Public spaces developments in Lyon (France) and Barcelona (Spain): a successful strategy against social exclusion and urban poverty?

Fatiha Belmessous
Université de Lyon, ENTPE, EVS – RIVES, UMR 5600,
e-mail: fatiha.belmessous@entpe.fr

Teresa Tapada Berteli
Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona
e-mail: Teresa.Tapada@uab.cat

Abstract

Today’s main focus on urban renewal projects has been partly on creating and managing the public spaces of cities. They have been at the centre of debates concerning the privatization of space, the disputed nature of public spaces and the various ways in which they can be designed and developed. Barcelona and Lyon, both European metropolises, have been concerned by the interventions in public spaces as a cornerstone of urban revitalization strategy. The experience in Barcelona has been taken up as a successful example by the municipal government of Lyon. Some parallels can be drawn in the light of these cities focusing on the interventions on public spaces at different levels within the city centre and peripheral large scale housing estates.

This paper presents the conceptual framework of an empirical research in progress1 dealing with the changes of the city centre in two metropolises (Lyon and Barcelona) and discusses the meanings of public space within urban renovation policies, particularly the evolution of their legitimization. With its exploratory approach, this study aims to:

• Bring out the influence and co-occurrence links between the discourse of public space programmes (a local level) and the European scale (the influence of the European Fund Agency and Eurocities as an important cities networks) and the dissemination of the ideas;

• Understand how this rhetoric language has changed (or not) the way to intervene in the public spaces within cities centers.

Our main idea is that the analysis of micro objects as public spaces can be relevant to understand partly the importance of these interventions within urban policies and the increase of discourses of legitimization, mainly with the normalization of a “conceptual discourse” and the spreading of the now standard terms (social cohesion and social mix).

Keywords: public space policies; social mix; social exclusion; social cohesion; Europeanization.

1 To make this research, Fatiha Belmessous received a grant from the Region Rhône-Alpes, France (CMIRA) and stayed in Barcelona from April to June 2011.
Introduction

This paper presents the conceptual framework of an empirical research in progress based on the changes of the cities centre in two metropolises (Lyon and Barcelona) and discusses the meanings of public space within urban renovation policies. With its exploratory approach, this study aims to:

• Bring out the influence and co-occurrence links between the discourses of public space programmes and the idea of Europeanization and the dissemination of the ideas;
• Understand how this rhetoric language has changed (or not) the way to intervene in the public spaces within cities centers.

Due to the European integration and political rescaling (Brenner, 2004), the making of urban policies and the shaping of processes and structures of urban governance takes place within a multilevel institutional environment, that is more complex than during the 80’s. The European Union carries out its own policies for cities’ competitiveness and social cohesion (Tofarides, 2003) providing local actors with resources and models for action. Moreover the EU serves as a target for cities’ strategies which are directed toward international arenas (d’Albergo and Lefevre, 2007). Another transnational actor (cities’ network) provides policy-makers with cognitive resources and more or less explicit normative pressures.

The legitimization of the interventions within cities centers’ neighbourhoods and the spreading of “conceptual discourse” used by the politicians and technicians deals with a number of structural changes, which are taking place outside cities and are primarily beyond their control. They are:

 Economic globalization, with power going upwards from the nation state and the loss of local control;
 Economic restructuring, which is creating divided labour markets;
 Competition between cities, regions and nations as well as firms, with winners and losers within as well as between cities;
 The restructuring of welfare states with the loss of support for already vulnerable individuals, communities and areas.

Our main idea is that the analysis of the micro object (public space) highlights the transition of methods, mainly due to the transformation of the environment: from a “traditional” transformation during the 1980s at a territorialized scale, these “external” changes (a new global level in economical and spatial environment) have produced novelties in the way to implement and legitimate the interventions. From the 2000s, the interventions are more considered as the “mirror” of the city, a positive image and a part of the branding strategies of Lyon and Barcelona.

The methodological approach: the making of a comparative research’s object

Those who engage in the comparative method and attempt to control the effects thereof are aware of a number of difficulties that involve the tension between the method and the object. To simplify, the difficulties arise from the fact that, on the one hand, comparison is a cognitive operation that, by its nature and function is in accordance with a principle of binary opposition between differences and similarities; and on the other hand, is applied in the social sciences to empirical subjects that are historically situated. For example, the notion of public space appeared in France in the administrative literature during the 1970s with aiming at determining the spaces within the large-scale housing estates. Then, the meaning of the notion has changed, mainly because of the Anglo-Saxon acceptance.

The approach developed by M. Werner and B. Zimmermann (2004) in De la comparaison à l’histoire croisée² provides the theoretical and methodological framework of the paper: indeed, the concept of

² Can be translated: “From comparison to historic cross”.
corporations seeking to serve an expanded Southern European trans-logistics, research, development value added manufacturing and tertiary business service functions of all those corporations seeking to serve an expanded Southern European trans-national region.

The ideological assumptions.

As a conclusion we proposed a more in depth analysis of the theory of social mix especially defining its limits concerning the ideological assumptions.

In a previous paper presented at the ENHR conference in 2006, “Reconsidering social mix theory” we compared and analyzed the use of the concept of “social mix” in four different countries (France, United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Sweden). As a conclusion we proposed a more in depth analysis of the theory of social mix especially defining its limits concerning the ideological assumptions.
acclaimed “network of major European cities”, Eurocities is, above all, a pressure group that represents the interests of large cities in and around the European Union’s institutions. Eurocities has acted both as a forum for developing common political stances as well as allowing for the development of joint projects related to urban policy. City-states could re-emerge which promote citizenship and solidarity and could organize on a European level, thus helping to account for the waning of the nation-state as a source of identity. For Lyon and Barcelona, their participation in Eurocities’ network and its working groups allowed them to play a role within a new configuration of political intermediation and to facilitate access to a supranational governmental level.

The effects and/or goals of the Europeanization and the standardization of concepts and values

Our main hypothesis is linked to the use of academic concepts by the urban policy makers: indeed we think that it is closely connected to the Europeanization of the urban policies and its rhetoric. As the Europeanization notion is still discussed, we have chosen the definition done by Radaelli (2000:3). Following the author, the Europeanization refers to: “processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ‘ways of doing things’ and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of European Union decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies.”

The interest of such definition is that it goes beyond the notion of ‘impact’ of the European Union on local systems. Following this definition we want to discuss the European measures and thus the normative notions incorporated into national and local urban policies. They aim to improve social connection and social order by reducing the spatial concentration of poverty, unemployment, deprived social/ethnic groups and weak social capital. Within these programmes, the ambiguous principle of social cohesion and the notion of social mix are interpreted differently (Le Galès, 2007:225).

Social cohesion: the key-concept at the European level?

To explain the idea of standardization of this concept in a territorial acceptance, we have to make the genesis of the notion, from the ‘social exclusion’ to ‘social cohesion’. First, we have to underlie that the European level has been decisive for the introduction and the spreading of the two concepts in a few years (Rom, 1995; Berger-Schmitt, 2000).

In the realm of analysis and research, ‘social exclusion’ is a rather new concept (Rom, 1995). At first sight, it was launched at the European level as a practical alternative to the old poverty concept. But the conceptual difference is that the traditional concept of poverty is now restricted to denote a lack of income, whereas the concept of social exclusion refers to a breakdown or malfunctioning of the major societal systems that should guarantee full citizenship (Berghman, 1995).

“One’s sense of belonging in society depends on all four systems. Civic integration means being an equal citizen in a democratic system. Economic integration means having a job, having a valued economic function, being able to pay your way. Social integration means being able to avail oneself of the social services provided by the state. Interpersonal integration means having families and friends, neighbours and social networks to provide care and companionship and moral support when these are needed. All four systems are therefore important. In a way, the four systems are complementary: when one or two are weak the others need to be strong. And the worst off are those for whom all systems have failed.” (Commins, 1993:4).

As referring to major social institutions, social exclusion could be conceived in terms of the denial (or non-realization) of citizenships rights.

In that sense, the idea of social cohesion of a society received great political attention at the national level (in that case in France) and supranational level (the European Commission has strongly
emphasized the economic and social cohesion of the European Union as a main goal policy⁵). By implementing many norms and rules at the European level, the belief is that the cohesion measures will compensate for any negative effects of restructuring which may result from the pursuit of neoliberal growth policies (Amin, 2002). But in the academic literature, the concept has been differently defined. Indeed, social cohesion is viewed as a characteristic of a society dealing with the connections and the relations between societal units such as individuals, groups or associations as well as territorial units (city, region, state) (McCracken, 1998). As referring to Berger-Schmitt, the “concept of social cohesion incorporates mainly two goal dimensions which can be analytically distinguished: the first dimension concerns the reduction of disparities, inequalities and social exclusion. The second dimension concerns the strengthening of social relations, interactions and ties.” (Berger-Schmitt, 2000). This last dimension embraces all aspects which are generally considered as the social capital of the society.

The association of social cohesion with a crisis of social order is closely linked to the “new geography” of deprivation and the problems of disorder (crime and fear of crime), associated with economic, physical and social degradation in some urban neighbourhoods (Lea, 1999).

The spatial polarization of social problems is addressed through spatially differentiated and measures, that reveal a direct connection with the European Initiative which utilized many aspects of the national programs and un turn, provided the national programs with stronger legitimization and cognitive resources (d’Albergo and Lefevre, 2007). The French Politique de la Ville policy and its main instrument (the Zones Urbaines Sensibles as target-areas) illustrate this orientation (Estève, 2001).

From the social cohesion to social mix: the best guide to integrate mainstream norms in some French social neighbourhoods?

Launched in the early 1980s as a response to the spatial concentration of social deprivation in the peripheral areas of certain cities, this target-areas policy have been carried out some attempt to connect social cohesion, social mix and urban development. Recently (above all after the riots of 2004), the policy emphasizes the ideological connections between the risks represented by these neighbourhoods, especially by the young inhabitants (the category “jeunes des quartiers” is often used) in terms of social cohesion. In fact, the concern of "social cohesion" has fueled a debate: the ideological discourse and the meanings to define and practice in the selective areas, a sort of "new citizenship". A study done in 1995 has shown the relationship between citizenship in the classic sense of the term (legal status that makes a person member of a political community, and holds such right and obligations equal to those of others), citizenship in a large acceptance (all relations between individuals and institutions within the meaning of a common life, a political city constructive reports) and civility (domain of relations of good neighbourliness between people). The main lesson of this study is that the "social link’s basis", which establishes a basic communication between people, has to be rebuilt." (DIV, 1995)

Today, when the concept of social cohesion is used, it is often in terms of "threat" to the existing urban order, even for the model of society that it is supposed to embody (DIV, 1995): referred to the ghetto concept, these social neighbourhoods are considered as a place that could weak the Republican State and the French Society (the Borloo Act⁶). In 2002, the Minister Borloo has increased the discourses of social alarm and emergency, dramatizing the situation of the social neighbourhoods concerned by the Politique de la Ville: they were presented as the “Ghettos within the French Republic”, that must be break down because they are considered as the symbols of the Republic in danger, as the presidential results in April 2002 have demonstrated (Epstein, 2004).

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⁵ Indeed, cohesion is the term coined by the European Union to signal its policy aim of reducing the social and regional gap in Europe. In recognition of the possibility that economic integration may not lead to any convergence of living standards, the European Union has introduced, since the mid-1980s, a number of measures – from laws and directives to recommendations and statements of principle – to accompany its measures for European economic integration in order to facilitate cohesion.

⁶ Loi d'Orientatión et de Programmatión pour la Ville et la Rénovation Urbaine, introduced by the Ministry Jean-Louis Borloo and voted in 2003. Among all the principles, one important measures concern the demolition of large-scale housing estates and the necessary of social mix in these estates.
The social mix concept: another norm of integration?

The idea that social mix leads to the introduction of mainstream norms and values is predicated on the notion that the existing norms and values of the inhabitants living in deprived areas diverge and are homogeneous from those held by the wider society. This assertion stems from the discredited ‘underclass thesis’ (‘the poor are poor because they are morally inept’) popularised by Murray in the 1980s (Murray, 1994). Similarly, the idea that social mix leads to the creation of social capital defined as ‘networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit’ (Putnam, 1995) should be questioned.

What is the majority in a multi-cultural setting in European countries? It is widely observed in the European context that society is based on fragmentation and population flows and movements. The identity of the group is based upon different cultures, migrations flows and refugees among other variables. The anthropologists Gupta and Ferguson make the presumption that spaces are autonomous and are always interconnected instead of naturally disconnected “then cultural and social change becomes not a matter of cultural contact and articulation but one of rethinking difference through connection”. The fragmentation and the interconnection of society have to confront with the multiculturalism that is not only located in peripheral estates but in the city as well.

“Multiculturalism” is both an acknowledgment of the fact that culture has lost their moorings in definite places and an attempt to assume this plurality of cultures within the framework of a national identity. Similarly the idea of “subcultures” attempts to preserve the idea of distinct “cultures” while acknowledging the relation of different cultures to a dominant culture within the same geographical and territorial space. Conventional accounts of ethnicity, even when used to describe cultural differences in settings where people from different regions live side by side, rely on an unproblematic link between identity and place. Although such concepts are suggestive because they stretch the naturalized association of culture with place, they fail to interrogate this assumption in a truly fundamental manner. We need to ask how to deal with cultural difference while abandoning received ideas of (localized) culture.” (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992: 7)

In France, since the 1990s, the issue deals with a situation that is not dominated by a hierarchical economic system but by a position of externality in a segregated area-based system. Thus, concerning the existence of different levels within the French society, the State advocates the diffusion of the republican values (Foret, 2008). As in the 1970s, the idea emerges again that the residential proximity would produce social connections. But, through this new issue, it is less a question of decreasing the difference between the social categories with different incomes than to reach a consensus. In response to criticisms made on the concentration of social housing, dangerous for national cohesion, the concept of social mix or diversification of the dwellings and the settlement became one of the expressions of the “right to the city”. Accordingly, one is in the presence of the myth of social and cultural mix: the coexistence in the same area of different social groups should break down the social barriers and thus restore the lost consensus and/or some logics of social cohesion. Conversely, the segregation would be reprehensible because it breaks the harmonious functioning of the city. This ideal representation of the city had already been criticised by scientific researches, showing that the proximity did not necessarily lead to share sociability (Chamboredon and Lemaire, 1970) This fiction of planned social mix continues however to deal with the public policies in order “to manage the society by the urban reform” (Deschamps, 1998: 47). However, why this new urban and residential morphology would guarantee a social cohesion?

The necessity to integrate European policies and values

Another relevant aspect of the Europeanization concerning the dissemination of the ideas deals with the integration of certain notions within the administrative culture, especially to get fund from the European agencies.

The reading of the administrative documents related to the regeneration of the historic centre of Barcelona, Ciutat Vella introduces the changes in the justification of the interventions and the need to
adapt in 1994 the existent program to the European norms and values for getting funding at the Social Cohesion Funds.

«Acomodacion del proyecto de revitalization del centro historico de Barcelona a través del programa urbano de mejora medioambiental de Ciutat Vella a los objetivos establecidos en el reglamento 792/93 del Consejo de las comunidades europeas que instituye los fondos de cohesión. En el Reglamento (CEE) 792/93 del Consejo de 30 de Marzo de 1993 en el que se instituye un instrumento financiero de cohesión, así como en el artículo 130 R del tratado sobre la union europea, firmado en Maastricht el 7 de febrero de 1992, se especifica que los proyectos elegibles para su financiacion por el Fondo de Cohesión deberán contribuir a la realizacion de los objetivos ambientales de la comunidad, y en consecuencia deberan acomodarse (los objetivos) a la directrices del Quinto Programa de Accion Ambiental. »

«Los objetivos del Quinto Programa de Accion Ambiental quedan reflejados, entre otros, en la prioridades establecidas en el programa LIFE (1993), donde se establecen como prioritarios los proyectos de medio ambiente urbano y en concreto el desarrollo de proyectos tendentes a disminuir la presión de la circulacion y a aumentar el esponjamiento en el espacio publico y a una utilizacion mixta del tejido urbano que la conforma. Puesto que el Fondo de Cohesion tiene por objeto tambien reducir desigualdades economicos y sociales (art. 130 D del tratado de Maastricht), financiando proyectos en el sector de las infraestructuras del transporte y programas medio ambientales en aquellos casos con evidentes deficiencias estructurales y una limitado capacidad financiera, se considera que el proyecto que se presenta se ajusta plenamente al proposito de los Fondos de Cohesion teniendo en cuenta que en el sistema urbano, las desigualdades sociales y economicas y el desarrollo de proyectos de medio ambiente y transporte, tiene en la calidad de vida el denominador comun de todos ellos. »

“Adjustment of the project in order to revitalize the historic center of Barcelona through urban improvement of the Ciutat Vella program following environmental objectives set in the rule 792/93 of the Council of European cities instituted by the Cohesion Funds.

In the Rule (CEE) 792/93 of the Council of 30th of March of 1993 it is set up a financing mechanism of cohesion, also included in the article 130 R of The Treaty on European Union (TEU) signed in Maastricht the 7th of February of 1992(...) specify that the projects to be funded by the Cohesion Found must follow the environmental objectives (...) of the Fifth Program of Environmental Action. »

« The objectives of the Fifth Program of Environmental Action reflects the priorities of the Program LIFE (1993) that established as a priority the projects focused on urban environmental subjects and in particular the development of projects that try to diminish the pressure of circulation and the increasing of esponjamiento in the public space and the mix use on the urban fabric. Since the Cohesion Fund also aims to reduce social and economic inequality (Article 130 D of the Maastricht Treaty), by financing projects in the field of transport infrastructure and environmental programmes in those cases with obvious structural deficiencies and a limited financial capacity, it is considered that the project presented is fully aligned to the purpose of the Cohesion Funds”.

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7 This fund is a financial tool for helping the poorest countries within the European Union (Spain, Greece, Portugal and Ireland) and thus integrates them into the monetary and economical union. Spain received 52-58% of the total support of the Cohesion Fund.

The ideological goals of urban public spaces programmes

Barcelona: the making of a future model?

Since the middle of the seventies, Spain transitioned from a dictatorship to a democracy and Barcelona became one of the major European metropolises in the last decades. Public space has played a fundamental and underestimated role as an ideological platform on which new “collective social identities” have been constructed. Thus, by examining public space policies from this period, we want to see how local government have used it as a tool to build “collective ideologies” regarding on the Francoist period was, maybe how the city of Barcelona should be in a new democratic context. In addition, examining public space allows us to see how citizens have responded (often via space) to these democratic transformations in their space (McNeill, 1999).

During the 1960s, the implementations of urban policies are linked to the fulfilment of a number of popular demands for which neighbourhoods pressure groups had campaigned since the late 1960s. Indeed, from 1965, when the local neighbourhoods associations of Veïns del Poble Nou and Veïns de la Barceloneta has begun their resistance to the 1953 Pla Comarcal (extended by the 1976 Pla General Metropolita), the Barcelona Citizen Movement led the campaign for better urban infrastructures while protesting against the capitalist speculation. In 1972, the various local groups joined together under the Federacio d’Associacions de Veïns de Barcelona (FAVB), continuing to play a key-role in articulating a broad range of demands on part of Barcelona’s various local communities (McNeill, 1999).

As Manuel Castells indicates with the reference to Citizen Movement’s socio-political influence on recent Spanish redevelopment:

“At the level of specific urban effects, the major causal argument is that all the themes, from shanty town redevelopment to historic conservation, to the re-equipment of peripheral housing estates, had been promoted alone by the Citizen Movement. The Franquist administration, not only had followed an entirely contrary policy, but the opposition parties, including PCE and the radical left, never took the urban programme seriously, only considering neighbourhood mobilisation as a matter of political agitation the revolutionary outcome of which would for outweigh all its demands. So, chronologically speaking, all the topics and concepts that became the common wisdom of leftist and centre administrations, as well as of the media, in the second half of the decade originated with the Citizen Movement.” (Castells, 1983, 262).

The consensus which has characterized the recent changes needs to be viewed in the context of earlier resistance to the urban policies of the former Franquist City Council and the fact that many of the demands generated by the earlier protest movement were at least partially met by the recent renovation process. Many of whose had participated at the popular urban protest movements of the 1970s became bureaucrats, technicians and intellectuals working for the city council, including its town planning departments.

The death of Franco brought urban planning back into the spotlight, reinvigorating and amplifying urban policy (specifically what was called the PGM—Pla General Metropolità d’Ordenació Urbana) of 1973 with grassroots participation. Important factors in creating a modern and democratic image abroad—initially based on collective approval at home—were urban planning and public culture.

Pasqual Maragall10 reflected this ideology of the early democratic years in his maxim: “La mejora del espacio público es relevante para la resolución de los problemas económicos y sociales” (Capel, 2005, 30). The communal effort and urban politics of the early democratic years took another turn in October 1986. That year Spain became a member of the European Union and Barcelona was chosen to host the 1992 Olympics. Urban policy began to accommodate large-scale projects, incorporating

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5 The city has received the internationally competitive urbanism awards such as the Royal Gold Medal of 1999 by the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects), the “Most Admired Knowledge City” in 2007 and is currently nominated for UK’s academy of Urbanism “European City of the Year” award since 2008.

10 P. Maragall was the mayor of Barcelona during the fundamental transitional years, from 1982 to 1997. He was a member of the PSC and perhaps the most important figure associated with post-Francoist period.

11 Translation: “Improving public space is relevant for solving economic and social problems.”
private and foreign investments, architects, and urban planners. With the arrival of the postmodern global economy, urban space began to drastically transform. A split began to grow between citizens and the Ajuntament of the city of Barcelona. This occurred largely because many political activists (having gained trust in the new government or wanting to cash in on the opportunities that the Games would bring) left the neighborhood associations (such as Oriol Bohigas, Head of the Department of Urbanism of the Ajuntament) (McNeill, 1999). With funds coming from the International Olympic Committee, the national government, the Generalitat and the Ajuntament underwent construction in preparation for the games. The Ajuntament and Generalitat considered the Games to be an opportunity to boost the economy and to re-define Barcelona’s image. The city continued the urbanization of the periphery (particularly Montjuïc, Vall d’Hebrón, Diagonal, Poble Nou, and the Gloriès area) and embellishing public space (Moix, 1994).

The repercussions of Barcelona’s urban renewal experience were widely acclaimed internationally in the 90s, although they have also been the subject of considerable criticisms at the local context (Alexandre, 2000; Capel, 2005; 2006, Carreras; 1993, Degen and Garcia, 2008, Delgado, 2007, García-Ramón and Abet, 2000, among others.). According to pre-eminent researchers “the Barcelona experience” could be synthesised in general terms in ten points summarised in the following figure.

Figure 1 - Features of “Barcelona Experience”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of the Barcelona experience or also called “Barcelona Model”</th>
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<tr>
<td>basic role of public space in the newly transformed areas as a means to generate identity and to foster social and cultural integration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barcelona City Council’s leadership and initiative in the design and management of urban transformation projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>compliance with the pre-established Town Planning Regulations in order to maintain coherence, credibility and legitimacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>integration of partial interventions within and overall projects for the whole of the city</td>
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<tr>
<td>concern for the connection and continuity of the newly built areas with pre-existing neighbourhoods in order to avoid excessive zoning or functional specialization</td>
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<tr>
<td>urban renovation and rehabilitation of the Old Town aimed at avoiding displacement of residents and maintaining social cohesion in the affected neighbourhoods</td>
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<tr>
<td>upgrading of peripheral areas by different strategies for example, by means of public sculpture programme linked to the restoration of squares, arcades, open spaces, and gardens, and by the introduction of cultural values and symbols in the landscape</td>
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<tr>
<td>the inclusion of large sections of the citizenry in the project of urban transformation</td>
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<tr>
<td>the dynamic role of the network of surrounding medium-sized cities which help to balance polarities within the metropolitan area of Barcelona</td>
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<tr>
<td>the positioning of Barcelona within the world context of large cities, thanks to promotional strategies of urban marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td>urban management model: Public-Private Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>the creation of mixed capital companies, introducing a model for public-private partnership management</td>
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Some of these characteristics that categorise the Barcelona Model are relevant within the Ciutat Vella District, especially those relating to clearly staking the future on intervening in public spaces aimed at endowing the various quarters with an “identity” or implementing pre-existing plans such as the General Metropolitan Plan or the sector plans designated as Special Plans of Interior Reform (PERIs from now on) for the various central zones. They also dovetail with the wish to preserve the presence of autochthonous residents in the areas of intervention thus fighting against the gentrification process. The creation of a public-private partnership model through a mixed-capital management company, PROCIVESA (Promoció de Ciutat Vella SA) becomes one of the characteristics of the process. Moreover, this new private-public partnership management instrument allowed the elevated cost of the
Ciutat Vella urban plans to be underwritten. These cases of urban renewal developed in Ciutat Vella not only share the majority of these characteristics but also in the event became instances for the application of these “model” policies. Going further, we could consider these instances of intervention in central areas and other cases of urban renewal in areas of the periphery to have fed partially into the content of the “model”.

The goal of urban interventions was to provide a catalyst for the improvement of quality of life in the historic core of the city, not only within the immediate boundaries of individual interventions but beyond—by upgrading surrounding areas through the original impact of target renewal projects.

The role of public space in the Barcelona’s Model
As explained before in point, the planning practice leading urban renewal in the historic centre of Barcelona in the 1990s was known as esponjamiento (from “sponge,” hollowing out). That is, selective demolition of degraded residential areas, accompanied by the substitution of old residential units—and relocation within the district, as a norm—either by provision of newly built housing, or the upgrade of substandard dwellings. The practice of esponjamiento in urban renewal meant also the substantial provision of new public spaces—some of them of considerable size, such as the Rambla del Raval in Ciutat Vella and the construction of new housing stock.

This philosophy based upon the esponjamiento idea meant a radical or smaller scale demolition by opening of new public space in the highly dense urban fabric and improving the living of the residents in the deprived areas. The two cases represent two different scales of esponjamiento; a macro-esponjamiento in the case of Raval and a micro-esponjamiento in the case of Santa Caterina/ Sant Pere. In Raval fifty buildings were demolished, clearing 12,000 m² of land. A different type of demolition criteria was applied in the axis Allada-Vermell, Francesc Cambó, and today’s the named Pou de la Figuera area (all sites in Casc Antic/St. Pere), where esponjamiento was rather fine-grained, and involved a lower number of demolitions. The destruction of historical heritage was listed in a catalogue at the request of a social entity, “Neighbours in defence of the Barcelona Vella” (Alexandre, 2000).

Lyon: between a marketing operation and the social cohesion threat
Since the beginning of the mandate of Michel Noir in 1989, the improvement of quality of life took a major place within urban policies (cf. strategic documents as Plan Vert, Plan Bleu, Plan Presqu’île, Plan Lumière, Urban Ecology Charter and Public Transports and Mobility Plan). The public space programme is considered and designed at an agglomeration scale, at the intersection of urban planning policies and social development policies. Hence, the idea defended by the vice-president in charge of urban planning, Henri Chabert: “the reconquest and the requalification of public spaces should reflect the identity shared by the 55 communes of the agglomeration area” (Foret, 2008). The genesis of this approach has to be connected to the “crisis of the banlieues” in Lyon from 1981 (City of Venissieux, Les Minguettes estate) and the implementation of social policies (Politique de la Ville) (Belmessous, 2002). Michel Noir, mayor of Lyon, gives another reason to this urban ideological perspective. His main mandate goal concerns the positioning of Lyon City as a European metropolis (the reference to Barcelona is recurring). To conquest this status, it is necessary to consolidate the unity of the agglomeration and built a collective identity (Foret, 2008). These political reasons explain the double register of urban policies interventions. First, the urban improvement is necessary to ensure the influence and the prestige of the city and then attract economic agents: this strategy deals with a marketing operation and is mainly turned to the economical world. Secondly, social policies are implemented in many neighbourhoods to reduce the increased inequalities. Indeed, the effects of the socio-economic changes have increased poverty and social exclusion, mainly

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12 Plan Vert (natural and agricultural areas); Plan Bleu (the rivers and their immediate environment); Plan Couleur (Enhancing the sites according to their own characteristics); Plan Presqu’île (preserve and promote the heart of Lyon city); Plan Lumière (shape a nocturnal landscape through the scene of the streets, sites and monuments of the city).
in some urban areas (the Zones Urbaines Sensibles\textsuperscript{13}) and then could threat as the social cohesion than the image of the city.

In Barcelona and Lyon, public spaces are part of the perceived image of the cities at two different levels:

- At the city level through justification of authorities’ actions in creating an image through branding;
- At the neighbourhood’s level through daily lives of residents and their representation of their living environment (Bassand and Güller, 2001).

In public spaces, the authorities justify and legitimate their actions and their commitment to their residents, investors and visitors by planning, revitalizing and shaping the urban environment. These actions could be the creation of new public spaces as well as redesigning, rehabilitating and revitalizing existing ones. In their branding strategies, authorities try to create a new (positive) image and do not hesitate to highlight public spaces. But in Lyon, the public space programmes contribute to “maintain” a social cohesion.

**Santa Caterina / Sant Pere (Barcelona) and La Croix Rousse (Lyon)**

**Santa Caterina / Sant Pere neighbourhoods**

Santa Caterina/Sant Pere neighbourhoods are part of the Casc Antic PERI, which aim was to continue Francesc Cambó Avenue and regenerate the Allada-Vermell area. The urban area comprising the districts of Santa Caterina / Sant Pere covers a superficie of 35.13 acres, a population of fifteen thousand inhabitants and a fabric of residential housing around 8650. The average of owner occupation is 58% low in comparison with the 77% as an average in Barcelona city. The rental sector is higher (39%) than the ownership.

The City Council, through the Ciutat Vella district, presented to the Government of Catalonia a proposal to host the districts of Santa Caterina / Sant Pere in the Llei de Barris, urban areas and towns that require special attention\textsuperscript{14}. The proposal was adopted and benefited from a rate of about 50’76% of the total, 14.616 million €, the actions envisaged in the comprehensive intervention project in the districts of Santa Catalina and San Pedro, which were:

- Improving the provision of public space and urban green spaces to the Pou de la Figuera;
- Rehabilitation of common elements of private buildings;
- Provision of facilities for collective use in the Pou de la Figuera, Centre Civic de Sant Agustí, building for la Penya Cultural Barcelonesa and building for a residence for the elderly;
- Promotion of sustainable urban development with the installation of pneumatic and rubbish;
- Programmes to improve social and economic planning.

The bigger intervention of the area was in the axis Pou de la Figuera area and Allada-Vermell. One aspect of interest with regard to this axis is the protest reaction of neighbourhood movements, much more active in the case of Santa Caterina / Sant Pere as against the case of the Raval, even though the volume affected and the type of demolition was much more massive in the former than in the latter.

**La Croix Rousse: a specific neighbourhood within Lyon**

The first arrondissement of Lyon is one where the percentage of the buildings dating from before 1949 is the most important (85% in 2006, compared to 38% on average in Lyon). Collective dwellings constitute 99% of the housing stock. The image of a popular, mix and friendly neighbourhood is

\textsuperscript{13} The target-areas (Zones Urbaines Sensibles) are divided in three categories: from the worst deprived ones (with global and massive interventions) to small interventions. In the precise case of the study, the Croix-Rousse neighbourhood belongs to the first category, as well as large-scale housing estates (Les Minguettes, Vaulx-en-Velin, La Duchère and Rillieux) of the agglomeration.

\textsuperscript{14} Llei 2/2004, de 4 de juny, de millora de barris, arees urbanes i viles que requereixen una atencio especial.
mainly perceived by the presence of immigrants who settled from 1962, and which yet decreased rapidly since the 1980s. However, the attraction on many visitors outside - as the outputs for students, walks for tourists - is relatively recent: District has not always had good reputation and several informants have reminded us that in the 1960s, visitors who had no family ties is there were not readily; advised in the 1990s, were against still only girls spend the evening in the bottom of the slopes.

This representation continues actually, kept by the neighbours. The opposition to the renovation draws widely from this local history and in this image of the neighbourhood popular, blended, user-friendly and rebel and considerably strengthens (Bensoussan, 1982).

For example, in 1968, the mayor of Lyon, Louis Pradel carried out a massive urban renewal within the city center, mainly to adapt the historical neighbourhoods to the economical needs, by demolishing important parts of the center (more than 8000 m²) and building urban infrastructures. Following this project, a citizen movement appeared, to protect buildings as the neighbours: in the local history of the city, the most famous "urban struggles" was played at the Croix-Rousse neighbourhood, especially in the area called Les Pentes. The movement focused on the restructuring projects located Montée de la Grande Côte, in the neighbourhood called La Martinière-Tolozan (renewal areas selected for a following restructuring project). This urban fight concerned on one side the mayor of Lyon, Louis Pradel and some conservative local associations and a popular movement, created in 1974, against the urban restructuring projects of the local council on the other (Joliveau, 1987). After this urban struggle, the State admitted the creation of a specific protected area within the Croix-Rousse sector (even if many historical buildings have been demolished): the Perimetre de Restauration Immobilière has been carried out in 1986 and focused on the renovation of private buildings. In 1994, another perimeter has been implemented by the Commune to protect the radical transformation of the area by the private owners and to prevent the speculation: the ZPPAUP15. In 1998, the neighbourhood perimeter is integrated in the global UNESCO World Heritage site.

Actually, the neighborhood is concerned by the Politique de la ville policy and is considered as one of the deprived area within the city: this is an opportunity to the Local Council to carry out an integrated project, which focuses on the "maintain of the social mix and the improvement of the quality of life, by promoting the diversity of the neighbourhood" (CUCS, 2010).

*Comparison of the principal characteristics of the demolition rebuilding process Santa Caterina/Sant Pere and Croix-Rousse cases*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban Renewal Plans</th>
<th>Santa Caterina / Sant Pere (&amp; Rivera) Area Based Project</th>
<th>Croix-Rousse Area Based Project</th>
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</thead>
</table>

**Objectives**

- Creation of open spaces for neighbours use and reduction of high level density using the *esponjamiento*
- *Up-to-date obsolete and non implemented projects and renovation of degradated housing.
- Upgrading in urban infrastructure

- Preserved area (in terms of architecture, urban and landscape)
- renovation of deprived housing
- creation of public spaces
- upgrading in urban infrastructure

**Public Space Built**

- “Forat de la Vergonya” Movement (later called Pou de la Figuera) (until 2006)
- Montée de la Grande-Côte

**Period of demolition**

- Starting date (aprox): 1991
- More active period: 2001-2004
- During the 1970s.

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15 Zone de Protection du Patrimoine Architectural, Urbain et Paysager (Protected Area selected by the French State)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>activity</th>
<th>Final date (aprox.): 2006</th>
<th>Neighbourhood Protests against intervention</th>
<th>Starting date (aprox): 1991</th>
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<td>More active period: 2001-2004</td>
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<td>Final date (aprox.): 2006</td>
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<td>During the 1970s and 1980s.</td>
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Source: Belmessous and Tapada-Berteli.

**Conclusion**

To open the debate and as this research is still in progress (this is the presentation of the first “results”), we want to focus on two main ideas:

- The idea of the ‘normative’ or standardized notions’ acceptance: the measures and notions promoted by the European Union (social cohesion; social mix) reveal a direct connection between the European Urban Initiative, which utilized many aspects of the national programs (France, UK, The Netherlands) and in turn, later, provided the national programs with stronger legitimization and cognitive resources.

- The target-areas and the creation of such perimeter within the cities: in that cases, the history of the urban changes in the cities centers is particularly relevant because the neighbourhoods were during the 1970s and 1980s perceived as “simple” neighbourhoods where intervene, they actually considered as “specific areas” (Llei de Barris in Barcelona; Zone Urbaine Sensible in Lyon).

Illustration: Oriol Nel.lo, previous secretario de planificacion territorial de la Generalitat de Catalunya, designer of the Llei de barris: « contra la segregacion urbana y por la cohesion social: la ley de barrios de Cataluña »;
References


L. Moix, 1994, La ciudad de los arquitectos, Anagrama, Barcelona.


