

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
SECOND SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Gardens, Parks and Landscape Design
Honors theses

Barcelona community space in contemporary age: theories, practices, and case studies - A project proposal in the Poblenou

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Barcelona passed through different phases of urban renovation since the mid seventies, at the end of Franco's dictatorship. This kind of propulsion is still in action nowadays.

During this long time the public space of the city have had a very important role because it was considered the main element to achieve high quality levels of urban restoration. It was used as a matrix to organize new urban systems and as a network between different projects.

The public space was a social topic where people could meet and have relations and it had an important role in supporting the recovery of democracy values.

Several theories and researches were made to understand functions and activities necessary to define this kind of spaces (mainly squares, gardens, parks and road network).

During the last thirty years, planning attitudes for urban spaces have changed. Nowadays the trend is usually based on a simplification of uses: the citizen himself, as a user of the place, can create his own use for it. On the contrary, the first public projects in the eighties (we remind Parc Mirò, Parc del Clot, Parc de l'Espanya Industrial, Parc de la Pegaso, Parc de la Creueta del Coll), was defined by an excess of formal uses and functions.

Architects and designer experimented different solutions to define a formal language for a new issue of "Urban Design", to be developed during the following years, according with the results of the first experimental projects and with landscape architecture principles. This new issue was meant to suggest an organic way to define urban spaces.

Freedom and neutrality of spaces were the established principles for the new project attitudes, inclined to an organic introduction of projects in their urban contexts. Though public design issue had an important evolution during the last thirty years, it's possible to infer from the study of public spaces in Barcelona how programs and functions have had the main influence on planning activities: the eighties' projects have many common features that it's still possible to observe in the urban landscape. Theories and practices of urban planning in Barcelona are closely related: a study of green spaces cannot be abstracted from a previous research of theories of urban design.

One of our aim has been to find out common elements of the urban planning in Barcelona. We noticed that there is always a strong connection between the spaces and their urban contests.

Most of times, the axis of the surrounding contest are maintained, contiguous sectors of the suburbs are connected by paths and the historical uses of the place are evoked with art installations or urban equipments. According with the characteristic of Barcelona as a seaside city, urban design is often based on the mediterranean archetype of *plaça dura*, a typical kind of paved square with trees in the middle.

Another element that it's possible to observe is the constant presence of sculptures, first used as "instruments" to enforce feelings of social identity for the newborn democracy.

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