

Barcelona: Urban Identity 1992-2002

Donald McNeill is a lecturer on human geography at the University of Southampton, UK. His doctoral research on Barcelona was published by Routledge as Urban Change and the European Left: Tales from the New Barcelona (1999), and he continues to do research on the city. He has also published on mayoral politics in Rome and London, and current work includes developing a geography of the Vatican under John Paul II.

Across the European continent cities are being transformed, reconfigured, reoriented, reimaged. Barcelona, a city that was long constrained by a Francoist straitjacket, now bears little resemblance to the gaudy guidebooks of the 1960s and 1970s with their lurid images of the Sagrada Família, their dusty statues of Columbus, the *golondrines* bravely navigating the working port. The city has been, in no particular order, Catalanised, globalised, informationalised, gentrified, redesigned, and Europeanised. Its sounds and smells have changed; some streets have gone and others have arrived; high buildings have soared above the two-story housing in Hortafrancs and Poble Nou. The Ciutat Vella (Old City) and the Barrio Chino (Chinatown) are, contrary to some opinion, as vital as ever. And all around, in virtual and territorial spaces, the city is being pulled open and stretched wide by fibre optic cables, an ever-expanding airport, *rondes* (expressways) and a high-speed train network. The city is unbound, snaking beyond its municipal limits into the valleys and along the north and south coast, and it is disembedded, feeding on the skill of its football team and the aesthetics of its architects, its icons projected globally by the media.

There have been dramatic changes, yet all taking place against an unusually stable backdrop of social democratic governance, where a centre-left coalition has been in power in the city council since 1979. In this paper I want to explore how some of the diverse processes mentioned above might be related to issues of urban identity, and how interventions in the urban landscape are intimately politi-



cal. I want to reflect on the city's emergence from dictatorship through the Olympic phase, where the urban left (in a range of guises) found itself having to rethink how its politics fitted the changing city and how the city, in turn, fitted the transformation of the political options of the centre-left. After briefly tracing the evolution of this relationship, I will discuss the changing nature of the old town, the growing dogma of a technologically modernised city, the impact of deterritorialisation on the city's icons, primarily its football club, and finally will draw some comparisons between the 1992 Olympics and the city's next "megaevent," planned for 2004.

I. Urban Policy and the Left 1979-2002

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the city's development since the re-establishment of democracy is its uninterrupted governance by a social democratic party, the *Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya* (PSC). Here, under the mayoralties of Narcís Serra (1979-82), Pasqual Maragall (1982-1997), and Joan Clos (1997-present), the city has followed a reasonably coherent and carefully rationalised urban policy, a situation which makes it unusual both within Spain and the wider European context. This also makes it an interesting laboratory in which to follow the possibilities of public-sector led planning and development.

Since 1979, it is clear that the Barcelona Left has understood itself by looking through an urban lens and, moreover, that its self-identity has changed alongside its vision of the city. In the years of the transition, and the earliest days and months

following the 1979 elections, many on the Left hoped for a radical, strongly participatory, non-marketised urban policy. Yet the changing climate of politics in Spain and the world economy prevented such a direction. The PSC in Barcelona found itself facing the same dilemmas that the PSOE government faced in the early 1980s, when:

in order to eventually give impetus to the European project of democratic socialism, Spain [had] first to catch up with the most developed member states; but the restructuring needed to obtain economic convergence [tended] to strengthen all those social and political forces which [were] less concerned with ideology and more with instituting market reforms. (Holman 124)

Here, adapting Montaner's periodisation of the city council's urban policy since 1979, we can identify four phases of political-urban development.

1979-1986

The 1979 municipal elections gave the left a huge majority, with Serra, then Maragall, confidently leading the city through a traumatic period of political instability. Under chief planner Oriol Bohigas, the city attracted attention internationally for its policy of small-scale, but avant-garde, interventions in public space, as well as for its shift away from destructive road and infrastructure policy. The changes were aided by a highly mobilised neighbourhood association movement, under the *Federació d'Associacions de Veïns de Barcelona* (FAVB), which constantly lobbied the council over the environmental problems or the absence

of services that the Francoist councils had left as legacy.

1986 to 1992

This period was marked by increasing tensions between Jordi Pujol's CiU-controlled (*Convergència i Unió*) Generalitat and Pasqual Maragall's city council, controlled by the *Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya*, which came to a peak with the awarding of the Olympics in 1986. Maragall's increasingly distinctive mayoralty developed into a fully-fledged world-view (*Maragallisme*) of how the city related to other institutions and places (including Catalonia, Spain and Europe). The city received substantial financial aid from the central government to prepare the infrastructure needed to host the Olympics in 1992, and realized major expressways (*rondes*), two new communications towers, Olympic stadia, and a comprehensive improvement of the built environment. An entire new district in Poblenou was masterplanned and constructed as the Olympic Village, subsequently turned into permanent, middle to high income residences. Other key ex-industrial zones known as "New Downtown Areas" or *Àrees de Nova Centralitat*, including the office blocks at Carrer Tarragona next to the main railway station in Sants and new retail projects at Diagonal-Sarrià and Glòries, became the focus of the city's urban policy.

1992 to 1997

This period has been seen as one of crisis, coinciding with the cessation of the flow of public money after the Olympics and a generalised recession in the world economy. The city turned increasingly towards the private sector to secure par-

tial funding for new cultural projects, such as the Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA) designed by Richard Meier, which was part of a broader attempt to inject diverse economic activities into the Ciutat Vella. The period was marked by widespread job cuts, such as at the SEAT factory in Zona Franca, and demonstrated the city's dependence on wider trends in economic restructuring. As a consequence, the council pushed forward its "Barcelona New Projects" portfolio of preparing major sites for development such as Sagrera, Diagonal-Mar, and Glòries. The projects were designed to balance and spread development within the municipal territory, and especially to decentralise the office market from the overstretched Eixample, yet they also provoked fears of increasing gentrification and loss of green space.

1997 to 2002

With Clos as mayor, the city began to show a far clearer opening towards foreign capital. For example, between 1992 and 2002, six large new multi-use shopping centres opened, all on ex-industrial land: L'Illa Diagonal (between Les Corts and Sarrià, 1993), Les Glòries (1995), La Maquinista (in Sant Andreu, 2000), Diagonal Mar (adjacent to the site of the 2004 Forum, 2001), Maremàgnum (on the old town waterfront, 1995), and Heron City (in Sant Andreu, 2001) (Recio 18-19). The impact of such a massive increase in retail floorspace has been the subject of some controversy: in the classic neo-Marxist analysis of land use that dominated debates in the 1970s, most of these sites are seen as speculative ventures divorced from the demands of the adjacent neighbourhoods. While the council has argued that the new shopping centres

are required to *resist* the power of the peripheral centers (*hípers*), their effect on local business is clear inasmuch as they have facilitated the penetration of multinational retail chains such as Habitat, Carrefour, H & M, FNAC, McDonald's and a range of increasingly internationalised Spanish chains such as Zara, Mango, Cortefiel, Pans & Co. Furthermore, the cinema multiplexes attached to these sites are overwhelmingly in the hands of multinationals—Cinesa, Warner, Lusomundo and AMC account for four of the five sites with only Glòries in the hands of a "local" group, Balaña (Recio 18-19). The city has undertaken major strategic planning projects to link into the high-speed train network, has expanded the airport, has witnessed the building of the World Trade Center at the mouth of the old port (albeit undertaken by the independent port authority), and has set its sights on the next major urban spectacle to follow in the tradition of the 1888 and 1929 World's Fairs and the Olympics: a 2004 Forum for World Cultures to be located in the eastern reaches of the city towards the Besòs river.

It is the fourth and most recent phase that will be the focus of the pages to follow. With the Left's confidence nourished by strong showings in the 1999 Generalitat elections, and a landslide victory by Clos in the 1999 municipal elections, the PSC leadership has once again turned to placing Barcelona at the centre of Catalan development. This agenda—Clos declared himself against the idea of a directly-elected metropolitan *superalcalde*—is tied into the anticipated post-Pujol landscape. While Maragall scored a pyrrhic victory (though a shattering defeat in reality) by outscoring Pujol in the Generalitat elections of 1999 (the vagar-

ies of the voting system conspired to give CiU more seats in the regional parliament), there seems to be little doubt that the PSC has been enjoying a substantial degree of popularity among the electorate. Yet how the renewed popularity of the PSC has been affecting the city, its distinctive identity and its urban policy, has been controversial, and I now turn to some of the dynamics of the post-Olympic city.

II. The Right to the (Old) City

The old city would not be a problem if it were on the periphery. The awful thing about the district is that it is in the centre, next to the architectural jewels of the past. To make matters worse, several [civic] institutions are located here, among them the Palau de la Generalitat and the Ajuntament and the Liceu (Opera House). And, you just have to deal with it, the Mediterranean is here too, though how convenient it would be if it found itself among the tennis courts of La Bonanova or the mansions of Pedralbes. (Torres 78)

Maruja Torres summed up the ambivalence felt by many of the city's upper middle class residents towards the Ciutat Vella: so much beauty and culture, yet so marginal, so unpredictable, so *other*. Aside from special days such as Sant Jordi or the Mercè, the old city—and not just the Barrio Chino—has long been perceived as politically rebellious, bohemian, bacchanalian, and sexually immoral (Villar 1996). Yet voices are being raised about the new direction of the old city. Crowded by tourists, increasingly gentrified, its slightly cosy waterfront has raised fears that Barcelona is going the same way as many

cities in the United States, in a process that Thomas Bender calls “city lite”:

a place to visit, a place to shop; it is no more than a live-in theme park [...] this new urban recipe is insidious, for it pretends to offer what it is not. Such pseudo-city culture offers scenes of city life, not the city itself. The City Lite is safe, orderly, simplified. It demands little [...] and gives little. (Soja 247)

To what degree does the concept of “city lite” resemble current debates surrounding the future of the Ciutat Vella? From my perspective, it differs in two ways. First, the linking of citizenship with centrality has been part of a discourse associated with Europe’s urban renaissance, what Edward W. Soja describes as:

a retrospective longing for the alleged spiritual glories of the ‘democratic’ Athenian polis, ancient Rome, the great Renaissance cities of Italy, the medieval Hanseatic league of cities and its famous motto, *Stadt Luft macht frei* (city air makes one free), and now, it would seem, the early modern metropolis. (248)

The emphasis on building a public and legible urban landscape is rife with such ideas—not for nothing was Maragall, adept at careful “scheming,” known as “the Prince” by his political opponents. Furthermore, the city possesses a relatively healthy and active set of grassroots movements which closely examine the council’s policies and the plans of developers. Second, the old town is under such demand from its citizenry, and citizens from around the world, that all sorts of conflicts have begun to emerge.

Lloretizando

If someone were to ask you, dear friend, if the Rambla is *un paseo*, what would you say? If you asked me, I would answer without hesitation, no. What’s more, I’d say, with the same seriousness, that it’s not even *un lugar de paso* [...]. I understand strolling as a serious activity, that requires its rhythm, that leaves the mind free, open to every kind of suggestion, to dally at will and stop when one wishes to look at shops or other interesting things, still or moving. Don’t forget that the stroller, even more after Walter Benjamin’s theories, is not a superfluous being, but the most rounded representative of a city’s tone [...]. Anyway, walking down the Rambla has turned into an exercise in syncopation, bearing some relation to the slalom or the obstacle course [...]. Here you can’t walk, only stop [...] because more and more it seems like a theme park, formed by a string of absurd statues, inane acts, *trileros* [find-the-lady players] and attention-seekers that bring movement to a standstill [...]. The Rambla was once a popular *paseo* that joined the serious side of the city with its uninhibited and seedy side. Its identity lost, its function annulled, now the Rambla is a non-place. (Espadaler)¹

Anton Espadaler’s opinion piece captures the reality of the Rambla in the summer. Swollen with crowds, the street is increasingly log-jammed, its old kiosk-inspired role as an informal ingestion of news replaced, or at least hindered, by an array of performance artists, the protrusion of metallic café chairs, caricaturists, and trinket stalls. That said, the street still retains many of its charms, not least at night. Yet its function as thoroughfare,

deepened no doubt by the completion of the Rambla del Mar and Maremagnum in the mid-1990s, has dissipated. As Quim Monzó noted in *La Vanguardia*, the verb *lloretitzar*²—apparently coined by the cartoonist Nazario—aptly conveys the disreputable consequences of the city’s reopening to the sea. Calling it the “ground zero of tourism,” Monzó complains that the streets of the old city are now filled, even cluttered, with scorched bathers in flip-flops and swimming gear. Approvingly citing the decision of many southern French beach-towns to introduce spot-fines for inappropriate dress, he suggests that it may get so dark that the impossible has to be thought: decamping to Sant Cugat.

We can contrast Monzó’s criticisms with Vázquez Montalbán’s view of the Rambla of 1976 in *The Angst-Ridden Executive*:

As night settled on the Rambla, Carvalho began to register the symptoms that marked the onset of the daily confrontation. The riot squad had begun moving into position, according to the prescribed rituals of the ongoing state of siege. Apolitical counter-cultural youth and young counter-cultural politicians maintained their customary distance from each other. At any moment a gang of ultra-right provocateurs might appear, and you would see the militants of this or that party disperse and head for their now legalised party offices [...]. Between the hours of eight and ten the prostitutes, the pimps, the gays and the crooks great and small would disappear off the streets so as not to find themselves caught up in a political battle that was not of their making. (85)

Vázquez Montalbán’s presentation of the Rambla (and Orwell made its former political-territorial significance famous internationally) holds up the street, and the behaviour of its crowds, as symptomatic of the political and social state of the city. During the transition, however, the Rambla became a somewhat traumatic red light, with not infrequent cases of drug-fuelled physical attacks and even murder serving to disconnect the old town from *la zona alta*.

Thinking about this disconnection, and its subsequent tourist-spurred rejuvenation, and how it is all tucked into the morphing of state and society, I was struck by Marshall Berman’s account of the three phases of New York’s Times Square. In phase 1 (1900-1945), the Square symbolizes American commercial vitality and show business; in phase 2 (the 1950s to the 1980s), the Square, indeed the island of Manhattan, is “cut off” by virtue of federal highways; and finally, in phase 3:

the Square’s first signs are celebrating European sportswear and Asian software, and multinational media conglomerates—not just Disney and Time Warner, but Conde Nast, Bertelsmann, Reuters, and more—are taking over the real estate and harvesting huge city tax breaks and subsidies to create new forms of ‘too much’: more massive buildings and brighter light; more luxury shops than the Square has ever seen; more police, private as well as municipal; ever more people, happy to be out in public [...]. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani presides over the Square’s fast-track commercial development [...]. ‘Civility’ is promoted with the manners of a nightclub bouncer, in vendettas against food vendors, newsstand operators, taxi drivers, artists sell-

ing their work on the streets, musicians trying to play in the subways, and many more. The city puts barriers up in the most crowded streets, making them harder than ever to walk in [...]. Explaining this policy, authorities proclaim that New York is afflicted with 'pedestrian glut.' Many people on the street think the city's real affliction is 'authority glut,' but no one asks them. (42-43)

Something similar happens with Barcelona, and particularly the Rambla. The Barcelona of the Civil War and the Republic gives way to the post-war edginess captured so well by Vázquez Montalbán, and then, from the 1980s,...phase 3? The logical extension of Monzó's and Espadaler's arguments is, perhaps, the Rambla as Business Improvement District, where wardens in *senyera*-themed waistcoats watchfully ease the passage of the flip-flops, check to see if the living statues are licensed, eject the pickpockets (driving them back down Sant Pau or into the Santa Caterina backstreets), introduce pedestrian traffic lights and make sure that the football jerseys that dangle from the streetsides are genuine. Still and all, what Monzó calls *el turismo basura* is surely still preferable to Disney's attack on Manhattan.

The Right to the Night

While the visit of Europe's leaders to Barcelona in 2002 did not generate the levels of conflict seen at Genoa the summer before, there was another issue simmering in the flats of La Ribera and steaming up the windows of the bars below: the right to the night. Mirroring similar instances in Madrid, the phenomenal popularity of the zone around the Born—

far more than in the traditional territories of the Chino and Raval—has become a key electoral issue in the Ciutat Vella. As *La Vanguardia* reported:

Eleven councils sanctioned in only two days. And there's more on the list. The Ciutat Vella district office has started an offensive against the terraces of bars and restaurants obliging the closure of nearly a dozen of them. Excessive noise, failure to observe closing time, excessive occupation of the outdoor space and insufficient smoke extraction systems are some of the reasons given by the district [...]. The refusal of a new license for the terrace of the bar El Rosal mobilised around a hundred people who, in solidarity with the owners, and defying administrative orders, took tables and chairs outside at night. ("Ciutat Vella")

The action taken by the authorities reflected a growing backlash from local residents against the nightly barrage of noise that echoed through the narrow streets of the old town, particularly around the Passeig del Born. While the nature of the protests were complex—many of the bars users were local, and many of the protesters were attracted to the area because of its vitality—it nonetheless opened up a range of debates over the political rights of city users, as opposed to residents.

On the other side of the Rambla, the issue is complicated by strong traditions of nocturnal revelry associated with the old town, particularly the Barrio Chino. As the Chino, associated with deep-rooted problems of criminality (Villar 1996), went into decline in the 1980s, the city council undertook comprehensive demolition and rehousing programmes. The opening of the Rambla

del Raval—a new tree-lined boulevard that replaced and cleansed the degraded zones of poverty and prostitution, not dissimilar in modernising gusto from the opening of the Via Laietana in the early decades of the twentieth century—has been presented as a means of allowing “daylight” into the cramped streets of the old Chino, with funding by the European Union (Von Heeren 2002). The reference to light was continued in the competition for a new hotel and residential development on a key site in the new Rambla. Holding between 250 and 300 rooms, a 10-storey, four star building of translucent glass was hailed by the zone’s masterplanner, Josep Acebillo, as “a giant lamp [that] will become the focus for the Rambla del Raval,” sitting with 5 blocks of rent-protected housing (Angulo). As a microcosm of the European Union’s multicultural reality, the local community, including many Pakistanis, uses the arc-lights and carefully paved surfaces to re-enact any number of floodlit test cricket matches.

III. TechnoBarcelona

It all comes together in the city. The new city-states are said to be emerging as the information and communication centres of global business. Their elite status is linked to the proliferation of satellite dishes and cable grids. And now they are entering the popular imagination as symbols of the new economic order and of the new lifeworld it is supposedly bringing into being. The information city, the virtual city: this, we are being told, is the city of the future. What will life be like in these new virtual environments? The ideologies of the technoculture tell us to look forward to tele-working and

cyber-shopping, to the comforts of virtual community, and to the recreation of the Athenian agora by electronic means [...]. Why am I having difficulty in containing myself in the face of this confident virtual triumphalism? [...] Well, for a start, because there is nothing that is significantly revolutionary in this mission. It merely continues and perpetuates, by other means, the project of urban modernism, which has involved the progressive rationalisation and ordering of city cultures. (Robins 47-49)

In seeing the informational city as continuing with the modernist project of comprehensive redevelopment and rationalisation of urban space, can we draw any parallels with the on-going replanning, rezoning, and redevelopment of the city under the Clos mayoralty? The genealogy of the thought of the PSC leadership cannot be understood without a consideration of the role of Manuel Castells in piloting the city as a means of embedding global flows within a comprehensible urban planning regime. But while Castells clearly distanced himself from the grassroots organising of the late dictatorship, it is apparent that the new urban ideology of technoregeneration has clear parallels with efforts to accommodate the city’s space to a globalised market. Here, Clos and Maragall have been proactively reshaping the city in its post-Olympic guise, particularly in the Poblenou 22@ project. In 2000, Clos was interviewed by Madaueño and Gómez and had the following to say:

Clos: The leading cities in the US [...] no longer depend on financial capital, but rather on capital in the form of

knowledge [...]. We have this large area where we can apply this concept of the city of knowledge, i.e. Poblenou, where we have the opportunity to harmonise public use with the uses that require us to move towards this objective [...]; it's the same as what happened in New York, in Soho.

Madueño and Gómez: You and Maragall seem rather obsessed with New York.

Clos: Well, New York was a decaying city, one with severe safety problems, and every other kind of problem as well. But, by chance, the multimedia and publishing industries moved in, and it has been on the road to recovery ever since [...]. We want the same sort of thing to happen here. Exactly the same. (113)

From New York to Poblenou: the Catalan Manchester, with its old industrial landscapes, remains a powerful image within the Barcelona mental map. Yet what Clos describes is an ambitious plan to rezone much of the remaining industrial fabric of Poblenou for knowledge-based new economy functions. The project—running under the name 22@—will, if realised, have a massive impact on the city's urban structure. The overall project is centred on two main areas, one between Glòries and the Olympic Village, the other to the east of Glòries and the north of the Diagonal. Approved in July 2000, the plan envisages over 4500 new flats, green spaces, and, most importantly, over 4.5 million square meters destined for *punt.com* businesses. And yet, some worry that the projected new economy businesses may fail to materialise, resulting in further rezoning of the area for flats sold on the free market (Andreu et al. 12-13). Such, it

may be recalled, was the case with the Olympic Village.

Accordingly, the 22@ project raises memories of a whole series of recurrent battles over Poblenou that stretch back to the era of Porcioles (the mayor of Barcelona from the late '50s to the early '70s). As Capel (11) has suggested, the current redevelopment of Diagonal Mar and Poblenou is but the latest stage of the Pla de la Ribera, the landmark victory by the neighbourhood associations in the early 1970s that was reprised—under the flag of the Olympics and led by the social democrats—with the building of Nova Icària (the Olympic Village). Here, the proximity to the city's beachfront and the coastal expressway has attracted high-spending investors, in a gentrification process somewhat different from that which took place in the Ciutat Vella. In 1992, Vázquez Montalbán predicted this process as he surveyed the Olympic-driven redevelopment:

Where are the state-subsidized houses? [...]. Who has rationalised the market city? One cannot write down this inventory of suspicion and dissatisfaction without being consumed by a terrible fear of making a complete fool of oneself [...]. When the future Olympic Village ends up as a radial centre for the redevelopment of mile after mile of working-class housing, nobody will ask whether things might have been different. (*Barcelonas* 10-11)

In many of the cities of North America, and in many other parts of the world, we may be seeing the emergence of what Graham and Marvin (2001) have called a “splintering urbanism,” where metropolitan change is related to the increasing emphasis on access to informa-

tion technology and the protection of elite lifestyles. Could it be, they ask, that we may see future urban landscapes as being made up of

layers of premium network spaces, constructed for socio-economically affluent and corporate users, which are increasingly separated and partitioned from surrounding spaces of intensifying marginality—spaces where even basic connections with elsewhere, and basic rights to access spaces and networks, are increasingly problematic. In this understanding of contemporary urban change, dominant practices of urban design, network configuration, electronic access control, and police, security and institutional enforcement are increasingly seen to be working in parallel to support the sociotechnical partitioning of the metropolis and, indeed, societal fabric. (383)

Interestingly, the key challenge that Graham and Marvin see is something that Barcelona has been famed for coming close to achieving: the problem of constructing a metropolitan landscape from fragments.

One of the clearest rationalisations has been the council's new policy of giving permissions to new skyscrapers. The existing tall buildings that have exceeded the 100-metre mark in the city are as follows:

- | | | | |
|---------------------|----------|------|------|
| 1. Collserola Tower | Mast | 288m | 1992 |
| 2. Hotel Arts | Hotel | 154m | 1992 |
| 3. Mapfre Tower | Offices | 154m | 1992 |
| 4. Montjuïc Tower | TV tower | 136m | 1992 |
| 5. Sagrada Família | Catedral | 112m | |
| 6. Edificio Colón | Offices | 110m | 1970 |

(from www.skyscrapers.com)

So, aside from the twin towers built at the start of the Olympics and which were bedeviled with low occupancy rates on their completion, the city skyline is relatively low-rise compared with many of its comparator cities. Yet the beginning of the twenty-first century saw a wave of new buildings being given planning permission, six of which will exceed the 100 metre mark, with another handful coming in close to that altitude (Herranz 22). Significantly, most will be designed by internationally renowned architects such as Richard Rogers, Ricard Bofill, and—most strikingly in terms of design—Jean Nouvel, whose 145-metre Torre Agbar, nicknamed variously, in Castilian and in Catalan, “el pepino,” “el vibrador,” and “el supositori,” is already beginning to rise above Glòries housing Aigües de Barcelona. Despite the impact that such buildings will have both on the aesthetics of the skyline, and, more significantly, on the city's existing infrastructure, opposition to them has been sporadic.

It could be suggested that the PSC council may have acted to reconcile, as best it can, the redevelopment of the city within a post-industrial, Europeanised market and the social demands for new public spaces and affordable housing. Of course, the shift is not unique: other city councils, with equally strong left-wing traditions, have undergone a transition from municipal socialism to urban entrepreneurialism, as Quilley shows with reference to Manchester. The political desire to adopt a discourse of globalism and competitiveness is as apparent in Barcelona as in Tokyo or Toronto, with the global serving as an excuse to undertake drastic plans of urban restructuring. In many ways, however, the council *has* consulted

local groups in an attempt to foster participative planning. Yet as Capel argues:

if all this has happened with a leftist council, run by social democrats and communists, we can only fear what will happen if the parties of the right (CiU and PP) manage to win the mayoralty once the changing social composition of the city brings its logical political consequences. (11)

IV. Disembedding the City

Sport has an unrivalled capacity to capture the attention of huge numbers of people the world over and, no matter how exciting or glamorous an event is, the number of attending spectators is necessarily dwarfed by those vicariously present through the medium of television, radio and the press [...]. From title sequences to 'cut and paste' montages of the week's events, television, in particular, can help set a particular tone that penetrates deep into the public's perception [...] [and has] also involved the increasing identification of cities as centres for the switching of images and symbols. (Whitelegg 802-03)

Whitelegg's account of how Atlanta used the 1996 Olympics to project an image of the city to a global audience has certain parallels with what happened in Barcelona in 1992—"nervous boosters" worried about how the city competed with its competitors. With respect to Barcelona, the power of symbolic urban landscapes, projected in bite-sized packages to potential tourists, gave the Rambla and the buildings of Gaudí, particularly, an airing they had not previously enjoyed.

In many ways, such projections are part and parcel of the impact of global-

isation on the city, though perhaps it might be better specified as expressing a deterritorialised identity where sport and place (strongly associated ideas) are projected out of any physical, or even climatic, context. 1992 has often been discussed as a perfect example of the oversimplified, yet often-used, notion of a global-local interplay, where ethnic particularisms use the reach of global media or capital to project, or advertise, their "difference" to the rest of the world. Thus, for instance, Josep Miquel Abad, who won admiration for his fierce negotiations over television rights, was described as embodying "el 'seny' global," the application of essentialised Catalan commonsense and stubbornness to a global media context (Álvaro).

Yet away from the Olympics, a similar, though more pervasive, process was under way, as *el Barça* slipped its Camp Nou moorings and became ever-more identifiable to a global audience, eager for top-range European club football. By 1998, FC Barcelona was among the three richest clubs in the world, alongside Manchester United and Real Madrid. Crucially, between 1978 and 1998, the share of the total revenue drawn from supporters and membership fees had dropped staggeringly, from 87% to 35% (Burns 349). While in many ways the drop can be seen as a positive trend when compared with the astronomical prices charged to attend British football matches, it represented the dominance of television revenues and, in its train, the emergence of a class of footballing superstar unmatched even in the days of Maradona and Schuster. The business acumen of club president Josep Nuñez has perhaps replaced the highly politicized relationship with Catalan nationalism

that had previously existed. The decline in the number of Catalan-born players, along with the concurrent rise in the number of Dutch and Brazilian imports, reflects the increasing internationalisation of the football labour market. The Barça 2000 project which seeks to redevelop a considerable portion of Les Corts into a theme park and leisure centre may once have been tolerated for the good of the community, but many see in it a speculative development—at which Nuñez excels—akin to the controversial rezoning of Espanyol's Sarrià ground in the mid-1990s.

And so, if one of the manifestations of *turismo basura* are the cheap replica shirts hanging in the Rambla, or the expensive replica shirts hanging in the club shop in Maremàgnum, and paraded around by pale-skinned Northern Europeans in flip-flops who clog up the centre gawping at banal statues, another is the homage to the city's other major icon: Antoni Gaudí. 2002 was declared the “year of Gaudí,” heralding the 150th anniversary of the architect's birth with a range of exhibitions, floodlighting projects, open days, and merchandise. Yet as Deyan Sudjic has argued:

the truth is that the architect has been turned into a sacred monster, casting a darkening and ever kitscher shadow over the city he did so much to shape. The celebration of his memory has turned into an excuse for a deluge of junk that serves to diminish his reputation and stunt the imagination of his successors.

Sudjic draws parallels between the “cult” of Gaudí and the similar rediscovery of Charles Rennie Mackintosh by the municipal authorities of Glasgow.

As Balibrea has noted, such initiatives are indicative of a qualitative change in the nature of how culture is perceived in the city. More pointedly, local government now sees culture as commodity or industry as much as aesthetic or symbol. The national agenda again comes into play, for Barcelona's regeneration was bound up in the post-Francoist restatement of regional identities:

Within this propitious climate, Barcelona has been able to consolidate itself, politically and symbolically, as the capital of a Catalan nation without a state [...]. The conception of the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, the reconstruction and extension of the Liceu, the building of a Teatre Nacional de Catalunya, of a new Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó, or the Auditori, have been implemented by the autonomous and/or local government as ideological instruments of a nineteenth-century style nationalism. (Balibrea 196)

Other major institutes, such as the CCCB (Centre for Contemporary Culture)(the “Beaubourg of Barcelona”) and the MACBA (Museum of Contemporary Art) have contributed to the transformation of the Raval through their high-grade architectural spaces, but have simultaneously sought to provide very different urban-driven cultural programmes. Balibrea's unease—echoed, for example, by Guillamón—stems from the increasing intervention in the sphere of media and public opinion by the city government and associated authorities to construct a “global” (in the sense of total) vision of the city. From publicity campaigns on billboards, leaflets and brochures to the co-optation of several key figures on the city's under-

ground graphic art scene, such efforts represent a return to a long-absent tradition of representing the city as a whole.³ Such representational practices actively reinforce how the name of the city is understood and used, which may help foster a sense of citizenship: naming practices are, after all, a key aspect of identity construction (Amin and Thrift 24-25). These practices, these opportunities to think of the city as “whole,” tend to be most frequently used in short-term, concentrated events, such as those of 1992 and 2004.

V. 2004 and the Post-Olympic Left

It's the 25th of July, and the Olympic Stadium is filled with 40,000 spectators listening to speeches by Pasqual Maragall and Jordi Pujol. Under the Olympic mascot Cobi's watchful eye, the Olympic flame is lit by an archer, and the spectators settle back to enjoy the kind of ceremony for which the Games have become famous. The year is 2002, not 1992, and while the invited medallists, volunteers, and families of children born during the Games are there to remember what was—by all accounts—a magical, almost utopian, fortnight for the city, the ceremony has a second purpose: the transition to the staging of the city's next world event: *Fòrum de Les Cultures 2004*, a UNESCO-supported festival with the theme of multicultural understanding.

The Forum's location was controversial, however. Here, where the Besòs flows into the sea, and where the Diagonal finally ends its cross-town journey from the leafy heights of Pedralbes, developers are already eyeing the opportunities to be

gained from a waterfront location. Despite its location adjacent to the Sant Adrià power station, the area—one of the eight New Downtown Areas—already houses a large shopping centre and high-end residential apartments. As a result, while many saw the 1992 Games as being about more than just property development, there is doubt over the extent to which 2004 is just an excuse to open up more of the city to developers.

If the 1992 Games were mercifully free of much of the rancour surrounding most of the other events that the city has hosted, it has become abundantly clear that the Olympics have lost much of their “nobility.” As Lenskyj has described in gory detail, Olympic events have tended to entail corruption in selecting the host city, wasteful and environmentally destructive sports facilities, and corporate dominance of sporting events. Of course, there was considerable scepticism raised by the neighbourhood associations and assorted critics over the direction of the city's urban policy in the run-up to the 1992 Games. It was argued that many of the developments merely repeated the efforts of the Francoist mayor Porcioles, albeit carried through with greater finesse and more attention to public goods (McNeill, *Urban Change* 114-33). Not least among the concerns was the protagonism of Juan Antonio Samaranch in the staging of the Barcelona Games. After all, Samaranch was a prominent Francoist, speculative property developer, and target of the Left during the transition. As president of the International Olympic Committee, Samaranch subsequently became embroiled in the worst crisis in the history of the organisation of the Games. After emerging from the Salt Lake City

bribes fiasco as the apparent saviour of the IOC, Samaranch was honoured by the city in a cross-institutional gathering in 2002 and was invited by Joan Clos to assume an honorary role in the staging of the 2004 event—all of which raises questions about continuity.⁴

At any rate, the 2004 event—ostensibly set up to promote inter-cultural understanding—is in danger of becoming even more subordinate to private sector planning aims than the Olympics, with property development rendered anodyne by the “intercultural” celebrations. As Balibrea argues:

The use of terms such as dialogue, solidarity, human rights, civil society and sustainable development play a prominent role in defining a fashionable kind of progressive rhetoric which is in fact contradicted and refuted by the increasing inequalities that the facilitation of the project is generating in the city. (199)

As Capel ironically notes, the juxtaposition of the new districts and some of the most marginal (socially as well as territorially) corners of the city will make for some interesting interactions among Barcelonans:

Only one of the projects seems to have been well thought out—the enormous shopping mall next to the Diagonal Mar’s towers, right on the junction of the avenue with the Mediterranean, which can be the meeting place of the inhabitants of the working class districts of La Mina and the Southeast Besòs and the new inhabitants of the de luxe apartments [...]. That is if the Centre’s guards [...] don’t keep [the former] out as being undesirable. (11)

However the social mixing unfolds, it is clear that the 2004 project has shifted the centre of the city to the east. With the new skyscrapers at Glòries, the 22@ project, the Diagonal Mar developments, and—not least—the high-speed train interchange at Sagrera (a long and highly politicised saga), Barcelona’s eastern districts are now of growing strategic importance. This is a fact well-recognised by Clos, and it awakens the political debate of the mid-1980s over the possible “macrocephaly” of Barcelona within Catalonia, temporarily stalled by Pujol’s abolition of the Metropolitan Corporation:

There’s a new frontier: the metropolitan area [...]. Where will La Fira grow? And the Ciudad Judicial? In l’Hospitalet. And the Forum 2004? In Sant Adrià. Our biggest projects are taking place outside our territory. (Madueño and Aroca)

And as Barcelona changes shape, how are urban theorists to understand it?

VI. Conclusion: Barcelona and Urban Theory

I have tried to chart out briefly some of the themes and controversies that have dominated the post-Olympic transformation of Barcelona. But where does this leave our understanding of the city after 23 years of democratic governance in the broader context of urban studies? There are a number of issues fundamental to contemporary urban theory that I have only touched upon in this paper, but that Barcelonophiles might wish to consider. First, the idea of erasure, the things of the city that are not there any more, be they buildings

or experiences. This is a theme that has dominated the thinking of Vázquez Montalbán, for example, as he has dramatised the transformation of the Barrio Chino and Poblenou. Yet other writers have been exploring the same issues in different contexts (for example, Cobb on Paris; Klein on Los Angeles; Robb on Naples; and Spring on Glasgow). One might engage the sensory city as formulated by Amin and Thrift and think about noise and illumination (24-25). Or one might develop arguments made by Von Heeren regarding the apparent gentrification of the old city. Second, although I have mentioned splintering by way of Graham and Marvin, I have only hinted at the impact of the city's new extraterritoriality on its spatial logics, as it is Europeanised and encased in an ordering ideology of technoculture. How will the high-speed train, surviving *punt.com* culture, and skyscrapers affect the city's urban order? Third, how will the city be narrated in future years by its institutions, planners, and writers? Here, Guillamón offers numerous insights into how Barcelona is, just possibly, losing its cultural distinctiveness or identity. At the same time, however, it may be gaining new perspectives and imaginaries. One might also attend to how politicians script or embody the city (as Pasqual Maragall did and continues to do), or how the city engages with Catalonia as a whole. Fourth, how will the Left cope with the increasing pressures of migration, economic restructuring, and Madrid-based neo-liberalism in its attempts to carve out a distinctive Barcelona model? Will the neighbourhood associations and the growing numbers of anti-globalisation protestors in the city be able to mount a success-

ful defense of the livable, cosmopolitan city? In many ways, even 10 years after the Olympics, Barcelona is of growing relevance to urban theory.

Notes

¹ *Pasear* means "to stroll" while *un lugar de paso* means "a place of passage," such as in a narrow road.

² Lloret de Mar is the most notorious of the Costa Brava's mass tourist destinations, a Torremolinos of the North.

³ Balibrea draws on Albert García Espuche's 1995 exhibition *Retrats de Barcelona*, organised at the CCCB, which contains a fascinating trove of visual representations of the "city" of Barcelona across several hundred years.

⁴ See "Samaranch: 'Siempre estaré a disposición de Barcelona.'"

Works Cited

- Álvaro, Francesc-Marc. "El 'seny' global." *La Vanguardia Digital* 21 July 2002 <<http://www.lavanguardia.es>>.
- Amin, Ash, and Thrift, Nigel. *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*. Oxford: Polity, 2002.
- Andreu, M., J. Gol, and A. Recio. "22@, a cara o creu." *La Veu del Carrer* 69 (2001): 12-13.
- Angulo, Silvia. "El hotel del Raval tendrá forma elíptica y se iluminará de noche." *La Vanguardia Digital* 8 March 2002 <<http://www.lavanguardia.es>>.
- Balibrea, Mari Paz. "Urbanism, Culture and the Post-industrial City: Challenging the 'Barcelona Model.'" *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 2:2 (2001): 187-210.
- Berman, Marshall. "Too Much is not Enough: Metamorphoses of Times Square." *Gritty Cities: Images of the Urban*. Ed. Lynette Finch and Chris McConville. Annandale, New South Wales: Pluto, 1999. 11-43.
- Boyle, Raymond, and Richard Haynes. *Power Play: Sport, the Media and Popular Culture*. Harlow: Pearson, 2000.
- Burns, Jimmy. *Barça: A People's Passion*. London: Bloomsbury, 1999.

- Capel, Horacio. "El Poblenou y la ciudad de los prodigios." *La Veu del Carrer* 69 (2001): 11.
- "Ciutat Vella cierra once terrazas en dos días por ruido y ocupación excesiva." *La Vanguardia* 19 July 2002.
- Cobb, Richard. *Paris and Elsewhere: Selected Writings*. London: John Murray, 1995.
- Espadaler, Anton M. "¿Es la Rambla un paseo?" *La Vanguardia Digital* 7 July 2002 <<http://www.lavanguardia.es>>.
- Graham, Stephen, and Simon Marvin. *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities, and the Urban Condition*. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Guillamón, Julià. "¿Barcelona? No, Heron City?" *La Vanguardia Digital* 10 July 2002 <<http://www.lavanguardia.es>>.
- Herranz, Elia. "A Barcelona li creixen els gratacels." *La Veu del Carrer* 69 (2001): 22.
- Holman, Otto. *Integrating Southern Europe: EC Expansion and the Transnationalisation of Spain*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Kipfer, Stephan, and Roger Keil. "Toronto Inc?: Planning the Competitive City in the New Toronto." *Antipode* 34 (2002): 227-64.
- Klein, Norman. M. *The History of Forgetting: Los Angeles and the Erasure of Memory*. London: Verso, 1997.
- Lenskyj, Helen Jefferson. *Inside the Olympic Industry: Power, Politics and Activism*. New York: SUNY P, 2000.
- Machimura, Takashi. "Symbolic Uses of Globalization in Urban Politics in Tokyo." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 22 (1998): 183-94.
- Madueño, Eugeni and Josep Martí Gómez. "La entrevista: Joan Clos." *Barcelona: Metròpolis Mediterràneo* 44 (2000): 29-36.
- Madueño, Eugeni, and Jaume V. Aroca. "Es la hora metropolitana, pero no defiendo un 'supercalde'." Interview with Joan Clos. *La Vanguardia Digital* 14 July 2002 <<http://www.lavanguardia.es>>.
- McDonough, Gary. "Discourses of the City: Policy and Response in Post-transitional Barcelona." *Theorizing the City: the New Urban Anthropology Reader*. Ed. Setha M. Low. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers UP, 1999. 342-76.
- McNeill, Donald. "Barcelona as Imagined Community: Pasqual Maragall's Spaces of Engagement." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26 (2001): 340-52.
- . "Mapping the European Left: The Barcelona Experience." *Antipode* (Forthcoming).
- . *Urban Change and the European Left: Tales from the New Barcelona*. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Montaner, Josep Maria. "Els models Barcelona." *Barcelona 1979/2004: Del desenvolupament a la ciutat de qualitat*. Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1999. 24-26.
- Monzó, Quim. "El turismo basura." *La Vanguardia Digital* 17 July 2002 <<http://www.lavanguardia.es>>.
- Quilley, Stephen. "Manchester First: From Municipal Socialism to the Entrepreneurial City." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24 (2000): 601-15.
- Recio, Albert. "Espais del capitalisme global." *La Veu del Carrer* 72 (2002): 18-19.
- Robb, Ian. *Midnight in Sicily*. London: Vintage, 1999.
- Robins, Kevin. "Foreclosing on the City? The Bad Idea of Virtual Urbanism." *Technocities*. Ed. John Downey and Jim McGuigan. London: Sage, 1999. 34-59.
- Rowe, David. *Sport, Culture and the Media*. Buckingham: Open UP, 1999.
- "Samaranch: 'Siempre estaré a disposición de Barcelona.'" *La Vanguardia Digital* 25 July 2002 <<http://www.lavanguardia.es>>.
- "Skyscrapers." *Skyscrapers.com*. <<http://www.skyscraper.com/english/worldmap/city/skyscrapers.html>>.
- Soja, Edward. W. *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.
- Spring, Ian. *Phantom Village: The Myth of the New Glasgow*. Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990.
- Sudjic, Dejan. "There but for the Grace of Gaudi." *Observer* 7 April 2002 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/archive>>.

- Torres, Maruja. "Barcelona: Regreso a la ciudad de los prodigios." *El País* 13 March 1988. Partly reproduced in *El vol de la fletxa: Barcelona '92: Crónica de la Reinvenió de la Ciutat*. Ed. Pep. Subirós. Barcelona: CCCB/Electra, (n.d.). 19-103.
- Vázquez Montalbán, Manuel. *The Angst-Ridden Executive*. Trans. Ed Emery. London: Serpent's Tail, 1990.
- . *Barcelonas*. Trans. Andy Robinson. London: Verso, 1992.
- Villar, Paco. *Historia y leyenda del Barrio Chino (1900-1992): Crónica y documentos de los bajos fondos de Barcelona*. Barcelona: La Campana, 1996.
- Von Heeren, Stefanie. *La remodelación de Ciutat Vella: un análisis crítico del modelo Barcelona*. Trans. Arnim Schulz. Barcelona: Veïns en defensa de la Barcelona Vella, 2002.
- Whitelegg, Drew. "Going for Gold: Atlanta's Bid for Fame." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24 (2000): 801-17.

