

## Urban governance and regeneration policies in historic city centres: Madrid and Barcelona

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In this article we seek to analyse and compare the models of regeneration of the city centres of Barcelona and Madrid in the light of the transformation of urban governance in Spain. New ways of network governance are emerging in European cities and Madrid and Barcelona are no exception. Urban policies are evolving towards the creation of more integrated strategies for regeneration that involve not only multiple public stakeholders, but also private actors including social and community organizations. Despite both cities showing some common trends, the analysis reveals significant differences between the two cities, both in terms of the composition and the dynamics of the governance networks, and the priorities and strategies for regeneration. The article concludes by discussing the possible explanatory factors for such differences and their political implications.

**Keywords:** integrated approach; participation; network governance; urban regeneration

### Introduction

The historic centres in many European cities have developed in parallel with the development of public policies in general and town planning policies in particular. The period when the first comprehensive programmes began to be put into practice in the 1980s was one that saw large-scale transformations across Europe in the Welfare State System and in the rationale of governments, particularly at a local level. The Spanish case has been somewhat different, as the consolidation of democracy brought with it the extension of the Welfare State. Against this background, local governments in Spain saw their powers and spending capacities extended, coinciding with a major effort of rationalizing administrative structures. The administrative reforms inspired by New Public Management did not begin to be broadly applied in Spanish local government until well into the 1990s, and they overlapped with the emergence of new forms of network governance such as the Strategic City Plans and the Local Agenda 21.

This article will analyse the strategies for regeneration of the historic centres of Barcelona and Madrid from the 1980s until the present day in the context of the transformation of local governance in Spain. The analysis of these cases shows us that new forms of local network governance have begun to emerge here, as in other European countries, although perhaps later and in less depth. The development of new forms of network governance coincides with an increasing emphasis on the need to adopt an integrated

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approach to urban regeneration, although a trend to overemphasize the physical aspects of regeneration persists both in Barcelona and Madrid. However, the analysis also reveals the significant differences between the two cities, both in terms of the composition and the dynamics of the governance networks, and the priorities and strategies for regeneration.

The aim of this article is therefore not only to point to the specific national features of local political change in Spain (a country that is usually under-represented in comparative studies on governance and urban regeneration); it also aims to highlight the diversity of models for governance and regeneration within the country and the possible factors explaining them.

The first two sections of this article identify the main trends in the changing forms of local governance and policies of urban regeneration identified in the literature. This allows us to sketch a general framework within which to place the specific experiences of Barcelona and Madrid. The following sections explain each of these two cases, highlighting what they have in common and how they differ. We also identify the factors that can explain the differences observed. Finally in the conclusions we stress how this comparative analysis fits into the general debate on the determinants of governance and urban regeneration.

### **From local government to local governance**

Since the 1980s, political analysis of urban governance in Europe has stressed the notion of change. There are numerous reflections on how the socio-spatial morphology of cities is changing in the context of globalization; on the pressures to which local governments are subject when these processes of structural transformation take place; and on the dynamics of change in public policy agendas and forms of urban governance. The analysis of public policies should try to understand the reasons for policy change, policy stability and policy variation (i.e. change in relation to context) (John 1998). However, the concern shown by the literature in the last three decades regarding government and public policies on urban development has focused much more on the question of policy change than on policy stability and policy variation.

One of the narratives that has gained most ground with regard to local policy change is that referring to the transition from 'local government to local governance' (Andrew and Goldsmith 1998, John 2001, Brugué and Vallès 2005, Lowndes 2005).

The main characteristics of local government (traditional) have been defined according to three main parameters: the institutional weakness of local government entities (due to insufficient resources and/or lack of political autonomy); the dominance of representative democratic institutions over participative institutions; and the development of a model of public administration based on Weberian principles of bureaucracy (public monopoly, hierarchy, specialization and so on).

According to this narrative, the model of local government began to experience major mutations in the 1980s. Under the influence of neo-liberal ideas, local governments began to adopt private management principles rather than bureaucratic ones. Public managers acquired greater autonomy with respect to elected politicians; the practice of outsourcing services to private companies became generalized; greater management autonomy was given to public organizations (although at the same time the mechanisms controlling results were made stricter); formulas for competition between service providers were introduced; formulas for improving the service provided for users/customers became more common; and in sectors such as education and health, the rights of users and consumers to choose between organizations (schools, doctors, hospitals and so on) began to be introduced. It

was a case of reforming the public sector at a local level to make it as similar as possible to the principles and operation of the market and private companies.

Starting in the late 1990s, there was a new wave of reforms. The paradigm of network urban governance on the rise throughout Europe (and in other parts of the world) since the end of the 1990s is based on the creation of networks of different types of public and private actors as a formula for producing urban public policies (Perri 6 *et al.* 2002, Stoker 2004).

More particularly, network governance advocates inter-governmental coordination where before there had been a strict separation of powers or a subordination of certain levels of government with respect to others; it also reclaims administrative transversality where before there had been a rigid division of powers by areas or departments; it promotes cooperation between the public and private sectors in multilateral institutional frameworks rather than a public monopoly or simply outsourcing of services to private companies. Finally, it favours the creation of new spaces for citizen participation instead of the institutions exercising the monopoly of political decision-making, and instead of citizens being treated as 'clients'.

The underlying reason for these transformations is argued to originate in the growing complexity of local public affairs and the resulting need to offer a holistic response (Clarke and Stewart 1997, Christensen 1999), for which the regeneration of underprivileged urban areas provides a clear example.

The operation and results of network governance has been the subject of extensive debate in the literature. Some authors have tended to celebrate the emergence of this paradigm as a Third Way (Giddens 1998) that can overcome bureaucratic rigidities and market inequities through the incorporation of a great variety of actors into the development of public policies. They have stressed not only the capacity of the governance networks to provide efficient and effective responses to the most complex urban problems, but also the opportunities represented by this model of policymaking for the development of new forms of participatory democracy (Stoker 2004). However, other authors question the concept of network governance as a Third Way and rather tend to interpret this paradigm as a reflection of a neo-liberal urban policy governed by an alliance between institutional and economic urban elites. Other problems have also been pointed out, such as the co-opting of networks by the most powerful actors and the lack of transparency and accountability in these kinds of institutional arrangements (Swyngedouw 2005, Geddes 2006, 2007).

### **New urban regeneration policies**

Urban regeneration policies (transformation of underprivileged urban areas) are among the cases most often dealt with in the literature dealing with the development of new forms of urban network governance. In part, this is because of their growing importance in urban policy agendas in Europe over recent years; but also because of the dynamic level of this field of public policy in recent decades. Their growing importance is the result of increasing awareness of the pernicious effects of the concentration of socially vulnerable population groups (Smith *et al.* 2007), fed in turn by the intensification of socio-spatial urban inequalities. The dynamism of urban regeneration has to do with the growing awareness that traditional town planning instruments are unable to respond to the problems of underprivileged areas (Couch *et al.* 2003).

Based on a comparative analysis of different urban regeneration programmes in Europe, a number of authors have observed a convergence in the approaches and methodologies

used by different national, regional and local governments. The most notable dynamics of change in this sense are as follows (Andersen 2001, p. 235):

- *Geographical focus*. That is the specialization of regeneration policies in specific urban areas where the problems are concentrated and where the challenges posed by transformation are greatest.
- *Integral intervention*. Based on recognition of the multi-dimensional nature of the problems of underprivileged urban areas, and the consequent need to act on them in a holistic manner.
- The adoption of a new organizational scheme of *governance networks* made up of different levels of government, public organizations, private organizations and social and community groups.

This model of intervention is not free from controversy. For example, some authors have criticized the geographical organization of urban policies using three main arguments (Taylor 2003, pp. 31–32): (1) low incomes and exclusion are not necessarily confined geographically and, in any case, prioritization in favour of some neighbourhoods against others may become a source of social injustice; (2) regeneration programmes lead to population movements, either by encouraging the exodus of people who improve socially thanks to them, or by expelling those who cannot afford the price increases of homes as a result of urban improvements; and (3) regeneration policies are not an effective instrument of social inclusion, as they tend to focus on the neighbourhood level, rather than dealing with the structural factors responsible for exclusion.

Another focus of debate related to these policies refers to their actual content, and specifically to the underlying goals of regeneration. The relationship between urban regeneration and social inclusion has tended to be taken for granted in some academic and institutional discourses, although research in this field reflects the existence of different motivations (Davies 2007). It is true that some regeneration programmes are strongly associated with the idea of community development and social cohesion, but at the other extreme, other programmes are based on the radical transformation of urban uses and residents to promote the gentrification of the area; often, somewhere in between these two extremes are programmes that aim to mix social uses and groups (Lees 2008), and try to balance the economic development of the area with social cohesion.

Finally, the composition and dynamics of the actual governance networks for urban regeneration is also a critical subject. In countries such as the United Kingdom, for example, there is a great deal of empirical research on the degree of community involvement in urban regeneration partnerships. It has been observed that the community actors represented in these partnerships tend not to be very representative of the population; that the governance networks tend to be dominated by institutional or institutionalized actors; and that in the last resort, there is little real influence by citizens on the design of regeneration policies (Davies 2007). However, empirical research shows a great variety of experiences, some of them highly participative and others highly elitist (Taylor 2007).

### **Regeneration in the historic centres of Barcelona and Madrid: a comparative analysis**

Thus, when we consider the general debate on urban governance in relation to the specific field of urban regeneration, we can observe the great diversity of urban policy practices that have developed in this changing context. Nevertheless, we can expect that, in fact, some practices will remain anchored in a traditional paradigm of local government, with very

few elements of policy innovation. But, even when the elements of innovation are strong, the orientation of policy change might be significantly different in different places. Even though urban regeneration projects face similar problems which have their roots in global factors and are usually framed within the same national (or European) programmes local sociopolitical circumstances and local political choices may well bring about the adoption of very different regeneration strategies in different places.

Recent comparative studies have stressed the diversity of urban regeneration practices around the world, but we can identify three main deficiencies in such comparative analyses:

- (1) First, a tendency to over-represent Anglo-Saxon case studies (mainly from the United Kingdom and the United States) while the experience of other parts of the world is clearly under-represented.
- (2) Second, a tendency to focus on the national characteristics of urban governance and regeneration, at one extreme, and on the local particularities of different cities, at the other. Focusing on cross-national comparison means that local diversity within the same country is often neglected. However, the focus on single case studies usually leads to very detailed and descriptive accounts, making generalization very difficult.
- (3) Third, the normative implications of the different orientations of urban governance and regeneration are often neglected. The relationship between the different regeneration strategies and the right to the city often passes without comment.

As a partial reaction to such deficiencies, we conducted a 3-year research project in which we compared the policies for the regeneration of the historic centres of Barcelona and Madrid, focusing on the democratic period (since 1979).<sup>1</sup> More concretely, such comparative analyses permit us to give some answers to three types of questions which, respectively, have an empirical, an analytical and a normative dimension:

- (1) Which strategies for the regeneration of the historic centres have been followed in Barcelona and Madrid? What types of institutional arrangements have been developed? What types of actions have been undertaken? With what socio-spatial consequences?
- (2) What type of factors account for the differences between these two cities? What is the relative importance of aspects such as the urban economic structure, the political orientation of local governments and the role of urban social movements?
- (3) How are the strategies of urban regeneration related to the practice of local democracy? What are the prospects of such regeneration strategies for social cohesion? To what extent is the right to the city enhanced or weakened through these types of urban policies?

We will begin by providing a brief historical context of the start of regeneration policies in both cities, stressing the major effect of community protests in the 1970s against the urban policy of the Franco regime. We will then analyse the regeneration strategies for the historic areas in these cities, dealing with the main town planning instruments in each case. Next, we will review the institutional structure and the composition and dynamics of the networks that have boosted these regeneration policies. After identifying the elements of innovation in the most recent policies, we will make a critical review of the models of both cities. This will lead us to an interpretation of the possible explanatory factors for the differences we have observed.

### ***The beginnings of regeneration in Madrid and Barcelona: a brief historical context***

Spanish cities experienced major demographic growth in the 1950s as a result of immigration from rural areas. However, population growth was not accompanied by policies for creating new neighbourhoods. Until then, urban intervention had basically aimed at reconstructing zones devastated by the Spanish Civil War, which led to an increase in overcrowding in the old city centres and the expansion of slums and shanty towns in outlying areas<sup>2</sup> (Capel 1983).

During this expansion process, the regime increased the size of the city of Madrid by annexing many small towns on its outskirts (San Blas, Vallecas, Hortaleza, Fuencarral and so on), which gradually became neighbourhoods housing immigrants from rural areas. For political reasons, Barcelona was not subject to the same process of annexation and its peripheral towns, which grew like those in Madrid, today continue to be independent (Badalona, Hospitalet, Sant Adrià and so on).

This expansive approach to town planning was carried out to the detriment of the historic centres, which underwent a process of decline characterized by the exodus of the population and business activity; lack of interest on the part of owners with respect to the maintenance and refurbishment of the housing stock; and institutional neglect in relation to the tasks of town planning and provision of facilities. The degradation was heightened in the 1970s and led to a situation of urban crisis (Gomà 1997).

The response of the regime's town planning policy to this situation of degradation, which had been continuing since the immediate post-Civil War period, was to prepare urban plans based on a rational and functional concept designed to open up large avenues and squares and 'sanitize' those areas suffering the worst degradation. However, only a fraction of these plans were actually implemented. Most of them were stalled because of lack of public funds, no interest on the part of private capital for regenerating the historic centre and, to a lesser extent, community opposition.

The end of the Franco regime (1975) coincided with the emergence of the neighbourhood community movement as a key actor in the defence of the local area and the struggle for collective use and provision of services in Barcelona and Madrid. This led to the establishment of a protest agenda which would be the basis for developing the political agenda following the arrival of democracy to the Spanish local councils 4 years later. As Manuel Castells (1983, p. 215) states: 'The social mobilisation on urban issues that occurred in the neighbourhoods of most Spanish cities throughout the 1970s was (. . .) the largest and most significant urban movement in Europe since 1945.'

At the start of the democratic period, Madrid's population was almost double that of Barcelona and its surface area was six times the size. Both cities had an enormous surrounding belt of shanties and slums with very active social protest movements. The relative weight of the historic centre of Madrid was much less important than that of Barcelona, whose historic centre was larger and more degraded, with less new neighbourhoods built on the outskirts.

### ***Regeneration models in Madrid and Barcelona***

With the arrival of democracy, the new city councils in both Madrid and Barcelona had similar political leanings (left wing) and developed similar programmes relating to citizens' rights with respect to the city and citizen participation. However, starting in the 1980s planning policies in the two urban centres began to diverge.

In Barcelona, the City Council's Town Planning Department opted to maintain the General Metropolitan Plan of 1976, rather than to prepare a new general plan. At the

same time, it decided to use the zonal plans for building plots known as Plan Especial de Reforma Interior (PERI)<sup>3</sup> to negotiate specific town planning needs with the community movement in each neighbourhood, particularly in those with greater levels of community participation (Ajuntament de Barcelona 1987). This approach, together with the redesign of the political and administrative structure of the city (political and administrative decentralization of the City Council), gave a more important role to the neighbourhood and its residents. District councils were set up in the 10 districts of Barcelona as mechanisms for formal citizen participation. The PERIs were also drawn up following a process of dialogue between the representatives of the City Council and the neighbourhood community movement, so that in some cases (such as the neighbourhoods of Barceloneta and Casc Antic), they were actually directly drafted according to the 'popular plans' prepared in the 1970s by the neighbourhood associations themselves.

In Madrid, the decision was made to reform the General Plan. The process of political and administrative reform did not include devolving political power to the 21 districts in the city, but was rather a simple administrative deconcentration. In other words, in the 1980s town planning was given a city dimension, while the districts became a mere administrative reference point for the citizens. Participative mechanisms were also created in the districts, but their use was relegated in importance due to informal participation. This was because the neighbourhood association's leaders could exercise influence more efficiently in the policy process through informal contacts with the municipality rather than through the standard participatory devices in the districts. Protest and confrontation were common in the process of conflict resolution between the neighbourhood associations and the City Council.

Another difference between the two cities was the priority given to regeneration of the historic centre in the agenda of each city's town planning policies. In Barcelona, since the start of democratic town planning, the idea was the 'restructuring of the centre and the monumentalization of the periphery' (Bohigas 1985); in other words, the regeneration of the historic centre and the introduction of elements of the centre into the outlying areas. In Madrid, in contrast, democratic town planning put a priority on making outlying areas more dignified (40,000 social homes in 10 years, provision of facilities, town planning and so on) based on the Neighbourhood Remodelling Plan promoted by the City Council of Madrid and central government in partnership with the local community movements, which had the real leading role in the process.

In Madrid, the first town planning measures in the historic centre followed an approach based predominantly on heritage preservation, and aimed at maintaining the monuments of the historic centre, as well as isolated activity to refurbish some *corralas* (traditional blocks of flats)<sup>4</sup> and provide a legal framework that would protect residents. This was in response to the initial demands by local residents in the city centre in the 1970s who had protested against the confiscation of homes and eviction of residents in the centre for speculative reasons.

Starting in the 1990s the focus began to move towards intervention at a neighbourhood level. The actions were developed through subsidies for private rehabilitation of housing through the Area de Rehabilitación Integral (ARIs) without implementing measures for the social or economic development of the neighbourhoods where the intervention was carried out. The eradication of substandard housing<sup>5</sup> became the main objective of intervention in the area of Lavapiés, in the Embajadores neighbourhood, but despite the rehabilitation of 2200 homes through subsidies only 93 substandard homes (4.2%) were demolished (Fernández 2004, Díaz Orueta 2007). A strategic urban centre rehabilitation plan Plan

Estrategico de Reforma de Centro Urbano was approved in 2004 to integrate previous and future actions in the centre for the failed 2012 Olympic bid.

In contrast, in Barcelona actions were more focused on urban rehabilitation of public space through urban redevelopment operations, first through urban 'acupuncture' in Raval and the Gothic Quarter, and later by clearance in densely built-up neighbourhoods (Rambla del Raval), which led to the demolition of 1384 homes and the rehousing of around 1000 people. Unlike Madrid, which chose a conservationist model, the implementation of reform in Barcelona was much more aggressive in urban terms, with greater intervention by the public administration based on a process of seizure, expropriation and freeing up of the land and less emphasis on private rehabilitation. The urban reform in Barcelona can be considered a success in this sense, as at the end of the 1990s the main operations planned via the PERIs had already been completed.

Finally, urban reform in the historic centre in Barcelona can be considered to be more clearly defined than in Madrid at this time. While in the years 1979–1985 in Barcelona the PERIs were prepared and negotiated with the community movement, in Madrid there were only isolated interventions. The trend was to deal with problems in an isolated individualized manner (e.g. water treatment, slums, paving), and only started in the 1990s. These interventions were carried out without a coherent perspective or strategic focus that linked them to a desired model for the city. The main urban policy effort was in the periphery. Only in recent years have elements of coherent action been introduced in an isolated form. For instance, citizen participation has been included in the design of regeneration programmes (the Pez-Luna Integrated Rehabilitation Area) and the management of accompanying social cohesion programmes (Neighbourhood Plans) (Arenilla *et al.* 2007).

### **Structure, composition and dynamics of the urban governance networks**

One of the key elements in the design of institutional structure for intervention in historic centres is the passing of Royal Decree 2329/83 by the Spanish Government, which allowed the allocation of funds to finance regeneration in those parts of the historic centres that were declared an integrated rehabilitation area (ARI). For the first time, citizen participation in urban affairs was given a legal basis through the incorporation of neighbourhood representation into the ARI Management Committees.

In the case of Barcelona, after the preparation of the PERIs, which represent the design stage in urban reform, the process of creating institutional structures began. The first step was the creation of an integrated action programme, the Plan Actuación Integral for Ciutat Vella in 1985, whose basic aim was to coordinate town planning actions with those carried out in other fields (such as social, cultural and educational policies), under the leadership of the local district councillor (Abella 2004). Subsequently, in 1986 the Ciutat Vella as a whole was declared an ARI. This enabled the actions designed through the PERIs to be structured within the same framework and the central and regional government to become involved in financing and managing the reform. It is important to stress that Royal Decree 2329/83 originally intended the ARI for rehabilitating specific areas and not a district as a whole. This special use is thus linked to the strategy followed by the municipal government of reinterpreting town planning bodies and instruments in a flexible way to meet its needs. The ARI Management Committee was also created in 1987 as a mechanism for participation and concentration of the different actors linked to the reform (the Regional Government of Catalonia, the Local Council, the Chamber of Commerce and representatives of each of the neighbourhood associations in the neighbourhoods affected by the reform).



This use of the ARI is broadly different from that carried out by the City Council of Madrid. In Madrid, the ARI was not incorporated until the 1990s and has not been used as an instrument for institutional agreement and citizen participation, but rather as an element to support town planning activity for rehabilitation of specific areas (Dos de Mayo square, Pez-Luna area). The sole exception has been the two phases of the ARI in Embajadores, which covered a whole neighbourhood, but its scope was much more limited compared with the operations in Barcelona, as it was mainly aimed at promoting private rehabilitation.

Another key element in setting up institutional structures in Barcelona was the creation of the company Promoció de Ciutat Vella, SA (PROCIVESA) in 1988. While the ARIs ensured the participation of the community movement and the different levels of government, PROCIVESA involved private capital in what would become a key instrument for the development of urban management (i.e. the expropriations and evictions resulting from the actions programmed). At the same time, its status as a company allowed PROCIVESA to use loans to help its activity. Barcelona City Council and the provincial deputation had a 53% holding to ensure public control of the company. At the same time, Barnacentre, the main association of retailers in the historic centre, was allowed to participate in the PROCIVESA board through a company created *ad hoc* (Promoció Ciutat Nova, SCP), so that while the management committee was opened up to participation by local residents, the retailers were involved as shareholders.

The main objective of PROCIVESA was to facilitate and speed up urban management operations, which normally suffer from time lags due to institutional bureaucracy. In 2000 the joint venture Foment de Ciutat Vella, SA, was set up to continue with the work of PROCIVESA, following the expiry of its operating term of 14 years. Thus at the end of its active life in 1999, the process had led to the demolition of 500 buildings, including around 4200 homes and 800 commercial premises, as well as the creation of 2800 new homes, most of them to rehouse those individuals affected by the urban intervention. The creation of PROCIVESA (and later on, FOCIVESA) was part of the strategy of public-private cooperation promoted by the Barcelona City Council following the city's nomination to host the Olympic Games in 1992 (Casellas 2006, Blanco 2009).

Finally, the design of the institutional structure in Barcelona was completed with the creation of the Office for the Rehabilitation of Ciutat Vella in 1989. The aim of this office was to promote private rehabilitation based on subsidies to individuals. Later it was incorporated into the network of housing offices that the City Council would open in the 10 city districts.

In contrast, in Madrid the operations to free up land and rehouse residents were led by the Municipal Housing Corporation, the Empresa Municipal de la Vivienda (EMV),<sup>6</sup> which unlike PROCIVESA was wholly public in ownership. Its main sphere of action was the whole municipal area of Madrid. However, through the Plan Estrategico de Reforma de Centro Urbano the Madrid City Council has recently created a Centro Office, whose powers are still not well defined, particularly in terms of those connected with urban regeneration. One of the problems shown up by our study is the competition between the different bodies within the municipal government (Urban Management, the Municipal Housing Company and the Centro Office, the Environment Department, the General Area for Public Works and so on). This makes it difficult to develop a comprehensive approach to urban reform.

In the case of Madrid, the ARIs have not included any specific mechanism for participation, although they have included the provision of social services for residents who are at risk in terms of housing. Thus on occasions, urban intervention has been combined with social programmes, but not in a way that has been integrated into the project itself. Only in recent years has this form of participation been incorporated into one of the ARIs:

Pez-Luna. However, this has been on an experimental basis, at the request of the neighbourhood community movement, with the incentive of obtaining European funds and due to some political willingness on the part of the political representatives on the EMV.

### **Exhaustion of the model and renewal**

By 2006, the main reforms included in the PERI in Barcelona had been developed, and there was a renewed interest on the part of private capital to invest in the historic centre as a result of the rise in the tourist industry. However, throughout the process other factors appeared that threatened the achievements of the previous regeneration policy. First, the boost provided by private capital, particularly from the property sector and the tourist industry, had given rise to dynamics of gentrification and expulsion of residents in certain zones in the centre. These were seen by the local community as a threat to social cohesion. In addition, the arrival of a significant contingent of non-European Union (EU) immigrants settling in Raval and Casc Antic led to the urgent need to rethink the model of social policies to cover the new needs and problems resulting from the changing socio-demographic composition on the ground. What is more, the plural reality of the district could no longer be represented by traditional residents' association. New channels for participation had to be opened up to give room for the plurality of voices and realities present in Ciutat Vella.

This will to change was shown in the determination of the Cuitat Vella District Council to encourage a variety of participatory processes (the urbanization of Pou de la Figuera, Plaça de la Gardunya and so on) where traditional neighbourhood associations were no longer the sole representatives of local residents. This change has its origin in the approval in 2004 of new rules for citizen participation, which aimed to give a renewed boost to participatory democracy in the city. These rules were complemented in 2008 with the approval of the government measure 'neighbourhood Barcelona', which created neighbourhood councils as new channels for citizen participation. In addition, the new integrated projects in neighbourhoods such as Barceloneta and Casc Antic have generated specific structures and participatory processes. All this has steadily replaced the role of the ARI Management Committee as the space for agreement and participation. The Committee itself was wound up in 2006.

However, the transition from a public-private to a participatory model may not be considered as fully consolidated. Most of these bodies are only consultative in nature and their effective decision-making powers are extremely limited, particularly at the district level.

In the case of Madrid, until 2004 an incremental model had been used for policies designed to regenerate the historic centre. Following the approval of the plan to revitalize the centre and the creation of the Centro Office, the foundations began to be laid for the development of a strategic model, including some components of citizen participation. However, the focus of urban regeneration policies has begun to take on an increasingly neo-liberal stance, in which public action focuses on urban intervention (rehabilitation and town planning), leaving the regeneration of the commercial and residential fabric mainly to private initiative. The most notable example of this model is TRIBALL, a group of investors in the southern part of Malasaña (a nightlife area with some prostitution activity). The group is seeking to transform the commercial fabric of the area through the purchase and rental of premises, of which they now own more than 50 either directly or indirectly. This organization has also become a manager of the privatization of the limited public space in the area by acting as intermediaries between the companies that want to organize promotional events and the district authorities. The overuse of public streets and squares for these activities limits their use by residents (Méndez 2007).

### **Critical balance**

In the last section, we have shown how two major Spanish cities addressed the problem of the urban crisis faced by their historic centres in different ways, thus giving rise to distinct models of regeneration and urban governance. In Table 1, we compare the most significant differences. The differences that can be seen show that we cannot consider that there is a single model of urban governance and regeneration in Spain, but rather that it varies widely according to the city in question. This can be explained above all by the wide-ranging autonomy of local councils in the field of town planning, and by the lack of urban policy at national level. The lack of national guidelines, apart from legislation governing land use and subsidies for rehabilitation introduced by Royal Decree 2329/83, means that each municipality has approached the problem of rehabilitating its historic centres differently according to a variety of factors.

If we restrict ourselves to the two cities studied here, a number of points are worth highlighting. First, the different importance given by the two cities to the regeneration of their historic centres (very high in Barcelona and rather low in Madrid). This explains the strategic vision with which the policies for regenerating the historic centre have been formulated in Barcelona and the rather incremental approach used in the case of Madrid. Another point to highlight is the great importance given to interventions in public spaces in Barcelona, unlike the case in Madrid, where regeneration has been focused above all on promoting private rehabilitation.

Second, it is important to highlight the importance of the geographical scale at which interventions have taken place. Whereas in Barcelona the regeneration of the centre has been based on administrative decentralization to the Ciutat Vella District and the recognition of neighbourhoods as functional units in the development of urban policies, in Madrid the interventions had a much more individualized character based on the definition of sectors to be rehabilitated.

Third, in relation to the composition and dynamics of the governance networks, we can see how since the 1980s Barcelona has developed an *ad hoc* structure of governance for the regeneration of the historic area, which freed up the strategies for intervention under the PERIs. This structure could be defined as post-bureaucratic, and consists of a strategy for public-private agreement under the leadership of the public sector. The use of agencies (through the joint company PROCIVESA and other bodies such as the Rehabilitation Office) has given much more flexibility to the process of executing the PERIs.<sup>7</sup> In Madrid, in contrast, no specific organizational structure for the rehabilitation of the historic centre was in place until very recently. Although there is a public agency with significant competences in questions of rehabilitation (the EMV), it has not incorporated private capital and operates at the city scale. The elements of management innovation represented by the EMV are much less significant than those of PROCIVESA.

Fourth, administrative joined-up working (transversality) and citizen participation are elements that have been developed only to a limited extent in the two cities, although in general terms the results of Barcelona in both respects are more positive than those of Madrid. The Plan Actuación Integral of Ciutat Vella shows some will on the part of political leaders to promote an integrated geographical vision, although there are no formal mechanisms for coordination between areas. Participation by residents has been promoted above all within the framework of the ARI Management Committee and the informal negotiations with representatives of residents' associations, at the cost of excluding for a long time many other social grass-roots collectives. In Madrid, as we have seen, there has been practically no cross-sector implementation or design of policies. Citizen participation has

Table 1. Main characteristics of urban governance and regeneration in the historic centres of Barcelona and Madrid.

	Concept	Barcelona	Madrid
Regeneration agenda	Urban policy model for the city	Aimed at <i>reform of the constructed city</i> (intensive town planning)	Aimed at <i>urban growth</i> (expansive town planning)
	Priority of intervention in the historic centre	<i>High</i> (since 1981 with the idea of monumentalizing the periphery, cleaning up the centre)	<i>Low</i> (until 2004, when the process of revitalizing the centre began and the Centro Office was created)
	Orientation of urban policy in the historic centre	<i>Strategic</i> (based on a hierarchically ordered and coordinated project programme)	<i>Incremental</i> (based on scaled interventions that do not form part of a common programme)
	Type of rehabilitation	<i>Clearance and intervention in the urban area</i> (emphasis on the promotion of new housing for rehousing of residents affected by urban clearance)	<i>Housing rehabilitation</i> (scant intervention in the urban area, the intervention in public space is limited to semi-pedestrianization)
	Object rehabilitated	<i>Public space</i> (the interventions for reform are mainly aimed at roads, public facilities and so on)	<i>Housing, infrastructures and roads</i> (the interventions are mainly aimed at rehabilitation of housing)
Governance networks	Intervention in housing	<i>Public initiative</i> (expropriation through Compensation Boards promoted by PROCIVESA–FOCIVESA)	<i>Private initiative</i> (subsidies for private rehabilitation of buildings)
	Relationship between government and the private sector	<i>Public–private agreement</i> (including the third sector and associations)	<i>Differentiation of functions</i> (the public sector aims to create economic incentives for private initiative; the private sector is limited to private business)
	Negotiations of the intervention in public spaces with the neighbourhood community movement	<i>High</i> (particularly in the 1981–2006 period, first with the negotiation of the PERIs and then since 1987 in the ARI Management Committee)	<i>Low</i> (the negotiations are carried out in bilateral meetings of the local neighbourhood movement and local government representatives of the area involved)
	Administrative principles	<i>Post-bureaucratic</i> (creation of PROCIVESA as a joint public–private company to implement the urban reform, using administrative structures (ARI, Llei de Barris and so on) in an innovative way to respond to needs in the area)	<i>Bureaucratic</i> (strong compartmentalization between areas, not using administrative means in an innovative way and so on)

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

Concept	Barcelona	Madrid
Decentralization	<i>High</i> (based on the 1984 administrative decentralization policy for districts)	<i>Low</i> (the district has very limited powers, except for social services)
Cross-sectoral administrative work	<i>Medium</i> (strong coordination between the urban planning and the economic development areas, and to a lesser extent the area of culture; little coordination between the urban planning and the social policy departments)	<i>Low</i> (little coordination between the Municipal Housing Company and the Town Planning Department)
Multi-level coordination	<i>Medium-high</i> (the supramunicipal government tiers normally act as fund providers)	<i>Medium-low</i> (there is strong competition between the municipal government and the government of the autonomous region of Madrid)
Integration	<i>Medium-low</i> (integration is conceived as the participation of different levels of government; intervention in public spaces and housing; and promotion of economic and social change through urban intervention)	<i>Medium</i> (integration is conceived as a combination of urban actions in different fields, such as housing or public roads)

Note: PERI, Plan Especial de Reforma Interior; ARI, Area de Rehabilitación Integral; PROCIVESA, Promoción de Ciutat Vella, SA

also been relegated to informal forums where attempts have been made to resolve specific disputes (Walliser 2003).

However, it should be pointed out that starting in 2004 there has been a change of approach in both models. Whereas in Madrid the approval of the Centro Plan may represent a turnaround in the adoption of a more strategic approach, in Barcelona the previous model appears to have reached a point of exhaustion, now that the main urban operations included in the PERIs have been completed. Currently, the PERIs are being replaced by some integrated neighbourhood projects, such as those of Barceloneta and Casc Antic, and the global vision of the district as a whole is being lost to a certain extent. This crisis of the model of regeneration is linked to a more structural crisis affecting the model of the city itself, as has been made clear by Capel (2005), Borja (2010) and Muntaner (2003). At the same time, the negotiation of the Neighbourhood Plans between the regional federation of neighbour's association, the Federación Regional de Asociaciones de Vecinos de Madrid and the City Council of Madrid may represent a greater recognition of the neighbourhood scale in urban policies and favour participatory processes that have been absent until now. In the case of Barcelona, the political commitment to extending mechanisms of participatory democracy face enormous difficulties, and the future scenario in this respect is extremely uncertain.

### **Explanatory factors**

In the first part of this work we identified a number of trends in the transformation of forms of local governance in Europe, and in particular, in the field of urban regeneration policies. A comparative analysis of the cases of Barcelona and Madrid has shown that local governments in Spain – at least those in the major cities – have not been unaffected by these dynamics of change. There has been a commitment to the integrated regeneration of the historic centres in both cities based on agreement between different types of urban actors (different levels of government, private actors and residents' organizations) and using a more or less strategic approach.

However, it is difficult to include the experience of these two cities within the same model, given the significant differences between them. Rather than allowing us to point to the specific nature of the Spanish case within the framework of European dynamics, our analysis has led us to highlight the difference in the pathways of political change taken within the same country. This takes us to the debate on the explanatory factors of the models of urban governance and regeneration. Thus, in a tentative way we can suggest that the main explanatory factors of the differences observed in these cities are as follows.

First, the morphology and geographical context of each city. Madrid has a much greater scope for territorial growth compared with Barcelona, which is geographically limited by sea and mountains. This has meant that the strategic priority of Madrid, in terms of urban development, has been expansion towards the outskirts, rather than rehabilitation of the constructed urban fabric; precisely the opposite of what has occurred in Barcelona.

Second, the economic and productive structure, more specifically the strategic value of the historic centre for the economic development of the city. Barcelona has made a firm commitment in this respect to tourism. The historic centre, due to its wealth in terms of history and culture, is one of the main attractions (together with the sea) of this city. In contrast, in Madrid there have been other main sources of wealth creation until recently, which has meant that the historic centre of the city has played a secondary role. However, in the last decade Madrid has become a tourist and business destination and revalued the potential of its urban centre.

Third, there is the political leaning of the two cities' local governments. Barcelona has been run by a left-wing coalition of social democrats and communists since 1979, with the participation in some governments of the pro-independence left. Thus urban regeneration in the city tends to respond to social liberal ideological principles, as can be seen, for example, in the way public leadership has been combined with the participation of private capital, and the commitment to mechanisms of consultation and agreement with the main representatives of community associations (McNeill 1999, Blakeley 2005). In Madrid, in contrast, a left-wing government was in place until 1989, when it was defeated by a centre-right coalition. Since then, the conservative Partido Popular has dominated the City Council with an outright majority. It has favoured the development of a strategy of urban reform with a clearly neo-liberal leaning (Observatorio Metropolitano 2007), very little citizen participation, little public leadership and a great deal of confidence in private business initiative.

Fourth, the dynamics of the associative fabric. In Barcelona, the neighbourhoods in the historic centre have a broad and dense network of associations that include local residents' associations, cultural associations, entities in the third sector and local business groups that have shown an interest and a notable involvement in the mechanisms or processes of citizen participation in urban reform operations, while at the same time boosting second-level networks of associations. In contrast, in Madrid the associative network is more dispersed and has participated less in the reform. Its representation has been limited to structures on a metropolitan scale, such as the Federación Regional de Asociaciones de Vecinos de Madrid, although in recent years local neighbourhood movements in the centre have managed to win a greater role in the structures of local governance.

Finally, it is worth highlighting how the institutional structure of governance has itself become a factor in explaining the differing models of governance and regeneration. The administrative decentralization in Barcelona and the specific political weight of the Ciutat Vella District has favoured public leadership in the process and dynamics of agreement between the institutions and the associative fabric. In contrast, the centralization of urban policies in Madrid, the lack of political relevance of the district and the absence of *ad hoc* bodies for the regeneration process have taken away the leading role from the actors most linked to the geographical area, among them social and community organizations.

## **Conclusions**

The comparison between the regeneration of the historic centres of Madrid and Barcelona allows us to identify the main characteristics of the Spanish case. Amongst these we must highlight the significance of the high level of decentralization of both social and urban planning policies to the autonomous communities, although this tier of government has not been particularly active in the field of urban regeneration. Recently, the Government of Catalonia passed a Neighborhood Plan (Nel-lo 2010) that could be compared with the regeneration programmes developed in other European countries, such as the *Grands Projets de Ville* in France, the *Kvarteloft* in Denmark or the *New Deal for Communities in England* (see Atkinson and Carmichael 2007). In the rest of the autonomous communities, the situation is very different and only highly sectoral and uncoordinated programmes can be identified (Bruquetas *et al.* 2005). Local governments, thus, continue to be the main actor in urban regeneration policy in Spain. Within them, the strongest departments (and the ones who have led most of urban regeneration projects) are those related to urban planning. Despite the increasing importance of the discourse that emphasizes the need to adopt a holistic approach, coordination between urban planning departments and the other

departments of local government continues to be low, as shown by the cases of Barcelona and Madrid. Another important actor in urban regeneration policies in Spain has been the residents associations, which were born in the urban conflicts of the 1960s and the 1970s, under the Franco regime, although their role is increasingly called into question by an urban context that is much more complex and diverse than it was three decades ago. Finally, we must also highlight the increasing importance of the EU, both as a funder and as a generator of discourse. The influence of the EU can be observed in a number of ways, but most relevant to our case is the increasing importance that urban planners themselves ascribe to notions such as public–private cooperation, joined-up working and public participation.

The highly decentralized nature of urban policy in Spain makes regeneration programmes very sensitive to local sociopolitical circumstances and to local policy choices, as we have seen in the cases of Barcelona and Madrid. This diversity of practices is probably more significant than the one observed in very centralized countries where national governments lead urban (regeneration) policy, such as the United Kingdom. The comparison between the two Spanish cities confirms the significance of the type of factors identified by the literature on comparative local governance (see, for instance, John 2001, DiGaetano and Strom 2003, Denters and Rose 2005). Of particular importance is the influence of the local government's ideological orientation and of the role of urban social movements, which entails that urban policy practices are not necessarily determined by inexorable and impersonal forces, but they are also subject to political will and the policy choices of local agents.

Finally, the comparison between these two cases also revealed how different regeneration strategies can enhance or debilitate the 'right to the city'. Both Barcelona and Madrid have put strong restrictions to citizen's participation in the making of regeneration policies for their respective historic centres. They both have also privileged the physical aspects of urban regeneration, which has had the effect that urban improvements in these areas have brought about strong gentrification pressures. However, they represent different conceptions of how to put into practice the transformation of historic centres. In Barcelona, urban planners have recognized the right of the residents to stay put; they have prioritized intervention in the public space by promoting the opening up of new squares and of new public equipment; and they have negotiated most of interventions with community organizations. In Madrid, policies of public housing have been much weaker; a much more prominent role has been given to private initiative; and the restrictions on public participation have been much stronger. Both cities have faced similar structural pressures, but as Stone states (2004, p. 11), structural factors 'set the stage, but they do not write the script of the play'.

## Notes

1. SEJ 2007-673888/CPOL project, *Redes, participación y políticas de regeneración urbana en centros históricos* (Networks, participation and urban regeneration policies in historic centres) financed by the Ministry of Science and Innovation, Government of Spain. The main researcher is Ismael Blanco (IGOP), and the research team is Andrés Walliser (CIREM), Jordi Bonet, Mauro Castro, Marc Grau and Marc Martí (IGOP).
2. In 1950, Ciutat Vella (the district that includes the neighbourhoods in the historic centre of Barcelona) had 255,000 residents in an area of 4.3 km<sup>2</sup>; in the Raval neighbourhood, the densities were among the highest in Europe (10,000 inhabitants/ha). A similar process of densification took place in Madrid in the Centro District, which led to a degradation of living conditions in these areas. At the same time, the inability to absorb this population led to a growth of the periphery of the city in the form of shanty dwellings and self-constructed housing. The best known of these areas are Somorrostro, Camp de la Bota and Montjuïc in Barcelona and Pozo del Tío Ramundo, Orcasitas and Peña Grande in Madrid.



3. PERI (Plan Especial de Reforma Interurbana): special plan for inner-city reform.
4. This is a type of housing that was common in workers' neighbourhoods in Madrid consisting of a block of small flats arranged in galleries around an interior courtyard.
5. Substandard housing is defined as a unit that is under 25 m<sup>2</sup> in size and/or does not have basic services (water, bathroom, lighting, ventilation and so on), according to the modification of the General Town Planning Programme (PGOUM) (Centro Office).
6. Since 1989 the rehabilitation of the centre was led by the Municipal Housing Company (EMV), which was part of the Town Planning Department. The EMV developed the ARIs in the centre and outlying areas, although only in strictly physical intervention programmes.
7. This flexibility would have its correlation in access to European Regional Development Fund, which despite not having been originally designed for urban regeneration were used to finance the creation of the Rambla in Raval. In Madrid European funds were also obtained for reform through participation in the urban programme. However, these were of less value and the tools used were less innovative (they were allocated to the creation of cultural pathways).

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