LA CONSTRUCCIÓ
DEL TERRITORI
THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TERRITORY

Amb With Josep Antoni Acebillo.
Architect. Director General de Barcelona Regional

Eduard Bru.
Architect. Subdirector de l’Escola Tècnica
Superior d’Arquitectura de Barcelona
Architect. Subdirector of the Barcelona School of Architecture

Juli Esteban i Noguera.
Architect. Director del Gabinet d’Estudis Urbanístics de l’Ajuntament de Barcelona
Architect. Director of the Urban Planning Studies Department of the Barcelona City Hall

Oriol Nel-lo.
Geographer. Director de l’Institut d’Estudis Metropolitans de Barcelona
Geographer. Director of the Institute of Metropolitan Studies of Barcelona

Ricard Pie.
Architect. President de la Societat Catalana d’Ordenació del Territori
Architect. President of the Catalan Society of Land Ordinance

Manuel de Sola-Morales.
Architect. Director de l’Escola Tècnica Superior d’Arquitectura de Barcelona
Architect. Director of the Barcelona School of Architecture

Joan Antoni Solans.
Architect. Director General d’Urbanisme de la Generalitat de Catalunya
Architect. President of the Town Planning Commission of the Generalitat of Catalonia

Moderador Moderator
Josep M. Villanova. Architect
Architect
JOSEP M. VILANOVÀ. To begin the debate I should like to pose a number of questions concerning the most recent developments in the structuring of the Catalan territory, from the departure point of the duality formulated in the past between the role of Barcelona and the counter-weight of the system of mid-scale cities scattered over our geography. The impulse behind the internal restructuring of Barcelona over the past decade has enhanced the centralisation of the most dynamic and converging activities, particularly in the tertiary sector. Industry has substantially modified its location patterns, taking advantage of new sites well situated in terms of growing transport, communications and exchange infrastructures and offering in historical centres new areas of opportunity for urban refurbishment.

The transformation of land markets as a result of pressures from the most dynamic, economic activities has led to a major crisis in the housing market in central areas.

The most important growth in major housing over the last decade has taken place in what is known as the "second residential ring", often in towns or cities whose urban structure is weak in relation to the volume of growth experienced.

These processes have taken place in a context which reinforces Barcelona's interrelation capacity with her hinterland and province on the basis of changes in accessibility generated by improvements to the highway and railway networks.

JOAN A. SOLANS: It's clear that a "change of pace" has taken place in comparison with that of the seventies, a change of pace caused by planning itself. Most growth has been produced in what we call second and third rings: Of the 54,000 new homes built in this decade, only 15,000 are within the municipality of Barcelona. In the field of industrial location, however, the phenomenon is even more spectacular: around 30% as against 70%.

In the service sector there's also been a fundamental change: Except for the most central facilities (especially new equipment installed in Barcelona), many of these new activities have been distributed outside the Barcelona area. The phenomenon is, therefore, very different from the one produced in the seventies, and the questions we should ask ourselves are: What kind of new structuring is being produced by this model of city formation? To what extent can present-day centrality continue to carry out efficient directive functions? How can we ensure interrelations between a recognisable centre and a vaster, poorly connected territory? How should we structure the new nuclei that appear in this territory?

A substantial change has been produced not only by new planning concepts but also by the very nature of traditional densities, the crisis of developments of 300 homes per hectare in blocks of four flats on a floor ventilated by a narrow central patio. Today new models of housing growth are emerging which have much to do with the newly acquired, democratic power of town and city councils.

A new phenomenon has appeared also in the location of industrial activity, the result of the construction of new motorways which began to be sped up in 1982 in response to new standards of space required by industry and has led to new types of industrial plants. In view of this, the issue is one of examining whether the models being followed are in fact the most ideal ones.

DRÒL I.-LO. I agree absolutely that a change in trends has taken place from the centralising dynamics of previous decades to a new situation in which population, economic activities and services have become scattered over the territory.

Furthermore, this is a phenomenon common to most big European cities. Even so, if we look closely we see that alongside these processes of quantitative decentralisation, there's a qualitative permanence of centrality. We've mentioned industry, for instance: From the employment point of view it's true that the

JOSEP M. VILANOVÀ. Per comenzar el debat, voldria plantegar algunes

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anterior entre el paper de Barcelona i el contrapès del sistema de ciutats mitjanes desenvolupades sobre la nostra geografia. L'impuls realitzat en el darrer decenni en la reestructuració interna de Barcelona, ha portat a un reforçament de la capacitat de centralització de les activitats més dinàmiques i convergents, especialment pel que fa al sector terciari.
city has lost relative weight in relation to Catalonia as a whole (though this is subject to statistical qualifications), but in regards to produced value we see that the weight of the city and its productivity differential is still very high in comparison to her hinterland. We might say the same about services: While services geared towards people and the home are spread over the territory, what we call the strategic, tertiary sector (finance, insurance, advertising and so on) is still strongly rooted, with few exceptions, in the central city and in some districts of the central city (which contain 9 out of every 10 jobs in the metropolitan area of Barcelona in this sector). To this we could add public administration, which is strictly concentrated within Barcelona's city limits. While it's true that we're witnessing a process of "diffusion of the city" over the territory, this diffuse city (as the Italians call it) is a city that imposes specialisation and a hierarchical scale on each of its elements in relation to the whole. And in its centre, at its core, it maintains a city of intensive use, a hard, potent nucleus, in which most of the most productive and most sophisticated activities, those most closely linked to power, are concentrated.

JOSEP A. ACEBILLO

Allow me to make an observation from the economic viewpoint: Anyone listening to what's been said so far might get a false impression of the real power of Barcelona's metropolitan periphery. The fact of the matter is that 10% of the Spanish gross domestic product is produced in Barcelona, and of this 10% (according to data from the 1987/88 period) only 2% pertains to the metropolitan ring; the rest is generated inside the municipality of Barcelona. In economic terms, therefore, this duality between the city and the surrounding territory is non-existent. A second reference which I'd relate to system criteria: The reason why the central power situation is decreasing in favour of the periphery lies theoretically in the inability of central areas to absorb the large-scale infrastructures necessary to ensure mobility (or cross-modality) essential to strong economic activities. It's also true, though, that the trend today isn't initially this; today's large-scale infrastructures have little to do with recent ideas of the city. The trend in years to come will be to give priority to virtual infrastructures. Remember that an optical fibre much finer than a pencil point has far more communicative capacity than most of the telephone lines in the Besos exchange. This means that the territory is regaining the isotropy it had formerly lost, is becoming more egalitarian in terms of capacities. So if we're capable of transmitting this isotropy to the exterior, "peripheral" situation, why not to the centre? The main reason for the productive decline of the centre is tempered by this new situation. This is the option most of the world's major urban decision-making centres are working on at the moment and consequently, one of today's main challenges is to provide our territory with an effective cable network. Third question: cost and ideology. The reasons for this "central decline" must be sought above all in the brutal liberalisation of the sixties. But if we look at more specific recent situations, questionable issues arise. When I'm told that only 15,000 homes have been built in Barcelona, I wonder why no more have been promoted, with everything this implies. Practically more homes have been built in a city like Huesca than here. If we don't look at these issues objectively, we're bound to have problems when it comes to tackling them.

RICARD PIE

To be honest, I don't really know whether as many innovations are being made as we sometimes think. The major options of metropolitan territory articulation were examined in the seventies: We might say it was then that the idea of formulated of regional growth following the pre-litoral Vallès axis as an alternative to the industrial: des del punt de vista de l'ocupació podem admetre que la ciutat perd pes relatiu sobre el conjunt de Catalunya (i encara això s'hauria de matar esta dinamicament), però des del punt de vista del valor produït veiem que el pes de la ciutat i el seu diferencial de productivitat respecte de l'entorn roman molt alt. El mateix podríem dir dels serveis: mentre els serveis a les persones i a la llar es difonen sobre el territori, allò que hem anomenat tercari estratègic (finances, assegurances, publicitat, etc.) es manté —amb poques excepcions— fortament aïllat a la ciutat central i encara en alguns districtes de la ciutat central (que contenen nou de cada deu llocs de treball conjunt de la regió metropolitana de Barcelona en aquest sector). I això podem afegeix encara l'Administració pública, estrictament concentrada en el terme de Barcelona. Així doncs, és cert que ens trobem davant un procés de "dissolució de la ciutat" sobre el territori, però aquesta ciutat difusa (per dir-ho com els italians) és una ciutat que —en integrar-se— especialitza i jeraquitzia cadascun deus seus elements en relació amb el conjunt. I manté en el seu cor, en el seu centre, una ciutat d’ús intensiu, un nucli dur i potent, on segueixen concentrades bona part de les activitats més productives, més sofisticades i més lligades al comandament.

JOSEP A. ACEBILLO

Deixeu-me fer una primera puntualització, des d’un punt de vista econòmic. Una persona que sent el que s’ha dit fins ara ara podria tenir una idea equivocada de la potència real de les periferies metropolitanes de Barcelona. La realitat és que el 10% del producte interior brut de l’Estat Espanyol es produeix a Barcelona; i d’aquest 10% (en dades del període 87/88), només aproximadament dos punts porten a la corona metropolitana; la resta es genera al terme municipal de Barcelona. De manera que, en termes econòmics, de fet no existeix aquesta dualitat entre la gran ciutat i el territori. Una segona referència que jo denominaria de criteris de funcionament. La raó per la qual la situació de potència central aniria decreixent a favor de la periferia, romandria, teòricament, en la propia incapacitat de les àrees centrals d’absorbeix grans infraestructures necessàries per assegurar la mobilitat (o la intermodalitat) necessària en les activitats econòmiques fortes. També és cert, però, que avui la tendència no és inicialment aquesta. Avui les grans infraestructures tenen ben poc a veure amb la idea de ciutat recent. La tendència en els pròxims anys és donar prioritat a les infraestructures virtuals. Pensem que una fibra òptica molt més petita que una pinya té moltíssima més capacitat de comunicació que la majoria de línies telefòniques que puguin passar pel col·lector del riu Besòs. Això significa que el territori guanya la isotropia que abans havia perdut, el territori es torna més igualitari quant a capacitats. Aleshores, si som capaços de transmetre aquesta isotropia a la situació externa i “periferica”, per què no al centre? La raó principal de la decadència productiva central queda mediatizada per aquesta nova situació. Aquesta és l’opció sobre la qual s’està treballant en la majoria de centres de decisió urbana importants avui en el món, i per tant, un dels reptes prioritaris avui, és, per exemple, cablear eficaçment el nostre sòl. Tercera qüestió: preu i ideologia. Les raons d’aquesta "decadència central" cal buscar-les prioritàriament en el liberalisme brut del enys seixanta. Però parlant de situacions més concretes i recents, hi ha temes qüestionables.

Quan jo sento que a Barcelona només s’han construït 15.000 habitatges em qüestiono el perquè no s’han promogut més, amb tot el que això comporta. A Osca s’han fet pràcticament més habitatges que aquí. Si aquests temes no els objeteixem, tenim obviament dificultats a l’hora d’abordar-los.

RICARD PIE

De fet no s’hi realment estan passant tantes coses
It was then that the great infrastructures, the ring roads, were traced out... The question we should pose today, however, is if what’s happening now is what we wanted, that is, to decongest the centre and create the “city-region”, or if it’s the process of decentralisation and deconcentration, fruit of the crisis of the city model of the central city and of the emergence of phenomena of spread towards the periphery of housing and other activities, which is substantially modifying that model by creating new situations of physical and social imbalance. The danger lies in the fact that we value these changes positively because we believe they’re homogenising the territory, whereas there are situations in which they’re creating new forms of imbalance due to excessive specialisation of the parts, to the decline of central places or to inability to control the process of change.

**Juli Esteban i Noguera** I’d second what Ricard has just said. Indeed, the real metropolitan city works increasingly as an integrated whole. Barcelona as a municipality is a specific part of this territory, and apart from exercising a clear leadership is capable of relating more and more efficiently to broader surroundings. This generates a process of spatial specialisation taken to unprecedented extremes which can potentially affect both the role and the character of the central metropolitan area. Barcelona is a tissue especially rich in components and balances which distinguish her from other cities. This tissue, which has always been able to integrate a wide range of urban activities, is now in fierce competition with an ever expanding hinterland. What happens outside the city is no longer peripheral, no longer characterised by its former quality of banishment; on the contrary, it’s now in a position to compete with the inner city.

This is a historical change, concerning above all the consideration of the central tissues of the city, those which have reached a state of over-ripening, and concerning urban policies geared towards these tissues.

**Eduard Bru** I suppose we’re talking about whether it’s really the existence of a strong, large-scale metropolitan reality we should give priority attention to or whether we should opt for a diversity of multiple living and well connected centres. Without wishing to go against the future of the different mid-sized cities in Catalonia, I believe the existence of a reality such as Barcelona is exceptional. Other cities are offering what Barcelona offers, but I reckon a structure that moves four million people enjoys a number of a priori advantages to be considered: those of the concentration and interaction of a vast number of people, which is what in fact has always characterised the very idea of city. The dimensions of Catalonia make it possible to connect this particular phenomenon with other realities (above all if the infrastructure network functions properly), so I’d rather opt for a structure which allows us to take correct advantage of this fact instead of merging it with others.

**J. A. Solans** I’d like to make a number of observations. Nobody would question the central role of the foundations of the system. But we must be aware of the highly radical changes which have taken place in its functioning, for instance in terms of mobility. If we compare the mobility figures for 1981 with those for 1991, the situation is as follows: there’s been a growth of 10% in the dynamic towards the exterior as against a growth of 4 in the interior dynamic. In other words, the people of Barcelona have tended to move to the Vallés Oriental region while fewer people from the Vallès Oriental tend to leave the system to move to other systems, and this phenomenon is becoming consolidated. While in the sixties and seventies the formation of peripheries responded to a model of novedoses com a vegades diem. Les grans opcions d’articulació del territori metropolità ja es van plantear als anys vintanta: es pot dir que va ser aleshores que es va formular la idea d’un creixement regional seguint el corredor prelitoral del Vallés com a alternativa a la macrofèlia de Barcelona; aleshores es van dibuixar les traces de les grans infrastructures, els cinturons,....

La pregunta que ara ens hem de fer és si el que ara està passant és el que voliem, descongestionar el centre i construir la “ciutat-regió”, o és un procés de descentralització i deconcentració, fruit de la crisi del model de ciutat central i de l’aparició de fenomenos de difusió cap a la perifèria de la residència i altres activitats, cosa que modifica substancialment aquell model, creant nous desequilibris físics i socials. El perill és que valorem positivament aquests canvis perquè creïm que estan homogenitzant el territori, quan, segons com, s’estan creant nous desequilibris per especialització excesiva de les parts, per decadència dels llocs centrals o per manca d’una capacitat per ordenar el procés de canvi.

**Juli Esteban i Noguera** Jo insistiria en el que s’acaba d’apuntar. Certament, la ciutat real metropolitana funciona cada vegada més com un tot integrat. Barcelona-municipi és una part concreta d’aquest territori, que a més d’exercir un clar lideratge, es capaç de relacionar-se cada vegada més com un tot integrat. Barcelona-municipi és una part concreta d’aquest territori que, a més d’exercir un clar lideratge, és capaç de relacionar-se cada vegada més eficientment amb un entorn més ampli. Això genera un procés d’especialització de l’espai fins a punts mai experimentats i que poden afectar el paper i el caràcter de l’àrea central metropolitana.

Barcelona constitueix un teixit particularment ric en components i equilibris que la fan especialment diferent d’altres ciutats. Aquest teixit que ha estat al llarg del temps capaç d’integrar una gran amplitud d’activitats urbanes, té ara una forta competència del territori molt més ampli del seu entorn. El que passa fora de la ciutat ja no té el caràcter perifèric, d’expulsió, que havia tingut tradicionalment, sinó que està en condicions de competir amb el que passa al seu interior. Aquest és un canvi històric, sobre tot pel que fa a la consideració dels teixits centrals de la ciutat, aquells que han arribat a una certa sobremadarçadura, i pel que fa a les polítiques urbanístiques envers aquests teixits.

**Eduard Bru** Suposo que estem donant voltes sobre si realment és l’existència d’una gran i forta realitat metropolitana el que ens ha de preocupar d’una manera forçosament prioritària, o bé hem d’optar per la diversitat de multiples centres vius ben connectats. Sense anar en contra del futur de les diverses ciutats mitjanes de Catalunya, crec que el fet de l’existència d’una realitat com Barcelona és un fet excepcional. El que Barcelona ofereix ja ho estan oferint altres ciutats, però em sembla que una estructura que mou quatre milions de persones presenta -a priori- unes avantatges que cal considerar: una concentració i interacció d’una quantitat enorme de persones, que és, de fet, el que ha catalogat la idea mateixa de ciutat.

Catalunya té unes dimensions que permeten la connexió d’altres realitats amb aquest fenomen particular (sobretot si la xarxa infraestructural funciona i, per tant, preferiria optar per una estructura que permetés aprofitar correctament aquest fet, i no dissoldre’l amb altres.

**J. A. Solans** Voldria fer unes precisions. Ningú no discutirà el paper central dels fonaments del sistema. Però hem de ser conscients del canvis, molt radicals, presents en el seu funcionament, com, per exemple, en termes de mobilitat. Comparant les xifres de mobilitat del 81 amb les del 91, les situacions són d’aquest ordre: el creixement de la dinàmica cap a l’exterior és del deu i el creixement de la dinàmica interior és del quatre. Vol dir que gent de Barcelona
The fact is that we with over phenomenons or quantitative measurements. The city and the territory. are strong enough to give physical form to the opportunities existing there, and the major of physical differential element is the territorial. The debate between centre and periphery, is a problem you don't come across in more or less established, (Sabadell or Mataró). And this to a considerable extent is the dynamic character of the current situation. Dynamic is a rhetorical term, but it's the only word that interests me at the moment. It means that the way of using the different territories varies. Varies a lot. In the central city there's a trend towards overly conservative policies under the weight of image, history and so on. By contrast, while open territory offers a vast number of new possibilities, there's an absolute dearth of models, of physical models, which is the only image to which I dare refer without considering, as I said, structural phenomena or quantitative measurements.

The fact is that the physical forms through which use is made of the Catalan territory don't honour the opportunities existing there, and the major differential element is the almost total bewilderment of the authorities, of the developer, of the planner. And this is a problem you don't come across in other countries (although evidently they have their own limitations). There are patterns which, while more or less established, more or less successful, are strong enough to give physical form to the territory. The debate between centre and periphery, between centralisation and decentralisation, doesn't strike me as a priority since the fundamental difficulties don't lie in the field of the structure of the city but in the physical forms that transform the city and the territory.

0. NEL-ŁO Even so, there's a clear relationship between structural dynamics and physical forms. For instance, let's take the question of population. We all know that the population of Barcelona is falling: A great fuss has been made about this leading at times even to a bit of demagogy. The fact is that all the cities in the metropolitan area with over 100,000 inhabitants are either losing population (for example, L'Hospitalet or Santa Coloma) or have stagnated (Sabadell or Mataró). On the other hand, the towns and cities undergoing the greatest growth in both relative and absolute
terms are the smallest (Bigues, Riells, Llinars, Alella and so on). Often we’ve led to believe that these movements are linked to architectural and territorial forms: the demand for new kinds of housing and for a less urbanised way of life, etc. The fact is, though, that when we carry out studies to discover who makes these moves and why, the conclusions are very clear: mostly the population sector between 18 and 35, in the middle-income bracket and with an average educational level, who can’t afford to live as they want in their city of origin.

J.A. SOLANS Regarding the question of the built-up area, in the last 10 years this has grown (in the large central system of Catalonia) by some 1,400 hectares. Of these, around 500 belong to housing and, consequently, if we bear in mind the dimensions of Cerdá’s Example, these 500 hectares would correspond to the area bordered by Avinguda Carles I, Carrer Tarragona, the Gran Via and Diagonal (Cerdá’s Exemple has a total area of 900 hectares). From the dimensional point of view, therefore, this phenomenon is of crucial importance. I should like to make an observation on the comments which have been made here about the lack of structuring of this built-up area. Many of the new development operations are conceived as a restructuring of a highly deficient and critical inherited periphery, and this dramatic legacy tends to cover up the restructuring operations on which most emphasis has been laid. Therefore highly important, crucial restructuring phenomena exist which represent new standards from which to provide housing, premises for economic activities and so on. Another question is the adaptation of existing urban tissues. The dimensions required by new economic activities and the way they’re located on the territory place historical tissues in a very unfavourable position vis-à-vis these new dynamics. Consequently, major phenomena of structural devaluation are produced so that they can enter the market and therefore become competitive again when the increase in the artificial value of the centre causes its own blockage. We have to intervene to prevent this devaluation from being so rapid that subsequent recovery becomes an uphill climb. This “central” periphery can’t be created out of unadapted tissues. I’d like to take advantage of this moment in the debate to talk about the subject of housing. The modifications which are being made to the territory have led also to profound changes in the land market and, by extension, in former values of centrality and in the value of those areas located around central nuclei. A process under pressure from the re-implantation of tertiary activities as well as by the sharp drop in the housing land market, above all in the central areas.

M. DE SOLÀ-MORALES I get the impression that most of us here have much the same idea of what’s happening. Except that we express it with different words and emphases. If we talk about housing, we recall all those towns of Catalonia with built-up peripheries, new areas of growth unconnected but not very far from the centre. Operations which almost imitate “tourist developments”, possibly a bit more carefully laid out, with more flower beds and a swimming pool. Has this got anything to do with housing structure? I think it has more to do with a set of pseudo-models conceived “in a rush” with which part of our land has been transformed. In other words, I should like to defend the importance of urban (not building) typologies. To observe the issue of housing through form, not in the sense of aesthetic tastes or of figurative form, but of the search for more modern, less boxlike, models of function. I’m not in a position to judge all operations, but in general I think that we should have been more capable of establishing a stronger relationship between the inner growth of the support nucleus and a broader, more ambitious territorial function. The kinds of solutions applied so far are generally sorted and somewhat outdated, població (com L’Hospitalet o Santa Coloma), o bé estan estancades (com Sabadell o Matarrà). En canvi, els municipis que creixen amb més força en termes relativus —i, si els agreuem, també en termes absoluts— són els més petits (els Bigues i Riells, els Llinars, els Alella, per entendre’ns). Sovint, se’ns han presentat aquests moviments com lligats a les formes arquitectòniques i territorials: la demanda de nous tipologies d’habitatges, la recerca de modes de vida menys urbans, etc. En realitat, quan fem estudis per esbrinar qui són els que marxen i perquè ho fan, les conclusions són ben clares: es tracta, en la major part, de població de 18 a 35 anys, amb nivells d’ingressos i estudis mitjans, que no pot satisfeix la seva demanda d’habitatge en el municipi d’origen.

J.A. SOLANS Sobre la qüestió de la taca construïda, aquesta ha crescut en els últims 10 anys (dintre del gran sistema central de Catalunya) de l’ordre d’unes 1.400 Ha. D’aquestes, unes 500 Ha pertanyen a habitatges i, per tant, si tenim presents les dimensions de l’Exemple de Cerdà, aquestes 500 Ha són les que hi hauria entre el carrer Marina i el carrer Tarragona i entre la Gran Via i la Diagonal (L’exemple en té en total 900). Per tant, des del punt de vista de la dimensió, aquest fet és molt important. Cal realitzar una observació sobre els comentaris que s’han fet que aquesta taca no està estructurada. Moltes d’aquestes noves operacions es plantege com una reestructuració d’una periferia heretada molt deficitària i crítica, i aquesta herència dràmàtica taca les actuacions de reestructuració en les quals s’han posat molts els antics. Existeixen, doncs, uns fenòmens de reestructuració molt importants, fonamentals, que representen uns nous estàndards per offerir habitatge, localització d’activitat econòmica, etc. L’altra qüestió és l’adaptació dels teixits existents. Les dimensions que demanen les noves activitats econòmiques, la forma d’ubicar-se en el territori, fan que els teixits històrics tinguin una posició molt desfavorable per competir amb aquestes dinàmiques; en conseqüència, es produeixen fenómens estructurals importants de desvalorització per tal que puguin entrar en el mercat i, per tant, tornar a ser competitius quan l’augment de valor artificiós de centre està provocant el seu propi bloqueig. Cal intervenir perquè no es produeixi una desvalorització massa accelerada que faci després molt més costosa la seva recuperació. No es pot produir aquesta periferia “central” dels teixits inadaptats. M’agradaria aprofitar aquest moment del debat per abordar el tema de l’habitabte. Les modificacions que s’estan produint sobre el territori han suposat també unes modificacions profundes en el mercat del sòl i, per tant, dels antics valors de centralitat i dels valors d’aquestes àrees ubicades a l’entorn dels nuclis centrals. Un procés molt pressionat per la reimplantació d’activitats terciàries i també per la profunda davallada del mercat de sòl residencial, sobretot en les àrees centrals.

M. DE SOLÀ-MORALES Tinc la sensació que la majoria de les persones que estem aquí tenen una idea bastant semblant del que està passant. L’únic que l’expressem amb paraules i accents diferents. Si parlem de l’habitabte, ens venen al cap tot aquests pobles de Catalunya amb voltants edificats, nous creixements desvinduclats, però no gaire lliny del centre. Una operació quasi d’imitació dels “desarrollos turísticos”, potser una mica més acurats, amb més flioret i piscina. Té aixo res a veure amb l’estructura de l’habitabte? Més aviat amb uns pseudomodels pensats a correccuta amb els quals s’ha transformat una part del nostre sòl. Amb altres paraules: m’agradaria defensar l’importància de les tipologies urbanes (no de les tipologies edificatòries). Observar el tema de l’habitabte a través de la forma, no en el sentit de gust estètic ni de forma figurativa, sinó de la
in short, rather insensitive to the phenomena which produce them. Residential developments generated today could enjoy marvellous freedom because there's great mobility, a cultural domestication of the territory, optical fibre, the fax and the motorway. Nonetheless, what appear are limited developments, and architects are among the major culprits for this situation because they don't look beyond these limitations.

J.A. SOLANS

There's been a radical change on the housing market: The cost of developable land (in gross terms) has dropped considerably. At moments when strict control has been exercised over complete developments per sector (and therefore the cost charged to those responsible for the development), developers and the authorities have automatically applied the residual cost, so that when financial costs are very high, this residual cost has tended to keep land costs within standardised limits. An attempt has therefore been made to prevent the same price rises here that have taken place in other parts of the process linked to the construction sector. While here we find land priced at between 45 and 90 pesetas per spa, in Madrid, for example, it never drops below between 3,600 to 7,000 ptas/m², even undefined land. In this sense, the issue of land yield is fundamental when it comes to deciding on the most operational types of intervention, which are genuinely possible, as well as determining the degree of formation of the new city.

E. BRU

The impression some of us get is that the present situation is very open. It's possible to plan housing types which don't have to be always based on the same stereotypes, to establish very different relationships with the site and not always fall back on the same more or less widespread design clichés. Rarely has the cultural and material situation been so open, and yet rarely has the repertoire of solutions we architects—and now Incasol or recent developments promoted by the Metropolitan Area—offered been so closed. There was for greater innovation (in terms of the design of new types of homes) in part of the housing architecture produced in the impoverished Barcelona of the fifties than now. It seems that we've discovered a kind of " prêt-à-porter " when it comes to defining lifestyles and we have to do absolutely everything in exactly the same way. If, for instance, we glance through the publications of the Institut Català del Sòl (Catalan Land Institute), we see that the relationship between building types is always the same: the hexahedron, the semicircle as the public space which "articulates" and relates to the historical core and a type of housing which are repeated on the pretext of durability. I'm not suggesting we should enter into a phase of permanent experimentation, but perhaps we should set our sights higher given the perceptive which are apparently opening out to us.

R. PIE

Quan canviem d'escala, com estem fent ara, i passem d'un àmbit metropolità a un àmbit d'escala menor, es posa en evidència la manca de models de referència. Seguim utilitzant uns esquemes deficients, uns models caducs que no permeten entendre eficacisament els processos en curs. El problema és que, a més d'aquesta falta de comprensió, hi ha una falta de projecte. Un projecte no únic, no general (que potser seria molt difícil de definir) però sí capaç de construir el conjunt.

La projectació des de les parts, que es va legitimar en el discurs arquitectònic dels vuitanta, s'ha traslladat a tot arreu legitimant la projectació del fragment, desen SENTENENT-
and with it the ability to conceive projects in the form of overall plans.

J. ESTEBAN Unless we’re to understand them as criticisms of the Institut Català del Sòl, these observations on the typological problems of growth are merely a lament, because what we do normally is what the demand requires of us. It’s no coincidence that the best recent examples of projects you’ve mentioned in keeping with modernity are urban public works. Private development, whether inside or outside the city, tends to be conventional, because developers are normally reluctant to put their investments at risk. This is a cultural problem in our society, and I don’t think that the simple claim for a more avant-garde or innovative discourse will take us very far. It strikes me that the problem of housing location is a far more substantial one than its typology, which is a problem far from being solved especially in areas such as ours where residual options go far beyond the limits of municipal ambit. Housing land policies are devised from municipal viewpoints; but these policies have never been explicit enough in terms of territorial articulation. Where must the housing demand go that is generated in L’Hospitalet or Santa Coloma de Gramanet? The most desirable policy would obviously be to "repopulate" the urban tissues of these cities with young residents, and this objective should form part of the policies to be followed in these urban areas. But while this is insufficient, ways must be found to satisfy the demand and to find sites for housing growth. To what extent? And where? I think this is one of the few important issues that the Metropolitan Territorial Plan should tackle, but something tells me it won’t, because politically speaking this is a complicated problem. It’s very true — and J.A. Solans has often pointed this out — that towns and cities are reluctant to grow, unless this growth is restricted to holiday homes, which interest the local construction business. An increase in the number of permanent homes is undesirable, and unfortunately, this is a widespread view, because it generates more necessities, more costs and the need for more services.

J.A. ACEBILLO Frankly, I believe that the Catalan territory is being developed in a perfectly predictable way, on the basis of these which have nothing to do either with models or with typologies, but with ideological questions in the strictest sense of the term. All the rest tends to be incidental. Questions of quality are sometimes examined, but most decision-making in this field tends to be too complicated. Decisions are made on the basis of office logic and pragmatic mentalities with the intention of “getting things done”, and architecture becomes a simple subsequent figuration, a question of cosmetics.

E. BRU The extraordinary thing is that models are produced through economics, to the extent that form is justified on the basis of the usual 13.5% profitability.

J.M. VILANOVA At this point in the debate, I’d like to introduce a number of questions concerning territorial planning in this country. Territorial development has hitherto been entrusted almost exclusively to those responsible for planning on a local scale, complemented with sectorial infrastructure plans or natural space preservation schemes. The evolution of this local planning is becoming increasingly influenced by what we call “strategic planning”, in which the aim is to include economic and social agents in the debate on city options as well as the sectors traditionally involved in urban planning (landowners, developers and so on). In many cases, these processes also have to do with the need to resistuate oneself in relation to the territorial dynamics we’ve been discussing so far and which take place in the mid-sized cities of the “system of Catalan cities”. In this sense, one of the criticisms which has been levelled at the General
Territorial Plan is precisely the lack of "strategic" formulations and formulations of delimiting "sensitive" spaces in the transformation of our territory.

In the more specifically disciplinary field, often we observe too great a distance between the concepts and contents of programmes of an emblematic character and the projects which develop them by arranging functional elements and giving form to interventions through the infrastructures and architects that give them concrete form on the territory.

R. PIE In this country, what's traditionally understood as territorial planning is still very much linked to the local scale, a scale in which there are other interests at play over and above those of strict territorial coherence. This phenomenon and the fact that planning on a territorial scale hasn't yet been formulated as a strategic plan, focusing exclusively on key aspects for the country's wellbeing in this sense because it has opted for schematic and overly comprehensive projects which by wanting to say everything actually say nothing, have resulted in a trend to discredit territorial planning. The divorce between this planning and projects derives from a falsely "scalar" view of the problem, from the supposed need to approach it through a progressive sequence of focuses. This attitude has converted territorial plans into something not even worth the paper they're printed on, into purely generic proposals, because it has proven impossible or no attempt has been made to pinpoint the major problems, the key spaces, the areas with most potential opportunities and to decide which strategic projects to develop in order to finally define options on the basis of multi-scale proposals which encompass concepts ranging from the overall territorial plan down to constructional details.

J. A. ACEBILLO In a society in which economy is so decisive, there can't be much interest in determining when it comes to land use. While it isn't my intention to make value judgments on the urbanistic level, we must understand that political decisions are basically of management. If a mayor manages to secure an important industrial plant for his town, appropriate urbanistic adaptation becomes a major problem.

The people in charge of local corporations here in Catalonia, except when these corporations are very small, have absolutely no influence on urbanistic issues. The only option therefore open to these politicians is to try to implement a strategic plan, for which they means a plan in which they'd like to see specific uses consolidated in a number of different situations (theme parks, industrial parks, etc.). This is what we mean today by a strategic plan and, in the absence of other mechanisms, it generates interactions and consensus among a variety of not necessarily political social forces.

J. ESTEBAN It's precisely up to the Territorial Plan to take the relatively small number of strategic decisions relating to the territory: decisions regarding water, energy resources, port models and so on, which though by no means strictly disciplinary issues are the responsibility of the Territorial Plan. If the Territorial Plan doesn't lead the way in these questions, what plan will? It might overlook other issues, such as regulating facilities in municipal unit or fixing the population in functional areas, but it seems that the plan we have now is neither strategic nor territorial.

E. BRU Things have always been more or less like this; planning in which there's a divorce between strategy and physical determination. And the issue is becoming increasingly complex. Consequently, perhaps more now than ever before action — the project — means the capacity to give concrete form to a situation. The situation is created by fragments of a kind of cascade of plans and movements ranging from the particular and the local to the
de restituir-se en relació amb les dinàmiques territorials que fins ara hem estat debatent per part d'aquestes citats mitjanes del "sistema de ciutats català". En aquest sentit, una de les crítiques que s'han fet al Pla Territorial General ha estat precisament la manca de formulacions "estratégiques" i de delimitació d'espais "s sensibles" en les transformacions del nostre territori.

En un àmbit més disciplinari, massa sovint constatem una excessiva distància entre les determinacions i continguts generals en actuacions de caràcter emblemàtic, i els projectes que les desenvolupen organitzant els elements funcionals i donant forma a les intervencions, gràcies a les infraestructures i les arquitectures que les concreten sobre el territori.

R. PIE En aquest país el que s'entén tradicionalment com a ordenació del territori està encara molt lliurat a l'escala local. Una escala en la qual hi ha altres interessos per davant dels d'estricta coherència territorial. Aquest fet i el fet que el planejament d'escala territorial no ha sabut formular-se com un pla estratègic, centrat exclusivament en aquests aspectes que són claus pel país, perquè ha recorregut a propostes esquemàtiques i omnipròximes que, per voler dir-ho tot, no diuen res, ha portat al desprestigi del planejament territorial. El divorci entre aquest i el projecte prové d'aquesta visió falsament escalar del problema, de la suposada necessitat d'aprofundir-se amb una successió progressiva d'enfocaments.

Aquesta actitud ha convertit els plans territorials en paper maltat, en un enunciat genèric, perquè no han volgut o no han sabut triar quins són els problemes més importants, quins són els espais claus, on són les àrees d'ocupació i quins són els projectes estratègics que cal desenvolupar per, finalment, amb aquestes propostes multiscalears, des de l'esquema territorial fins gairebé el detall construït, definir les seves opcions.

J. A. ACEBILLO En una societat en què l'economia és tan decisiva no interessa gaire el determinisme de l'ús del sòl. No vull fer judícis de valor en el camp de l'urbanisme, però hem de comprendre que les decisions polítiques són bàsicament de gestió. Si un alcalde aconsegueix que una gran indústria s'instal·li en un poble, la qualificació urbanística es torna un problema important. Els responsables polítics de les corporacions locals aquí a Catalunya no tenen cap tipus d'intervenció en matèria urbanística, excepte en sistemes locals molt petits. A aquests politics no els queda més reneix que intentar impulsar un pla estratègic, que per a ells vol dir el pla en què s'aclariria que determinats usos es consolidessin sota diverses situacions (parcs temàtics, parcs industrials, etc). Això és el que avui es denomina un pla estratègic. En absència d'altres mecanismes, provoca interaccions i consens entre forces socials diverses, no necessàriament polítiques.

J. ESTEBAN El Pla Territorial hauria de prendre precisament les relativament escasses decisions estratègiques en el territori. Posseren estat molts allunyats dels problemes estratèmicament disciplinats, però són les que pertquen al Pla Territorial, decisions respecte de l'aire, els recursos energètics, el model portuari... Si tot això no ho estableix el Pla Territorial, quin pla ho dirà? Podria prescindir de moltes altres coses, com per exemple regular els equipaments en les units municipals o fixar la població en les àrees funcionals, però sembla que la figura que tenim ara no és ni exactament estratègica ni exactament territorial.

E. BRU Sempre ha estat aproximadament així; el planejament distant entre l'estratègia i la determinació física. I és cada cop més complex. Per això ara, potser més que mai, l'acció — el projecte — és la capacitat de fer cristal·litzar en forma concreta una situació. La situació està formada per fragments d'aquesta mena de cascada de planejaments i moviments que venen des del particular i el local al més
The ability to convert planning decisions into a project is essential, and the skill of architects, of urban planners and of engineers has become more essential than ever. In a universe without models, each project is an exercise in intelligence and strategy. The means should be generated by which we can grasp latent forces and transform them into projects. Incidentally, in Catalonia, Barcelona included, it’s becoming more and more difficult to secure the means to maintain works or monitor their evolution.

M. DE SOLA-MORALES I disagree with Eduard’s view. The architect must work with models. He can’t be an empiricist pure and simple, he can’t function merely on the basis of providing concrete responses, above all in the case of problems of this order. I can’t agree with this strange panorama with its hotchpotch of insinuations, tensions and semi-plans in which a “synthesizer” comes to put things in order in the form of a “project”. Every day there’s more evidence to show that things can’t go on like this. Because when architects synthesise, they do so with false, mistaken and coarse means.

To sum up today’s discussion, let me say that the territorial problem in Catalonia doesn’t lie in Barcelona but in all the rest, due to highly incompetent management, the product not of economic inefficiency but of an absolute dearth of ideas. The architect copies, learns and improves, but he never creates. There’s no architecture without ideas, and ideas on the territory have never existed here. When J.A. Solans says that Catalonia has grown as much as the Eixample, where is this Eixample of Catalonia? Obviously, I don’t mean that Catalonia should have been parcelled out in the form of a “gridiron”, but there should have been ideas, principles. If no efforts are made to conceive a model, then responses come to depend too much on the circumstances of the moment. There’s only one way to overcome small-scale changes of fortune and that is by having a clear idea that anticipates them, an idea that acts as a driving force.

O. NELLO I thoroughly share this concern with plans which only too often are operations of empiricism, of justifying decisions already taken and of ideologically covering up interventions whose aims are actually quite different. I also share the idea of the need for plans as a vehicle for collective reflection, as city or country projects. Even so, the problem is: On what scale and with the participation of what agents should these plans be devised?

And this leads to the burning question of the administrative map: The one we have at present doesn’t respond to current territorial dynamics in terms either of delimitations, or of administrative levels, or of sharing out of jurisdictions. And this means that in most of Catalonia the problems involved in efficient territorial planning are not only disciplinary or conceptual but directly political and administrative.

I believe that only by including these elements in the picture can we attempt to make the assessment of territorial planning which the moderator requested at the beginning of the debate.
Barcelona, 1995
Jordi Bernadó
Santa Perpètua de la Mogoda, 1995
Jordi Bernadó