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Reclaiming Public Space for People:
The Roots of European Urban Regeneration

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1. Is Urban Regeneration a Tool for Economic Activation?

As Japan enters the 21st century, the wooden buildings in the densely built-up city centres are disappearing while high-rises spring up in their place. This is the drastic transformation of built environment caused by the "TOSHI-SAISEI," urban regeneration policy led by Koizumi Japanese government.

Many Japanese have come to believe that Tokyo compares unfavourably with other cities in Europe and the US. Now is the time to renew the crude, makeshift buildings built in times of postwar urgency, in order for good quality urban stock to be built. Then, as the city gains confidence, a more energetic Japan will surely emerge. These are the ideas that lie behind urban regeneration in our country.

As long as an inferiority complex towards attractive European cities exists, the aim will always be to emulate this model. Japan has always been impressed with urban regeneration projects taking place in Europe. Such as the Docklands in London, where private initiatives participated widely in the redevelopment of depressed port logistics area. Or Paris's Gran Project, whereby under Mitterrand's political mandate public investment transformed abandoned industrial land into large-scale cultural facilities. Or, as Europe expands eastwards, Berlin's ambitious redevelopment in declaring itself a new European capital. The area surrounding the Potsdam Place has been redeveloped thanks to huge investments made by such multinationals as Sony and DaimlerChrysler. Each of them using private capitals in a highly effective way through wise policy introduction, successfully acting as an impetus towards economic activation while ensuring the consolidation of qualified built-up environment.

This European precedent was exactly the model Japan was seeking in its search for measures that would immediately reactivate the economy minimising public investment. While it is certain that these European urban projects of large scale expected economic effects, the basic idea behind urban regeneration was not necessarily directly related to reactivating the economy, but rather to restraining market-economy movement. However, Japan boldly ignored this basic idea behind European urban regeneration. Confiding by the

European experience that urban regeneration could be used as an economic activation tool, the Japanese government suddenly adopted it as a high-priority policy. Areas that would instantly provide direct economic gains as a result of private construction development were chosen for urgent policy implementation.

It might be successful to raise Japanese GDP in a short term. However, it is quite doubtful that the skyscrapers being built today will become Tokyo's heritage 100 years from now.

The actual Japanese urban regeneration policy could hardly achieve to recreate attractive built-up environment in a long term. The aim of this article is to reveal the philosophy which lies behind the urban regeneration in Europe and help to find out the alternative scenario for urban regeneration different from the actual national policy directions.

2. Public-space Intervention in Barcelona

2.1 Evaporation of People

A line of high-grade buildings built along a splendid main street will not necessarily invite visitors to exclaim the city as "very beautiful or fantastic." It is when citizens come out for their evening strolls, when families and friends, encompassing all ages and sexes, enjoy social exchange in the streets and squares, that the mature quality of urban life can be felt.

In the Mediterranean cities that have inherited the Greek and Roman urban culture, squares and streets are considered the salons as well as the show cases of the city. People gathering in the urban spaces have come to embody a city's attractiveness.

However, there has been a post-war decrease in pedestrian flow in European cities. When a fixed-point observation survey took place in the several cities surrounding Paris, it indicated that between 1910 and 1970 pedestrian activity had dropped to one quarter of the original volume (García Espuche, 1999) (Figure 1(a)(b)). It is a prominent trend in the cities absorbed into metropolitan regions. There was a diminished presence of women and children in particular. The presence of people in public spaces decreased, and the scarcity of people can be directly related to the death of a city. Awareness of this impending crisis was a motivating force in European urban regeneration from the 80's to the 90's.

But why were fewer people being drawn out to the streets and squares if there was no decrease in population? Although the changes in lifestyles in general brought about by

technological advances are to blame basically, the functionalist urban planning has helped the evaporation of people from streets and squares. Planning by zoning which created different mono-functional zones connected each other by motorways has taken away the social life from the public spaces. More directly, cars take over the streets and squares, driving the people out. The car was an epoch-making invention that expanded people's freedom of movement. However, when city roads were unable to handle the unexpectedly rapid increase in the number of cars, the result was a serious urban problem. The cars had enough capability to destroy the historic areas of European cities as El Roto analogised with bombs in his caricature (Figure 2). Thus the creation of smooth-flowing traffic focusing on the car took priority, and this conditioned city planning. Cities began to rely on motorisation, and soon it became obvious that cars were taking the dominant position in public spaces such as roads and squares, while people were being shuffled off to the corner.

In the 80's and 90's, people seriously looked to restrain the predominance of cars in the squares and on the roads in order to regain them for themselves (CCCB, 1999; EC/Environment, 2004).

2.2 Nine Palm Trees in Trilla Plaza

Barcelona is a pioneer city in European public space intervention. And although Barcelona's urbanism is well known by the large-scale city reconstruction that took place for the 1992 Olympic Games, it is often claimed that one of its first steps in this direction was the project known as "nine palm trees in Trilla Plaza" in 1980's.

Trilla Plaza is located in the district called Gracia, a former extramural small town of Barcelona that was absorbed into Barcelona when it expanded beyond its city walls in the 19th century. Naturally, motorisation was a shock to the entire urban transportation network, but the greatest blow dealt by the overflow of cars was felt in the historical quarters that had been formed before the industrial revolution. Gracia is a typical case. The streets are narrow to begin with, their limited width further aggravated by motorists' propensity to park their cars right up along the sidewalk on one side. Exhaust-emitting cars run through these narrowed streets. Once a town planned when walking was the main mode of mobility, the overflow of cars made the streets impossible for pedestrians. Plazas were being converted into parking lots unexpectedly, and people found themselves forced to weave their way through parked cars.

In one area of urban historical value worthy of conservation, there have been

previous measures to control the inflow of vehicles and protect its quality as a tourism resource. There you find a pleasant atmosphere where you can enjoy window shopping while appreciating the historic quarter. However, this privileged area was just one limited part of the historic city, whereas the rest remained typically Gracia-like, simply old and not enough to be a touristic site, resigned to suffer under the subjugation of vehicles. No matter which European city you visit, there is always a deprived area that is defenceless against the invasion of vehicles.

The names of the plazas and streets reflect the nature of the daily market activities, named after the wares --- fruits and vegetables, seeds, fish and meats --- historically sold there. However, the names can barely approximate the liveliness of the past, since vehicles prevail over the entire area. The propagation of cars has squeezed people out of the public spaces in the historical quarter.

Trilla Plaza was just another unremarkable plaza. So small that a mere 6 or 7 vehicles could fill it. Occupied by cars and having become an urban garbage fill, the fact that it was a plaza had been long forgotten. Its revival as a public space began with cleaning up the accumulated garbage. Next the plaza was freed from the presence of cars. Finally nine palm trees were planted, the pavement was refurbished and benches installed. The palm tree trunks became ladders and their leaves giant awnings. Once just a place for leaving vehicles and garbage, it was reborn as an urban salon.

To the blossoming the Barcelona model of public-space policy, the Franco dictatorship regime that ruled Spain up until the mid 70's was prepared a precondition. Because the Catalonian region, with Barcelona as its capital, was a stronghold of nationalism against the Spanish central government during the Franco years, public expenditure granted the city was reduced and not so effective, and a few biased concessions were in charge of spontaneous suburban development. Barcelona city almost hibernated throughout the 30-year Franco regime.

When the Franco years was coming to an end, the urban social movements had been expanded claiming for more public spaces (Domingo and Bonet, 1998). When the first democratic local government was established, on one hand there was an accumulation of projects to be done. On the other hand, however, with the advent of democracy the maintenance of public peace and order was loosened, and social problems such as unemployment, immigration, crime and prostitution suddenly reared their head. These complex social problems were concentrated at historical centres and suburbs, areas ill-equipped to meet modern-day necessities.

Under such conditions, policy measures towards large-scale investment in public

works such as the traffic infrastructure used to be taken to achieve job creation and improving basic urban facilities at the same time. But there was no money. Faced with a non-existent budget, they invented that the countermeasures be original public-space policies exemplified by the Trilla Plaza.

Barcelona's urban intervention, such as making public spaces the key, has also been successfully implemented in the deprived neighbourhoods at the periphery of Barcelona. Many of the medium-low class districts in the suburbs were developed as residential areas close to the factory they work. Since priority was given to supplying housing urgently for workers who had flowed after the war, there were scarce provisions for urban basics such as parks and public facilities. Open spaces were only the unused spaces between buildings. Then, when a sudden increase in unemployment due to factory closure took place, it took little time for homogenous residential areas to become depressed. The municipality took notice of the fact that the steep slopes left behind by development, or abandoned factory sites, were becoming hotbeds of activity among youthful offenders and drug users. They decided to use these sites to create public spaces, and in order to achieve high quality at low cost, they boldly entrusted the matter to the unfettered imagination of avant-garde artists and architects. A new trend in urban design for the 80's was born and the results became an international topic, attention being paid to stellar projects such as Richard Serra's arc-drawing large-scale sculpture dominating the entire Palmera Park, and the Sants Station Plaza. To the people resigned to live in limited space housing, these newborn parks and plazas were like an open-air living room (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1987).

2.3 Recognizing City as a Network of Voids

Without realising it, we perceive the city to be an accumulation of buildings and other elements. The 1:10,000 scale maps for urbanised areas that the National Survey Institute of Japan is providing concurs with this common-sense approach to urban awareness. On the three-colour map, buildings are outlined in red, traffic infrastructure elements such as railways and roads, and waterways in blue and green areas in green. Here the city is visualised as an accumulation of numerous elements classified into three groups with each different color respectively. Furthermore, buildings are distinguished according to their use. Public and commercial buildings are further emphasised than ordinary residential buildings and buildings more than three-story tall are outlined with thicker lines. On the whole, we can observe the intensified red zones in front of train stations, and the red tone is gradually

diminished towards the direction away from the train station. These maps show that urban development means to add artificial things, buildings and infrastructures, on the natural landscape. If we analogise city maps with photographs, the artificial things such as buildings, or the mass, correspond to the positive figure of photographs, while the open spaces such as squares and streets, or the void, are considered as the negative back in contrast with the positive.

Now, what happens when a city is understood through the reversal of the negative or the void and the positive or the mass? There is a remarkable depiction of this in the Nolli map of Rome made in the 18th century. While the grand floor surface occupied by private buildings that cannot be accessed by the public are hatched in grey and shaded, public streets and plazas that everyone can access have been left blank. In addition, religious facilities and courtyards that can be accessed by the public are also left blank with their detailed plans outlined (Figure 3). E. Rasmussen describes the Nolli map in this way: "Streets formed a network of passages between the large construction that was known as Rome, and the plazas were its variously-shaped salons." (Rasmussen, 1969). As the Nolli map indicates, historical European cities were recognised as a series of public spaces connected each other, rather than a mere accumulation of buildings and other artificial things.

If we accept these two ways to perceive city image, by the mass or by the void, Barcelona's public-space policy is based on the latter. As a way to revitalising the city, Barcelona intervened in these voids, refurbishing streets and squares, instead of erecting more volume of buildings. That is why it has been considered epoch-making.

Taking the void instead of the mass as urban assets, the idea of returning public spaces to the people could emerge. "Public space has not been the space in negative of dwellings, but *the space in positive* of the city" (Garcia Espuche, 1999). According to Ortega y Gasset, "The house is built for us to live in; the city is found so that we can leave our house and meet up with others who have left theirs." (Soria y Puig, 1999)

Thus, returning public spaces to the people can be understood as a means of correcting urban awareness, through reverting the urban asset from the mass to the void, when the current trend is to place an exaggerated value on the materialised mass.

2.4 Public-space Network in the Raval

The Barcelona public-space intervention focusing on small spots, begun with Trilla Plaza, was really a strategic approach involving a series of public spaces to create a network

covering the entire city.

Among the several deprived areas in Barcelona one is called the Raval district, an area marked by high immigration and social decline. Located adjacent to the tourist areas of the Gothic quarter and the Ramblas, it is characterised by 19th century buildings of inconsequential antiquity, with few of these buildings boasting preservation value. It would not have been difficult to call on private capital to redevelop the area, since it is centrally located. However, the people who live there are marked by economic, social and cultural problems. Therefore, even if physical redevelopment was easily accomplished, these problems would metastasize to other parts of the city. What was needed was an integrated revival of the living and built environment that had a positive effect on the people who lived there.

By specifying that the historic urban centre must be preserved as a composite entity, city administration prevented a clearance-type redevelopment by private means. A strategy was developed to furnish the entire area with an extensive public-space network, while preserving the maximum possible amount of existing buildings. This was the special Raval district redevelopment plan known as PERI (1985). Armed with this primary consideration, three local architects developed a plan that would enliven the area with a network of public spaces apparently modelled on the previously-mentioned Nolli map (1980) (Figure 4(a)).

The method of implementing a series of public spaces within the overcrowded urban area was carefully examined, as an initial probe, with the understanding that the key word to regeneration would be "Culture." First, abandoned buildings considered ruins in danger of collapse were pulled down, leaving open spaces. This action alone resulted in wayside plazas open to receive the sun, and well-frequented, neighbourhood outdoor-café terraces were installed in their midst. This insertion of the voids or plazas into the mass of densely built-up zones is an urban intervention method known as the sponge effect for its injection of air into the density. Second, certain preservation priority was given to buildings, such as former religious buildings, and the reformation of these involved making their inner patios a public space. One building, formerly a charitable institution, was remodelled into a present-day cultural centre. Third, a new public facility was built in an empty area left after some buildings were demolished. This is the newly-established modern-art museum designed by R. Meier. These two cultural centres are the highlights of the Raval district redevelopment plan.

2.5 Three Conditions for Public Spaces

It is natural that each citizen is in favour or not of the architectural design according to individual taste. But only one change has gained unanimous positive reviews from the people, and that is the large-scale plaza that was designed in front of the modern-art museum (Figure 4(b)). This plaza is the largest in the Raval district and large enough to incorporate an underground parking lot.

Elderly people, residents from long before redevelopment work began, bask in the sunny plaza, taking part in a political discussion that has changed little over the last 10 years. Lively neighbourhood children swarm the plaza's flat surface with their roller blades and skateboards. Once the museum was completed, the presence of citizens from other city districts began to be noticeable. Tourists from northern European countries, having visited the museum, stay to warm their fair skin in the Mediterranean sun that fills the plaza.

What is it about this plaza that it should be so widely supported and highly evaluated as a public space derived from contemporary urban regeneration? The following three points are offered for consideration in evaluating the important requirements for a plaza as a public space.

First, one of the most important requirements is that it be a place where many people gather. Whether a street, a plaza or a park, the more people gather there, the more it can be called a good public space. No matter how beautifully designed a park may be, it is a waste if no one goes there. An empty lot cluttered with sewer pipes which was common open space for Japanese children in the 1960's, yet ringing with the never-ending laughter of children, has far greater value as a public space.

The second requirement is that the people who assemble have diversity. J. Jacobs was pointed out that the loss of diversity had conducted American cities towards death and she emphasised the importance of diversity for cities (Jacobs, 1961).

This plaza in the Raval gained citizen support not only because traffic was controlled and a large number of people could get together there, but also because it established itself as a gathering place for an assortment of people. As a gathering place for diversified people, it has offered the further incentive of giving birth to small but new economic activity. The number of private galleries and trendy cafés in the neighbouring streets has increased.

Tokyo like other Asian metropolis maintains the places and streets crowded by a surprising number of people. However, there are a large number of gatherings comprised of homogenous groups of people, whether they be the teens in Shibuya, the female youth in Aoyama or Otemachi's businessmen in suits. These would be far from good public

spaces if the quality of public space can be determined by the variety of age groups, sexes, occupations, incomes and purposes of the people who gather there.

The third requirement is related to the human or intellectual network that emerges from the assemblage of people. A plaza has emerged in a place where people meet to talk and discuss. Habermas understands the public sphere (space) to be a space for discussion towards consensus (Habermas, 1973). In Greek and Roman polis, urban problems were discussed and resolved in the plaza. It also became market place. The political debates nurtured philosophy and the trade at market place developed economic activities. In the Raval district's plaza, there is a noticeable number of people who stand around and chatting. The atmosphere reigns with acquaintances being introduced to other acquaintances, or perhaps chance conversations taking place between total strangers. People living in Tokyo often find themselves in the middle of a crowd. However, the sphere of an individual's activity is so wide, that meeting an acquaintance by chance is practically impossible. We can hardly have the preconceived notion that a spontaneous human network emerges from throngs of people.

2.6 The Plaza Alleviates Social Exclusion

How did this plaza satisfy these three requirements to make up a good public space? The Raval district grew into a place that absorbed people who had been socially excluded from the city and citizens who live outside Raval hesitated to visit Raval because of the degraded image of the district. Now, this newly-created plaza became a salon-like place where the people already living in Raval rendezvous daily, while at the same time it became an easy place to meet for people who came from outside Raval.

When defining public space, H. Arendt connects it to the political value called "resistance against exclusion" together with "freedom" (Saito, 2000). In the case of Raval district's plaza, we can observe that "resistance against exclusion" works in a double sense. This is to say, there is resistance to the fact that they have been excluded from people in other areas, while there is resistance towards the inverse that new comers as a fruit of urban regeneration begin to exclude the people who have lived in the area. The plaza opened up for all citizens where plural values can coexist could serve as a safety net in social rupture prevention.

M. Castells analyses the May, 1968 Paris revolt as having obtained political influence thanks to the streets as public space. The factory workers' and university students' movements were held in the main streets, thus these movements obtained popular support

widely. As he says, the street in itself "is the ideal gathering point for the movement, the ideal form of organized political expression." (Castells, 1972) Multitudinous gatherings in plazas and in the streets, in the manner of the Paris May uprisings and the Cultural Revolution in China, have gained the power to change history. Even today, at election time candidates make the rounds of market places and talk with the people in order to unearth hints on urban strategy. European people place a great deal of confidence in the plaza as a public space, looking to the plaza as a means of overcoming social polarization. Borja points out the condition that plazas and streets have as public spaces as "the possible stage for political reform" (Borja, 2001). Nevertheless, the times in history when the power of public spaces was misused to multiply the extraordinary energy of fascist agitation must not be ignored. The question whether or not to expand the plaza's role as even more active than the mere social safety net would be a sensitive one. Nevertheless the success of public-space strategy in Barcelona has confirmed that urban regeneration would be impossible without the suppression of growing social polarization.

3. Urban Regeneration and Market-economy

3.1 Urban Regeneration as a Market-correcting Tool

We cannot say that European urban regeneration was promoted purely in the search for social cohesion. It would be possible that urban regeneration may not experience such intensity if the alleviation of social segregation had been overly emphasised. Many expectations remain hidden behind plans for urban regeneration.

Economically speaking, a stronger competitiveness was widely expected by improving city image. Lively plazas and populous streets would represent qualified urban space. The urban regeneration, on one hand has strategically integrated the voices of economic circles and has aimed to improve city image enough to be competitive, and on the other hand to minimise social segregation which tends to widen within the city under the main stream of neo-liberalism. Because although on one hand market mechanism may make the impossible possible, it does not necessarily work towards automatically alleviating social disparity. Public intervention to correct social inequality is necessary for a market-economy to function in a healthy manner. Therefore, even if urban regeneration areas are extended and a variety of policy objectives are blended together, the targets have been always the deprived neighbourhoods and the people living there who are socially

excluded when the market-economy rules. Urban Pilot Projects, one of the innovative actions of EU structural funds, and URBAN, one of the community initiatives of EU structural measure, have the clear principle to tackle social segregation.¹

Now in Japan, the strong initiative to regenerate cities has resulted a construction boom. The developers are competing with the quality of housing and the enhancement of common space has begun to gain added value. The market-economy seems capable of creating opulent public spaces with private means, but the reality is the privatisation of public spaces that really should be open to all. There are no public spaces where a variety of people of all ages, sexes and incomes assemble for various reasons. The exclusive-community zones born of the market-economy have swallowed up urban public spaces, and real public spaces have become degraded.

Moreover, in large metropolitan areas, including Tokyo, ongoing urban regeneration has invited a surge in the high quality housing development adjacent to protected scenic areas or parks. In Japanese cities, green areas or waterfronts are public spaces for anyone to commune with nature. However, as a result of ongoing urban regeneration, the public spaces that should serve to strengthen social cohesion are being used as a tool to reactivate economy by stimulate private investments to develop housing constructions, resulting in a remarkable polarisation within the mutual coexistence of high-rise living residents close to parks and riversides and the homeless people who live in parks or on the riverfront.

3.2 Which Comes First, the Economy or the Life of People?

The following two beliefs stand out from European experience on urban regeneration of the last 20 years. First, that economic activation might act against improving the quality of life. And second, that even if physical improvements in the built environment of the deprived neighbourhoods are given first place, this will not result in alleviation of urban polarisation.

Competition between European cities has intensified with the EU integration process. The lure of convention facilities or improvements in airport accessibility to raise competitiveness have reached saturation levels, therefore the decisive competitiveness could be now whether the deprived areas' problems that any European city have can be solved.

¹ See http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/urban2/index_en.htm

Behind the European cities' reasons to boldly commence integrated regeneration that focuses on the deprived areas, apart from the external factor of intensified competition between cities, two further internal factors can be pointed out. The first is the fact that the European urban structure has a clear weak point where the undesirable functions have been easily concentrated, where many socially excluded people live and consequently absorb immigrants. Second, many people who live in deprived neighbourhoods, such as the long-term unemployed, immigrants and the elderly, are welfare reliant, and these problems may not be softened by economic activation and relief measures for the unemployed in the entire region.

These derelict districts does not display its own fair share of improvement when regional economy improves, but rather, it suffers the polarisation effect as a by-product of economic development, and is left with even greater damage. The optimistic theory that "upward growth in the economy leads to improved quality of life for everyone" is deep-rooted among the generation of Japanese who took confidence in the high-growth economic period. European urban regeneration targeting degraded districts is an experiment against this common sense. It is an approach that prioritises the recovery of human lifestyle over the economic aid of the residents. In the deprived neighbourhoods plazas and streets, by resuscitating these public spaces that can be accessed on a daily basis by the local residents and visitors from other areas, is a means of easing the socially isolating conditions and stimulating quality improvements in their lives. This increases the possibility of their participating in economic activities because the humanity in their lives has been returned.

R. Putnam tried to reveal based on quantitative analysis, what is the determined factor of the Italian north vs. south differences in performance of democracy. He concluded against common sense that a difference in maturation of civil society was a dominant factor rather than a gap on economic development. (Putnam, 1993) (Miyazaki, 2002). If we analogize inequality between the north and south in Italy to inequality within the cities, it can be induced that because public-space interventions in deprived districts helped to raise quality of life of the residents, this triggered economic activities in the area.

3.3 The Absurdity of Clearance-type Redevelopment

Many times a drastic physical improvement by scrap-and-build has been adopted to reduce the problems of the degraded districts based on the recognition that the built environment has deteriorated. However this method does not create incentives towards essentially

solving the problems. M. Castells was quick to draw attention to this matter in his book "Urban Problems," citing as his example the redevelopment project of recovering Paris, known as the 'reconquista', that evolved from 1958 (Castells, 1972). This redevelopment targeted the impoverished district known as "Cité du Peuple" and were to convert to upper social class residences. It was indispensable for a Paris urban strategy because this district was very close to the new business district. Regarding this, Castells assumed that the overcrowding problem of this district was simply a population problem, and pointed out that "contrary to popular belief, deterioration in building property was not necessarily higher than the average for Paris." His social analysis centres on the resistance exhibited by residents of the targeted redevelopment districts, but this issue highlights the "contradiction between the housing conditions (desired by) the residents involved and the municipal Paris urban redevelopment plan connected to the real estate development industry."

Even if their resistance yields positive results and public housing is incorporated into redevelopment as an indication of social concern, residents can easily fall to the conclusion that they will be driven out of the district they are accustomed to living in. Through a series of social campaigns, certain points regarding the resuscitation of impoverished areas, such as "the same place, or re-location to a new building in a nearby area, with suitably reasonable rent," or "making use of an existing building rehabilitated" can later be stressed.

The resuscitation of the previously mentioned Raval district in Barcelona put into practice guidelines obtained by Castells' analysis. In the Raval district resuscitation, emphasis was placed on making the social functions of public spaces healthier, rather than on the deteriorated building stock. Simultaneously, the quality of residential stock was steadily raised in incremental phases. They commenced with the supply of protected social housing, and among the housing properties given preservation priority those deemed deteriorated were renovated, or buildings recognised as ruins were replaced. Next, the district's residents living in buildings to be replaced, or deteriorated buildings in need of rehabilitation, were relocated to previously installed social housing located in the district, and thus the existing community was preserved while gradual progress was made in regenerating housing stock.

As public institutions concentrated measures to regenerate the Raval and also a part of the project was subsidised by the EU cohesion fund, regeneration of the Raval district has accelerated, and the gradual project spanning 25 years is about to come to an end. At the same time, due to rapid economic resuscitation in the deprived district, a new

problem of gentrification has rear its head. Intellectuals or artists with relatively higher economic capacity, from both within the city and from abroad, have come looking for housing, property values have risen, and pre-renewal residents have begun to flow out.

Gentrification itself proves a success that the public initiatives have encouraged private initiatives. However it can lead to weaken the social cohesion that Barcelona's intervention has been quite sensitive about.²

4. The 21st Century Challenge of European and Japanese Cities

European cities put into motion urban regeneration that involved the rebirth of public spaces, especially in deprived neighbourhoods. Until the end of the 20th century, various western European cities showed visible improvement through integrated measures targeting on deprived neighbourhoods, and presently, this methodology is applied in various eastern European cities with similar problems. However, although success stories in reduce traffic flow and of environmentally friendly cities are highly extolled, in many European city suburbs motorisation is accelerating. According to the Parisian fixed-point observation survey mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the number of pedestrians was halved during the 20 year period between 1970 and 1990 (Figure 1(b)(c)). This shows that the European urban regeneration did not put brake on the pedestrian decline, and moreover the pedestrian decline's velocity is increasing still. While at the same time that the economic buoyancy put into practice by new liberalism was in favour to regenerate deprived neighbourhoods, it also expedited suburban development through deregulation policies. Looking at the city as a unity, it is evident that instead of speed being a characteristic of regeneration in the city centre, the speed of destruction taking place in the suburbs has been even greater. Barcelona was not an exception.

If the definition of a city restricts into a physical continuity of built-up areas, then European urban regeneration in the 80's and 90's has succeeded in a certain extent to mend the city's cracks. The deprived districts' unemployment rate that reached 50% was lowered and the quality of living was raised, reducing the negative image that had encumbered its urban competitiveness. While the benefits of developing brisk economic activity in overall by EU unification have contributed to reduce economic imbalances between European

² The social artist M. Romani is critical of gentrification in the Raval district. She points out that by the end of the 90's Barcelona's urban policy had begun to go mad, and is developing civil action.

cities, they are biased towards those who have competitive power in the labour market, with a rather expanded income gap within each city.

Also, at the end of the 20th century the *urban* goes beyond a continuous built-up area. F. Ascher identified it as "metapolis" observing the reality that the urbanisation is continuing metaphysically (Ascher, 1995). Due to the advanced traffic and information infrastructure, people live beyond the suburbs and in the countryside with access to the usual everyday services common to the city. If the city is defined as a regional extension including both urban and rural areas, newly-visible urban problems are detected. It is crucial that the problem of wastes and environmental pollution originated by the city expands outward and must be addressed on a regional scale. Coupled with trends towards decentralisation, new regional governance is emerging. Cities have to contribute as motors to achieve regional development. EU-level urban policy that brought significant results through targeting deprived neighbourhoods, is now proceeding towards dealing with the urban problems entailed in regional expansion (European Commission, 2002). While on one hand European urban regeneration seems to have solved problems in the city centres but on the other hand the similar problems have sprung up to in the city suburbs and the surrounding smaller cities. With regards to the 21st century European city, the emerging theme is one of urban social polarisation expanded on a regional scale.

If we try to tackle the 21st century urban problem at a regional scale, much attention should be paid to the role of farmlands, forests and mountainous areas found outside the built-up areas. While it can be said that originally the European city excluded the countryside, this does not mean that an auto satisfied city was constructed within the enclosing walls. The city defence was consolidated only when a wide countryside where no enemy could hide was located just outside its enclosing walls. As shown in E. Howard's garden city theory, Britain's traditional admiration for the country is inherited acceptance of the necessity of the country as a means of supporting the city (Krier, 1984) (Figure 5). Most of European citizens have supported the viewpoint that urban sprawl should be contained and the city made compact, with greenery preserved nearby in the city. Therefore today's reality of the city that has expanded regionally has led to expansion of the traditional complementary relationship between the city and the country, with the advent of the concept that the countryside be preserved as an inherent part of the city-region. This is what draws attention to the Randstad in the Netherlands. The Randstad is a regionally expanded city-region made up of the medium-size cities Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Den Hague and Utrecht that surround a green area with a diameter of over 40 km called the Green Heart. While the efficiency of large city agglomerations with a single core city in the

centre, such as London, Paris or Berlin, retain their firm support, there are a rapidly growing number of regions that have a polycentric urban cores that incorporates green areas, and these are represented by the Randstad.

However, when dealing with cities on a regional scale, the simple application of urban regeneration means using public spaces as the key, in use in Europe up until now, will not be enough to overcome the facing problems.

What does a public space mean to a city-region that encompasses the countryside? What can be done to return public spaces to the people? Japanese cities would give some hints. Japanese cities have traditionally configured in sympathy with nature while European cities have done against nature. The ruling order of Japanese cities has been given by the surrounding nature. For instance, in cities formed down the feudal castle, the method known as "YAMA-ATE" has been widely used. It consists of establishing the path of streets by directing them towards the nearby mountain that happens to be the area's landmark (Sato, et al, 2002). It is an idea to involve the mountain which stands far away from the built-up area as a key element of city-scape. You could say that this philosophy of town planning might be related to the fact that cities in Japan, even those larger in scale than European cities, have long escaped social imbalances. It is not sure if there has been a direct relation between Japanese and European cities as Kawakatsu raised the hypothesis that "the roots of English garden cities can be found in Japanese vernacular landscapes,"³ but we may find some common keys towards sustainable development for Japanese cities as well as European ones in the hidden philosophy of Japanese pre-modern urban and regional development. In order to not have this valuable treasure remain in obscurity, instead of clinging to urban development based on economic motives or subjective preconceptions, Japanese cities should come back to share the basic European urban regeneration idea of "returning the city to the people" and should draw up their own urban regeneration scenarios squarely facing the problems and respecting the history of each individual city.

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³ From the "Maritime View of History of Civilization," by Heita Kawakatsu.

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Figure 1: Declining the Number of People from Saint Cloud, Avenue du Palais in the suburbs of Paris



(a) Avenue du Palais in 1910



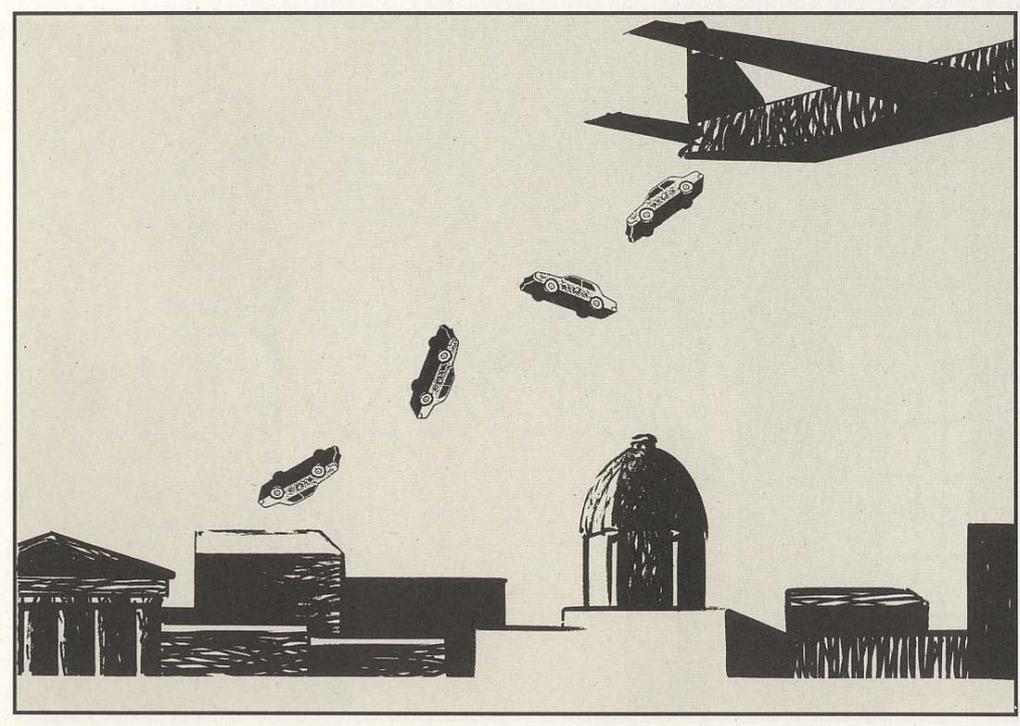
(b) Autoroute in 1970



(c) Autoroute A13 in 1990

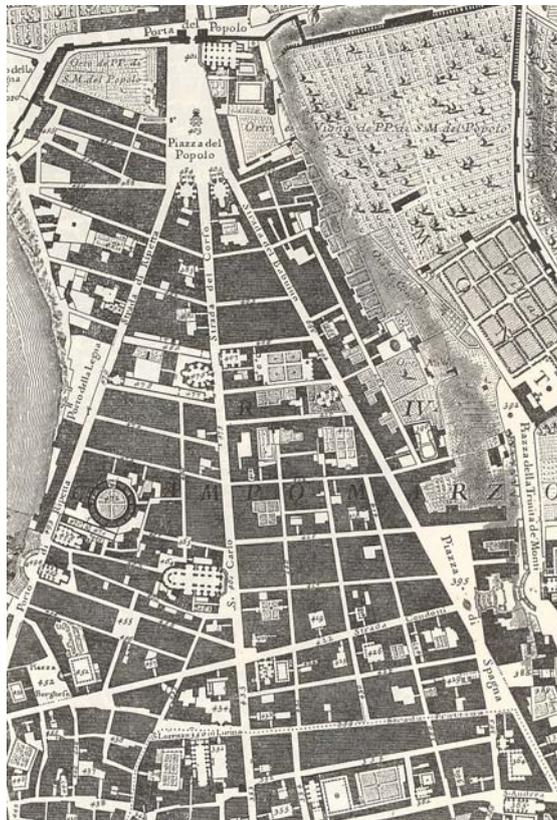
(Source) CCCB (1999), pp. 24-25.

Figure 2: Air-Raid



(Source) CCCB (1999), p. 40.

Figure 3: The 1748 Map of Rome by Nolli



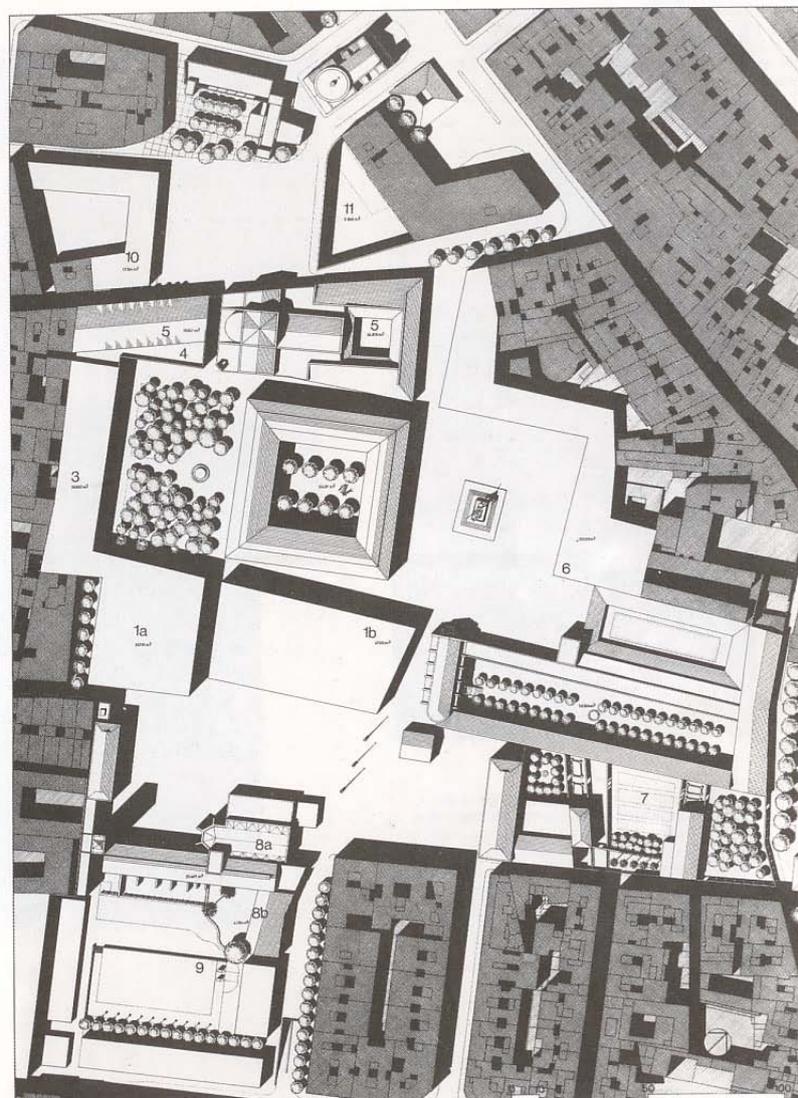
(Source) Rasmussen (1969).

Figure 4(a): Public Space Plan in 1980, The Raval District, Barcelona



(Note) By three architects, L. Clotet, O. Tusquets, and F. Basso.
(Source) IMPU (1990), p. 107.

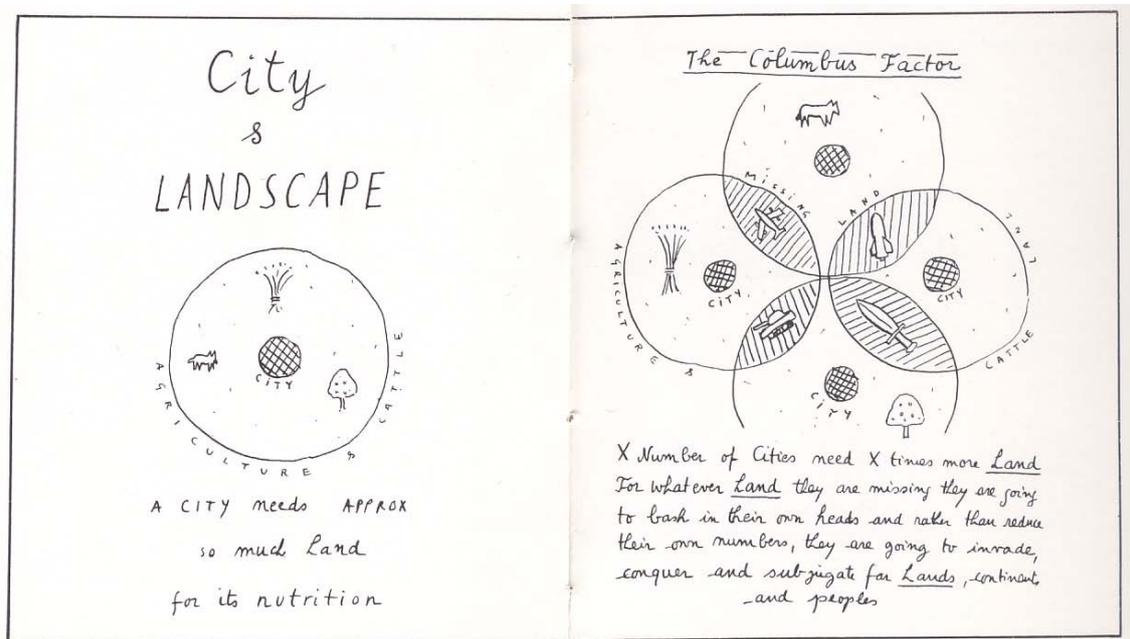
Figure 4(b): Public Space Plan, around the Modern-Art Museum in the Raval District, Barcelona



(Note) By two architects, L. Clotet, and I. Paricio.

(Source) IMPU (1990), p. 107.

Figure 5: Garden City



(Source) Krier (1984).