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FORMS OF LOCAL RESISTANCE

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FORMS OF LOCAL RESISTANCE:

NO AL 22@

(working draft)

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INTRODUCTION

Forms of Local Resistance: No al 22@ is the final project for the *Global Cities* seminar, which is part of the Sociology of Everyday Life postgraduate programme held on the Faculty for Social Sciences, University in Ljubljana. Marjan Hočevár tutors the seminar. The preceding four-months study was carried out on the Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia in Barcelona with Luis Falcon Martinez de Maraňon as the local academic supervisor.¹

Due to a short period of time spent in Barcelona, the main aim of the study was less to come up with an in-depth understanding of particular phenomena in the Poblenou district of Barcelona, but rather to examine and to show the extent and complexity of the current urban transformation of Poblenou with an emphasize on role of local resistance in it. From that reason the research methodology was focused on qualitative interpretation of mainly interviews and secondary resources, though some empirical study has also been done on quantitative public data about Poblenou district and Barcelona. Another methodological remark has to be made at this point – when I will talk about the “locals” or the “local population” in this paper, I will refer to those inhabitants of the Poblenou district, whose identities are rooted in the history of the district and whose everyday practices are closely related to the past traditions of the area. I made no further attempt to actually discover the social composition of that group, as it seems that the experience and reactions of the locals, affected by the current transformation of the area, doesn’t depend strongly on their class, ethnicity, gender, age etc. Only a minor part of the locals are however actively involved in different forms of local resistance.

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In this paper I will try to show, how the three main processes of modernization – accelerated urbanization, economic globalization and digital revolution – converge and directly influence every-day life and local social practices in Poblenou. First I will examine some theoretical concepts, which help us understand the influence of globalization on cities in general and how Barcelona, in particular, has become integrated into global network of cities. One important consequence of the globalization on urban life is related to emergence of new production space and I will use the case of Docklands development in London to reveal some of the social and spatial consequences that such transformations produce. Further, the study will briefly explain social and urban history of the Poblenou district in Barcelona, which has recently become a place of intensive and ambitious urban renewal project called *Districte d'Activitas 22@BCN*.² I will present that project as an attempt of the Barcelona City Council, which is to make sure that the city remains “competitive” and doesn’t stay behind the world’s leading regions in knowledge-intensive production. The implementation of that plan has caused a conflict between the Barcelona City Council and one part of the local population in Poblenou. I will show specific forms of local resistance, which have emerged during the past years as a reaction against the implementation of the 22@ project, and the rationality behind those resisting movements. In the conclusion I will try to use the lesson of Poblenou to question the success of the so-called “Barcelona model” of city planning and governance in relation to impacts of globalization on local population. At the very end I will argue that the incapacity of the City Council to confront everyday perception of its policies on one hand and processes of appropriation and fragmentation of the local on the other represent the core of urban conflict in the neighbourhood. The future outcome seems to depend, as I will show, primarily on a possible emancipatory role of urban movements in producing “living alternatives” against the global pressures.

² In the rest of the paper I will refer to *Districte d'Activitas 22@BCN* simply as a 22@ project.

FLOWS AND PLACES

Space doesn't exist outside society. Space is society and it can't be defined without referring to particular social practices, which influence its production. It is thus not a reflection but the very expression of society. In words of Manuel Castells, it is the material dimension that gives sense to relation between space and society. (Castells 2000: 334) In general, production of space – understood not only as a legal and institutional articulation of space, but in very broad terms of any legitimate social practice that becomes spatially expressed – has to be approached on two levels. On one hand one has to be aware of its structural conditions, on the other it is necessary to consider production of space, within its local historical and cultural specificity. Besides, the notion of space as a material support for multiple social practices by definition involves simultaneity and therefore not only different instrumental dimensions of a single space, but also multiplicity of its symbolic and cultural meanings. These assumptions are fundamental to understand any production of space, and particularly the one in the Poblenou district in Barcelona, where the macro and micro conditions, mentioned above, converge in a very direct way. Castells argues that the transformation from industrial societies to post-industrial information- and knowledge-based societies has caused profound changes in characteristic spatial forms and spatial organization of dominant socio-economic practices. Material dimension of contemporary social life is being increasingly characterised by *space of flows* in contrast to modern or pre-modern societies, which were traditionally bound to *space of places*. This is not to say that accelerated urbanization, economic globalization or digital revolution in the future will cause disappearance of traditional places. On contrary; as I will try to show later, referring to the Poblenou area, traditional space of places is on certain levels gaining back its cultural importance in society. However, space of places doesn't represent the main spatial arrangement of society anymore, which instead is materialized in the space of flows, an emerging and dominating spatial logic of *reflexive modernity*.³

³ Different scholars use distinct concepts and terminology – such as “late modernity” (Giddens), “second modernity” (Beck), “supermodernity” (Augé) or “liquid modernity” (Bauman) – to explain the transition from *simple modernity* towards the late or *reflexive modernity*. Nonetheless, all of them refer to structural

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The space of flows is the material organization of time-sharing social practices that work through flows [that are] purposeful, repetitive, programmable sequences of exchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions held by social actors in the economic, political, and symbolic structures of society. (Castells 2000: 344)

Castells makes a further distinction between three fundamental “layers of material support that together constitute the space of flows.” (Castells 2000: 345) *Information technology devices* and *networks of electronic exchanges* represent the first layer supporting material practices of contemporary society. On a city level this layer doesn’t have an explicit spatial expression. It does however directly influence the topography and organization of the second layer of material support, constituted by specific *places of nodes and hubs*. The later are hierarchically organized according to their relative importance within different levels of the global networks. There seem to be several closely intertwined and overlapping networks,⁴ which on global scale structure spatial arrangements of nodes and hubs. The last of the three layers concerns *spatial manifestation of dominant managerial and financial elites*, occupying privileged positions in contemporary societies supporting their requirements and practices. As a non-historic abstract space, the space of flows⁵ tends to escape social and political control, which

changes, which happened in industrial societies of the first world in the last twenty years. A social order, which has taken place instead of the old industrial one, is not a radically new one – it’s a result of “modernization of modernity itself”, a “radicalisation of modernity” and brings to the forefront not a subjugated but an empowered reflexive individual. (Beck 1994: 3) For the sake of epistemological consistency, I prefer to use a concept of “reflexive modernity”, which also involves a notion of “aesthetic reflexivity” as one source of the local resistance that I will introduce in the concluding chapter.

⁴ Beside financial or economic network of exchange, there are other important global networks, such as tourism and leisure industries or medical and health-care services, with similar totalizing consequences on places. Centres of a particular network often gain importance in other sectors as well. Palma de Mallorca for instance, a city once important only for its role on the global tourist map is now one of the fastest-growing and prospective metropolitan areas in Spain.

⁵ Freeways, airport lounges, traffic hubs, service and parking areas, international hotel chains, shopping malls, corporate business parks etc. constitute the space of flows. Marc Augé calls such places *non-*

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once was possible in the place-bond societies and makes it harder to comprehend organizational patterns of those elites. Such situation is manifested in space through existence of privately secured and secluded communities, which in some places become physically gated business, housing or leisure estates. Castells further emphasizes another spatial consequence caused by social organization of economic elites. Apparently there is a tendency to create unifying environment that prevails cultural and historical specificity of particular places. In this respect the space of flows is blurring once meaningful relationship between built environment and society. The placeless generic nature of space of flows becomes a consequence of “postmodern acultural architecture.” (Castells 2000: 350)

As one may notice, when looking at uniform design of hotel lounges, airport’s VIP areas or parts of corporate architecture, built in a similar manner all over the globe, assumption of Castells may at least to some extent be true. However, recently we also witness an opposite trend. Global capital is becoming more interested in local heritage, shamelessly appropriating the local imaginary for its own purposes and profits, creating in this way “themed” localities. In Poblenou for instance housing developers and the Barcelona City Council have used historical imaginary of the area to construct a notion of a distinct identity aimed at promoting and branding the new neighbourhood (and developers). Constructed image of the area has thus become anything but what the historical imaginary once used to represent. For that reason some historical industrial monuments – like the old chimneys and towers, as the most emblematic symbols of the appropriated past (Figure 1) – were preserved, renovated and incorporated in the newly build areas of the Poblenou district. At least on an aesthetic level one may say that the local, although mainly re-contextualized and fragmented, is regaining its ground that seemed to have been already lost due to the universalizing tendencies of globalization.

places (non-lieux). “If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space, which can not be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity, will be a non-place.” (Augé 1995: 78) Augé urges for “anthropology of supermodernity”, which would study ways that people use and understand non-places and explore what meanings those places may have in their everyday life.

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Figure 1: Industrial heritage of Poble Nou as a “decoration” of the new housing development at the Diagonal-Mar in Barcelona – the old water tower of Can Girona

After some opening thoughts on the relation and role of space in society, I will talk in the following chapters about two key socio-economic issues, which signify the most important structural conditions influencing production of space in Barcelona and in the Poble Nou district in particular. We will first see, how Barcelona is becoming an important international node and integral part of the global city network and how the city has transformed intensively its industrial economy into tertiary service-oriented one. At the same time Barcelona is getting more integrated into a global space of information, knowledge, advanced services and high-technology production. The city is thus becoming strongly dependent and influenced by the global dynamics of those sectors. In both cases Barcelona is facing a pressure, which is mainly out of control of the local agents, who at their best can only deal with the some social and spatial consequences of that universalizing dynamics. As Castells may say in this case – Barcelona has become “characterised by structural domination of the space of flows.” We will see later, how the *Barcelona City Council* (Ajuntament de Barcelona) and the local population of the Poble Nou district have reacted to that domination.

BARCELONA GOES GLOBAL

Global economy is organized around key centres able to control and manage interlinked activities of networks of firms on different scales. Yet the spatial arrangement of the advanced services,⁶ which represent the core dynamics of the global economy, are characterised by simultaneous concentration and dispersal. Whereas certain activities and functions are more or less equally dispersed around the globe, Sassen, in her classical study on the *global city*, acknowledges a rapid emergence of new spatial forms of centrality. Joint dominance of New York, London, Tokyo, Frankfurt and Paris in financial, consulting and business sectors has made these cities into crucial control nodes of the global economy.

Beyond their long history as centres of international trade and banking, these cities now function in four new ways: first, as highly concentrated command points in the organization of the world economy; second, as key locations for finance and for specialized service firms; third as sites of production, including the production of innovations, in these leading industries; and fourth, as markets for the products and innovations produced. (Sassen 1991, 2001: 4)

Sassen claims that this new type of global city doesn't refer anymore to each city in particular but to a fact that all those cities work together as a functional whole covering a variety of time zones for the purpose of non-stop financial trading. Flexibility and adaptability of production and management, which global city offers through its core nodes, seem to be the main reason for concentration of advanced services in few central metropolitan areas of the world. Clearly, there are other reasons for the concentrations as well. Once settled for instance, corporations often hesitate to move to other places because of their high investment in the real-estate market. Possibility of face-to-face contacts is still very important aspect of business and last but not least

⁶ Advanced services include finance, insurance, real estate, consulting and legal services, advertising, design, marketing, public relations, information managing as well as research and development, scientific innovation and other information and knowledge intensive economic activities. (Castells 2000: 315)

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large metropolitan centres offer unique quality of life favoured by managerial and corporate elites, which particularly plays important role in the case of Barcelona.

The global city, according to Sassen, isn't just a particular spatial form, but rather a "strategic space," where diverse global socio-economic exchanges (Sassen 1991, 2001: 347), occur on local level within complementary constitutive cities. There are some spatial characteristics that cities constituting the global city have in common. Business centres are in most cases still economic engines of the metropolitan areas linking the city on the international level with the global economy. Often the global economic exchange is complemented by globally oriented though more locally conditioned tourism and cultural industries. Unlike in United States, wealthy managerial and professional class in European cities doesn't establish truly exclusive areas in the suburbs, but rather appropriates local culture and traditions by transforming older or abandoned inner city areas. City centres are in the last case becoming battlegrounds between public interests and private developers, trying to "redevelop" parts of the city, upper middle class, inhabiting those gentrified areas, and old local inhabitants, new immigrants or other marginalised- and counter-cultures claiming their own "right on the city". Areas of exclusion in European city centres are in general much less deprived as their American counterparts. Mainly because the level of unemployment in Europe is lower than in American ghettos and social networks of mutual support are stronger, especially in case of ethnic family-oriented communities of immigrant's neighbourhoods. In Barcelona such areas of urban marginality can be found in *Barri Gòtic* and *El Raval* in the very historical centre of the city, or in peripheral areas such as *La Mina* district. Castells concludes that the higher position of the European metropolitan centres in the new economic and informational networks, the less difficulties those cities have in transforming themselves from industrial to post-industrial city. (Castells 2000: 336)

A global city phenomenon can't be reduced only to the coalition of its key nodes like New York, Tokyo, Frankfurt, Paris or London. As the expanding global economy constantly incorporates new markets and restructures existing ones, more cities,

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required to manage advanced services for developing markets, are rapidly emerging. On lower scales a number of “regional” centres – such as Brussels, Amsterdam or Zurich, to name only few examples from Europe – are joining and complementing the global city network. Those new nodes also show increasing interdependence and complementarities although at different levels and at lower intensity. At the same time it seems that competition among local nodes is much stronger as it is among nodes on higher levels. Next to restructuring their economies cities have to find other possibilities to attract economic investments and retain competitive. In the struggle among cities to put themselves on the world map, particular local historical and cultural distinctions are thus becoming ever more decisive factor for spatial arrangements of the global capital. Despite of the growing internationalization, localities are thus far from disappearing and the most dynamic local sectors are becoming integrated into international networks. The *local* is hence not only a subject of aesthetic appropriation by developers and economic elites, but has also become a subject of their explicit financial interests, especially in case of cultural and tourist industries. (Balibrea 2001: 189) Both have evolved into fundamental issue of city economies, turning them into instantly consumable places.

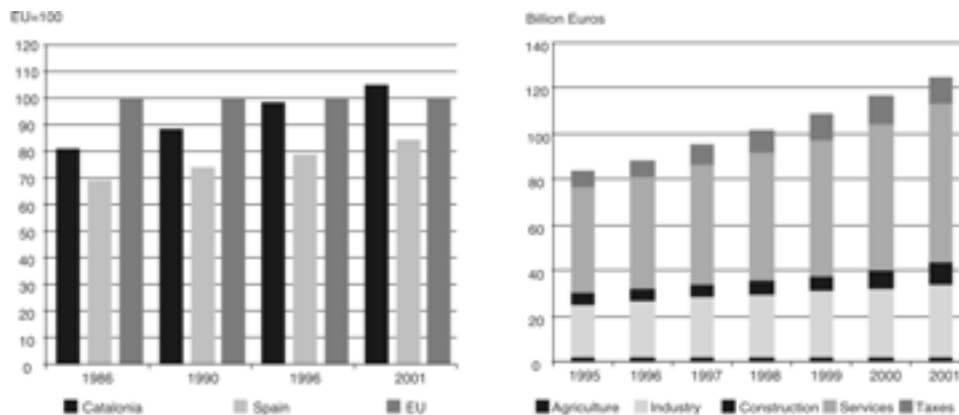


Figure 2: GDP per capita (purchasing power) (left) and GDP of Catalonia per sectors (right)

Source: Generalitat de Catalunya, Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya (2003):

Anuari estadístic de Catalunya 2003

Spain in the eighties was an interesting case of an “emerging market”, where subsequent economic and urban development of its two biggest cities, Madrid and Barcelona, was directly influenced by the Spanish entrance to the European Community

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in 1986. The national market had to open to foreign investments, which had boosted local economy and put the two cities and on the global map as important “regional” economic nodes. Spain had one of the world's fastest growing economies with its annual growth averaging 4,1% in the period between 1986 and 1991, compared with the EU average of 3%. Likewise, foreign trade grew from 23.8 \$ in 1975 to 52.5 \$ billion in 1980 and to 143 \$ billion in 1990. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita has grown in Catalonia from 2.909 € in 1980, to 10.190 € in 1991 and achieved 20.444 € in year 2002. The overall GDP of Catalonia during the same period has grown from 17.309 in 1980, 61.865 in 1991, up to 131.321 million € in 2002. (Figure 2) The GDP per capita of Barcelona was in the beginning of the nineties some 40% higher than that of Catalonia, but the relative difference has decrease to some 20% in 2002. Nonetheless Barcelona’s GDP has grown from 14.360 € in 1991, to 23.468 € in 2002. (Generalitat de Catalunya, Institut d’Estadística de Catalunya 2003)

Barcelona in particular has very soon become aware of its “global” advantages and prospects. A broad consensus has been made between various institutional, private and civil parties about a shared vision and action plan how to transform the city in the future, resulting in economic and social *Barcelona 2000 Strategic Plan* (Pla Estratègic Barcelona 2000).⁷ Three main objectives were laid down: 1) to connect Barcelona into a network of European cities, while improving internal accessibility, 2) to improve the quality of life in the city and 3) to make industrial and service sector more competitive, while supporting new emerging economic sectors. One of the key moments during the implementation of the plan was the organization of the Olympic games in 1992. Olympics allowed Barcelona to put itself on the global map and to enhance its profile on

⁷ Started in 1988 the Barcelona 2000 Economic and Strategic plan brought together a broad spectrum of different agents in the city. The Barcelona City Council was the main promoting institution, while 10 other local bodies formed the Executive Committee and another 187 formed the General Council. More than 500 individuals were involved in the preparation of the plan. Beside the main objectives, the plan succeeded to disseminate strategic thinking among local agents involved in development of Barcelona and provided a common platform for negotiation with Spanish central government and large national or international private investors. (Borja and Castells 1997: 99)

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international scale, while at the same time generating enthusiasm within the city. The impact of the Olympics on Barcelona was very complex, though five key aspects can be pointed out. The games had 1) a strong ideological effect demonstrating efficient political governability of the city, 2) produced strong social cohesion, 3) improved considerably quality of life in the city, 4) built new urban infrastructure and 5) formed a starting ground for Barcelona's new economic base and development. Olympic Games in 1992 should in case of Barcelona by no means be seen as an economic opportunity only. Ambitions of the second post-Olympic phase of the Barcelona 2000 Strategic Plan, adopted in 1994, can be summarised around three other key priorities: 1) facilitation and integration of companies in the Barcelona area in the global setting, 2) re-situation of competitiveness factors in the fields of advanced emerging sectors and 3) promotion of sustainable development of the city. Meanwhile, it has become clear that the public support, enthusiasm and pride that the Olympics produced among the Barcelona citizens homogenized major part of the population for common projects and interests. Nonetheless, the case of Poblenou will later show, that the Barcelona City Council had learned well the Olympics lessons on city marketing and the ideological role of space.

From the Barcelona 2000 Strategic Plan point of view, the 22@ plan must be seen as an initiative *promoting the city* on the international level and *transforming Barcelona economy* further towards emerging industries and services. Before examining the 22@ plan itself, let us have a look, how the city has performed in last decade on the two issues mentioned above. To improve Barcelona as a competitive location and to attract new business and investments has become an ongoing effort of different public and private institutions in the city. Relatively big success of those initiatives, compared to other cities, can be best described by using surveys such as the *European Investment Monitor* or *European Cities Monitor*.⁸ The first survey lists Catalonia with 82 direct

⁸ European Investment Monitor survey is based on all-sector data (except retail) for investments by foreign companies in European city regions gathered by Ernst & Young. The investments listed in the survey comprise new companies as well as expansion of existing businesses. The ranking does not consider the number of jobs created by the investments. European Cities Monitor is a yearly comparative survey done

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investment projects in 2004 as the second in Europe, immediately after Greater London with 112 projects. (Ernst & Young 2004) Similar figures are presented in the second survey. It shows that Barcelona is now considered – after London, Paris, Frankfurt, Brussels and Amsterdam – as the 6th most attractive city in Europe for locating business. In 1990 the city was occupying the 11th position among European cities in that same category. The factors that the surveyed executives named as the most important for locating business in a city are 1) easy access to markets, customers and clients, 2) availability of qualified staff, 3) transport links with other cities and internationally, 4) quality of telecommunications, 5) cost of staff in particular city and 6) the climate that governments create for business through tax and the availability of financial incentives. How high does Barcelona rank, between European cities in respect to some of those

Best cities for creating business	Best cities in quality of life	Most desired HQ location in 2009	Climate that governments create	Qualified personnel	Easy access to markets
London	BARCELONA	London	Dublin	London	London
Paris	Stockholm	Paris	Prague	Paris	Paris
Frankfurt	Paris	BARCELONA	Warsaw	Frankfurt	Frankfurt
Brussels	Munich	Madrid	Amsterdam	Munich	Brussels
Amsterdam	Madrid	Prague	Madrid	Brussels	Berlin
BARCELONA	Zurich	Moscow	London	Berlin	Milan
Madrid	Geneva	Warsaw	Zurich	Amsterdam	Manchester
Munich	Amsterdam	Milan	Amsterdam	Milan	Amsterdam
Berlin	Lisbon	Brussels	BARCELONA	BARCELONA	BARCELONA
Zurich	London	Amsterdam	Brussels	Madrid	Munich

Table 1: Barcelona's ranks on the European "city market" in 2004

Source: Cushman & Wakefield Healey & Baker (2004): *European Cities Monitor*

by Cushman & Wakefield Healey & Baker, which examines views of senior executives or board directors "responsible for locations" from 500 important European companies about issues that they regard important in relation to business environment and compares, how Europe's leading business cities perform on each of those issues.

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categories, is shown in the table above. (Table 1) Though not among their top priorities, executives have also stressed the importance of the quality of life for the employees, when deciding to locate the company's business in a city. For over five consequent years Barcelona takes the top position offering "the best quality of life in Europe", which seems to be the city's strongest comparative advantage and attractiveness. In regard to the quality of internal transformation and in terms of value of money for office space the city holds the 4th position, concerning costs of staff the 5th and in regard to available office space the 6th place in Europe. A bit less dazzling Barcelona performs in the following categories – the level of pollution, where it occupies the 10th place, the languages spoken and the external transportation links raking the 12th and the quality of telecommunications, where it ranks the 15th in Europe. 29% of companies, which participated in the survey, already have an office in Barcelona, what makes Barcelona the third most frequent location in this category after London and Paris. (Cushman & Wakefield Healey & Baker 2004)

Yet one has to be careful interpreting these rankings as they are based on personal observations of participating executives rather than on empirical measurements. For instance, relatively low ranking of the city concerning the quality of telecommunications is questionable as other sources show that Barcelona has a well-developed telecommunication network. (IaaC 2003: 75) On the other hand it is true that among managerial elites, surveys, such as European City Monitor done by prestigious consultancy firms, have an important impact, when deciding about the business.

Another important step in establishing Barcelona as a competitive city on the global and regional scale was transformation of its economy from industrial to postindustrial one. A question, to what extent the shift towards service-dominated economy in Barcelona was accelerated by governmental measures or some other external influence is less important for our subject. What matters is that this shift in Catalonia and Barcelona was remarkable and profound. (Figure 2) We can see for instance that the salaried occupation of the service sector in Barcelona has increased for 19% in the period

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between 1991 and 1999. 77% of all paid jobs in Barcelona in 1999 were related to service sector. At the same time we can see that in the same period the salaried occupation of the industry sector has fallen down for 38%. The recent data confirm further strengthening of the service sector in Barcelona as already 80,7% of working places in 2003 were related to service sector. The growth of service sector salaried occupation in the metropolitan region is some 10% higher compared to the city, though the overall share of service-related working places in the metropolitan region is lower than in Barcelona. (Table 2)

	BCN 1991	BCN 1999	% (1999)	Change	RMB 1991	RMB 1999	% (1999)	Change
Industry	208.000	130.000	16,88%	-38%	485.000	425.000	27,76%	-12%
Construction	56.000	42.000	5,45%	-25%	110.000	112.000	7,32%	2%
Services	504.000	598.000	77,66%	19%	768.000	994.000	64,92%	29%
Total	768.000	770.000		0,3%	1.363.000	1.531.000		12,3%

Table 2: Salaried occupation (BCN: Barcelona, RMB: Metropolitan region of Barcelona)

Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona, Urban Planning Department (2000): *Modification of the PGM (General Municipal Plan) for the Renovation of the Industrial Area of Poblenou*

Similar transition towards tertiary sector can be also noticed on the regional scale. In 1977 the 45% of workers of the Barcelona province were employed in industrial sector, 42% in services. Almost twenty years later, in 1996, industrial sector in Barcelona Province employed no more than 30,9% whereas services employed already 60,4% of its labour force. (Ajuntament de Barcelona, Departament d'Estadística 2002)

The shift towards service sector economy is also spatially expressed in the city and the region. The data clearly suggest certain spatial decentralization of service sector and its move from the city to more peripheral metropolitan areas. What is unclear, is how much the indicated increased consumption of space by service sector is indeed caused by relocation and expansion of existing companies or is it a result of new emerging ones. The question is not irrelevant in relation to the 22@ plan, where the Barcelona City Council obviously wants to keep in the very city centre mainly those parts of the service

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sector, which bring highest economic revenues and taxes using at the same time the least possible amount of available space. Though the total consumption of space in Barcelona has not increased for more than 6% between 1993 and 1998, it is paradigmatic nonetheless that the service sector already used more than half of occupied space in 1998, 20% more compared to 5 years earlier. On the other hand amount of space occupied by the industrial sector has decreased by 17% during the same period. (Table 3) The same trend goes for the Barcelona Province too. The data available here is even more recent and shows that the trend of increased consumption in service sector continues, though apparently with a bit lower pace. With a growth of almost 11% in the period from 1996 to 2002, the service sector again is the biggest consumer of available space. Without going too deeply into statistics, one can notice that consumption of space by service sector in the Barcelona is likely to grow at a rate a bit higher (20% in 1993-1998) than the number of salaried labour places within the same sector (19% in 1991-1999). Increasing consumption of space makes us understand the intentions of the City Council mentioned above. While the consumption of space by the service sector in the Barcelona Province grew recently by a lower pace (8,2% in 1998-2002, from 10.542.884 m² to 11.404.136 m²), the revenue of the sector grew for 34% (from 54.406 to 72.887 millions €) during the same period. The share of service sector in the GDP of the Barcelona Province grew from 60% to 62% respectively. (Generalitat de Catalunya, Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya 2003)

	1993 (m ²)	%	1998 (m ²)	%	Change
Industry	5.000.821	23,75%	4.166.545	18,70%	-17%
Trade	5.913.596	28,09%	6.063.183	27,21%	3%
Services	9.473.953	45,00%	11.413.211	51,22%	20%
Professionals	666.840	3,17%	641.949	2,88%	-4%
Total	21.055.210		22.284.888		6%

Table 3: Occupation of space in Barcelona

Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona, Gabinet Tecnic de Programation (2000):

Trends in Economic Activities in Barcelona according to the

Economic Activity Tax 1993-1998, Document No. 16

NEW PRODUCTION SPACE

In the previous chapter we have seen how Barcelona is becoming integrated into global economic exchange network and how this process is expressed in the structure of the local economy. In the following chapter I will show, what are the overall social and spatial consequences caused by those industrial and service sectors, which nowadays play the main role in city economies and will, in particular, characterize economic, social and spatial development of the Poblenou district in Barcelona in the future.

Innovative working environment and immediate access to sector-related knowledge and infrastructure are important conditions of information-based production and thus influence directly spatial logic of what Castells terms as a *new industrial space*. Though spatial proximity is not a necessary condition for existence of highly innovative environments, Castells points out that because of the nature of interaction in information-based production, synergy and added value can be successfully generated only where such proximity exists. (Castells 2000: 324) Many *milieus of innovation* in Europe are located within or next to leading metropolitan areas. Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin talk about gentrified *cyber districts* or *high-tech production and innovation clusters*,⁹ as another kind of emerging enclaves in global cities. (Graham and Marvin 2001: 329) They point out that media enclaves are mainly developing in metropolitan areas with great strength in the arts, cultural industries and fashion where synergy between creative industries and information and communication technology (ICT) sectors can emerge. In Europe a city with the strongest relation between the two sectors is London. A success of Soho, a tightly packed London media enclave, shows importance of dense spatial organization for intense face-to-face innovation and interaction as key factors in of media production along with its broadband connections (Sohonet) to other media nodes around the world. On the other hand the new spaces of high-tech production and innovation clusters mainly emerge on the outskirts of

⁹ There are two distinct sub-sectors within the ICT industries: ICT (hardware and software production) and *new media* (Internet and multimedia industry). (Ajuntament de Barcelona, Urban Planning Department 2000: 141) Each of the two sub-sectors has a distinct influence on the city form.

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metropolitan areas, in a less dense or even in a rather dispersed spatial forms, compared to the media enclaves. (Graham and Marvin 2001: 335) If media enclaves try to establish a kind of link with the city life – although they are mainly detached from the nearby neighbourhoods – then technological clusters are even more inward oriented. Beside, unlike media clusters, technological clusters are strongly dependent on large-scale infrastructure networks (highways, electricity power lines, water supplies etc.), which importantly shape peripheral urban landscape.

A study of the *Catalan Institute of Technology*¹⁰ reveals closely those conditions that influence location patterns of ICT industries and relationships between those complexes and their respective cities. One of the most important factors is the location of ICT clusters in relation to surrounding services, where the relative location is measured in global terms. Infrastructure is the next decisive factor. Ever more important is also standard of living in a city as the new ICT-related workers demand a high living standard, which encourages them to join the new complexes. Depending on its location two trends can be observed. ICT complexes, which have developed in important metropolitan centres, are simply a result of their centrality in relation to the global economy. Alternatively, there are initiatives developed in the peripheral regions, where ICT clusters develop its own dynamics, which is often stimulated by higher flexibility of space or by availability of various options for proportions, functions and ownership, comparing to central areas in big cities. Nevertheless, the study concludes that ICT complexes that are more integrated into local environment (such as for instance Environment Park in Turin or Huxton in London) are more successful in terms of long-term economic performance. It is difficult to say, how much the Catalan Institute of

¹⁰ *Digital City Study, The New Productive Sector: Spaces and Activities*, a comparative study by the Catalan Institute of Technology was commissioned by the Barcelona City Council for the purpose of the 22@BCN Activity District planning. 21 case studies of “digital cities” from United States, Asia, Middle East and Europe were compared in this research. Summary of the study can be found in the *Modification of the PGM for the Renovation of the Industrial Areas of Poblenou* documentation. (Ajuntament de Barcelona, Urban Planning Department 2000: 103-141) The Institute itself is now accommodated in an old industrial building in the 22@ district in Poblenou.

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Technology study had influenced the decision of the City Council to locate Barcelona's new ICT cluster in Poblenou. It is possible that the study was made to actually support the decision already taken earlier about the location of the new cluster.¹¹

The possibility of moulding the new economy to the urban environment, which has already been established, is felt to be the richest possibility, given the information gathered with respect to urban planning history and production. This point could be the greatest weakness of the Asian megacities created artificially out of the void. This model contrasts with the organic development of the sector alongside the city, taking advantage of the urban development whilst adapting it to the new activity. (Ajuntament de Barcelona, Urban Planning Department 2000: 140)

What both types of the new industrial space have in common, are their effects on society. It is nonetheless paradigmatic that ITC developments in general often lead towards gentrification, real estate speculation, social fragmentation and exclusion of the low-income groups. As Graham and Marvin show for the San Francisco's Multimedia Gulch district or in case of the East Palo Alto district in Silicon Valley, major social and political conflicts within those cities have emerged, as the newcomers

with their extraordinary wealth, along with real estate speculators and service providers, have colonised selected districts. This has, not surprisingly, dramatically driven up rents, leading to the eviction or exclusion of many poorer residents and to growing efforts at disciplining those who are not trapped into high-tech, consumerist gentrification (in this case the poor and the black). (Graham and Marvin 2001: 330)

Similar urban processes, known in general as *gentrification processes*, occur in those urban situations, where buildings in dilapidated inner city neighbourhoods get renovated

¹¹ Another location for a large media centre (Parc Audio Visual) has been recently chosen within Barcelona metropolitan area in Terrassa, a city some 20 km away from Barcelona.

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for the use of higher-income population. Beside attractive high standard dwellings and lofts, new amenities like shops and restaurants are created in gentrified areas in order to serve the requirements of new affluent population. The most problematic consequence of such process is that in many cases most of the local inhabitants, living in those areas prior to gentrification, benefit little or nothing at all from the urban renewal. Often they are forced to move out of the area as the prices start to increase with the influx of richer population. Young professionals and wealthy childless couples are some of typical social groups inhabiting gentrified areas, as they are able to afford expensive housing in newly refurbished areas. Some of the new dwellings in gentrified areas also typically remain vacant, as they become a subject of real-estate speculation. Later we will see that the current transformation of the Poblenou district can be in many of its aspects described as a gentrification process. However, before moving to the Poblenou case, let us briefly look at a rather instructive story of Docklands renewal in London.

Docklands in London is a case of an urban renewal and a subsequent gentrification process, rather known for its failures than success. Besides, there seem to be some similarities with the Poblenou situation, which makes the case interesting enough to have a closer look on it. The Docklands, similar as Poblenou, is a former industrial area of some 2.000 ha in East London along the Thames River, which at some point has become deprived of its economic function and marked by a rapid economic and social decline. A decision of the Thatcher government in the 1981 made possible an appropriation of previously publicly owned land by private consortia of business and developer firms. Docklands have become a testing ground for free-market intervention into what used to be concerns of local public institutions.¹² The Canadian firm Olympia & York, which took over main investment share, started to work on a 1,1 million square meters Canary Wharf scheme of office space, apartments, restaurants, shopping malls,

¹² At this point it is important to note that a rather similar strategy is now being employed by the Barcelona City Council when developing the Forum 2004 and the Diagonal Mar areas. The city, previously known for its socially well balanced and integrative city planning policy, is apparently, yearning desperately for influx of new investments, willing to hand over urban development to private interests and capital.

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riverside facilities and the highest building at that moment in Europe. (Figure 3) One of the main goals of that scheme was to offer enough office space on the market, where this new space would attract clients from the expensive and overcrowded finance centre of London. Indeed, as Jon Bird describes, Canary Wharf has become a city within the City populated by a migrant army of executive, managerial and office staff¹³ along with relevant supporting amenities from food to culture and airport. As such, Canary Wharf has little to do with the neighbour boroughs and communities.

The politics of these postmodern utopias is to legitimize the actual processes of redevelopment and gentrification over and above the everyday needs and experiences of the people inhabiting the site. Indeed, the experience of visiting Docklands is one of exclusion and alienation. (Bird 1993: 126)

It is not surprising thus, that when in need to cut the project costs developers have first cancelled most of community-oriented programmes, which had been earlier negotiated with the locals. Only a small proportion of mainly low-paid jobs generated by the new developments were available to local residents. The real beneficiaries were advance service industries and their employees. Similarly, most of housing constructed was directly put on the market thus becoming unaffordable for the locals. Docklands have a clear division between haves and have-nots. Poor social integration of the new neighbourhood was criticised as the weakest point of the transformation. The very same question about successful social integration is also one of the main concerns of the 22@ plan opponents in the current debate about the future of Poblenou. (Estivill 2004: 140) Unfortunately and worrisome, without actually considering the devastating social consequences of a neo-liberal venture, where the market becomes the only motor of urban transformation, the MPGM document lists Docklands as the “best example of how a city ensures its position in Europe by regenerating a degraded area...” (Ajuntament de Barcelona, Urban Planning Department 2000: 83).

¹³ There were approximately 7.000 employees working in different ventures in 1993, 12.800 in 1994, 21.000 in 1997, 35.000 in 2000 and more than 55.000 at the end of 2002.

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Figure 3: Constructing an excluding city within the City – Canary Wharf development in London

Whereas it is clear that in the case of Docklands the issue of a balanced social development could have been solved and address far more efficiently, the other main problem was that the project was simply overambitious. Already during the construction process it became more than evident that the development was unable to absorb surplus of offices offered in the wake of cutting back service expenses and rapidly decreasing demand for new office spaces. (Bird 1993: 135) What we can learn from the case of Docklands, is how structural conditions, which are out of reach of local agents, directly influence an outcome of ambitious large-scale urban transformations and constrain everyday life of affected inhabitants. Wider economic crisis resulting in an office deficit turned out to be crucial for the failure of Docklands.¹⁴ At this point one can't but speculate to what extent a recent slow down of the "new economy" will affect the 22@ plan implementation, which was based on the very optimistic promise that ICT industry was showing some years ago.

¹⁴ It was estimated that the new office space could have been profitable even at a prices up to three times lower as in the Square Mile London finance centre. Because of the economic recession, prices in the old finance centre have dropped for some 50% already during the construction period of the Canary Wharf. By the year of 1993 the Olympia & York was faced with a debt of 20 billion \$. (Bird 1993: 122, 135) End of 1995 Canary Warf was sold to an international consortium of different investors and banks.

POBLENOU STORY

In order to understand the transformation of Poblenou, which is currently taking place and which I will explain in the next chapter, one has to go back into its history for some two centuries and see, what processes shaped Poblenou in the past. We will see that present urban transformation of the area is a part of longer tradition. This tradition should be seen as an ongoing process of interwoven economic, social and urban dynamism. In Poblenou, maybe much more than elsewhere in Barcelona, the production of space has been a very direct outcome of antagonism between actual interests of capital and particular needs of the local population already from its early days on.

The first references to Poblenou, as “a new neighbourhood next to the Barcelonese cemetery” date back to 1843. The name itself, which literary means “a new village”, became commonly used a decade later and referred to south part of the *Sant Martí de Provençals municipality*. (Arxiu Històric del Poblenou 2001: 19) The area of Poblenou started to develop rapidly already in the beginning of the 19th century with an advent of industrial revolution. Its industrial history nonetheless goes back even to the early 18th century, when the first textile workshops were established there. The main reason, which had boosted industrial development in Poblenou, was construction of the railroad in the year 1848, which was passing the area and thus offered excellent transportation opportunities. Another reason for fast industrial development were low prices and sheer availability of land in Poblenou at that time. The area had soon developed into industrial core of Barcelona and Catalonia and was often referred to as “the Manchester of Catalonia.” The name referred not only to dense industrial fabric and architecture, but very likely also to the working-class background of its inhabitants and particular social life, distinctive from the rest of the city. It was nevertheless the textile industry that had mainly driven development of the area in the 19th century. It was not until 1897, when Sant Martí municipality was officially annexed to Barcelona. From that point on, Poblenou has always been seen in Barcelona as a peripheral location, out of interest of the city. A condition, which until recently hasn't change a lot. Therefore one has to be careful not to misjudge increasing interest about Poblenou that has grown up in

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Barcelona lately. Explaining the 22@ plan, we will see later that today many may be more interested in the economic opportunities that the area currently offers, than with true concerns of the Poblenou inhabitants. During the seventies and eighties of the 19th century the area of Sant Martí, including Poblenou, was urbanized following the implementation of the new Cerdà master plan, also known as the *Extension* (Eixample).¹⁵ Although in following years basic street layout of the plan had been more or less fully implemented, the morphology of Poblenou in turn had become far more fragmented than the rest of Eixample. One reason for seemingly chaotic morphology of Poblenou lies in the early urbanization of the area, which had followed very old

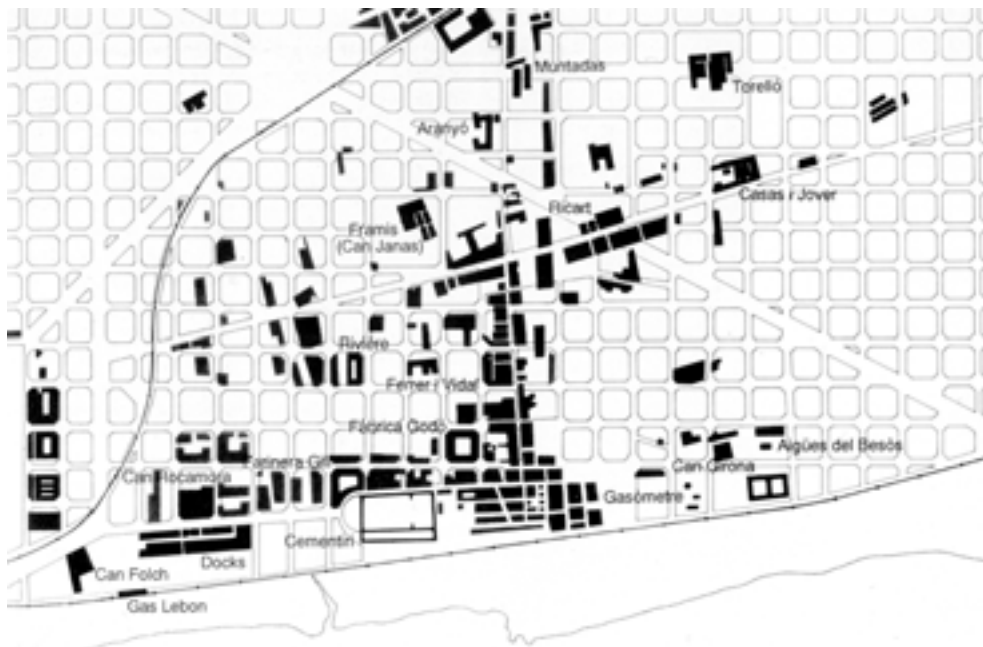


Figure 4: Industrial estates of Poblenou in 1895

Source: Arxiu Històric del Poblenou (2001): *El Poblenou: Més de 150 Anys d'Història*

¹⁵ In 1858 Barcelona torn down its medieval city walls and the prohibition to build outside the walls was banned. A year later the City Council organized a competition to get a new master plan for the extension of the city. The winning design by the architect Antoni Rovira i Trias, was – after a decision of the central government in Madrid – supplanted by a plan produced by the engineer Ildefons Cerdà. While the Rovira i Trias plan was a formalistic design with a strong hierarchy of spaces, at first place aimed to represent the local bourgeois, Cerdà envisioned a pragmatic and egalitarian scheme, based on division of territory into standard 113x113 meters city blocks combining housing and green spaces, which could at least in principle offer equal opportunities for development and life to everyone at any location in the city.

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agricultural division of the land. At the same time, as we can see on the Figure 4 very well, the most of the 19th century industrial estates of Poblenou were located along both railway tracks or along the historic pre-Eixample streets – *Rambla del Poblenou* and *Pere IV*. Neither railway nor the two old streets were following the new Eixample street pattern. This urban situation had influenced all later transformations of the area until today. *Rambla del Poblenou* or *Pere IV* had developed into backbone of the urban fabric, while they were at the same time also the core of economic activities and of the neighbourhood's social and communal life, which is why they still play an important symbolic role in collective memory of the local population. Another important reason for weak spatial coherence of the area is connected with many economic interests and speculations with the land, which had resulted in spatial dispersal and diversity of buildable lots. In contrast to unrestricted spatial development of Poblenou, central parts of Barcelona were at that time far more controlled, producing a greater cohesion of urban form as a result. Apparent chaotic morphology of Poblenou, in some parts still evident today, may be understood as a direct consequence of unrestricted operation of capital, freely appropriating available land and constructing factories or dwellings for workers on every possible location. One can thus see, how as early as in the 19th century, industry and economic interests of local bourgeoisie were influencing social and spatial structure of Poblenou. (Marrero Guillamón 2003: 4)

The early 20th century witnessed the first economic slow-down with parallel consolidation of the area. Metallurgic and automobile industry started to arrive to Poblenou. It seems that industrial activities and commerce in Poblenou had got more and more closely interwoven with local social life and different activities were often sharing same spaces of the neighbourhood. At the same time the area witnessed emergence of many shantytowns on its outskirts as a result of influx of the first wave of economic immigration, which were at that time coming mainly from the inner parts of Catalonia. The second wave of immigration hit Poblenou during the fifties, when economic immigrants came predominately from the Spanish southlands. This period also represented the second boom of mechanic, metallurgic and automobile industries occupying ever more of the

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city space. In 1966 a private company tried to build a luxurious private housing complex on the Poblenou seafront, which became known as the *Ribera plan* (Plan de la Ribera). Looking from the perspective of the 22@ plan, the Ribera plan is very paradigmatic, as it reveals how private capital and interests of city administration had joined in promoting an urban “renovation” without involvement of local population. Private interests, often disguised as general public one, would have in consequence resulted in dislodgments of local population and financial profits of developers after having acquired undervalued land. The Ribera Plan provoked a strong reaction in Poblenou and in Barcelona, which not only heavily attacked exclusivist and elitist proposal, but also resulted in a counter-plan. Based on historical continuity of urban and spatial structure, the counter-plan proposed a bottom-up revitalization of the neighbourhood following the needs of inhabitants and tried to avoid its spatial and social fragmentation. (Marrero Guillamón 2003: 4) The Rivera Plan had at the end never been carried through, while many ideas of the counter-plan were integrated in later proposals for the transformation of the area.

Economic and social decline of the Poblenou district started in the late sixties and the local industry started to relocate to more peripheral locations of Barcelona. As a consequence of rapid industrial decay Poblenou has lost some 25% of its population between 1971 and 1992. The negative trend has changed after the Olympics, when the newly constructed *Olympic Village* offered new attractive housing and office space in the area, though its social integration is going on much slower as it was expected after its completion. (Meyer 1999: 172) Within Olympics urban transformations the coastal railroad was also removed. On its place the new coastal ring road (Ronda Litoral) was built and new links between the Poblenou and the seaside were re-established. At the same time the beaches were recuperated and the neighbourhood was for the first time connected with its coast. Urban transformations carried out in the late eighties and before the Olympics were the first grand projects in Poblenou since a century. At that time most of the industry had already moved out of the district, mainly because *Zona Franca*, a large area on the southwest of the city, was established and promoted by the City Council as the new Barcelona industrial centre. During severe decay of the area in

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the nineties, smaller transportation, logistics and service companies have moved to Poblenou, while urban developments – such as construction of the Glòries or Diagonal-Mar commercial and residential centres, Forum universal de les Cultures 2004 or Torre Agbar – have moved to outskirts of the neighbourhood.

Today Poblenou is a part of Sant Martí, one of 10 *municipal districts* of Barcelona. The surface area of Poblenou occupies 6% of the land in Barcelona (56,5% of land of Sant Martí), while its population in year 2001 represented only 3,4% of entire city population (24,7% of population of Sant Martí). The density of inhabitants in Poblenou was some 44% lower than the Barcelona average and is, after Sarrià-Sant Gervasi municipal district, the lowest in the city. It is therefore not surprising that population of Poblenou is currently growing at a higher rate (4,9%) than in other parts of the city. In fact, the population of Barcelona has slightly decreased during the last years, mainly due to its move to more peripheral parts of the metropolitan region. (Table 4) Basic data about current social structure of Poblenou doesn't differ a lot from the Barcelona average.

	Barcelona	Sant Martí	Poblenou
Population (1996)	1.508.805	205.359	48.620
Population (2001)	1.505.325	206.401	51.015
Population change	-0,2%	0,5%	4,9%
Surface Area (ha)	10.096	1.080	610
Density (hab/km ²)	14.910	19.111	8.363
Barcelona-born (2000)	58,4%	58,3%	62,9%
Catalonia-born (2000)	8,2%	7,2%	7,4%
Immigrants (2000)	7,2%	5,2%	6,3%
Primary Education (2000)	56,9%	63,9%	61,8%
Secondary Education (2000)	26,1%	25,2%	25,0%
Higher Education (2000)	16,5%	10,6%	12,8%

Table 4: General population data for Barcelona, Sant Martí and Poblenou

Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona, Departament d'Estadística (2002):

Guia Estadística, Sant Martí en xifres

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We can nonetheless notice that proportion of native Barcelona residents is slightly higher in Poblenou, while educational structure is a bit lower. Even though the social structure of the Poblenou district has changed during last years, the differences of Poblenou current social structure, compared to the Barcelona average, still reflect the area's working-class past. A distinct social and industrial history may thus be the two main causes for a particular collective identity of the Poblenou inhabitants, which are often described as a "hard working and tough people." Specific history of Poblenou can also be traced in the economic figures of the district. (Table 5) 4,15% of active companies in Barcelona (and 42,4% of those in Sant Martí) were settled in Poblenou in the year 2000. The economic structure shows that proportion of industrial companies in Poblenou is still considerably higher than Barcelona average, while the number of services is some 10% lower. Poblenou also has a higher proportion (for 13,7%) of commercial companies than Barcelona, which most likely reflects a large number of relatively small commercial enterprises based in the district. The small commerce used to play an important role in the social life of the district in the past. Its recent decline thus doesn't change only economic but also social structure of Poblenou, as the small shops and services used to play important role in local social networks as well.

	Barcelona	Sant Martí	Poblenou
Active Companies (2000)	152.951	14.951	6.342
Industry (2000)	14.133	2.618	1.613
	9,2%	17,5%	25,4%
Construction (2000)	11.428	255	91
	7,5%	1,7%	1,4%
Commercial (2000)	54.134	5.472	2.112
	35,4%	36,6%	33,3%
Services (2000)	73.249	6.606	2.526
	47,9%	44,2%	39,9%

Table 5: Company Type, Barcelona, Sant Martí and Poblenou

Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona, Departament d'Estadística (2002):

Guia Estradística, Sant Martí en xifres

22@BCN

By now, we have seen, how Barcelona has become integrated into the global city and how it has transformed its economy during the last decade. We have also had a look at some of spatial and social consequences that the new global space of production brings to cities. The universalizing tendencies inherent the two processes mentioned above set the structural frame for the entire 22@ transformation. This operation, which I will examine in this chapter, must thus be seen at the first place as an initiative undertaken by the Barcelona City Council to make certain that the city doesn't stay behind the leading world regions concerning the ICT production, advanced services and logistics. In order to understand the 22@ possible economical impact, population and territory in question shouldn't be limited to Barcelona, but must comprise of entire metropolitan region with some two million jobs and a total population of 4,3 million inhabitants. Beside a development of a gigantic logistics infrastructure system at the Llobregat River delta, the 22@ plan is namely the most important and the most ambitious plan recently undertaken in the Barcelona metropolitan area. Ramón Garcíá-Bragado Acín, former head of the urban development section of the Barcelona City Council, calls the 22@ project as the "last great urban development transformation that will be possible in Barcelona." He continues stressing importance of the plan and gives a clear and dense summary of plan's intentions looking from the City Council perspective.

The new industry-services amalgamation must return to the city, to the new knowledge-based city. Urban development regulations must allow this recovery of industry and economic promotion policies must foster it. Why? In order to maintain our position among leading European cities, with new employees in new offices, with good communications [...] and to improve its citizens' quality of life. (García-Bragado Acín 2001: 39)

In order to sustain the economic growth of Barcelona and its profound shift towards tertiary-based economy, achieved during the last decade, the city has obviously to ensure sufficient amount of office and production space. Having the lowest density of

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the built land in the very city centre (Table 4) and many empty former industrial estates, the Poblenou district has been decided as a site for this operation by the Barcelona City Council. The area has other advantages as well beside its low density. Poblenou has a long industrial tradition and a special place in industrial culture of Barcelona and Catalonia. It also has an existing productive fabric, good traffic accessibility within metropolitan region and central location within the city. The morphology of the Cerdà street pattern, capable for a flexible spatial organization, can as well be considered as one of comparative advantages of Poblenou. “If Barcelona doesn’t create a service pole in Poblenou, it would have to do so somewhere else. Otherwise it will continue to lose users” changing to places with better conditions, as a report of Barcelona City Council says. It is estimated that in the next 20 years there will be 7,4 million m² of surface available in Barcelona. 2,4 million m² or 32% of this space is located in the Poblenou district, which is why Poblenou is called “a tertiary future of Barcelona.” (Ajuntament de Barcelona, Urban Planning Department 2000: 77)

Modifying the 1976 *General Metropolitan Plan* (Pla General Metropolità), which classified the Poblenou district for predominantly industrial use,¹⁶ the 22@ plan aims at transforming the old industrial land into a new district, dedicated to new economic activities and services related to information and communication technologies and advanced services. The *Modification of General Metropolitan Plan* (Modificació del Pla General Metropolità, MPGM) has done away with restrictions derived from the old industrial land classification and created a new category of *22@ activities*¹⁷ required to transform the area. In addition a 7@ classification has also been created in order to deal

¹⁶ According to the 1976 PGM land use codification, industrial areas were classified as 22a, which is why the new plan, having a promoting purpose to emphasize a transformation from industrial to postindustrial economy, got a new 22@ label.

¹⁷ @ activities include development or manufacturing of computers and telecommunication system, radio broadcasting, internet services, multimedia sector, publishing sector, data processing, maintenance and logistic support of ICT sector, services for creation of new companies, knowledge centres and other tertiary knowledge-based activities in areas of new technologies, commerce, finance, administration and personnel management. (Ajuntament de Barcelona, Urban Planning Department 2000: 64-66)

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Figure 5: Along the Diagonal – the most emblematic projects of the “new Barcelona urbanism”
Agbar tower (front), the 22@ activity district (centre) and the Diagonal-Mar with Forum 2004 (back)

Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona, 22@BCN S.A. (2004): *The 22@ Project*

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with activities linked to education, research and enterprise. The MPGM in overall is a document, which makes the 22@ transformation legally operative and was accepted in July 2000 after two years of discussions and negotiations. Due to the complexity of the transformation and its targeted 15-20 years time span, the MPGM was from the very beginning developed as flexible as possible allowing co-existence of diversified activities coming from both, small-scale local initiatives and larger operations. In a broader frame of complex urban transformations, which Barcelona has undergone in the past two decades, the 22@ operation was not possible before the basic city infrastructure was laid down – with a wake of the pre-Olympics transformations and afterwards – connecting in this way different city areas into coherent and functional urban network. The 22@ plan is thus not only an urban renewal project for the Poblenou district, but also a part of overall strategy for the transformation of the eastern Barcelona together with the new Sagrera inter-modal terminal, Universal Forum of Cultures 2004 in the Besòs River delta and developments around the Plaça de les Glòries Square. (Figure 5)

The transformation strategies proposed by the 22@ plan can be summed up in five main concepts – 1) creation of the 22@ use sub-category within existing 22a industrial use category, maintenance of existing housing is allowed as well as construction of new *protected housing*, 2) definition of characteristic 22@ activities, which require special urban planning, 3) definition of specific types of public amenities related to 22@ activities, 4) reurbanisation of the industrial land of Poblenou in order to provide adequate infrastructure and 5) provision of special planning instruments for internal renovation, *PERI* (Pla Especial de Reforma Interior) in order to develop certain pre-selected strategic areas in Poblenou, where the Barcelona City Council assumes the planning initiative. Those strategic areas will act as “motors of transformation of the area, [they] will help to read this part of the city, grant coherence,” ensure diversity of uses, provide sufficient continuity to residential fabric and “exploit the spatial and typological richness that already exists to a large extent and which is now distinctive element of the area.” (Ajuntament de Barcelona, Urban Planning Department 2000: 10, 18) There are six special areas defined, each with its strategic objective – Llacuna axis,

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Audio-visual field, Park Diagonal, Pujades-Llull east, Pujades-Llull west and Perre IV-Perú area. (Figure 6) Outside this scheme, other urban interventions may occur without a predetermined location, as long as they comply to basic regulations set up by the plan. In short, the 22@ project “opts for a high quality, compact, mixed, sustainable urban model which results in a better balanced, more hybrid, ecologically more efficient city of greater economic weight and cohesion. Thus it forms part of the overall strategy *Barcelona, the City of Knowledge*.”¹⁸ (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 22@BCN S.A. 2004: 3)

The chief Architect of the Barcelona City Council Josep Antoni Acebillo, one of the 22@ plan main creators and proponents, has summarised ambitions of the plan within three key strategies¹⁹ – *densification*, *infrastructuralisation* and *legislation*. Densification of the Poblenou district is clearly aimed to provide enough available land and space for the increasing market demands. At the same time it has an ambition to centralise an excessively decentralised metropolitan process in order to achieve efficient land use on one hand and to concentrate “different urban and economic agents in generating the critical mass required to achieve economies of agglomeration”, required in the knowledge-based economy. (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 22@BCN S.A. 2004: 3)

Infrastructuralization on the other hand has to address current infrastructural deficiency of the Poblenou district, not just in terms of a modern telecommunications network, but water, waste management, electricity, road network, urban furniture and public transport as well, in order to provide maximum flexibility for the future mixed-use area. A special infrastructure plan has been established for the implementation of those demands. Legislation mainly concerns development of housing in Poblenou and it seems to be at

¹⁸ City of Knowledge (Ciutat del Coneixement) is a long-term strategic project of the Barcelona City Council, which aims to challenge the unsustainable profit-driven model of Barcelona as “the residential, commercial and leisure capital of Mediterranean.” It identifies knowledge as 1) main economic base of Barcelona in the future and as 2) a way to reduce the “digital divide” and to reinforce social cohesion in a knowledge-based society of reflexive citizens. In the spatial politics the City of Knowledge is expressed through attempts to preserve some of the most attractive locations for knowledge-based activities against an immediate consumption of commercial developments. (de Semir 2001)

¹⁹ Josep Antoni Acebillo during his lecture held on the IaaC Institute in Barcelona on the 10th June 2004.

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Figure 6: Sant Martí municipal district, the 22@ area (black) and the “strategic areas”

A: Eix Llacuna, B: Audio-visual campus, C: Park Central, D: Llull-Pujades Levant

E: Llull-Pujades Ponent, F: Perre IV-Perú

the moment the most disputed part of the whole transformation, as we will see later. There are 4.614 existing dwellings in Poblenou, which some 90% were built prior to 1953 and were not “acknowledged” by the previous plans. They maybe don’t follow recent planning regulations, yet most of them are legally built, which also renders the term “legislation” as a misleading. It is nonetheless one of the main concerns of the 22@ plan to recognize those 4.614 dwellings as a “legal” part of the future development. That doesn’t necessarily mean, that all of them will in fact be preserved. The 22@ plan establishes specific criteria for “consolidation” of the existing dwellings, where only 72% of them actually meet those criteria. Beside the consolidation process, the MPGM explicitly states that all new housing will be constructed as *protected housing* (*habitage assequible*)²⁰ with partial public financial involvement and support, and aims to create

²⁰ In Spain there are in general three types of dwellings concerning type of investment. *Vivienda de promoción pública* is directly financed by public investments. *Vivienda de protección oficial* (*habitage*

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socially variable and mixed-use neighbourhood. (Ajuntament de Barcelona, Urban Planning Department 2000: 25) In fact, the 22@ plan is one of the few post-Olympic grand projects that actively approaches a problem of housing in relation to the urban transformation of an area itself.

When the plan was announced in 2000, it was expected to bring 3,2 million m² of available space for productive use and additional 800.000 m² for other uses, among which the most important were some 4.000 new subsidised dwellings, next to the existing 4.614 ones. The green areas surface should increase for some 75.000 m², new amenities for 145.000 m². The 22@ plan should on long term generate approximately 60.000 new jobs, though the 22@ promotional booklet optimistically estimates even some 100.000 to 130.000 new jobs. The amount of Barcelona productive activities is supposed to grow from 4% to over 15%. By the year 2010 58% of the development is predicted to be finished. 30% of the total cost will be carried out by public investments, whereas the owners of the land under transformation will have to cover the rest of the costs. Real estate potential of the entire operation is valued around 12 billion €.

(Ajuntament de Barcelona, Urban Planning Department 2000: 74, 86) End of the year 2000 the City Council established a private municipal company 22@BCN S.A., as an independent legal entity provided with instruments and powers required to administrate the process of transformation under the 22@ plan. The purpose of the company is 1) to prepare and execute different urban plans and actions related to the 22@ activity district in Barcelona, 2) to plan, construct and manage infrastructure, urban services, facilities and public spaces, 3) to manage the municipal land in the area and 4) to promote the 22@ plan and to foster establishment of ICT companies and activities in the Poblenou district. The promotion of the 22@ plan is also intensively promoted by the political and economic measures and by lobbying of the Barcelona City Council and the Autonomous Government of Catalonia (Generalitat). Both have succeeded to bring in Poblenou some large corporations like T-Systems and Auna or administrative governmental institutions

assequible in Catalonia) is financed and constructed by private investors yet with financial help of public administration. *Vivienda libre* is entirely financed by private capital without any public help.

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like the national Commission for Telecommunications Market. Yet the promotional activities are not only focused on potential private investors from Spain or abroad. A lot of effort has been made to promote the 22@ plan among the citizens of Barcelona. Jose Luis Echeverria has pointed out²¹ the sophisticated strategy of marketing machinery employed by the City Council in the case of 22@ plan. Public campaign has started with stigmatization of the existing condition in Poblenou, rendering its decaying buildings, poverty and delinquency, implying in this way the necessity for change. In the next stage of the campaign the new plan was introduced as a solution for the district, promoting all the advantages and benefits it brings for the citizens. (Figure 7) “A new city is emerging in Poblenou!” as one of the promoting slogans was announcing. Noteworthy, the concept of “citizens’ benefits” itself was used in a rather vague way, leaving it open, what those benefits might be. Marketing campaign has already anticipated the future transformation and has in advance constructed a desired image in the collective mind of the citizens. The fact that in 2002 for instance the City Council spent 24.539 € a day for advertising, tells a lot about the extent of its marketing campaigns. At the end, it looks that the only group that was left out of the marketing campaigns, were the local inhabitants of the Poblenou district. We will see now, what was their respond.



Figure 7: Barcelona City Council advertisement for the 22@ exhibition

“Oh! @h! The new 22@bcn district. Come to be surprised!”

²¹ Jose Luis Echeverria during his lecture held on the IaaC Institute in Barcelona on the 4th May 2004.

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The title of this chapter has a double meaning. On one hand we can talk about different forms of local resistance in regard to their particular motifs and aims, on the other it is important to see what form of representation different resistances may take within the discourse on the future of Poblenou. This chapter nevertheless, doesn't want to describe every existing form of protest or local resistance, but rather tries to reveal the extent and diversity of questions and concerns, which have become relevant for the local population since the beginning of the 22@ transformation. It is also important to notice that resistance is not aimed only against the 22@ plan as such, but often against other measures of the Barcelona City Council related to Poblenou.

From its very beginning on, the 22@ plan has nonetheless faced a tremendous opposition in the local community of Poblenou. The local protests against the plan are articulated through several well-organized local associations and organizations, which comes by no surprise. Being a working-class neighbourhood, Poblenou district has a long history of activism and organized social movements.²² Neighbourhood associations and organizations, opposing the 22@ operation, are *Associació de Veïns i Veïnes del Poblenou*, *Associació d'Afectats 22@ (Forum Perjudicats 22@)*, *Comissió d'Afectats 22@* and *Coordinadora Contra 22@*. At the moment it seems that only the first and the last still remain active. One has also to mention *L'Arxiu Històric del Poblenou*, which is specifically focused on preservation of historic and industrial heritage of the district, and is thus not a neighbours association as all the others. Although the initial motifs for involvement of those associations may be different – ranging from very pragmatic ones like in case of *Associació de Veïns i Veïnes del Poblenou* to a predominately ideological motivation of *Coordinadora Contra 22@* – their main critique can be summed along the following three objections: 1) against the decision-making process, 2) against the quality

²² In the book *El Poblenou: Més de 150 Anys d'Història* we can read about many hard strikes in years 1912 – 1913, about the role and importance of the CNT labour union in the thirties, anarcho-sindicalism and illegal movements during Franco dictatorship, big strikes in the neighbourhood in year 1951 or very strong opposition in Poblenou against the Ribera plan in 1966. (Arxiu Històric del Poblenou 2001)

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of planned projects or already constructed buildings and about 3) concerns of social costs deriving from the 22@ operation. (Marrero Guillamón 2003: 7) In addition, a fourth entirely ideological, though nonetheless equally legitimate, protest 4) against the unjust corporative policy of companies settled in Poblenou can be added to the previous three. I will call these four lines of objections the main *forms of local resistance* against the 22@ plan and we will look to each of the particular critiques and see how they are represented in discourse about 22@. Most of these associations agree that the Barcelona City Council has failed to involve general public into the process of decision-making; particularly there was no civic participation in the elaboration of the PERI plans. Instead of achieving an early consensus about the proposal with the people affected by it, the locals seem to feel that interests of corporations and real estate developers played more important role in the planning process. The neighbours demand to get involved in the decision making process in the future. Although associations share the same opinion about the failure of civic participation, the interpretation of the reasons may well be different among them. Whether the failure is indeed systematic and intentional or not, the gap between the Barcelona City Council openly stated participatory and democratic nature of city planning process²³ and its actual implementation, looks rather obvious. The quality of planned and already constructed buildings in terms of their content, form and nature is another point of profound disagreement between the city council and the neighbours association. The height of the new buildings seems to have become one of the most important concerns for local population. For the locals the question of building height is clearly not so much a matter of urban density or architectural qualities, but carries in the first place a strong symbolic meaning for the local identity. In other words, high-rise developments as the most visible manifestation of the “new city model designed to meet challenges Barcelona is facing” (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 22@BCNS.A. 2004) for the locals symbolize the very end of

²³ “The City Council should guarantee the right [to participate] to every citizen. The use of the most adequate technologies must be promoted and existence of sufficient number of open and flexible channels of participation guaranteed in order to encourage participation of everyone, who wishes to do so, and make dialogue of citizens with their city government possible.” (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2002: 7)



Figure 8: 25 years of history? From 1976 District plan to 2001 PERI Eix Llacuna

Source: Arxiu Històric del Poblenou (2001): *El Poblenou: Més de 150 Anys d'Història*,
El Poblenou, Associació de Veïns i Veïnes del Poblenou (2002): *Salvem el Poblenou*

what Poblenou used to be and what it used to mean. Therefore, the main argument of the local inhabitants is that it is unacceptable to build 24-storey buildings in an area, where the buildings were never higher than five storeys, since such developments “alter the essence of the area.” It is not surprising that among the locals, notorious proposals as for example the PERI *Eix Llacuna*²⁴ have been recognized as forced upon for the benefits of construction companies and real estate speculations. (Figure 8)

²⁴ PERI Eix Llacuna is a plan for one of the six strategic areas proposed in the 22@ plan. The City Council proposed to build nine 72 meters high towers with 24 storeys along the Llacuna street to define “a new axis that reinforces the sea-mountain relationship of the sector” and constructs a new Barcelona skyline. (Ajuntament de Barcelona, Urban Planning Department 2000: 18) Llacuna Street lies in the very historical centre of Poblenou, which is why the proposal has caused a lot of anger among local inhabitants. It has soon become opposed and rejected by all local civic associations. The City Council started to negotiate with the associations and has finally come up, reportedly after a very short time, with a completely new proposal for towers with 9 storeys and a height of 48 meters. Without consulting other associations the Barcelona City Council and the Associació de Veïns i Veïnes del Poblenou have signed an approval regarding the new PERI, which finally passed the procedure in the City Council on the 25th October 2002.

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The Barcelona City Council has been accused to have not enough respect and sensibility for the existing urban fabric and heritage for the sake of economical interests. Especially the local L'Arxiu Histiòric del Poblenou is constantly defending and promoting restoration and preservation of historic industrial and architectural heritage. On the other hand it is also true that many of the abandoned and obsolete industrial buildings were already renovated or are currently in a process of renovation under high architectural standards, such as the *La Farinera del Clot* or *El Vapor Lluç* buildings. In the first case an old mill-house has become a district cultural centre, whereas in the second case an old chemical factory has been converted into lofts and workshops for mainly artists, following the Soho model from New York. However, a question remains in the case of *El Vapor Lluç*, how much does the local community benefit from a renovation of industrial estate, which later doesn't get integrated into local communal life. It is also not difficult to show that many of those renovations are motivated by other than cultural concerns. For many private developers renovation of industrial heritage is an economic issue, which can be – as we have seen in the first chapter – appropriated to brand new developments as “reinterpretations of the old industrial fabric of Poblenou in a contemporary way” or even used to polish public image of developer himself.²⁵ In fact, the Barcelona City Council promised to the Poblenou inhabitants to renovate some of old industrial estates, like the old *Can Saladrigas* factory, and convert them into new *social infrastructure* (equipaments) providing a new district library, local museum and artistic workshops and studios. These plans were formalised by the *Social Infrastructure Plan* (Pla d'Equipaments del Poblenou) in July 2001. Yet three years after the beginning of the 22@ transformation, little or nothing has been made in regard to the question of communal amenities. Furthermore, people feel deceived as the City Council shows little

(Marrero Guillamón 2003: 9) The dispute among the associations opens questions not only about their representativity, but about legitimacy of the Barcelona City Council policy as well, if the later favours only one particular association.

²⁵ Maybe the most evident example of such straight-ahead corporative attitude in Barcelona is the American developer Hines, which has built, among other projects, the Diagonal Mar shopping centre and housing estate. Hines has shamelessly put their promoting banner over entire front of the old Barcelona cathedral – “Hines. Renovating the most emblematic to construct the most innovative.”

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will to actually start resolving the problem. At the same time, when the formal aspects of the new buildings are brought into question, local associations are opposing the housing policy of the City Council and the structure of the new dwellings, which they fear may be an excuse for gentrification of the district. Due to the general housing market situation and real estate speculations many inhabitants of Barcelona can't afford to buy a new apartment anymore.²⁶ The problem is especially difficult for the young people and young families. In Poblenou, where prices are growing – beside other reasons – also because of the impacts of the 22@ plan on the real estate market, people are already leaving the district to find a place to live in other cheaper areas of the metropolitan area. Associació de Veïns i Veïnes del Poblenou and Coordinadora Contra 22@ demand from the City Council to establish a helpful financial and tax policy and to reserve 50% of the new dwellings for the people and families from the district.²⁷ Such policy would allow the local population to stay in the district and could in consequence generate more sustainable and balanced social transformation of the area. Many local inhabitants believe that the City Council itself is too much involved on the real estate market in order to be able to deal with the housing market speculations. After all it is the City Council, which is selling the public land to developers. Inactive position of the City Council in regard to the market speculations often becomes interpreted as an intentional policy aimed at altering the social structure of the Poblenou district in favour of more affluent groups now attracted to the area. (Associació de Veïns i Veïnes del Poblenou 2003) In their protests against the housing policy of the City Council, local associations in Poblenou cooperate with other similar organizations in the city, which all face similar questions of social disintegration and fading collective identities in their neighbourhoods. (Figure 9)

²⁶ In the Sant Martí municipal district, which includes the Poblenou district, an average apartment rent has grown for 62% (from 374 € to 607 € a month) during 1999 – 2003 period, while growth in Barcelona has been slightly smaller (59% from 403 € to 639 €) during the same period. Though one has to keep in mind that prices in Poblenou must be some 8% higher than the Sant Martí average. La Mina for instance, another part of the Sant Martí municipal district, has the lowest rents in the city. With an average price of 2.074 € per m² for an apartment in 2000, Poblenou was already above Barcelona average price of 2.061 € per m². (Ajuntament de Barcelona, Departament d'Estadística 2002)

²⁷ An agreement has been made with the City Council to reserve 25% of the new dwellings for the locals.

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Figure 9: Manifestation of some 3.000 inhabitants in 2002 against the 22@

“Say No! Poblenou is not on sale!”

The housing problem and a process of possible gentrification of the area bring us to the question of “social costs” of the 22@. Due to the new housing model, the characteristic social structure of the district may profoundly change. On the other hand recent completion of the nearby Glòries and Diagonal-Mar shopping centres may force many small merchants and workshops, which used to be the core of the past social life in the neighbourhood, to close down their business. Some of once such characteristic local places have already been demolished due to construction of new housing, offices and infrastructure. (Pujol & Vila-Puig 2004) Although the City Council expects that the 22@ plan can generate more than new 100.00 jobs in the district, the local inhabitants are afraid they will benefit little from them. The case of Docklands has shown us, that such fear is not completely without a ground. The transformation of the district to facilitate the “new economy” and its new consumerism-oriented labour force will in turn change the everyday life in Poblenou, making it more expensive and forcing parts of the old population to leave the district. The Associació de Veïns i Veïnes del Poblenou and the Associació d’Afectats 22@ demand from the City Council to minimize the number of households affected by dislodgments, ask for just financial compensations and above all to rethink again the housing and economic model for the district.

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The last of the four forms of local resistance concerns a strong opposition among part of predominately younger population in Poblenou against multinational corporations, which have recently settled down their business in the district as a part of the 22@ scheme. Main criticism comes from the association Coordinadora Contra 22@ and questions corporative policy and its unjust social and environmental consequences of corporations like General Electric, Endesa, T-System, Agbar or Indra. Many of those companies are also involved with the military industries. Yet it is not only the corporations that are under critique, but also apparent hypocrisy of the City Council, which allows those companies to do their business in Barcelona.²⁸ (Coordinadora Contra 22@ 2003) (Figure 10, Figure 11) It is needless to say that ideological background of Coordinadora derives from the current political discourse on the radical left and is tightly connected with the anti-globalization movements and their ideology. At the same time, their concerns may as well be related to the local working-class background and activist history of the Poblenou district and its population. It is somehow paradoxical that even though the



Figure 10: Graffiti against 22@ corporations in Poblenou

“War industry, get out of the district! No for 22@”



Figure 11: Street poster issued by Coordinadora Contra 22@

“Companies of 22@, Work? Peace? Sustainability?”

²⁸ Barcelona City Council on one hand supports pacifistic mobilization of their citizens and organizes *Forum Universal de les Cultures 2004*, a project, which promotes ideas about sustainability, cultural diversity and peace. On the other hand the same City Council has allowed that “weapon corporations are sponsoring the Forum 2004 and has approved a setting up of war industry in 22@. Policy of the City Council (governmental and oppositional) is full of contradictions, incoherency and above all hypocrisy.” (Coordinadora Contra 22@ 2003: 55)

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critique by Coordinadora is the least particularistic among existing forms of resistance in Poblenou – as it is the only one that recognizes the real structural causes for the conflict; that is the productive logic of the global capitalism and its destructive consequences on the local population – Coordinadora is at the same time the most utopian in their demands. One of their basic demands is a radical change of the neo-liberal policy of the Barcelona City Council. The uncompromising nature of such demands makes it difficult to meet them; not only by the City Council but by other neighbour associations as well.

Associació de Veïns i Veïnes del Poblenou seems much more particularistic in their concerns and very pragmatic in their demands. Which makes sense. If they want to deal efficiently with the very specific problems of small groups of inhabitants or even some individuals affected by the 22@ plan, they need to work “rather with the City Council, then stay outside,” as they explain. Nonetheless, they also demand from the City Council “a pronounced policy aimed at conservation of historic heritage and elements of common identity; at promoting social interrelationship through communal institutions, neighbourhood commerce and social infrastructure and for a social housing policy, which permits continuity of families in the neighbourhood.” (Associació de Veïns i Veïnes del Poblenou 2003) The different approach of both local associations and their dissimilar institutional relation have become visible during the protests against the PERI Eix Llacuna, when only Associació de Veïns i Veïnes del Poblenou has signed compromising agreement with the City Council.²⁹ Nevertheless, it is clear that whatever the forms of local resistance – positioned either outside official discourse or associated with existing political institutions – all of them are equally legitimate and should as such be part of any debate on the future of the district and the city. In the opposite case, a part of population may feel or actually become excluded from the local communal life in Poblenou and the city, which in turn questions the very legitimacy of Barcelona as a shared project of all its citizens.

²⁹ See page 41.

CONCLUSION: LOCAL EMANCIPATION

During the last decade, when cities all over the world have faced different growing global pressures on their economies, societies and environments, Barcelona has become internationally known for its governing and planning practices as apparently a successful model,³⁰ dealing with opportunities and pressures of globalization. Assuming that a particular city neighbourhood expresses general dynamics in a city, I will use the transformation of Poblenou as a case to reflect the proclaimed success of the so-called *Barcelona model*. The attention in the concluding chapter will not be focused so much on the positive achievements of the model, but to some of its more doubtful social, spatial and political consequences.

At the moment, no one seems to be entirely satisfied with the current progress of the transformation in Poblenou. Developers are complaining about rigid regulations and procedures of city bureaucracy, which are supposedly slowing down their projects making them more expensive; politicians still can't show a successful "multifunctional neighbourhood" that they have promised to build, the transformation itself is moving

³⁰ I have already shown, how newly constructed or renewed public space and infrastructure projects can be read as ideological texts in Barcelona. At the same time Barcelona model itself, as a representation of those projects, is an ideological and political construct too. It is important to know, how international attention and prestige that the model has acquired over the past two decades – as a paradigm of a modern stylish metropolis with a well-balanced urban development and apparently high social and political consensus – is used in local discourses to legitimize local hegemonic ideologies and policies. (Balibrea 2001) Barcelona model thus primarily serves as a particular and exclusive representation of reality – favouring those aspects of it, which are in interests of dominating groups in society – and thus interpellates individuals and collectives as citizens of Barcelona. Due to the strong ideological role of the Barcelona model, its very existence in a form of specific and seemingly coherent approach to urban and strategic planning and city governance needs to be considered with certain scepticism. Even more so, since Marshall argues that the true innovation of the model "remains that within one of Barcelona's leading edges, the architectural profession, building on a deep tradition of action in the city. In the other areas there is much more of the common Spanish pattern of borrowing the popular US/north European ideas. If there is then a Barcelona model, it would be a particular combination of borrowings and innovation, new to a degree only." (Marshall 2000: 312)

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forward slower than it was expected; about concerns, objections and resistance of the local population, a lot has already been written in the previous chapters. Obviously, an outcome of urban renewal projects of comparable scale depends on a complex interplay of various global and local influences, and so does the outcome of the 22@ plan. Yet the point here is neither to evaluate particular roles that different agents play in the process of transformation nor to speculate about its outcome. The aim of this study is to look at the 22@ project and its social and spatial consequences from a perspective of the local population affected by the transformation. Furthermore, as this study wants to take a critical stand about impacts of globalization on cities and societies in order to win space for life-world, it has to turn its subject of reflection against the system of dominance and hegemony, power-relations and ideologies institutionalized either in form of private corporations or public bureaucracy. In this case the study may eventually contribute to a critical and emancipatory discourse and practice reflecting not merely living conditions of individuals but those of communal existence as well. With such objectives in mind, I want to focus now on those consequences of globalization in Poblenu – 1) *appropriation of the local*, 2) *social and spatial fragmentation* and 3) *alienation of the city as a communal political agent*, as maybe the most important among them – which in a very direct and profound way affect, how the population in question experience the city. At the end of the paper, it also makes sense to rethink existing responsibility of local associations in resisting global pressures and their possible emancipatory role for producing bottom-up strategies and “living alternatives” in the future. If so, then 4) a growing *emancipation of the local* must also be seen as another consequence of global pressures and as a process parallel to- and accelerated by the appropriation of the local.

Certain aspects of appropriation of the local have already been discussed several times in this paper.³¹ At this point I don't want to get more into aesthetic or commercial aspects of such appropriation. What needs to be emphasized here are its immediate political consequences, which Mari Paz Balibrea calls the “politics of amnesia,” that lead to lack

³¹ See pages 8, 12 or 42.

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of reflection on the local history. (Balibrea 2001: 190) As soon as we think the appropriation of the local as an instrument of hegemonic policies, it becomes possible to relate it directly to experience of alienation of the city as a communal political agent, which I want to return to later. We have seen that most of the land under transformation in Poblenou used to be occupied by industrial complexes and buildings. Many of them were already demolished and substituted by developments of the 22@ plan, which in the local community resulted in a strong opposition and rejection. It is true that relation of the local population to the industrial heritage is often emotional and mainly loaded with lots of uncritical romanticism, which makes those calls for the preservation of the heritage sometimes difficult to meet. In spite of that have local politicians shown much greater sensibility than the City Council in addressing and solving the problem of protection and renewal of industrial heritage in Poblenou. In fact, many of the old industrial estates and buildings, which in the past have become a part of the neighbourhood's collective memory and were already selected for demolition, have been added back to the list of industrial patrimony of Barcelona.

Yet looking from the local perspective, the problem of appropriation of industrial heritage appears, when its fragments, re-functionalized and de-contextualized, lose not only any practical function, but also their social meaning. The problem is not so much a question of multiplication of spatial identities (Kos 2002) and existence of their different symbolic representations in the space, as it is a matter of the politics behind – the politics, which according to Balibrea, converts local industrial patrimony into “empty shells” and promotes amnesia of a memory of capitalist exploration and working class struggle in Poblenou and neglects the importance of the neighbourhood for the history and current prosperity of Barcelona.

Isolated in the middle of areas now reconverted into shopping malls, new residential complexes for the middle classes, or luxury offices for business executives, they can only be flat and mute citations, unable to convey a sense of their own historicity to those ignorant of local history. Indeed, their disposition in

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space conceals the complexity of an industrial past characterized by social struggles and human relationships that were lived out on that spot, replacing it with a new configuration of space which promises the absence of conflicts and equality through consumption and the market. (Balibrea 2001: 190)

Although 22@ is a long-term project with an anticipated time-span of 15 to 20 years, its implementation has already destroyed or altered substantially many of social networks, local life and traditional communal places in Poblenou. As a consequence of new commercial developments around the district, the economic base of local life has also been affected by a demise of small business or shops, which were at the same time meaningful places of local culture. On the other hand it's also true that the influx of new population starts to show some positive effects on certain service sectors in the district. Spatial transformation of Poblenou thus generates two kinds of perception among the population. For some, new development creates a sense of new order, cleanliness and improvement of local living conditions, while for others it results in a "displacement at the loss of the original habitat." The outcome clearly depends on the "citizen's previous relationship to the now transformed spaces and on the material and symbolic conditions under which they have experienced the change." (Balibrea 2001: 189)

Another important aspect influencing the perception of the transformation by the local population are discourses giving meaning to the changes in the district, which are, as we have seen in the case of the marketing campaign following the beginning of the 22@ project, almost exclusively in favour of the policy of the City Council. In a need for different representations of- and multiple discourses about the transformation of Poblenou, the engagement of Coordinadora Contra 22@ is very important. Despite their sometimes unconstructive position, they are maybe the only local association in Poblenou, which persistently addresses and exposes structural contradictions inherent to the 22@ project and the one that keeps the voice of subalterns vocal. It is important to notice that the discursive practice of the City Council is not only a narrative one, but is also increasingly aestheticised. In the previous chapter we shown some aesthetic

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material, such as street adverts, posters, signs or graffiti which reveals, how the local associations in Poblenou, opposing existing hegemonic representations of reality, utilize a similar language of communication as the City Council public-relation agencies, yet subverting its content, aesthetics and semiotic meaning.³²

Ignorance for the local history and identity, absence of engaged social policy following the profound transformation of the district, aggressive public campaigns and seeming hypocrisy of the local government are – among part of the local population in Poblenou – perceived and interpreted as intentional speculation of the Barcelona City Council in favour of private interests on account of the needs and demands of the locals.

“Barcelona City Council cares more about the tourists and corporations coming to the city than about its own citizens,” is a common phrase, which one can hear, when talking to citizens of Barcelona about their City Council. The latter indeed contributes to acceleration of dissolving tendencies caused by such perceptions, which eventually lead towards further social fragmentation, instead of trying to deal (beyond the shiny public-relation campaigns attempts) with dichotomy between city policy’s proclaimed aims and individual experience of those aims among the local population. Whether such indifference of the City Council is indeed intentional or not, doesn’t matter here a lot, since its perception from the affected population remains in both cases the same – a feeling of alienation of the city as a communal political agent and a detachment from city

³² Aesthetic form of resistance has its origins in aesthetic source of the reflexive-modern Self. In a contrast to cognitive reflexivity, which presumes critique of the particular by the universal (knowledge, concept, ideology), the critique of aesthetic reflexivity is one of universal from the position of particular, where aesthetics of popular culture, of everyday life and of “high art” is understood as particular. Aesthetic reflexivity is increasingly important, as everyday practices and rituals are ever more aestheticised and cultural by nature. Aesthetic resistance in overall has been widely observed. Jon Bird reports – if we go back once more to the example from the earlier chapter – about similar forms of aesthetic resistance in a case of the Docklands development in London, where the strategy of different poster series issued by the local community (Docklands Community Poster Project) was to “confront the social and physical construction of images through representing specific histories, experiences and cultural practices that have formed individual and communal identities in the area.” (Bird 1993: 133)

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as a shared project of all its citizens. The inability of the City Council to confront the everyday perception of its own policies – which are in the case of 22@ transformation in Poblenou an instrument to strengthen city's competitive position on a global level – together with the processes of local appropriation and fragmentation seem to be at the core of the social conflict in Poblenou.

Yet if it is true, that such conflict in a significant part operates on a level of feelings and vague perceptions, it's difficult to even measure it and to observe it from a phenomenological point of view. From a more pragmatic and speculative perspective of daily politics, the problem looks almost invisible. When addressing lay-public perceptions that have no articulated rationality behind and no clear representation in public surveys, politics often fails to recognize them as "legitimate" and tends to ignore that problem. Quarterly survey of the Barcelona City Council (Baròmetre Trimestral), based on CATI methodology, gives us though only a vague picture about perception of the City Council policy among the population. (Table 6) When the interviewees were directly asked to name an issue, which at the moment worries them the most about Barcelona, only 2-3% have pointed out the measures of municipal policy. At the same time 27,9% of them think, that at the end of 2004 the general situation in Barcelona was worse than a year ago, while only 17,1% think the same about the general situation in Catalonia. Similar are the answers on explicit question to evaluate the policy of the Barcelona City Council and the Autonomous Government of Catalonia – 27% consider it as bad, 26,1% as normal and 44% as good (19%, 29,6% and 46,9% for Catalonia). However, we have seen that those kinds of perceptions may be on one hand strongly influenced by the media, while on the other, recently occurring events can shift the public opinion a lot. More interesting is then the question to compare the situation in ones family at the end of 2004 and 2003. Here 37,8% of interviewees consider that the situation in their families worsen in 2004 compared to 2003 (only 18,9% consider it better) – an information much more relevant for the discourse about alienation of a city, as it probably tells us more about individual everyday perception of life in Barcelona. (Ajuntament de Barcelona, Direcció de Comunicació Corporativa i Qualitat 2004, 2005)

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	3/2004 (%)	12/2004 (%)
Lower security, delinquency	19,3	16,9
Traffic	14,9	12,5
Unavailable apartments	13,8	13,1
Maintenance of streets, public space	8,5	9,6
Problems associated with immigration	6,6	11,6
Work conditions, unemployment	4,4	3,8
Public transportation	3,1	0,9
Pollution, noise	2,4	3,1
Municipal policy	2,0	3,0
Parking	1,6	0,9
Tram	1,6	-
Weak civic spirit	1,5	3,1
City planning	1,4	2,9
Healthcare	1,1	1,3
High living costs	1,0	1,6
Terrorism	1,0	-
Infrastructure, communication	1,0	0,9
Poverty, marginalization	0,9	0,9

Table 6: What worries you the most about Barcelona at the moment? (n=800)

Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona, Departament Estudis i Avaluació (2004): *Baròmetre Trimestral*.

In order to get a more complex picture about the alienation of the city as a communal political agent, a more in-depth study would need to be carried out, establishing for instance, to what extent, in which parts of the city and among which social groups such perceptions are more frequent. However, due to a limited time available, it was not the ambition of this study to come up with a theory of political alienation in cities. At this point it suffices to recognize the existence of the phenomenon, to find its implications on local life and to place it within broader global – local dynamics in cities today.

Nonetheless, it's significant to note that the notion of alienation of a city as a communal political agent clearly contradicts some of earlier expectations about the future importance of cities as political agents, which could more efficiently manage global pressures on a local level. In a contrast to national states that have turned out to have

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difficulties addressing adequately the rich diversity of needs found within growing metropolitan regions, cities were believed to offer a more “agile forms for managing the global.” Jordi Borja and Manuel Castells have emphasized the two main realms, where cities were expected to effectively confront global pressures as communal political agents – cities may play important role in 1) ensuring *coherent socio-cultural integration and development* of social base for local economic productivity and they may 2) become potent venues for *political representation and management* since local authorities in this regard have inherent advantages over the nation state. Cities are supposed to enjoy greater legitimacy as bodies of political representativity and to have more political manoeuvrability than national state. (Borja and Castells 1997)

The assumption of Borja and Castells that national political systems are becoming too distant and may not effectively represent specific cultural and local interests, while cities, on contrary, may become more accessible forums of political activity, has turned out to be correct to certain extent only. It's true, that when approaching the governance of the city and metropolitan region, a broad public discourse and a great deal of innovative political initiatives have been commenced in Barcelona during the past decade.³³ On the other hand, it's also true, as this study shows on the case of the 22@ project in Poblenou, that due to a strong competitiveness among different cities on global scale, Barcelona is facing precisely those very negative social and political consequences that Borja and Castells once have optimistically believed that cities may avoid in the future. In case of Barcelona there are several major structural issues underlying its failure to remain a truly communal political agent. 1) Productive logic of the global capitalism embodied in a model of *competitive city*, with the “market” recognized as the only motor

³³ One of the most recent among those initiatives is for instance a very recent plan to reform the administrative division of Barcelona, in order to bring city governance closer to the level of a neighbourhood. Another initiative has been taken by the Barcelona mayor Joan Clos, who wants to give a right to vote also to all the immigrants legally living in the city on the future local elections in 2007. Yet in a wake of growing social polarization in the city, Balibrea warns about the politics of consensus based on hegemonic practices, deprived of its grassroots source. (Balibrea 2001: 202)

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of urban development, favours instant market-driven solutions on account of social coherency and limited space for local bottom-up initiatives. (Borja 2003) Such model of competitive city is becoming a reality in Barcelona more than ever. 2) Growing importance for the city economy on so-called *city users* – politically unaccountable population of tourists, daily migrants, economic elites etc. – shifts interests of the local government away from the traditional *city dwellers*, which questions profoundly the very legitimacy of the City Council in the eyes of its citizens. (Martinotti 1996) 3) *Exclusivist nature of spatial and strategic planning* in Barcelona, and to a lesser degree of the process of municipal governance too, prevents involvement of local agents in earlier stages of planning process and reduces the role of the locals to merely verification of already accepted top-down decisions of professionals. Although the closed nature of decision-making process may look as another consequence caused by corporate pressures on the City Council, it originates more in a very local culture and tradition of profession related to the city governance and urban and strategic planning in Barcelona. (Marshall 2000)

At the end, some words have to be said about local civic associations in Poblenou, urban movements in general and about the renewed emancipation of the local. Local movements in general are becoming increasingly visible on the urban scene, particularly in advanced economies. In general urban movements, as any other social mobilizations, happen when in their collective action and at the initiative of a reflexive organized agent, they address one or more structural issues that “differentiate contradictory social interests.” Those issues, as Castells explains, express the movement’s primarily goals, importantly determine its practice and organization and establish its potential significance for society.

The social issues providing the goals represent the connection in action between the movement and the whole society. The issues are the translation of one into the other, and therefore they are specific to each society as it is historically determined. (Castells 1983: 161)

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In the case of Poblenou, as we have seen, the main structural issues of urban mobilization lie in an increased economic pressure on the local environment and daily life of the affected population and in social and spatial consequences of those pressures. Important question is thus on what levels of social action movements in Poblenou are able to operate and whether they can broaden their action from resistance towards more constructive production of long-term alternatives and utopias?

None of the local associations seem to be able to address at the same time particular everyday problems, get involved with system of power and challenge higher levels of social structure. Associació de Veïns i Veïnes del Poblenou mainly exercises pragmatic approach in solving immediate problems of the neighbourhood without confronting their broader structural frame. Coordinadora Contra 22@ is on contrary involved more in an ideological discourse questioning and revealing economic and political structure behind transformation of the neighbourhood without attempting to find applicable everyday answers. Castells found similar situation, when he was analyzing social movements in a neighbourhood of San Francisco. In spite of the obvious historic, cultural and political differences, his caution of exacerbated pragmatism on one hand and naive ideological engagement of local movements in San Francisco on the other have a valuable importance for the situation in Poblenou as well.

Having established their legitimacy exclusively on the basis of their capacity to deliver immediate rewards, they [movements] reproduce the social fragmentation of different interest groups fighting for diminishing pieces of an unquestioned pie of dubious taste. Unity [also] does not result from an ideological statement. It has to be built through a common collective practice originating from the different situations of its participants. (Castells 1983: 169)

It seems that when the local associations in Poblenou will overcome their ideological and cultural (maybe also personal) divides and join their action, they could gain not only considerably greater support and legitimacy in the eyes of the local population, City

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Council, developers and corporations, but could also address and negotiate more efficiently one of the core characteristics of contemporary city and reflexive modernity in general – a direct interaction of macro and micro level, convergence of local experience with the level of social structures. (Mlinar 1994) Castells in that respect convincingly shows, how political success of “grassroots organizations” and their ability to intervene in a process of local power system, is the key for a sustainable and coherent long-term urban and social development of a neighbourhood and for its prosperous cultural life. (Castells 1983: 178) In the opposite case, urban movements are solely limited to deal with very particular neighbourhood problems without a possibility to influence structural dimension of the neighbourhood life, as it was the case during the Eix Llacuna protests.

There are enough evidences showing a strong cultural emancipation of the local in Poblenou. Though, in spite of a growing social conflict in the neighbourhood and its long tradition of communal social and political action, it is somehow difficult to see a broader political emancipation of the local population at the moment. That very bottom-up political action of the emancipated local may be the future key for a more balanced development, social coherency and also economic and political success of not just the neighbourhood but the city as well. If such local engagement is to be exercised within or outside existing political institutions, remains open. The respond of the City Council to the urban conflict however continues to stay in a realm of public-relation campaigns without implementing a more sensible and engaged social and urban policy in reality. It's true – public-relation campaigns do work, though there's always a part of population that stays outside those homogenizing ideological practices and which eventually pays social costs of new developments. Yet the alternative is not to choose between models of *competitive city* against a *city of mixture*. The challenge is to think the local as a key for the transformation of the city and to build a diverse neighbourhood of multitude as a communal project of all its inhabitants and users. Successful examples are to be found, as Josep Subirós suggests, in a not so distant past of Barcelona itself.

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