, in which public and private actors share responsibility for defining policies and regulate and provide services. Therefore, a variety of non-governmental actors, companies, NGOs, professional associations, non-profits, are incorporated into public decision making in very different ways (Freeman, 2000).

In any case, both from the standpoint of strategic planning as from the perspective of governance, civic participation is a cornerstone of urban governability processes (Bovaird – Löffer, 2003). In this sense, the European Council of Urbanism, in its New Charter of Athens (1998, 2008), envisages participation as a warranty for the improvement of the environment of the city, its territorial and social cohesion and for the change of its economic base in order to allow development in the context of the knowledge economy.
Since 1998, the POLIS interdisciplinary research team carried out several experiences of citizen participation in peripheral neighbourhoods within the region of Barcelona, specifically in La Mina (Municipality of Sant Adrià de Besòs) and Baró de Viver and Bon Pastor (Municipality of Barcelona). Regardless of their particular characteristics, these neighbourhoods are located in the periphery of the city, as they arise from public housing policies aimed at re-housing people from shantytowns. The result is a poor quality built environment, poor economic environment, a social environment dominated by low levels of education and low professional qualification (Ricart, 2009; Remesar, A. – Luzia, A., 2013). In this territorial context we have developed some participatory experiences such as the “Social Uses of the Besòs River” project (1998-2000) (Remesar – Pol, 2000), the “Mapping La Mina” programme (2000-2006) (Ricart, 2009) and the ongoing projects in Baró de Viver and Bon Pastor (Remesar et al, 2012; Salas, 2015; Padilla, 2015). With the experience gained through the development of such processes, we also progressed in our methodological scope.  

5 For example, in 2003 we introduced the method of CPBoxes (Comment and Pattern Boxes), a methodological technique derived from the work of trend hunters that has produced excellent results (Remesar et al, 2004).
The main goal of these projects is to empower citizens, to empower neighbours to overcome the stages of complaint in order to reach new decision-making stages, cooperatively working with Local Administration and its technicians. Therefore, our role has been that of facilitator.

Built space can be considered a spatial setting. It has a form and, a more or less static meaning regarding the design operations conducted to build it. In this sense, we must consider the dimensions of form and function that the space contains and allows. Strictly, built space is solely a site.

On the other hand, we have the universe of social space, consisting of numerous factors such as perception, desire, collective representations, etc., linked to a greater or lesser extent to the physical space. What turns the built space into public space is its capacity (design options are critical) to connect with the social space: its ability to host social perceptions, desires, representations, and so on. In short, a site becomes a place when it has the capacity to accommodate, in one way or another, the social and the cultural will of people inhabiting it. Therefore, it is crucial to understand that nor the design nor the construction exhaust the creation of public space. Its forms have to be used to trigger the appropriation of space mechanisms essential to public space (Carro, Valera, Vidal, 2010; Valera, 2010). Therefore, public space is not a technical matter; it is a political and social subject.

Therefore, we can note that public space is not a matter of “disciplines”, even if it is too. Public space is, firstly, a subject of civic negotiation. A negotiation by all those agents/stakeholders who may be involved in its creation and use. On the one hand, the neighbours, mapping out their perceptions, desires or representations, not only at the level of the programme for spaces’ uses (which is common in some participatory processes), but also at the level of the form (colour, texture, materials, designs, etc.). On the other
hand, architects, urban designers and artists have to be able to gather and process these mappings – even formally – to turn them into a project. In addition, politicians have to learn to take the appropriate decisions, at times limiting or redirecting neighbours’ proposals, other times politically reconsidering the technical options. As Lefebvre stated:

The dominant trend fragments, cuts space. It enumerates the content of the space, the things, and the various objects. Specialists share the space and act crosscutting it, placing mental barriers and practical-social barriers. Therefore, the architect would own (private) the architectural space, as the economist would own his economic space, the geographer’s “place” his “property” in the sun in space, and so on. The ideologically dominant trend built on the social division of labour plots space (Lefebvre, 1974:107-108).

Usually, the local technical services – either directly or through outsourcing – design public spaces in the city, taking into account the guidelines of municipal policies. Thus, this way of working implies:

1. Assuming that the normal design process is originated in a decision or from the political agenda; technical staff running this decision from disciplinary shared knowledge, commonly in the fields of Architecture, Planning, Urban Design and Engineering.
2. This shared knowledge is based on the principle that other actors can only provide viewpoints regarding the programme, i.e., the content of public space and uses: playgrounds, fountains, green areas, etc.; hereafter, the development of a project becomes an unfolding of technical knowledge that is beyond the reach of ordinary mortals.
3. This attitude relies on the reductionist principle that different areas of the city can be summarized in a set of urban functions: work, leisure, relaxation, sport, walking, movement, and so on.

This functional way of conceiving a design process can be summarized as follows:

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<th>USES: What the technicians and politicians expect from neighbours</th>
<th>Embedded Functions</th>
<th>Programmatic solutions. General: Zone allocation</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Demand for green and tree zones</td>
<td>Leisure. To improve health</td>
<td>Choice of species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand for walkways</td>
<td>Leisure. To walk</td>
<td>Pavements. Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand for playgrounds</td>
<td>Leisure. To Play</td>
<td>Norms and regulations. Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand for tracks and sports facilities</td>
<td>Leisure. To improve health</td>
<td>Norms and regulations. Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand for fountains, bins, benches, etc.</td>
<td>Urban facilities. Complements to other uses</td>
<td>Standard, or not, objects. Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand for lighting</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Norms and regulations. Choice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The central matter of urban design, of the design of public space, is its form, the way we shape the terrain. And, this matter generally does not arise. The resolution of the form is a matter for the “technical knowledge” of the disciplines that historically have tried to deal with such matters. We believe that this appropriation of form, exclusive and excluding, on the part of the “technical knowledge” is based, on the one hand, on a genealogy of knowledge and solutions and, on the other, on the technocratic axiom that this knowledge is unique and its foundation is the control of technical solutions. A clear example of how knowledge can become an exercise of power, an exercise of “domination”. However, we all know that a “form of public space” may take several “forms”.

As we have argued elsewhere (Remesar – Esparza, 2014; Remesar, 2015a, 2015b), the confusion appears when we confuse two different concepts: form-space and form of space. To clarify this distinction, we break the string of discourse, in order to spatialize its contents using a table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form-Space</th>
<th>Pre-Form of Space</th>
<th>Form of Space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Space &amp; Knowledge</td>
<td>the logic of the facilities it will contain for fulfilling certain uses</td>
<td>The shaped and built space responding to technical knowledge and regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Knowledge</td>
<td>and the logic of materials and “forms”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens, Politicians, Technicians</td>
<td>Citizens, Politicians, Technicians</td>
<td>Technicians (Citizens, Politicians)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We think this distinction allows us to find a meeting point for the application of urban governance to the participatory and creative processes needed in order to allow citizens to take part, as actors, in the decision-making processes, shaping and conforming its content and its spatial form. Indeed, any urban actor can reflect, imagine, dream any form-space, but its final appearance as form of space requires some technical knowledge, unless we admit the possibility of building public space through vernacular procedures, which is not the case with public space policies in Barcelona.

6 We follow here the argument raised by Debray (1989) when analyzing the problem of the monument. Debray makes the distinction between “monument form” and “form monument”. In this respect, it is interesting to see also Alexander (1964) and Lefebvre (1973; 1974).
We will see that the right (straight line) and the curve (curve line), the grid (checkerboard) and radio concentric (centrality and periphery) are forms and structures more than textures. The production of space takes up the structures and brings them into sets (textures). Who says texture also says sense, but sense for whom? For any ‘reader’? No. For someone who lives and works in the considered area, ‘subject’ with a body, ‘collective subject’ sometimes. For such a ‘subject’, the forms and structures correspond to the functions of the set. White (absences – presences), margins, and therefore networks and frames, have a lived meaning to be raised to the conceived without breaking it (Lefebvre, 1974: 155-156).

In this sense, to shape the city, in the sense of to give form to space, is increasingly a process of social construction [...] where design professionals should handle three interaction capabilities: Negotiation; Agency; Communication, which must simultaneously contain elements of informative, persuasive and participatory communication (interaction, feedback). For professionals, the development of these skills is essential, in the sense that their communication must exceed the ‘gaps’ of the design:

- BETWEEN professionals and the profane (subjective response, personal, sensitive)
- BETWEEN design professionals and other
- BETWEEN reality and representation (codes of realism, symbolism)
- BETWEEN power and non-power (dominance / ownership of the process)
- BETWEEN the ‘designer and user’ (use requirement, design and value)

(Brandão, 2005)

Furthermore, when we look at the social dimension of space, defending a city with egalitarian vocation (isotopic), the relationship between form and structure should be organized, according to Borja (2009), to fulfil expectations regarding urban cohesion.

7 The main problem is that the community of technical knowledge feels that any transfer from and to other actors, in order to imagine the "space form", implies an attack on an alleged disciplinary autonomy principle derived from the paradigm of autonomy of art established mid-nineteenth century.

8 Borja points out several factors that must be accomplished: (1) To understand the city as public space; (2) The aesthetic value of the form must derive from its function and its quality is part of the content; (3) Urban projects based on public space should contribute to social redistribution; (4) The public space and urban projects must be based on principles of decentralization; participation and social dialogue; (5) Urban projects have different scales, which set policies regarding urban units – neighbourhoods, districts, city, metropolitan area; (6) Civic pride, based on the sense of belonging, requires communication systems, including marketing, to enhance the public esteem (Borja 2009:166).
If public space is the factor that allows an isotopic city or, as one would say in European terminology, “urbanely cohesive”.⁹

The main lack of cohesion problems, we face today, are mostly related with: (1) a lack of physical connectivity mainly generated by phenomena of spatial and functional segregation; (2) hyper-specialisation and economic hyper-specialization of the urban structure, and (3) problems of social exclusion, marginalization and loss of identity (Pinto – Remesar, 2012).

From the experience we have acquired in recent years, we can identify a set of relationships between the actors involved in the processes that may be useful to identify and / or establish participatory policies in the context of urban governance. (See Table 1).

As stated above, our main goal is to empower people, empower neighbours, to enable them to overcome the stages of “complaint” in order to reach new decision-making and cooperative work with the authorities and the technicians. As discussed, our task as facilitators has allowed this achievement. As we noted some time ago, “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 cannot do anything in relation to the capabilities that, genetically and culturally, have been identifying me and my way of being in the world” (Remesar, 2010).

With regard to these capacities and abilities, is our conviction that participatory processes that must occur within the context of the new urban governance should enhance the citizenship by increasing their capacity to intervene in the urban design of the city, while creating opportunities for interaction where the citizen can exercise this right in a free environment. The unfolding of this conviction means that whoever is representing the people’s power should have the sensitivity to offer citizens the opportunity to, firstly, develop their capacities and, secondly, to facilitate the exercise of these capabilities, while providing the resources that allow the binding of wills and the concretion of specific projects.

In short, our experience proves that effective facilitation¹⁰ can enable very positive results in the implementation of a public space project. If the political will of the local government is open to unfolding “bottom-up” governance processes, combining po-

⁹ “The concept we have developed is the result of an application, on the urban scale, of the concept of territorial cohesion that was introduced by the European Union (CEC, 2004). Both concepts involve two important dimensions: (1) Territorial balance, tied in with the physical form of the city and its connections; (2) Social and economic balance, endeavouring to ensure the whole population has equality in access to goods and services, but also that the different areas of the city (planning units) have diversity in terms of functions and cultures” (Pinto-Remesar, 2012:15).

¹⁰ In this case the work done by the team from the University with neighbours in order to increase their empowerment).
political goals and citizens’ objectives, thus implementing both negotiated public space projects and urban design, the process will result in increasing empowerment of citizens. By contrast, when the government uses “top-down” governance criteria the progress in participatory democracy suffers a significant decline. The formal discourse may be similar to that pointed out above regarding the Francoist mayor of Barcelona. A discourse that expresses the benefits of participation but, in real terms, it hides policies of placation and manipulation of participatory democracy.

Table 1. Relationship between actors in participatory processes. The first column indicates the groups of interest (in brackets) and (x) is a logical operator. UB represents CR POLIS, Universitat de Barcelona. District represents both Political Local Staff and Technical Staff of the City Council.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTORS</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE OF THE INTERNAL RELATIONSHIP AMONG ACTORS</th>
<th>TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP OF WORK IN PRACTICE</th>
<th>TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbours (X) UB</td>
<td>Goal-oriented Cooperation</td>
<td>Facilitation / Education</td>
<td>Without or against: resistance strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District (X) Neighbours (X) UB</td>
<td>Goal-oriented Cooperation</td>
<td>Facilitation / Education/ Mediation</td>
<td>With, partnership, roadmap and technical support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbours, University District (X) UB</td>
<td>Negotiating step-by-step. Overall objectives of cooperation, lack of focus</td>
<td>Facilitation, Education (Neighbours / UB) Excessive meetings for coordination</td>
<td>Neither with nor without Blocking of both long-term perspective of institutional relations and the objectives to achieve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In another context, but in the same direction, Tom Angotty points out:

It will be naïve to think that the rising tide of community-based planning, as impressive as it may be, will necessarily continue to grow or even survive. Government leaders have yet to display the political will needed to help community planning to grow beyond this insurgent stage. [...] Megaprojects, new luxury enclaves, and big-box sores are still on the horizon. [...] The obstacles facing community planning are enormous, and its most reliable advocates and allies are part of the broader movements for progressive social change of the city (Angotty, 2007).
Let us review briefly our facilitation working method. Firstly, to make clear that our subject matter is not planning, nor housing plans nor community plans to be implemented; our subject matter is public space.

Public space is the essence of the city. Which means building squares, and small places for ‘living them’ (sometimes two benches and a tree in a corner of a narrow street), supported by elements of urban art [...] distributed in the whole of the city, particularly in dense suburbs that went from alluvial housing to become shared living space (Borja, 2010).

Moreover, public space is considered from its physical dimension as built environment (Borja, 2010:30). So, our work is centred on facilitating tools to people – neighbours – in order to empower them – abilities and capabilities – for their own decision making with respect to changing or improving public space.

Why do we adopt the standpoint of facilitation? Firstly, because we start from the conviction that urban design operations at the local level should serve to solve real and material problems, apart from other possible goals associated with city development and/or marketing. Secondly, because those who know best the public space problems in a given territory are the inhabitants that “suffer” them daily. Thirdly, because we argue that a strategy of problem solving is much more appropriate than a strategy of conflict resolution.

Let us consider this option from an example. Baró de Viver was founded in 1929 and underwent some renovations in the fifties and again later in the eighties. Since its origin, a football field was the most important public space in the neighbourhood. The football field eventually disappeared with the remodelling in the eighties, with pledges of restitution by the City Council of Barcelona. Today the football field does not exist. Its claim has become a conflict between the neighbourhood and the government. The conflict required mediation, since the parties can hardly agree, mainly due to mistrust that the “promises” of the government generate among residents.11

This example of problem solving is one on which we have been working in recent years. What to do with an area of approximately 8,000 square meters allocated to car parking and a practice range for a driving school? A brief visit to the area allows us to identify the different actors and their respective interests: those linked to the sports association that manages a small petanque pitch; those related to the Parents’ Asso-

11 For a more detailed analysis of the urban and social evolution of Baró de Viver see Remesar, A. – Luzia, A. (2013).
ciations of the schools, one public and one private; the interests of all in relation to the quantity and quality of public space conveyed by the Neighbourhood Association and some youth groups associated with the Community Plan.

Table 2. “Tools” that can be provided to the neighbours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analytic</td>
<td>Morphological analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aesthetic analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socioeconomic analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban Design analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning foundations of “technical language”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual</td>
<td>Live Examples of solutions for public space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National or International References</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Neighbourhood managing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Managing with the administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>Developing civic pride and collective self-esteem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here, the unfulfilled promise of a football field is the problem. Once the problem was detected, the stakeholders can initiate a process of participation. By organizing working groups that develop their activities once a week and, from time to time, show their results to the rest of their neighbours in neighbourhood forums (usually coinciding with a neighbourhood celebration) where they discuss, modify and extend the proposals. Once again, the working groups develop collective proposals. If necessary, calls are made for expanded participation of the residents not included in the groups. Finally, the results are displayed, where other residents can express their views.

What results can be achieved when the process is complete? Firstly, a “reformulation” of the problem including different perspectives from different stakeholders. Secondly, we realize how the neighbours have been able to exceed the “programme” of the proposal, to enter into a process of “shaping” – of giving form to – the public space. The “programme of uses” has led to a characterization of the functions of public space and its “modelling”, the creation of sense, of texture, in the words of Lefebvre. So, we achieved a spatial form of public space that meets the proposed requirements of the programme. As result, we get a “project” – a pre-project if you prefer – for public space.
Table 3. From the problem to the strategy for its resolution. (See Table 2).

A project takes form in a model. The model includes a building for a community centre, an area for sports (petanques), a fully fitted square and some “symbolic” elements. Facing the unitary proposal, local authorities granting a dual urban land classification – a zone corresponding to green/open space, and another to social facilities – chose to launch two contests. The first corresponded to a community centre building. The second to the civic plaza posed by neighbours.

Contests were proposed in 2011 after almost three years of tug of war between the neighbours and the district of Sant Andreu. The first contest solved was the Community Centre, a wonderfully simple, flexible and sustainable project by 24 Territory, Architecture and Urbanism. The architects were sensitive to integrating neighbours proposals into the building programme. Moreover, even the volume of the building broadly recalls the neighbours’ naïve proposal shown in the model that they proudly exhibited in district fairs. It is important to remember that in one of these fairs, Jordi Hereu, former president of the district and Mayor of Barcelona at that time, knew about the neighbourhood proposal, a fact that led to the collaboration between neighbours and the district.
As shown in Figure 8, the vicinal project involved a building and public space. Textured public space concretizing a social space full of dreams, desires and will to equate a marginalized neighbourhood with the rest of the city precisely through what defines the Barcelona’s civility: its public space. “The public space as the essence of the city” (Borja, 2009).
While the design of the building presented a programme of uses and can be considered “pre-form” able to be shaped in many different architectural forms – such as it happened – this was not so with the design of the public space: the square in front of the building. The neighbours’ proposal had a structure opposing the organic nature of the public space to the linearity of the building. The landscape design of the square, incorporated hard and soft openings to spaces; with areas of sun and shade; with its roads and pavements allowing the transition from busy areas to calm areas. The design included facilities, such as a “remembrance playground” – reproducing the
archetypal image of a house to represent the old houses that shaped and defined the neighbourhood from its origins, *Casas Baratas* – and a leisure space organized around a moving fountain. The project respected also the interest of some neighbourhood groups in relation to the game of boules. It was not just a programme, a pre-form, it was a clearly defined spatial form that could easily result in an executive project. The square was defined by the will to create a space for meeting, inclusive and intergenerational. A lively and colourful place for a living community.

When outdoor areas are of poor quality, only strictly necessary activities occur. When outdoor areas are of high quality, necessary activities take place with approximately the same frequency – though they clearly tend to take a longer time because the physical conditions are better. In addition, however, a wide range of optional activities will also occur because place and situation now invite people to stop, sit, eat, play, and so on (Gehl, 1971).

Neighbours quickly accepted the building project. Not so the project for the square. The neighbours’ project for the square had organicist resonances of the cubist Burle Marx and was built in extrusion, with overlapping material layers, like in a collage. A large ground plan, in red asphalt, linked the square with its environment. Above this plane emerged the various organic forms.

The winning project looks like an application of the “*Poème de l’angle droit*” by Le Corbusier, of the cubist design by Gabriel Guevrekian for the garden in Ville Noailles (1923-1929), or the scenography designs by Robert Mallet-Stevens. It breaks the initial organic idea and proposes an organization of public space like a sort of territorial plan at scale 1:750. Possibly BIMSA – a municipal company responsible for the implementation of the project – and the District itself made recommendations for the project to contain everything that the neighbours had asked for. A transcript of the neighbourhood programme, modulated from the square. We can consider the project of the square as a good exercise in tokenism on the part of the local government. As pointed out by Armstein, tokenism is the policy and practice of making a perfunctory gesture towards the inclusion of members of minority groups. Thus, the project presents spatial hypertrophy of the boules fields and their facilities, claimed by the minority of the petanque club. The provision of equipment and furniture are also hypertrophied. The result can be evaluated in the photographs.

12 The issue of the square became an exercise of the master’s degree in Urban Design (2009-2010). The proposal can be found in Parra, J. et al (2010).
Fig. 16: The firm Scob presented a first proposal for the civic plaza. After several meetings with neighbours, this proposal went out to tender. Regarding the symbolic element that neighbours suggested, a contest was to be established.

However, the big problem of the neighbourhood project lies in the value granted to particular symbolic elements that will become aggregators of the project’s spatial “noise”. While at first – no obvious arguments – the District refused to use mirrors of water or moving water, thereafter the design incorporated a row of fountains, bland and ungainly. However, the final drama was to come, and this time not at the hand of architects. In the neighbourhood project there were two symbolic elements, an ob-
elisk and the silhouette of the bridge that linked the neighbourhood with Santa Coloma, a bridge that, many years ago, the fierce waters of the Besos River tore down. Today, with perspective, we consider it a mistake not to have further considered the neighbourhood discussion of which object could have symbolic value for them. The strong concept of the representation of the “casas baratas” could not be used in the square, as already in 2011 (see below) it had been transferred, as a monument, to the top of the Rambla Ciutat de Asuncion. District administration decided on a restricted competition within the School of Arts and Crafts, arguing that it had achieved a success with a monument proposal for the nearby Assemblea de Catalunya square – a square completely redesigned – that, however, to our understanding ruins the corten steel fountain designed by Olga Tarrasó (1996).

Fig. 18: Original fountain by Olga Tarrasó.

Fig. 19: The fountain with the new monument.

Poor targeting by young artists. Mismanagement of the process. A committee in which participated the District, representatives of the Public Art Central Unit, neighbours13 and even ourselves,14 chose three of the six submitted projects. The District organized a consultation with neighbours so they could vote for their preference. Certainly, the winning proposal was the only figurative proposal; the only proposal that also fit the budget allocated by the District and BIMSA technicians. Cast iron suitcases and a pseudo-bridge (see photos), a metaphor for the process of migration, a

13 It is important to note that at the time of completion of the contest, the board of the Neighborhood Association had left office, the District virtually proceeded to dismantle the premises of the Association, until a new group of residents offered to reflag it. The representative of residents in the evaluation meetings was confused and overwhelmed by the presence of “technicians” in a clear situation of placation (Arnstein).

14 In these meetings, we note that it was better to paralyze the competition, once it was clear that the winning project was not to be the most innovative, nor the most original, but rather a cliché.
search for identity that in any case, and in reality, is not a topic in the social imaginary of the neighbourhood, as evidenced by the Wall of Remembrance (see below). The sculpture made us revert to the public art practices of the eighties, which promoted a human scale and empathy of the work with the public. All these characters, portraits set in iron and bronze, standing with no pedestal or sitting on a street bench, which we can embrace, kiss, touch, rub, and that fill the streets of our cities. At least the artist had the sensitivity to do away – metonymically – with the human figure in his work.

In other words, residents chose the “Bridge of Suitcases” sculpture not because they identified with the content that the sculptor allegedly intended to convey, that of a migratory past, but because it was the only proposal that coincided with the cultural “habitus” (Bourdieu, 1994) of the neighbours. This means that the sculpture was chosen not because it was the most “liked” (which it was), but because it was the only one that the neighbours could understand and recognize as a work of art full of symbolism (Remesar, 2003). Is this a failure of the other art works? No, rather, a huge failure in the working process. The consultation broke the working procedures associated with the participatory process. This consultation, a form of tokenism, broke the structure of “facilitation” that our team had established as a methodology, and forced the neighbours into black and white decision-making, without evaluating the “scale of greys” that accommodated the other proposals. Our methodology allows us to find a

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15 Every city has at least one of these works of art in which we see more polished and gilded parts (hands, beards, breasts, etc.), because there is a habit of touching them. Urban rituals within the framework of urban legends.

16 “Notwithstanding, they often forget that the big difference between public art and art in public space, lies in the fact that the first aims that citizens have control over the aesthetics of their own environment, and the second supposes, in one way or another, an aesthetic imposition by those who manage the programs” (Remesar, 2003). Even when this imposition takes the democratic form of a “local consultation”.

17 In other words, empowerment permits neighbours to formulate a “form of space” (see the image 1 model), enabling a fluent interaction using the “technical language” of the administration and the technicians. The projects of a “form of space” and a “building form” will collect the key components of the negotiation in terms of the “form-space” and “form-building”. The material specificity of public space and of the building will substantially differ from the formal proposals of the neighbours, but it shall gain an informed consensus. Afterwards, this has to be negotiated with the local government. It is time to enter a second phase of the participatory project. In this phase, technicians and local politicians have much to say, both from the perspective of the fi-
space for interaction between technicians and neighbours within the symbolic space, which allows us to overcome tensions between the conceptions of one or the other about the perceived space. David Harvey (2009:29), quoting Ernest Cassirer, raises three levels of spatiality. The first, organic space, refers to the kind of spatial experience which appears to be genetically transmitted and, hence, biologically determined. The second, perceptual space, is more complex. “It involves the neurological synthesis of all kinds of sense experience – optical, tactual, acoustic and kinesthetic. This synthesis amounts to a spatial experience in which the evidence of various senses is reconciled.” An instantaneous schema or impression may be formed and memory may lead to the retention of that schema over time. When memory and learning are involved, the schema may be subject to addition or subtraction by culturally learned modes of thought. “Perceptual space is primarily experienced through the senses, but we do not yet know how far the performance of our senses is affected by cultural conditioning.”

The third kind of spatial experience is abstract and Cassirer calls this symbolic space.

Here, we are experiencing space vicariously through the interpretation of symbolic representations, which have no spatial dimension. I can conjure up an impression of a triangle without seeing one simply by looking at the word ‘triangle’. I can gain experience of spatial form by learning mathematics and in particular, of course, geometry. Geometry provides a convenient symbolic language for discussing and learning about spatial form, but it is not the spatial form itself.

These three levels of spatial experience are not independent of each other. The abstract geometries which we construct require some interpretation at the perceptual level if they are to make intuitive rather than logical sense – hence all the diagrams (David Harvey, 2009).

Urban design, public art and memory

The process of neighbours’ empowerment brings out the “sense of belonging to a place” and deepens the processes of social identity and of local pride. Identity is intimately tied to memory. As Hayden states, both our personal memories (where we have financial viability of the project, and from the perspective of technical and structural characteristics of the project itself. If everything runs well the project can go forward. However, as stated above, after negotiations, after putting on the table technical arguments – be they constructive, urban or budgetary – the “form of the building”, the “form of space” are far from the “forms” proposed by the neighbours in their initial project. However, the “form-project” holds and retains not only the programme of uses defined by the neighbours, but also the main structural features of the project derived from the citizen participation process. Quoting Lefebvre, projects have won “texture” and they have gained in social meaning.
come from and where we have dwelt) and the collective, or social memories are inter-
connected with the histories of our families, neighbours, fellow workers and eth-
nic communities.

Urban landscapes are storehouses for these social memories, because natural features such as
hills or harbours, as well as streets, buildings, and patterns of settlement: frame the lives of many
people and often outlast many lifetimes. Decades of ‘urban renewal’ and ‘redevelopment’ of a
savage kind have taught many communities that when the urban landscape is battered, impor-
tant collective memories are obliterated. Yet even totally bulldozed places can be marked to re-
store some shared public meaning, a recognition of the experience of spatial conflict, or bitter-
ness, or despair. At the same time, in ordinary neighbourhoods that have escaped the bulldozer
but have never been the object of lavish municipal spending, it is possible to enhance social
meaning in public places with modest expenditures for projects that are sensitive to all citizens
and their diverse heritage, and developed with public processes that recognize both the cul-
tural and the political importance of place (Hayden, 1997).

Paraphrasing David Harvey, memory itself may be fading and spatial parts of the
image, not enforced, can disappear very quickly. The social space is not only variable
from one individual to another and from one group to another, it also changes over time
(Harvey, 1977 p.31). But, as pointed out by this author we must discriminate the his-
tory and the memory: “history (a relative temporal concept) is not the same as memory
(a relational temporal concept)” (Harvey, 2006).

While good urban design has the ability to link the present with the past, estab-
lishing connections between ongoing construction and its relationship to the cul-
ture of “city-making” of a certain territory, public art features constructive and con-
ceptual tools necessary to establish the link between “memories” and “history”
(Remesar, 2015).

But, whose identity? Which collectivity? Again, experience suggests that citizen
participation processes are fundamental. In late 2010, two favourable events upset
our working process with the neighbours, centred at that moment on the negotiation
of the projects for the civic square and the building for the Community Centre (see
above). The first was the construction work on Ciutat de Asunción Street on the drain-
age system of a major development project related to the high-speed railway. The
second was the installation of noise screens – a barrier of 750 m long by 4 meters high –
on the road to Santa Coloma.
The street Ciutat de Asunción was, and remains, a neighbourhood boundary. Before its redevelopment, it was unused due to its design: a green tab, which reinforced the idea of limit and prevented its use. In the first participatory workshops (2005-2006) a group of local youths came up with the idea of turning the street into a “Rambla”, creating a new public space for the neighbourhood. Several years later, ADIF works allowed the transformation of the street into a civic Rambla. District officials got a commitment from ADIF to, after completion of the sewage works, renew the street according to the project presented by the District. The previous study was conducted by students of the master’s degree in Urban Design at the University of Barcelona (Paddilla et al, 2010), while later developments and the executive project were conducted by the neighbours, CR POLIS and the technical staff of the District (A.V. Pi i Margall et al, 2011).

18 A Rambla is a boulevard with a central pedestrian area lined with trees. Side channels carry the road traffic. The politics of public spaces in Barcelona enabled the creation of various Ramblas in several neighborhoods of the city.

19 ADIF (Administrador de Infraestructuras Ferroviarias) is the public company in charge of the remodelling and construction of railways.
The mystified idea of village life\textsuperscript{20} is present in the collective imaginary and overlies the following objective data: small houses, houses with minimum habitability conditions, isolation from the urban fabric, basic standard of living. This mystified notion holds memories and feelings associated with basic emotions related to those who are no longer alive. It is a strong, dominant idea that further explains who the neighbours are and what the neighbourhood is today. The memory of “affordable houses” (Casas Barates) was present in the neighbourhood project conducted for the civic square. The proposal was a children’s playground recreating the old village life with small replicas of cheap houses. (See Figs. 11-15). Nostalgia for a better time has been always present in the workshops, especially when involving people of a certain age. In Baró de Viver we can find people who spent their childhood in the “affordable-cheap houses”. Others who came to the neighbourhood in the 1950s and 1960s and, finally, young people who were born and grew up in a different neighbourhood because of the demolition of cheap houses and the subsequent urban developments.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{20} With houses which kept doors open, kids playing in the streets and roads and neighbours carrying out their social life in the streets.

As is well known, where there is a European regulation for the installation of street furniture, this concerns the playgrounds. Therefore, after the first meetings with the District, this playground disappeared from the agenda. The new project for the Rambla allowed the resurgence of the idea, this time in the form of a monument. The monument-form reproduces the archetypal idea of the house. That idea that we constantly see in children’s drawings. Thus, this monument has been designed by the neighbours and for the neighbours. It intends to recall a time that has passed and will not return. A space-time that is a repository of personal emotions and memories. As these feelings and these memories are shared, the monument reflects a collective space-time and becomes a condenser of the collective memory. The first idea was that the neighbours build the house. Later, because of the urgency of the District to complete the Rambla, was the municipal architect who was in charge of the construction.
The Wall of Remembrance

Murals are a common practice in so-called Community Art. Artists work with local groups who even physically perform the mural under their supervision. The results are very diverse, both in content and in visual quality. Nevertheless, generally, the work procedure is based on collecting a series of allegories about the theme to develop. In this sense, personal remembrances prevail. The “memory exercise” is based on individual remembrances or allegorical synthesis.

Fig. 26. Monument to the Cases Barates (“cheap houses”).

Fig. 27: Chicago – Chicago Public Art Group and Edgewater Community, Edgewater Mural, 2008.

Fig. 28: San José de Costa Rica – Natalia Morales / ACNUR, Displacement, Encounter, Coexistence, 2009.

“In 1975 when the Great Wall was still a dream, I never imagined it would lead me, the more than 400 young ‘Mural Makers’ and the 35 other artists on my team through such a moving set of experiences. Nor could I have imagined that 27 years from the date the first paint was applied to the wall that it would still be a work in progress. When I first saw the wall, I envisioned a long narrative of another history of California; one which included ethnic peoples, women and minorities who were so invisible in conventional textbook accounts. The discovery of the history of California’s multi-cultured peoples was a revelation to me as well as to the members of my teams. We learned each new decade of history in summer instalments; the 20s in 1978, the 30s in 1980, the 40s in 1981, and the 50s in 1983” (Baca, s/f).
For the Baró de Viver mural, we tried to combine history and memory. The linear character of the support (the noise barriers) was a good excuse to try the exercise. In recent years, through the urban design projects developed within the master’s degree in Urban Design, and in the PhD programme in Public Space and Urban Regeneration, we have developed the “Timeline / Atlas methodology”. The Timeline allows us to articulate the significant moments of a subject matter. The Atlas generates meaningful nodes in the timeline by providing documents of various types (plants, maps, prints, photos, texts, and so on). The idea of the timeline comes from interactive games. The idea of the atlas comes from Cerdà’s work (Cerdà, 1859; Remesar- García, 2013).

The work process was as follows. In various workshops with Baró de Viver’s neighbours, they were able to identify what they considered the important moments for collective memory. These results were compared with documents and archive research carried out by the CR POLIS team. A relevant point of this research was to obtain the legal document certifying the passage of Baró de Viver and Bon Pastor, from the mu-
The municipality of Santa Coloma to that of Barcelona (1944). Thus, we managed to develop the level of allegory, beyond individual remembrance, towards articulating a historical narrative, although not entirely corresponding to the official one. The history of a city highlights certain historical facts that enable one to articulate the framework within which history unfolds in a neighbourhood, but from a local perspective (the neighbourhood) it is indispensable to highlight some local facts having an alternative value with respect to the general narrative of the city, as it is essential to reflect local history. How did we develop the approach to discovering the neighbourhood’s relational content, the content of memories? We started working with neighbourhood youths. As the Neighbourhood Association states:

In 2009, neighbourhood youth conducted a series of design proposals for noise screens at the Paseo de Santa Coloma. During the main festival of the neighbourhood and the Third Participation Forum that same year, these proposals were presented to all the neighbours that could comment on them. Sound screens now installed, it is time to define a final design proposal and we again ask you for your cooperation. One idea that is ongoing is to organize ‘a memory archive of the neighbourhood’, a photo album of Baró de Viver since its birth to the present. For this reason we invite you to bring photos, pictures, newspaper clippings, letters, etc. that you would like displayed on the noise screens (A.V. Pi I Margall, 2010).

Figs. 34-35. Images of the workshops in which both the “order of the discourse” of the mural and the characterization of the Monument to the Affordable Houses were discussed.
CR POLIS collected over 4,000 photographs, and signed over 400 assignment contracts of image rights. We used most of the photographs. A lot in the mural in itself – in some cases by means of single images composed of hundreds of images. We used some others in the exhibition “Baró de Viver, Talks in Images”, which served to present the project at the Cultural Centre of the District. Finally, the Neighbourhood Association is the trustee of the archive that is available to all residents.

As for the mural’s content, it is divided into two parts. One, the lower section, reproduces the profile (sky-line) of the destroyed and re-built neighbourhood establish-
ing continuity across the surface. The other combines images (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. Thus, a neighbourhood that has not been benefited from the process of *monumentalization* of the periphery (Bohigas, 1985) received a work of public art, one of the few created from a structural civic participatory process in Barcelona.

![Fig. 40: The Wall of Remembrance.](image)

The mural could have been just graffiti, a simple and fast technique with clear forms, so easy to read. It is, however, very conceptual, recalling the history and development of the Baró de Viver neighbourhood from its origins in 1929. “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 1953 regional development plan, and the changes of “large-scale urban projects” resulting from the 1992 thoroughfares plan, and 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 hairstyles 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” (Grandas, 2011). The writing on the mural is not long, but is rather the fundamental part of the work, linking the reproductions of documents and texts and 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.
In the Baró de Viver mural, colour is once more an important feature, lively and warm, making the reading and analysis of the memorial message easier. But unlike the project in La Mina, colour is the result of combinations: the yellow tones in the background serve to unify the elements in the structure and a variety of different colours are used casually and randomly in the reproduced graphic images (Grandas, 2011).

To round off, it should be highlighted that the artistic work developed by CR POLIS shows a modern conception of the arts that convey messages as they use the latest technologies – cutting-edge at the time of completion – and express a break with traditional artistic languages. Eighty years ago, this would have been a mural covered with reliefs, but today it is a wall with flat, cut-out figures, full of colour as they are made from slightly overlapping photographs.

The images combine human forms with letters and traditions: two men practicing Greco-Roman wrestling, four other human figures, the neighbourhood initials ‘BdV’, a boy and a girl, and the neighbourhood’s giant figure crafted from the drawings made in one of the local school workshops. A good and wise choice that gives force to the message of a memorial that is ready to receive the accounts of neighbourhood life yet to be written (Grandas, 2011).

As pointed out by Brandão (2010, 2011), the project of public space requires a willingness of actors to share a foundational conviction:

Throughout 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 in such disciplines is then valid in the field of urban stakeholders. Participatory processes should aim to enable citizens to gain power, in the sense of empowering citizens to have ownership of their own city. Not only as users or through use, but as citizens to which we are able to entrust the processes of creation of forms, of space, of art. Processes that run beyond the politician’s terms in office, which require greater consensus between citizens and parties. Therefore, these processes turn out to be slow processes of negotiation between neighbours, politicians and technical staff. Processes in which it is not necessarily the arguments and technical proposals
of local government that are the appropriate arguments and proposals for public art and urban design by the citizens.

The creative capacity is always that of a community or a community group, a fraction of acting class, an ‘agent or actant’. [...] If there is a monument, this is an urban group that built it, either free or dependent on a (political) power. Necessary, the description is not enough. It would be insufficient, pure awareness of space, of describing rural and industrial landscapes and urban spatiality. [...] The analysis of an area leads to this dialectic relation: request – command, with the questions: ‘Who? For whom? By whom? Why and how?’ (Lefebvre, 1974:131).

![Fig. 41: The exhibition “Baró de Viver talks in Images” held at the Civic Centre in Sant Andreu and presenting the projects for the neighbourhood (2011).](image)
In the late Franco era and in the early years of the democratic transition, different professional groups (lawyers, sociologists, architects, etc.) played a clear role as facilitators (advocacy planning) in the context of the process of claim from Urban Social Movements, especially under the Spanish “Associations Act”. Later, when these technicians began to draw up the technical and political framework of democratic local governments, facilitation processes gradually disappeared, being replaced by various structures of mediation (community plans, regulations for participation, for example) between the local government and the claimants, typically involving complaints or suggestions from residents. These structures configure today the complex network of urban governance. A necessary but often overly bureaucratic network, which can result, as happens in university governance, in the administration and neighbours working to meet politically approved governance requirements (leading to different quality control systems, including transparency, traceability of processes, representativity, etc.) but that prevent or impede the real solution of local problems.

In this sense, returning to the classic work by Arnstein, we can confirm that, while progress has been made in the discourse of participation and participatory governance, the mechanisms of placation and tokenism are over-represented in participatory processes. Normally, local government considers its relationship with neighbours is supported in a conflictive relationship. Therefore, it tends to develop containment strategies, especially through mediation structures.

In this paper we have shown that there are other possibilities in which facilitation processes are essential. We should remember that city-making is “a process of social construction [...] where design professionals should handle three interaction capabilities: Negotiation; Agency; Communication, which must simultaneously contain elements of informative, persuasive and participatory communication (interaction, feedback)” (Brandão, 2011). We would add that specific processes of empowerment are also required in the framework of problem solving strategies. In this context, as Angotty said, “The planner isn’t solely a value-neutral technician; instead, values are part of every planning process. City planners shouldn’t attempt to frame a single plan that represents the ‘public interest’ but rather ‘represent and plead the plans of many interest groups’. In other words, planning should be pluralistic and represent diverse interests, especially minority interests” (Angotty, 2008). As public space is a political subject, of city policy but also, as we have seen, of urban cohesion, the democratic representatives of the people cannot escape – by managing the conflict – their duty to build-up a better and more critical citizenship. A citizenry empowered to solve the
specific problems of their living space. Citizens who can intervene in the spatial form of their neighbourhood. It is necessary to reactivate forms of “facilitation” that enable the empowerment of citizens.

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URBAN GOVERNANCE AND CREATIVE PARTICIPATION


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THE ART OF URBAN DESIGN IN URBAN REGENERATION


THE ART OF URBAN DESIGN IN URBAN REGENERATION

This volume comprises transcripts of the presentations made at the international seminar “CITIES. Interdisciplinary Issues in Urban Regeneration, Urban Design, Public Art and Public Space”, organized by the POLIS Research Centre and the PAUDO (Public Art and Urban Design Observatory) network in December 2013.

The book traces the paths of economic and political theory concerning the role of urban regeneration processes, from an overview of the policies implemented in Europe to their actual impact on job creation and local innovation initiatives. It addresses physical aspects of urban design processes, analysing an interdisciplinary project for urban regeneration of the Lisbon riverfront, and proposes some ideas on how to deal with climate change in the construction of public space in cities. Finally, the book concludes with a reflection on new modes of urban governance that can make an urban environment more liveable, evaluating the involvement of neighbours re-converting their role from consultive partners to active participants in the physical (urban design) and symbolic (public art) transformation of their communities. Thus, the book encompasses a broad reflection on urban regeneration, with contributions from disciplinary fields as diverse as Economics, Public Policy, Urban Design and Architecture, Landscaping and Public Art, and draws attention to the need for further interdisciplinary work.