Barcelona

From tourist to knowledge resort?

After the regeneration processes that culminated in the 1992 Olympic Games, Barcelona has become renowned internationally for its model of post-industrial urban restructuring. Indeed, the ‘Barcelona Model’ is often held to be exemplary in repositioning the city in the global economy and balancing the economic outputs with social and cultural cohesion goals. However, the results were mixed.

Economically, the Olympics represented a big branding boost, transformed the city into a top touristic destination and consolidated Barcelona as an entrepreneurial city. It is now considered the 4th best European city for business by Cushman Wakefield. The is sustained by decaying mature manufacturing industries (automotive, textile, pharmaceutical, agro-food), retail, education, and increasingly by the expansion of the tourist industry. Once the economic and cultural capital of Spain, Barcelona has been seriously affected by the rise of Madrid as a global financial, service and cultural centre for the Spanish speaking world.

Socially, it is true that during the Olympic regeneration increased private space and social infrastructure was built. Yet, gentrification and the cost of living in the city increased substantially, meaning worst living conditions for the working class in the city and the expulsion and sprawling of middle classes out of town.

Culturally, Barcelona is now a cosmopolitan city with 16.9% of foreign residents in 2008 (1.9% in 1996), and the cultural offer is wide and varied, with a relatively big public spending on cultural infrastructure and events. Yet, the effort to become a creative city has gone in hand with the systematic pressure on resistance and collective action.

To overcome these challenges, Barcelona’s aim is to convert the city into a knowledge city supporting ICT, biotech, design, energy, media and aeronautics industries growth. The three main characteristics of this shift are:

A metropolitan scope: based on public-private partnerships involving local authorities, quangos and “civil society” (business associations, trade unions, saving banks, etc).

A cluster-based district zoning: the crown jewel being the regeneration of the former manufacturing neighbourhood, Poblenou, into the high-tech district 22@.

A focus on talent: putting the accent in the attraction and retention of foreign creative talent by advertising the city as a mix of business/entrepreneurship oriented and a cultural/quality of life place to be, as the ultimate knowledge resort.

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Since the restoration of democracy in Spain, Barcelona city council has been led by centre-left coalitions as have been all but one of the metropolitan city councils and, since 2003, the regional government. On the other hand, the strength of urban movements is much lower than during the 1970s francist resistance, when they achieved important victories. In this sense, the last time when there was a unifying cause of resistance in the city was with the celebration of the Forum of Cultures 2004, a failed event but successful in redenveloping the northern waterfront, breaking the Metropolitan General Plan in favour of Poblenou, into the high-tech district 22@.
of the knowledge-based economy. If there is a place within the metropolitan area that epitomises this shift, this is Poblenou, a whole neighborhood that has been transformed into a competitive node and higher education zoning.

Description / Reason for this choice / Background

Since the late 1970s, and partly as a result of the PERIs, a process of gentrification is going on in some parts of the district while others remain underdeveloped or decaying. The city council aimed to keep an event-led regeneration for the northern waterfront.

Context

The Universal Forum of Cultures 2004 was an event intended to promote the global consciousness and the exchange of theories, opinions, experiences and feelings. The forum was divided into four different events, each one of them consisting of various activities such as conferences, conferences and shows. The forum took place in the city of Barcelona during the year 2004.

Impact/Resistances

Significance for New Metropolitan Mainstream

The project of Platja d’Aro is an example of an international event that led to a new project. The city council of Platja d’Aro, after the local elections, decided to develop a new beach in the area. The project was financed by the local government, and the professional sector was involved in the planning of the beach and the development of the area. The new beach was opened to the public in 2005.

Significance for New Metropolitan Mainstream

The project of the Hotel Barcelona is an example of a new project that was developed by the city council. The hotel was built on the site of an old market, and the professional sector was involved in the planning of the hotel. The hotel was opened to the public in 2006.

Significance for New Metropolitan Mainstream

The project of the Hospital of Sant Llorenç is an example of a new project that was developed by the city council. The hospital was built on the site of an old market, and the professional sector was involved in the planning of the hospital. The hospital was opened to the public in 2007.

Synthesis:

From 1980s to early 1990s, Barcelona has built a regeneration model that has been successful in combining the local and the global. This model is based on the idea of the knowledge-based economy, which has been further developed in the last decade. The model is based on the idea of the knowledge-based economy, which has been further developed in the last decade. The model is based on the idea of the knowledge-based economy, which has been further developed in the last decade.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that the three main projects described here have been described in economic times, and particularly in this moment when the Spanish economy was hit by a series of economic events. The projects described here are examples of successful projects that have been developed in the last decade. The projects described here are examples of successful projects that have been developed in the last decade. The projects described here are examples of successful projects that have been developed in the last decade.