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Universidad del País Vasco Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea

**UNIVERSIDAD DEL PAÍS VASCO-EUSKAL HERRIKO UNIBERTSITATEA**

FACULTAD DE ECONOMÍA Y EMPRESA

Reinventar la ciudad.  
Milagros y espejismos de la regeneración urbana en Bilbao.

## **TESIS DOCTORAL**

ARANTXA RODRÍGUEZ ÁLVAREZ

2019



DEPARTAMENTO DE ECONOMÍA APLICADA V  
FACULTAD DE ECONOMÍA Y EMPRESA

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## RESUMEN

En las cuatro últimas décadas, las aglomeraciones urbanas han sido el escenario privilegiado de cambios económicos, sociales y políticos de gran alcance. Estos cambios tienen su origen en la crisis del Fordismo y en los procesos de reestructuración y globalización económica que, desde mediados de la década de los 70, transformaron radicalmente el contexto para el desarrollo urbano y el papel de las ciudades en la economía globalizada. En las metrópolis de todo el mundo, pero especialmente en los países más industrializados, los desafíos planteados por estos procesos forzaron una redefinición de los problemas urbanos y, consecuentemente, de las prioridades, objetivos, instrumentos e instituciones de intervención en la ciudad. La agenda política urbana, centrada durante décadas en la ordenación del crecimiento y el control de las externalidades negativas provocadas por la expansión urbana, se realineó entonces con los objetivos de la reestructuración competitiva global incorporando actuaciones dirigidas a compensar los efectos de la crisis, promover el desarrollo de nuevas actividades y funcionalidades, y mejorar la atractividad de la ciudad. En este marco, la reconversión de grandes vacíos físicos y funcionales liberados por la crisis se interpreta como una oportunidad para reinventar la ciudad, convirtiendo la regeneración urbana en uno de los ejes estratégicos de la intervención pública y principal respuesta política a los nuevos problemas urbanos. Pero, en una coyuntura marcada por la ofensiva neoliberal y el retorno del Mercado, el realineamiento productivista de la agenda política urbana ha transformado las grandes operaciones de regeneración no sólo en el objeto principal de intervención pública en la ciudad sino en el instrumento clave de la recomposición del urbanismo regulador Fordista-Keynesiano y punta de lanza de las “Nuevas Políticas Urbanas”.

La investigación que aquí se presenta tiene como objetivo mostrar cómo las estrategias de regeneración/revitalización urbana (re)emergen en las últimas cuatro décadas, en paralelo a las tendencias apuntadas, convertidas en el principal vector de intervención en la ciudad y de la refundación de la política urbana y núcleo duro de la reurbanización neoliberal (neoliberalización de la ciudad). El análisis se apoya en una

extensa investigación comparativa sobre las estrategias de regeneración urbana impulsadas en 13 ciudades europeas desde la década de los 80. Los casos estudiados revelan con claridad meridiana la progresiva consolidación de un nuevo paradigma de intervención en la ciudad a partir de innovaciones substantivas en la formulación, instrumentación y gestión de la política urbana; un paradigma que, en un marco de restitución de la centralidad del Mercado, se articula en torno a tres tendencias interdependientes de cambio: a) el desplazamiento de las prioridades de la agenda política urbana hacia el crecimiento y la reestructuración competitiva, b) la reorientación del enfoque predominantemente gestor y regulador hacia un enfoque proactivo y empresarial basado en la introducción de criterios de rentabilidad económica y eficiencia en la gestión y desarrollo de las operaciones y actuaciones urbanas y, c) la innovación en la instrumentación fundamentada en nuevas arquitecturas institucionales y un modelo de urbanismo negociado, de la concertación, como fundamento de la nueva gobernanza urbana. El elemento vertebrador del nuevo paradigma son los Grandes Proyectos (de regeneración/revitalización) Urbanos (GPUs), expresión material de una lógica desarrollista renovada y vanguardia de un modelo de gobernanza proactiva, estratégica y empresarial característica de las Nuevas Políticas Urbanas. Los GPUs de este periodo desenfocan la atención de las políticas de regeneración más allá de las actuaciones tradicionales sobre espacios vulnerables o degradados –típicamente, centros históricos o complejos residenciales en las periferias urbanas– y lo redirigen hacia los vacíos físicos y funcionales de la ciudad consolidada para su (re)conversión en áreas de nueva centralidad sobre las que impulsar un nuevo ciclo/modelo de desarrollo urbano, reflejando el carácter estratégico de estas operaciones y su papel cardinal como motores incontestables de la reestructuración de la ciudad contemporánea.

El análisis detallado de estas tendencias se desarrolla tomando como ejemplo paradigmático el caso de Bilbao y, específicamente, el proyecto de regeneración de Abandoibarra, un enclave industrial y portuario situado en el corazón residencial y terciario de la ciudad, que se pone en marcha a principios de los años 1990. Buque insignia de la revitalización urbana de Bilbao, Abandoibarra es el proyecto que ha catapultado la ciudad a nivel internacional como un éxito rotundo, ejemplo y modelo

de referencia para futuras intervenciones. El intento (fallido) de reconversión de esta antigua zona portuaria e industrial en un nuevo centro direccional inaugura una nueva etapa en la política urbanística de la ciudad marcada por los objetivos de la revitalización a partir de la recuperación y puesta en valor de suelos de “oportunidad”, liberados por la crisis y el declive industrial. En la estela de las intervenciones emblemáticas en áreas portuarias-industriales en frentes fluviales y marítimos desarrollados por ciudades de todo el mundo en las últimas cuatro décadas, Abandoibarra sintetiza el denominado “efecto Bilbao” y muestra las potencialidades y también los riesgos de las Nuevas Políticas Urbanas. Porque, más allá de los autoproclamados éxitos del modelo Bilbao, el fracaso de la estrategia direccional de Abandoibarra revela también los límites de un modelo de regeneración cautivo de las exigencias de viabilidad financiera y maximización de plusvalías de corto plazo que supedita –y acaba por anular– el potencial estratégico del proyecto (la creación de áreas de nueva centralidad para la nueva economía) a la revalorización urbanística especulativa (la creación de nuevos espacios residenciales para viejas y nuevas élites urbanas: la gentrificación). En este sentido, el análisis de Abandoibarra ofrece algunas lecciones transcendentales sobre las paradojas de la regeneración neoliberal.

## **ABSTRACT**

In the last four decades, urban agglomerations have been the privileged setting for far-reaching economic, social and political changes. These changes have their origin in the Fordist crisis and in the processes of restructuring and economic globalization that, since the mid-1970s, radically transformed the context for urban development and the role of cities in the globalized economy. In metropolises all over the world, but especially in the most industrialised countries, the challenges posed by these processes forced a redefinition of urban problems and, consequently, of the priorities, objectives, instruments and institutions of intervention in the city. The urban policy agenda, which for decades focused on managing growth and controlling the negative externalities caused by urban expansion, was then realigned with the objectives of global competitive restructuring, incorporating actions aimed at compensating for the effects of the crisis, promoting the development of new activities and functionalities, and improving the city's attractiveness. Within this framework, the reconversion of large physical and functional gaps released by the crisis is interpreted as an opportunity to reinvent the city, making urban regeneration one of the strategic axes of public intervention and the main political response to new urban problems. But, in a situation marked by the neoliberal offensive and the return of the market, the productivist realignment of the urban policy agenda has transformed the large regeneration operations not only into the main object of public intervention in the city but also into the key instrument of the recomposition of Fordist-Keynesian regulatory urbanism and the spearhead of the "New Urban Policies".

The research presented here aims to show how urban regeneration/revitalisation strategies have (re)emerged in the last four decades, in parallel with the trends outlined above, and have become the main vector for intervention in the city and for the refounding of urban policy and the hard core of neo-liberal redevelopment (neo-liberalisation of the city). The analysis is based on extensive comparative research on the urban regeneration strategies promoted in 13 European cities since the 1980s. The cases studied clearly reveal the progressive consolidation of a new paradigm of intervention in the city based on substantive innovations in the formulation,



instrumentation and management of urban policy; a paradigm that, in a framework of restitution of the centrality of the market, is articulated around three interdependent trends of change: a) the shift in priorities of the urban policy agenda towards growth and competitive restructuring, b) the reorientation of the predominantly managerial and regulatory approach towards a proactive and entrepreneurial approach based on the introduction of criteria of economic profitability and efficiency in the management and development of urban operations and actions and, c) innovation in instrumentation based on new institutional architectures and a negotiated model of urban planning, of consultation, as the basis of the new urban governance. The backbone of the new paradigm is the Major Urban (regeneration/revitalisation) Projects (GPUs), a material expression of a renewed development logic and the vanguard of a proactive, strategic and business governance model characteristic of the New Urban Policies. The GPUs of this period refocus the attention of regeneration policies beyond the traditional actions on vulnerable or degraded spaces -typically, historical centres or residential complexes in the urban peripheries- and redirect it towards the physical and functional voids of the consolidated city for its (re)conversion into areas of new centrality on which to promote a new cycle/model of urban development, reflecting the strategic nature of these operations and their cardinal role as undeniable motors of the restructuring of the contemporary city.

The detailed analysis of these trends is developed taking as a paradigmatic example the case of Bilbao and, specifically, the regeneration project of Abandoibarra, an industrial and port enclave located in the residential and tertiary heart of the city, which was launched in the early 1990s. A flagship of Bilbao's urban revitalisation, Abandoibarra is the project that has catapulted the city to international acclaim as a resounding success, an example and a reference model for future interventions. The (failed) attempt to convert this old port and industrial area into a new management centre opens a new stage in the city's urban planning policy, marked by the objectives of revitalisation based on the recovery and enhancement of land of "opportunity", freed up by the crisis and industrial decline. In the wake of the emblematic interventions in port and industrial areas on river and sea fronts developed by cities all over the world in the last four decades, Abandoibarra synthesises the so-called

"*Bilbao effect*" and shows the potential and also the risks of the New Urban Policies. Because, beyond the self-proclaimed successes of the Bilbao model, the failure of Abandoibarra's directional strategy also reveals the limits of a regeneration model that is captive to the demands of financial viability and maximisation of short-term capital gains, which subordinates - and ends up annulling - the strategic potential of the project (the creation of areas of new centrality for the new economy) to speculative urban revaluation (the creation of new residential spaces for old and new urban elites: gentrification). In this sense, Abandoibarra's analysis offers some transcendental lessons about the paradoxes of neoliberal regeneration.





## LABURPENA

Azken lau hamarkadetan, hiri-aglomerazioak irismen handiko aldaketa ekonomiko, sozial eta politikoen agertoki pribilegiatuak izan dira. Aldaketa horien jatorria Fordismoaren krisia eta berregituratze eta globalizazio ekonomikoaren prozesuak izan dira. Prozesu horiek, 70eko hamarkadaren erdialdetik aurrera, erabat eraldatu zuten hiri-garapenerako testuingurua eta hiriek ekonomia globalizatuan duten eginkizuna. Mundu osoko metropolietan, baina bereziki herrialde industrializatuenetan, prozesu horiek planteatutako erronkek hiri-arazoak birdefinitu behar izan zituzten, eta, ondorioz, baita hirian esku hartzeko lehentasunak, helburuak, tresnak eta erakundeak ere. Hiri-agenda politikoa, hamarkadetan zehar hazkundearen antolamenduan eta hiri-hedapenak eragindako kanpo-efektu negatiboen kontrolean zentratua, lehiaren berregituratze globalaren helburuekin birlerrokatu zen, krisiaren ondorioak konpentsatzera, jarduera eta funtzionalitate berrien garapena sustatzera eta hiriaren erakargarritasuna hobetzera bideratutako jarduerak bultzatuz. Testuinguru horretan, krisiak askatutako hutsune fisiko eta funtzional handien birmoldaketa **hiria berrasmatzeko** aukera gisa interpretatzen da, **hiri-berroneratzea esku-hartze publikoaren ardatz estrategikoetako bat eta hiri-arazo berriei aurre egiteko erantzun politiko nagusia bihurtuz**. Baina, oldarraldi neoliberalak eta merkatuaren itzulerak markatutako testuinguru honetan, hiri-agenda politikoen berpizte produktiboak birsorkuntza-eragiketa handiak eraldatu ditu, hirian esku-hartze publikoa egiteko helburu nagusi bihurtzeaz gain, Fordista-Keynesiano hirigintza arautzailearen berrosaketaren funtsezko tresna eta "**hiri-politika berrien**" lantza-punta bihurtu ditu.

Hemen aurkezten den ikerketaren helburua azken lau hamarkadetan hiria (ber)biziberritzeko estrategiak azalerratu egin direla erakustea da, aipatutako joerekin batera, eta estrategia horiek bihurtu direla hirian esku hartzeko eta hiri-politika birsortzeko **bektore nagusia** eta berrurbanizazio neoliberalaren **nukleo gogorra** (hiriaren neoliberalizazioa). Analisia Europako 13 hiritan 80ko hamarkadatik bultzatutako hiri-berroneratzeko estrategiei buruzko ikerketa konparatibo zabal batean oinarritzen da. Aztertutako kasuek argi eta garbi erakusten dute **hirian esku hartzeko**

**paradigma berri bat sendotzen ari dela**, hiri-politikaren formulazioan, instrumentazioan eta kudeaketan funtsezkoak diren berrikuntzetatik abiatuta; paradigma hori, merkatuaren logikaren zentralitatea lehengoratzeko esparruan, hiru aldaketa-joera interdependenten inguruan egituratzen da: a) hiri-agenda politikoaren lehenetsunak hazkundera eta lehia-berregituraketara lekualdatzea, b) Nagusiki kudeatzailea eta erregulatzaileraren ikuspegia ikuspegi proaktibo eta enpresarialera birbideratzea, errentagarritasun ekonomikoko eta efizientziako irizpideak sartzean oinarrituta hiri-eragiketa eta -jarduketan kudeaketan eta garapenean, eta, c) berrikuntza arkitektura instituzional berrietan eta itunaren hirigintza-eredu negoziatu batean oinarritutako instrumentazioan, gobernantza berriaren oinarri gisa. Paradigma berriaren elementu egituratzailea birsortzeko **Hiriko Proiektu Handiak** dira, Hiri Politika Berrien bereizgarri den gobernantza proaktibo, estrategiko eta enpresarialaren eredu baten logika garatu berrituaren eta abangoardiakoaren adierazpen materiala. Aldi honetako Hiriko Proiektu Handiek desenfokatu egiten dute berroneratze-politiken arreta, espazio kalteberei edo degradatuei buruzko ohiko jarduketetatik harago – normalean, hiriguneetako gune historikoak edo hiri-periferian dauden bizitegiak –, eta finkatutako hiriko hutsune fisiko eta funtzionalak bideratzen dute, zentralitate berriko eremu bihurtzeko, eta horietan hiri-garapeneko ziklo/eredu berri bat bultzatzeko, eragiketa horien eta haien eginkizunaren izaera estrategikoa islatuz.

Joera horien azterketa zehatza egiteko, adibide paradigmatico gisa hartu da Bilboko kasua, eta, zehazki, Abandoibarra berroneratze proiektua, 1990eko hamarkadaren hasieran abian jarri zena. Abandoibarra industria- eta portu-enklabea da, eta hiriaren bizitegi eta zerbitzuen bihotzean kokatua dago. Bilboko hiri-berroneratzearen ikur den ontzia, Abandoibarra, hiria nazioartean arrakasta biribil gisa katapultatu duen proiektua da, etorkizuneko esku-hartzeetarako eredu eta erreferentzia-eredua. Portu- eta industria-gune zahar hori norabide-gune berri bihurtzeko saiakera horrek etapa berri bat ireki zuen hiriaren hirigintza-politikan. Etapa berri hori biziberritzearen helburuek markatu zuten, krisiak eta industriaren gainbeherak askatutako "aukera-lurzoruak" berreskuratu eta balioan jarri ondoren. Azken lau hamarkadetan mundu osoko hiriek ibai- eta itsas frontean portu-

industrialdeetako esku-hartze enblematikoen ildoan, Abandoibarrak "**Bilbo efektua**" deiturikoa laburbiltzen du eta Hiri Politika Berrien potentzialtasunak eta arriskuak erakusten ditu. Izan ere, Bilbo ereduaren arrakastaz gain, Abandoibarrako norabide-estrategiaren porrotak agerian uzten ditu finantza-bideragarritasunaren eta epe laburreko gainbalioak maximizatzeko exigentziaren ereduaren mugak, proiektuaren potentzial estrategikoa (ekonomia berrirako zentralitate berriko eremuak sortzea) espekulazioaren hirigintza-errealizazioaren (Hiri-elite zahar eta berrientzako bizitegi-espazio berriak sortzea: gentrifikazioa) menpe jartzen baitu eta ezeztatu egiten du azkenean. Alde horretatik, Abandoibarraren azterketak zenbait ikasgai transzendental eskaintzen ditu, birsortze neoliberalaren paradoxei buruz. Hirikoak: Alde horretatik, Abandoibarraren azterketak zenbait ikasgai transzendental eskaintzen ditu, **birsortze neoliberalaren paradoxei** buruz.





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# **CAPÍTULO 1**

## **Introducción**



## 1.1. Introducción General. Tema y justificación de la tesis

La investigación que aquí se presenta tiene como objetivo mostrar cómo, a lo largo de las cuatro últimas décadas, las estrategias de regeneración/revitalización urbana se han convertido en el principal vector de intervención en las ciudades de todo el mundo y en eje articulador de un nuevo paradigma urbano y punta de lanza de las Nuevas Políticas Urbanas (NUP), núcleo duro de la (re)urbanización neoliberal.

Bajo el término de regeneración urbana se agrupan un conjunto de actuaciones, programas y estrategias diversas impulsadas por las ciudades con el fin de revertir dinámicas de declive físico, económico y social en determinadas zonas, barrios o en el conjunto del área urbana. En general, la regeneración urbana se vincula con la intervención en áreas consolidadas de la ciudad que han perdido dinamismo y funcionalidad a consecuencia de los procesos de crisis y reestructuración socioeconómica vividos durante las últimas cuatro décadas. En las ciudades de antigua industrialización europeas y norteamericanas, los cambios en la base productiva, la especialización, y la estructura urbana impulsados por estos procesos han sido particularmente intensos resultando en la (re)aparición de graves problemas sociales, económicos y de enormes vacíos urbanos físicos y funcionales. Las políticas de regeneración se asocian, entonces, a la reacción por parte del sector público frente a los problemas del declive urbano promoviendo el desarrollo de nuevas actividades económicas y funcionalidades mediante la recuperación y reconversión de esos vacíos urbanos en áreas generadoras de nuevo dinamismo y centralidad (Rodríguez et al, 2001; Oatley, 1998; Roberts & Sykes, 2000).

A lo largo de las últimas cuatro décadas, el término de regeneración urbana ha pasado de estar estrechamente asociado al de crisis urbana a formar parte, desde mediados de los 90, de las dinámicas de transformación de las ciudades en un contexto de recuperación y una nueva fase de crecimiento económico. La enorme plasticidad del término “regeneración” permite no sólo su utilización recurrente en entornos y contextos muy diversos sino también su sustitución/intercambio por

términos como renovación, renacimiento o revitalización. De acuerdo con Roberts y Sykes (2005), el término “regeneración” es el último de una serie de expresiones que describen las estrategias urbanas adoptadas, en el caso británico, desde mediados del siglo XX: la reconstrucción en la década de los 50, seguida de la revitalización en los 60, la renovación en los 70, la reurbanización en los 80 y la regeneración en los 90, lo que sugiere que la regeneración es la última denominación que describe las políticas que diferentes gobiernos aplican para responder a los problemas urbanos en cada uno de esos periodos. Sin embargo, esta caracterización deja en el aire los aspectos específicos de lo que significa la regeneración urbana en el contexto actual.

Pero, aunque las políticas de regeneración urbana vienen ocupando un lugar cada vez más prominente en las estrategias en el urbanismo contemporáneo, hasta el punto de convertirse en la principal, cuando no la única, política urbana de muchas ciudades, las iniciativas de regeneración han sido parte integral de los procesos de transformación y modernización de la ciudad contemporánea desde los inicios de la industrialización y uno de los componentes constitutivos del urbanismo moderno. En efecto, los antecedentes directos de las políticas de regeneración urbana se encuentran en las reformas urbanas de las grandes capitales europeas del siglo XIX que tenían como objetivo una remodelación integral del espacio urbano mediante el derribo de las murallas, la apertura de nuevas calles a través de la trama urbana existente y, en ocasiones, la destrucción física de extensas zonas de la ciudad a partir de la cual proceder a una reorganización planificada del tejido urbano acorde con las necesidades de la industrialización.

En la ciudad industrial del siglo XX, la noción de regeneración urbana trasciende los objetivos de las reformas interiores impulsadas por razones de salubridad y viabilidad y adquiere nuevos significados a partir de la puesta en marcha de políticas focalizadas, dirigidas a actuar específicamente sobre la concentración espacial de la pobreza y el deterioro físico de áreas determinadas de la ciudad en el Reino Unido, en la década de los 30, y en Estados Unidos en los 40. Desde entonces, las políticas de regeneración urbana han seguido una larga y tortuosa evolución que va desde las operaciones predominantemente físicas de demolición masiva de áreas degradadas, a

las intervenciones de rehabilitación social y cultural de centros históricos y barrios periféricos y, más recientemente, las operaciones estratégicas de la revitalización urbana de las últimas décadas.

En su concepción más actual, la regeneración o revitalización urbana se vincula con la intervención en áreas consolidadas de la ciudad que han ido perdiendo dinamismo y funcionalidad a consecuencia de los procesos de crisis y reestructuración socioeconómica iniciados en la década de los 70. Estos procesos fueron particularmente intensos en las ciudades de antigua industrialización resultando en una transformación radical de su base productiva, especialización, y estructura urbana y la consiguiente (re)aparición de graves problemas sociales, económicos, políticos y ambientales.

Desde el punto de vista urbanístico, el impacto de la desaceleración del crecimiento económico y la recomposición de las jerarquías sectoriales y territoriales se materializó en la aparición de nuevos “vacíos” urbanos, físicos y funcionales, resultado del cese, traslado o depreciación de las actividades productivas (especialmente industriales) y/o de las infraestructuras (portuarias, ferroviarias, aeroportuarias, etc.) que los ocupaban. En ciudades de fuerte tradición industrial, el abultado número y escala de estos espacios abandonados u ocupados por actividades obsoletas y de bajo valor añadido, y su localización en áreas relativamente céntricas los sitúa en el punto de mira de la política urbana y en el foco principal de las propuestas de transformación física y funcional urbana. En las últimas tres décadas, la traslación de estos espacios de “áreas problema” en “áreas de oportunidad” redefine intensamente el terreno de juego de la política urbana y de un urbanismo subordinado a las exigencias de la revitalización.

Las políticas de regeneración urbana (re)emergen entonces a lo largo de las cuatro últimas décadas como la respuesta más conspicua por parte del sector público (pero también privado o en partenariatado) a los problemas del declive o estancamiento urbano, tomando como punto de partida el aprovechamiento de las oportunidades urbanísticas creadas por los vacíos funcionales y físicos mediante operaciones

singulares de reconversión de espacios degradados en áreas generadoras de dinamismo y nueva centralidad.

El instrumento clave de estas estrategias son los grandes proyectos urbanos, paradigma de la intervención para la regeneración urbana en Europa desde mediados de los 80 (Fox-Przeworski et al, 1991; Precedo, 1993, Terán, 1996). Los grandes proyectos urbanos de la última década tienen como objetivo impulsar la transformación física y funcional de la ciudad a partir de operaciones singulares de reconversión de espacios degradados u ocupados por actividades obsoletas en áreas generadoras de dinamismo y centralidad. La producción de estas áreas de “nueva centralidad” (ver Busquets, 1996) se apoya en el conocido esquema de combinación de usos productivos, residenciales, comerciales, culturales y de ocio donde se integran un conjunto de elementos recurrentes y meticulosamente diseñados: arquitecturas emblemáticas, proyectos bandera, centros de convenciones, infraestructuras culturales y turísticas, parques temáticos, festivales y otros eventos internacionales con una finalidad propagandística y de marketing urbano (Ashworth y Voogd, 1990; Kearns y Philo, 1993).

Más allá de la recuperación física de espacios degradados, estas operaciones tienen una clara orientación estratégica en la medida que la reurbanización de suelos degradados se percibe como una oportunidad excepcional para dotar a la ciudad de las condiciones físicas necesarias para acoger nuevos usos y funciones dinamizadoras capaces de relanzar una nueva fase de crecimiento urbano (Hall, 1995). Pero, además, en un contexto marcado por el aumento de la competencia entre ciudades, la creación de estos espacios cualificados de producción y consumo, adaptados a las exigencias de las nuevas demandas locales y globales, se considera decisivo para reforzar la capacidad de atracción tanto de inversores como de consumidores y asegurar ventajas competitivas para la ciudad (y región) (Dumont, 1995; Van den Berg, 1995).

Los grandes proyectos urbanos de la última década no son sólo uno de los instrumentos principales de las estrategias de regeneración urbana (Moulaert et al, 2003; Swyngedouw et al, 2002; Rodríguez et al, 2001), son además el contrapunto a



la crisis del plan, la quiebra de la visión hegemónica del planeamiento como instrumento de previsión y de control sobre la producción de la ciudad (Borja et al, 1985). En este sentido, la nueva generación de proyectos urbanos refleja una nueva forma de entender la producción urbana (Ezquiaga, 2001) que gira en torno a grandes operaciones urbanísticas consideradas hoy como *los* elementos definitorios de la construcción de la ciudad (Borja y Castells, 1997:253). La introducción del planeamiento estratégico y la gestión estratégica de ciudades ha contribuido también a consolidar esta visión de los grandes proyectos como motores y orientadores del desarrollo urbano en el marco de una relación dialéctica, no secuencial, entre objetivos, estrategias y proyectos (Borja y Castells, 1997).

Las grandes operaciones de reconversión y recualificación urbana se han desplegado sistemática y serialmente a lo largo y ancho de la geografía urbana internacional, convirtiéndose no sólo en el paradigma de la regeneración urbana sino en el principal instrumento de un urbanismo refundado, post-Fordista, post-Keynesiano. En este sentido, podemos afirmar que el destacado protagonismo de las estrategias de regeneración dentro de las políticas urbanas refleja cambios profundos y paradigmáticos en las formas de intervención pública en la ciudad: en los objetivos, en la orientación, en los instrumentos, en los actores, etc.

Esta tesis doctoral presenta un análisis de las estrategias de regeneración urbana desarrolladas por un conjunto de ciudades europeas desde mediados de la década de 1980 hasta principios de la década de 2000. La investigación examina la puesta en marcha de esas estrategias en el marco de los procesos de reestructuración socioeconómica y regulatoria en las áreas urbanas y el papel central que esas estrategias han cumplido en la consolidación de un nuevo paradigma de la producción urbana.

## 1.2. Objetivos e hipótesis

El objetivo de esta investigación es mostrar cómo las estrategias de regeneración urbana impulsadas por ciudades de todo el mundo a lo largo de las cuatro últimas tres décadas se han convertido no sólo en el principal vector de intervención en la ciudad contemporánea sino en el núcleo duro de la reurbanización neoliberal. La investigación propone la idea de que los procesos de regeneración urbana comandados por grandes proyectos u operaciones emblemáticas reflejan la progresiva consolidación de un nuevo paradigma de intervención en la ciudad a partir de innovaciones substantivas en la formulación, instrumentación y gestión (los objetivos, instrumentos e instituciones) de la política urbana que se articulan en torno a tres tendencias interdependientes de cambio:

- a) el desplazamiento de las prioridades de la agenda política urbana hacia el crecimiento económico y la reestructuración competitiva
- b) la reorientación del enfoque predominantemente gestor y regulador hacia un enfoque proactivo basado en la introducción de criterios de rentabilidad económica y eficiencia en la gestión y ejecución de las operaciones urbanas, y
- c) los cambios en la instrumentación apoyados en nuevas arquitecturas institucionales y un modelo de urbanismo negociado, de la concertación, como fundamento de la nueva gobernanza urbana.

La investigación desarrolla la hipótesis de que el elemento vertebrador del nuevo paradigma de intervención en la ciudad son los Grandes Proyectos (de regeneración) Urbanos (GPUs), expresión material de una lógica desarrollista renovada y punta de lanza de un modelo de gobernanza proactiva, estratégica y empresarial característica de las Nuevas Políticas Urbanas. Los GPUs dirigen la actuación sobre la ciudad consolidada más allá de los tradicionales espacios vulnerables o degradados—típicamente, centros históricos o complejos residenciales en las periferias urbanas—para abordar la reconversión de vacíos físicos y funcionales con una clara orientación estratégica en la medida que se percibe como una oportunidad para dotar a la ciudad

de áreas de nueva centralidad para acoger nuevos usos y funciones dinamizadoras capaces de relanzar una nueva fase de crecimiento urbano. En una coyuntura marcada por la ofensiva neoliberal y la restitución de la centralidad del mercado, los GPUs (re)emergen como una alternativa a los instrumentos reguladores del keynesianismo urbano que combina las ventajas de la flexibilidad y la eficacia de la gestión selectiva y focalizada con una extraordinaria capacidad de significación simbólica. El realineamiento productivista de la agenda urbana y las nuevas tendencias en la gestión pública catapultan a los GPUs como una pieza fundamental de la regeneración urbana neoliberal y, en general, de la neoliberalización de los procesos urbanos.

De manera que el objetivo general de esta investigación es, por una parte, examinar el surgimiento y consolidación de nuevas políticas para la transformación urbana, el nuevo paradigma urbano, que apuntalan la proliferación de iniciativas públicas y, específicamente, el auge de los grandes proyectos de regeneración urbana. Se trata de analizar el proceso de recomposición de las políticas urbanas e identificar las dinámicas sociales, políticas y económicas que están en la base de ese proceso. Apoyándose en una extensa investigación comparada sobre las estrategias de regeneración urbana implantadas en 13 ciudades europeas en las décadas de los 80 y 90, esta investigación se centra en el análisis de Bilbao como un ejemplo canónico de esos procesos de regeneración que incorpora los principios, objetivos, instrumentos y formas de gobernanza del paradigma emergente de las Nuevas Políticas Urbanas. En este sentido, se trata de examinar los rasgos específicos de la estrategia de regeneración de Bilbao y, más específicamente, de Abandoibarra, desde su formulación, diseño y planificación hasta su implantación y los efectos producidos sobre el entorno y la ciudad en su conjunto.

Los objetivos específicos de esta investigación son:

1. Establecer la centralidad de las estrategias de regeneración urbana como vector principal y eje articulador del nuevo paradigma de intervención en la ciudad: las Nuevas Políticas Urbanas.

2. Exponer el papel de las políticas de regeneración urbana en la neoliberalización de la ciudad en una perspectiva de retorno de la centralidad del mercado en la producción de la ciudad y, por tanto, de redefinición de la relación ciudad-mercado-estado.
3. Mostrar la importancia de los Grandes Proyectos Urbanos (GPU) como instrumentos estratégicos de la regeneración urbana neoliberal en Europa a través del análisis comparativo de su desarrollo e implantación, a lo largo de las últimas décadas, en diversas ciudades europeas.
4. Presentar la regeneración urbana de Bilbao como un ejemplo emblemático de la regeneración dirigida por GPUs y su transformación en un modelo de referencia y de éxito a escala internacional
5. Evaluar y extraer las lecciones positivas y negativas más relevantes del proceso de regeneración urbana de Bilbao con el objetivo de que este balance contribuya a ampliar las fronteras del debate sobre las (nuevas) políticas urbanas

### **1.3. Marco analítico**

Este apartado desarrolla el marco conceptual de la Tesis. En primer lugar, se presenta un análisis del contexto de la reestructuración urbana y la neoliberalización de ciudad. A continuación, se examina la reorientación de las políticas urbanas y el papel de las estrategias de regeneración en la consolidación del nuevo paradigma urbano. Finalmente se analizan los grandes proyectos urbanos como paradigma de la intervención para la regeneración urbana en las ciudades europeas en las últimas décadas y como expresión material de las Nuevas Políticas Urbanas

### **1.3.1. Reordenar lo Urbano: Reestructuración y Regeneración Urbana en la Neoliberalización de la Ciudad**

En las cuatro últimas décadas, las aglomeraciones urbanas han sido el escenario privilegiado de cambios económicos, sociales y políticos de gran alcance. Estos cambios tienen su origen en la crisis del Fordismo y en los procesos de reestructuración económica que, desde mediados de la década de los 70, transformaron drásticamente el contexto para el desarrollo urbano y redefinieron el papel de las ciudades en la nueva economía globalizada (Moulaert et al, 1988). El impacto de la reestructuración económica se vio agravado por las políticas de ajuste aplicadas por la mayoría de los gobiernos en respuesta a la pérdida de rentabilidad de las industrias Fordistas y a la crisis del Estado Social que se concretaron en reformas políticas e institucionales de corte neoliberal<sup>1</sup> orientadas a apuntalar al sector privado y fortalecer la disciplina de mercado y la competencia mediante nuevas modalidades regulatorias y formas de gestión estatal (Jessop, 1996, 2015). Estas políticas no sólo agudizaron el impacto de la crisis, sino que abrieron paso al desmantelamiento progresivo del régimen de regulación Fordista-Keynesiano vigente desde finales de la

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<sup>1</sup> Aunque los inicios del neoliberalismo suelen situarse en las políticas de ajuste impulsadas a mediados de la década de 1980 por Margaret Thatcher en el Reino Unido y Ronald Reagan, en EE.UU., su origen se remonta a los años 1920 cuando este término se acuña para definir una forma de liberalismo reactivado enfrentado a las políticas colectivistas desplegadas tanto por la Unión Soviética como por los regímenes fascista y nazi. Este proyecto de refundación liberal es promovido por los liberales austríacos (Popper, Hayek, Mises, Schumpeter) y refrendado en el Colloque Walter Lippman en París en 1938, donde esta corriente se impone en la reafirmación de la doctrina *laissez-faire* del liberalismo clásico (victoriano) la prioridad del mecanismo de los precios, la libre empresa y la libre competencia— frente a otros enfoques más críticos y valedores de un libre mercado pero bajo la supervisión de un estado fuerte e imparcial a través de una política económica comprehensiva que combina instrumentos monetarios, fiscales, de crédito, inversión, comercio y políticas sociales, una especie de “tercera vía”, más cercana a los postulados del socio-liberalismo alemán (Audier, 2008; Aalbers, 2017). Desde entonces, el uso y definición del término ha ido evolucionando en distintas direcciones a menudo contradictorias entre sí. Tras caer en desuso en los años 50 y 60, el término neoliberalismo resurgió con fuerza a finales de la década de 1970 en el contexto de la crisis económica asociado a una interpretación radical del liberalismo y capitalismo *laissez-faire* de la mano de influyentes economistas como Milton Friedman, James Buchanan o Friedrich Hayek, posteriormente adoptada como referencia para la puesta en marcha de políticas de liberalización durante los gobiernos de Thatcher y Reagan, entre otros, en los 80. Impulsada por una retórica de hostilidad manifiesta contra el Estado y la regulación económica, esta nueva ola de neoliberalismo, sin embargo, no aspira tanto a eliminar el Estado como a redefinir su naturaleza y funciones (Mirowski, 2009; Harvey, 2009), en una guisa de “sincretismo oportunista” de *laissez-faire* extremo en ciertos ámbitos que se combina con un apoyo explícito a los monopolios rentistas, el corporativismo de las élites, la plutocracia y el amiguismo (Crouch, 2011). Esta aparente ambigüedad está en la base de los intensos debates y controversias en torno a la conceptualización del neoliberalismo (o neoliberalización).

segunda guerra mundial y sentó las bases para el retorno a la centralidad estratégica y política de la lógica del mercado.

Desde entonces, y lo largo de cuatro décadas, las agendas de reestructuración neoliberal se han desplegado por todo el mundo y a todas las escalas territoriales, en un proceso de neoliberalización<sup>2</sup> irregular, inestable y a menudo contradictorio que se extiende como una “marea de reforma institucional y ajustes discursivos” (Harvey, 2006: 145). A escala urbana, estos procesos de neoliberalización han impulsado una reorganización radical de las condiciones para el desarrollo urbano, de las formas de producción urbana, de los modelos y problemas urbanos y, consecuentemente, de las prioridades, objetivos, instrumentos e instituciones de intervención en la ciudad.

### ***La Reestructuración Neoliberal***

Entendemos por neoliberalización no solo el despliegue de una agenda de ajuste estructural basada en la conocida triada liberalización-desregulación-privatización, sino un proyecto de largo alcance que, como subraya Harvey (2005), es principalmente un proyecto político que busca restaurar el poder de las élites económicas a partir de la reconstitución de las condiciones de acumulación del capital erosionadas por las crisis sistémicas y recurrentes desde la década de 1970 (Ibid:19). Desde este punto de vista, la neoliberalización es, esencialmente, un proyecto de clase que implica, además de la acumulación por ampliación de la asalarización industrial, la acumulación por desposesión, una forma de apropiación depredadora del plusvalor a través de diversos instrumentos entre los que destacan: a) la privatización, mercantilización y corporatización de activos públicos (educación, sanidad, pensiones, etc.); b) la financierización; c) el endeudamiento y la manipulación de las

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<sup>2</sup> El término *neoliberalización* subraya el carácter de proceso del proyecto neoliberal. Como sugieren Theodore et al (2011), "no se trata tanto de un "ismo" coherentemente delimitado, un sistema o resultado final, sino de un proceso en evolución, inestable, irregular y contradictorio de *neoliberalización* en curso [que] debe ser pensado como un proceso específico, fungible e inestable de transformación socioespacial impulsado por el mercado, más que como un régimen de políticas vigente en su totalidad, un aparato ideológico o un marco regulatorio (Ibid:3; ver también Peck y Tickell, 2002).

crisis; y d) la redistribución regresiva de la renta desde el estado a través de esquemas de privatización y recortes en el gasto público (Ibid, 2006).

En la misma línea, Jessop (2016: 2-3), considera el neoliberalismo un proyecto de naturaleza económico, político y social que tiende a juzgar todas las actividades económicas en términos de su rentabilidad y todas las actividades sociales en términos de su contribución a la acumulación de capital diferencial; un proyecto donde la primacía de lo político se antepone a lo económico debido a que su expansión y reproducción exigen el apoyo constante y decidido del poder político y regulatorio del Estado<sup>3</sup>.

Por otra parte, Brenner et al, (2010) destacan la dimensión política de la neoliberalización entendida como una entre varias tendencias de cambio regulatorio que se han desplegado por todo el sistema capitalista global desde la década de los 70; una tendencia que: i) prioriza las respuestas a los problemas de la regulación desde una perspectiva basada, orientada e impuesta por el mercado; ii) busca intensificar la mercantilización de todos los ámbitos de la vida social; y iii) a menudo moviliza instrumentos financieros especulativos con el objetivo de abrir nuevos espacios de oportunidad para la acumulación de capital (Ibid: 329-30). Desde este punto de vista, la neoliberalización se refiere a un *patrón prevaleciente* de reestructuración regulatoria que está tomando cuerpo a lo largo de un escenario institucional irregular y en el contexto de procesos político-económicos que co-evolucionan” (Ibid: 3; ver

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<sup>3</sup> Uno de los ejemplos recientes más llamativos de padrinazgo/subordinación del poder político y regulatorio del Estado a la reestructuración neoliberal es la *constitucionalización* (y, por tanto, despolitización) *de la austeridad*, una dinámica que fija las políticas de austeridad de forma permanente, sacándolas de los ámbitos y procedimientos habituales de la esfera de la política democrática liberal (parlamentos, ministerios, etc.) y blindando esas medidas austeritarias detrás de barreras impenetrables e inescrutables (McBride, 2016). Aunque las medidas de austeridad son viejas conocidas de la reorganización regulatoria neoliberal, estas medidas se agudizan especialmente a partir del 2010, como consecuencia del crack financiero del 2008 y de las medidas de ajuste rescate financiero, incluida la nacionalización de los activos tóxicos de la banca, el control de la deuda pública etc. Uno de los casos más extremos de esta tendencia es la constitucionalización de la estabilidad presupuestaria aprobada en España por el gobierno (socialista) de Rodríguez Zapatero en el año 2011 vinculando, a través de una reforma constitucional (la modificación del artículo 135), una regla para garantizar la estabilidad presupuestaria en el medio y largo plazo en relación tanto con el déficit estructural como con la deuda, vinculando a todas las administraciones públicas... Cabe destacar que esta reforma constitucional es la segunda en casi 35 años de vigencia de la Constitución; la primera se produjo en 1992 con ocasión de la ratificación del Tratado de Maastricht.

también Peck y Tickell, 2002).

La expansión global del nuevo “régimen regulatorio neoliberal” (Harvey, 2006: 28-29), post-keynesiano, avanza en sucesivas rondas de reestructuración regulatoria adoptando configuraciones variables, dependiendo de su inserción en contextos específicos y de cómo esas agendas se han visto alteradas a partir de su interacción con tradiciones históricas y configuraciones institucionales y políticas preexistentes (Peck y Tickell, 2002). Brenner et al. (2010) proponen una periodización esquemática de la extensión y consolidación de los procesos de neoliberalización, desde sus inicios en la década de los 70 hasta finales de la década de los 90, a partir de tres dimensiones principales: (i) las formas contextualmente específicas de experimentación regulatoria; (ii) los sistemas de transferencia normativa interjurisdiccional; y (iii) la formación de regímenes normativos transnacionales.

Cada una de estas dimensiones coincide grosso modo con las décadas en que ese proceso evoluciona tendencialmente desde una primera etapa de neoliberalización desarticulada, en la década de los 70, basada predominantemente en formas local, territorial y escalarmente específicas de experimentación regulatoria sujeta a la disciplina de mercado<sup>4</sup>, a una segunda fase, durante los años 80, de propagación transnacional de un repertorio estandarizado de políticas neoliberales a través de un amplio sistema de transferencia de políticas y circuitos interjurisdiccionales para la promoción, legitimación y puesta a disposición de modelos de políticas neoliberales<sup>5</sup> de un modo más cohesionado y sistemático. La expansión del neoliberalismo se consolidó en la década de los 90, a medida que las agendas de reforma política dirigidas a reforzar la disciplina de mercado y la competencia se institucionalizaron a

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<sup>4</sup> Los primeros experimentos de reorganización regulatoria neoliberal (privatización, desregulación, liberalización, financierización, workfare, etc.) de la década de los 70 se desarrollan en contextos específicos como el de Chile durante la dictadura de Pinochet, en el Reino Unido tras el rescate del FMI, o en algunas regiones y ciudades de Estados Unidos devastadas por el impacto de la desindustrialización.

<sup>5</sup> La transferencia internacional del repertorio prototípico de reorganización regulatoria neoliberal, testado en el periodo de la neoliberalización desarticulada, se difunde durante esta etapa a través de un conjunto de mecanismos interjurisdiccionales que incluyen tanto las redes neokeynesianas ya existentes de transferencia de políticas (la OCDE, el Banco Mundial o el FMI, por ej.) como nuevos circuitos y redes de influencia mediados a través de la influencia creciente de cuadros de expertos, think-tanks, polos tecnológicos, consultoras internacionales, etc.



escala mundial a través de una serie de reformas y reconfiguraciones jurídico-institucionales supranacionales, multilaterales y multinivel caracterizado como el “Consenso de Washington”, una fase de neoliberalización “profundizada” (Ibid, 331-339). A esta periodización cabe sumar una nueva fase de neoliberalización autoritaria (o austeritaria) que se abre paso con el estallido de la crisis financiera global del 2008 con la intensificación y ampliación del ajuste y la imposición de un estado de austeridad permanente acompañado de un aumento de los dispositivos de vigilancia y control social necesarios para mantenerlo (Peck y Theodore, 2016; Jessop, 2019).

Aunque de carácter sistémico, la expansión global del nuevo régimen neoliberal no implica resultados regulatorios convergentes, sino que asume formas diversas y específicas en los diferentes contextos territoriales y temporales. Esta diversidad se debe a la fuerte dependencia que los procesos de neoliberalización tienen de la trayectoria previa: en la medida que estos procesos necesariamente colisionan con entornos regulatorios (nacionales, regionales y locales) específicos diversos, herederos de rondas previas de formación y contestación regulatoria (incluido el Fordismo, el desarrollismo o el socialismo de estado), esas formas de articulación e institucionalización son extraordinariamente heterogéneas. De modo que la expansión global del neoliberalismo avanza inexorablemente, pero como un proyecto inacabado en constante adaptación y reformulación y sobre la base de un desarrollo territorial desigual materializándose a través de esa desigualdad (diferenciación geo-institucional) en formas híbridas de neoliberalización en distintos lugares, territorios y escalas (Brenner y Theodore, 2002a, 2002b, 2005; Peck y Theodore, 2007; Peck y Tickell, 2002; Larner 2003).

Cada una de esas variantes puede entenderse como el resultado de un proceso de *destrucción creativa* del espacio político-económico existente que combina dos “momentos” diferenciados aunque dialécticamente conectados e interdependientes: uno, de destrucción (parcial) o desmantelamiento de las formas institucionales y acuerdos políticos vigentes a través de reformas orientadas a reforzar la disciplina de mercado; y otro, de creación (tendencial) de nuevas modalidades de regulación institucional y gestión estatal necesarias para la consolidación del modelo neoliberal

(Theodore et al, 2011; Harvey, 2007). Las reestructuraciones neoliberales “realmente existentes” son, desde este punto de vista, el resultado de esas tendencias combinadas de destrucción institucional creativa; un proceso de neoliberalización en curso, contingente, abierto, dinámico, inestable y contradictorio, que toma cuerpo en formas localmente específicas de transformación socio-espacial y en el marco de procesos político-económicos que co-evolucionan, pero en un contexto geo-regulatorio definido por tendencias sistémicas de penetración global del proyecto neoliberal.

### ***La Neoliberalización de la ciudad***

Aunque los procesos de neoliberalización se han desplegado en todas las escalas territoriales y en entornos geo-institucionales muy diversos, se han dado con especial intensidad en el ámbito urbano (Harvey, 2007:6). En efecto, las ciudades, epicentro de la industrialización capitalista desde sus inicios y soporte material básico en la instauración del régimen fordista-keynesiano (Abramo 1996; Harvey, 1985; Lefebvre 1991), son también los territorios claves de la reestructuración neoliberal. Es precisamente la funcionalidad (centralidad) de las ciudades en los sistemas fordistas-keynesianos lo que las convierte en espacios decisivos –los verdaderos campos de batalla– para las estrategias de dismantelamiento de las estructuras materiales y reguladoras del viejo orden y la imposición de nuevos marcos institucionales locales orientados a promover, intensificar y ampliar el imperio del mercado – y de su contestación. Esa dinámica de destrucción creativa regulatoria a escala urbana, o “*neoliberalización del urbanismo*”, constituye, por tanto, un elemento central del proceso de neoliberalización (Moulaert et al, 2003; Theodore et al, 2011; Pinson y Journel, 2016).

Sin embargo, las ciudades no son un mero soporte pasivo de los proyectos de reestructuración neoliberal. Por el contrario, las ciudades tienen un papel activo destacado en la conformación del nuevo orden/régimen neoliberal: por una parte, su significado estratégico como espacios de innovación y crecimiento y como ámbitos de gobernanza delegada y experimentación institucional local, posicionan a las ciudades a la vanguardia del avance neoliberal, como nodos críticos para el desenvolvimiento

de las nuevas funcionalidades y modalidades de regulación necesarias para la consolidación del nuevo orden neoliberal. La neoliberalización del urbanismo se ve, entonces, intensificada a medida que las ciudades se han convertido en campos de prueba de una gama cada vez más amplia de experimentos de políticas neoliberales, innovaciones institucionales y proyectos políticos, produciéndose así un proceso de “*urbanización del neoliberalismo*” (Theodore et al, 2011: 24). Por otra parte, en la medida en que la materialidad urbana, las infraestructuras, los activos y recursos del entorno construido son cada vez más estratégicos para las nuevas formas de acumulación y regulación capitalista, las ciudades aportan las bases materiales para la reproducción del régimen neoliberal y en nodos generadores (Swyngedouw et al, 2002; Brenner y Theodore, 2002; Peck et al, 2009). Las ciudades son, por tanto, espacios estratégicos en los cuales, y a través de los cuales, tienen lugar los procesos de reestructuración regulatoria neoliberal, así como de su contestación (Moulaert et al, 2003; Brenner y Theodore, 2002; Leitner et al, 2007; Mayer, 2016).

Así pues, en la era post-keynesiana, las ciudades vuelven a constituirse en espacios cardinales del nuevo régimen de acumulación a través de la configuración de nuevas espacialidades urbanas, o funcionalidades urbanas, asociadas a las particularidades históricas y geográficas bajo la forma de lo que Abramo (1996/2009) denomina “**regímenes urbanos**”, es decir, las formas particulares de la espacialidad construida urbana que asumen los procesos de producción y de apropiación (p. 35) y que remiten a las particularidades históricas de la producción de lo urbano como formas de acumulación y reproducción del capitalismo (Abramo, 2009). El régimen urbano se articula a través de un conjunto de mecanismos de regulación de esa espacialidad urbana construida que garantizan su estabilidad y reproducción duradera, un modo de “regulación urbana”. Los procesos de crisis y reestructuración urbana de las últimas décadas pueden, entonces, ser entendidos como procesos de *neoliberalización urbana*, la manifestación a escala urbana de esa dinámica de destrucción creativa antes mencionada: la destrucción paulatina del régimen urbano fordista-keynesiano y la creación tendencial de una nueva espacialidad, un medio ambiente urbano construido –o funcionalidad urbana– acorde con las nuevas dinámicas de valorización del capital, del nuevo régimen de acumulación post-fordista, así como de una nueva

normatividad o modo de regulación urbana post-keynesiana necesaria para garantizar la consolidación de ese nuevo régimen urbano neoliberal. Y en la formación de ese nuevo régimen urbano juegan un papel fundamental las políticas y estrategias de neoliberalización a diferentes escalas.

Por otra parte, la centralidad estratégica de las ciudades en la configuración del nuevo orden neoliberal se ve además reforzada por los procesos de reorganización y re-escalamiento<sup>6</sup> del Estado asociados con el debilitamiento de la primacía de la escala nacional como base para organizar las relaciones económicas, políticas y sociales del fordismo atlántico, en vigor desde la postguerra. Estos procesos de reorganización territorial y funcional de competencias –viejas y nuevas– del Estado, en diferentes ámbitos subnacionales, supranacionales y transterritoriales, son parte integral de lo que Jessop (1994; 1997; 2002a/2004) denomina el “vaciamiento” de la escala nacional como eje estructurador del conjunto del entramado escalar, una tendencia provocada por la erosión de la capacidad del Estado para responder a los desafíos planteados por las nuevas condiciones de la acumulación globalizada y la crisis del modelo keynesiano de gestión y regulación económica. El “vaciamiento” de la escala nacional implica la dispersión del poder del Estado a otras escalas de la jerarquía escalar: hacia “arriba”, hacia organizaciones que operan a escala supranacional (Unión Europea, FMI, G7, OMC, etc.), hacia “abajo” (gobiernos locales, urbano-metropolitanos y regionales), y lateralmente hacia redes transterritoriales (alianzas estratégicas institucionales en diferentes escalas territoriales, redes de ciudades, etc.). Estas tendencias de re-escalamiento del Estado nacional expresan no solo proyectos políticos y económicos orientados a diferentes escalas

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<sup>6</sup> La escala, en este sentido, no se refiere a una cuestión cartográfica sino a un “entorno focal en el cual los límites espaciales son definidos por una demanda social, actividad o comportamiento específico” (Agnew, 1997: 100). Para Brenner (2001, 2002a/2004), la escala es el nivel de resolución geográfica donde los procesos sociales son actuados, pensados o analizados, que debe ser entendida en relación con otras escalas y que es necesariamente multiescalar (Brenner, 2004). Este concepto surge en el contexto de los debates sobre globalización a mediados de los 80 y de la crisis y reorganización del Estado Keynesiano. Así, Brenner (2001, 2000) y Swyngedouw (1992, 1997) sugieren que la globalización ha llevado a una reconfiguración de las escalas territoriales (re-escalamiento) como elemento central de la reestructuración del poder político (ver también Smith, 1984 y Jessop, 2002a). Los procesos de re-escalamiento se refieren, por tanto, a la reconfiguración de las estructuras inter-escalares que van desde la relocalización hasta la globalización.

sino una complejidad creciente de las configuraciones escalares que no puede ser capturada en términos de simples contrastes como global-nacional o global-local.

Ahora bien, la transferencia de funciones y actividades específicas que previamente se organizaban a escala nacional a entidades sub-nacionales, supra-nacionales o incluso cuasi-privadas no significa necesariamente un debilitamiento *tout court* del poder y capacidad reguladora del Estado nacional. Esta dinámica debe entenderse como parte de un proceso complejo de redefinición de la naturaleza y funciones del Estado y de las relaciones entre Estado y economía; un proceso de neoliberalización que moviliza activamente las instituciones del Estado a diferentes escalas territoriales con el objetivo de apuntalar y reforzar el papel del sector privado y la disciplina del mercado. En lugar del debilitamiento del poder del estado esta dinámica sugiere una movilización activa de las instituciones del Estado para extender y reforzar el papel del mercado.

Al mismo tiempo, aunque estos procesos de re-escalamiento y dispersión del poder del Estado nacional reflejan la pérdida de relevancia de la escala nacional como eje estructurador del conjunto del entramado escalar, ninguna otra escala –ya sea local, global, urbana, triádica, regional o suprarregional– ha logrado hasta el momento una primacía similar (Jessop, 2002a/2004:27). En este marco de “relativización de la escala”, diferentes espacios económicos y políticos compiten para convertirse en la nueva ancla alrededor de la cual otras escalas puedan organizarse para producir un grado adecuado de coherencia estructurada. Es en este escenario complejo e indefinido donde la escala urbana se proyecta como eje central de la reconfiguración escalar post-fordista.

### **1.3.2. La Urbanización del Neoliberalismo: Regeneración y Nuevas Políticas Urbanas**

El redescubrimiento de la centralidad estratégica urbana en la configuración del nuevo orden neoliberal viene acompañado de un intenso debate en torno al papel de las ciudades como actores políticos y de la política urbana como un instrumento clave

de la gestión local de la nueva economía globalizada (Borja y Castells, 1997; Moulaert, et al., 2002). En contraste con la erosión progresiva de los Estados para responder a los retos de la globalización, las últimas cuatro décadas han sido testigo de un creciente protagonismo e implicación de los gobiernos locales-urbanos en la promoción y regeneración económica y de experimentación y ampliación del campo de acción institucional y política.

En un marco de intensa reorganización regulatoria y descentralización del Estado, las ciudades se proyectan como escenarios preferentes para el desarrollo de nuevas fórmulas e instrumentos de gestión estratégica y gobernanza territorial; una dinámica que ha supuesto cambios fundamentales tanto en las prioridades y objetivos de la agenda política urbana como en los modos de intervención pública y gestión en la ciudad. Las estrategias urbanas resultantes de este proceso se articulan en el marco de tres tendencias interdependientes de cambio: a) el desplazamiento de las prioridades de la intervención urbana hacia la crecimiento económico y la reestructuración competitiva b) la reorientación del enfoque predominantemente gestor y regulador de la política urbana hacia un enfoque proactivo y empresarial y c) los cambios en la instrumentación de la intervención y la aparición de un nuevo modo de gobernanza urbana.

### ***La Nueva Agenda Urbana: la reestructuración competitiva urbana***

La primera de estas tendencias, el desplazamiento de las prioridades de las políticas urbanas hacia el crecimiento económico y la reestructuración competitiva, tiene su origen en los procesos de desaceleración y crisis estructural de mediados de la década de los 70 cuando las ciudades europeas y de los países más industrializados se enfrentan a la finalización de los procesos de expansión metropolitana, los efectos de la reestructuración productiva y la aparición de nuevos problemas urbanos. A lo largo de cuatro décadas, estas tendencias transforman la naturaleza de los problemas urbanos, asimilándolos a los derivados de la reorganización productiva y regulatoria (pobreza, desempleo, precarización, sinhogarismo, etc.), al mismo tiempo que, en el marco de los procesos de reconfiguración escalar del Estado y reconstitución de la

primacía de la escala urbana, impulsan una redefinición tanto de las formas, representaciones y funciones urbanas, como de las “soluciones” a esos problemas, así como a los modos de gobierno y formas de intervención pública en la ciudad.

La reconstitución de la primacía de la escala urbana<sup>7</sup> va, así, acompañada de la expansión de la esfera de acción política local y un creciente protagonismo de las instituciones y actores locales, urbano-metropolitanos y regionales a medida que se produce una transferencia a escala sub-nacional de parte de las competencias y responsabilidades del estado nacional; los gobiernos locales dejan de ser simples mecanismos de transmisión de las políticas del gobierno central para asumir un papel más activo en la organización de las relaciones económicas, políticas y sociales a escala local que busca reforzar las economías locales a través de un conjunto de medidas basadas en nuevas fórmulas y mecanismos político-institucionales. La preocupación con la base productiva de la ciudad y el desarrollo económico local se incorporan como elementos innovadores cada vez más centrales de la intervención urbana, desplazando a un segundo plano las funciones relacionadas con la redistribución o la reproducción social, características del urbanismo fordista-keynesiano (Borja, 1990; Vázquez, 1993). El eje de la política urbana de las ciudades europeas se desplaza, pasando de ocuparse mayoritariamente de la gestión del crecimiento y el control de las externalidades negativas provocadas por los procesos de expansión urbana, a intervenir para compensar los efectos de la crisis y apoyar el desarrollo de nuevas funcionalidades económicas y urbanas (Hall, 1988).

Aunque estos procesos siguen trayectorias muy diversas tanto temporal como espacialmente, y adoptan formas variadas en diferentes contextos institucionales, la creciente implicación de los gobiernos locales/urbanos en la promoción y regeneración económica es inseparable de la expansión global del régimen regulatorio

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<sup>7</sup> La reconstitución de la escala urbana como eje central de la nueva organización económica se intensifica en el contexto de transición hacia una nueva economía basada en el conocimiento y a escala global en la que las áreas urbanas (re)emergen como nodos estratégicos en base a su capacidad para actuar como espacios de innovación y generar dinámicas de aprendizaje, economías externas y ventaja competitiva (Maskell et al, 1998). Los recursos, atributos y activos locacionales de las áreas urbanas conforman el sustrato material sobre el que se fundamenta la competitividad de las empresas que operan desde ellas,

neoliberal. Así, con – relativa – independencia de su sesgo político e ideológico, la mayoría de los gobiernos locales/urbanos se han visto forzados a adoptar iniciativas y estrategias alineadas con los objetivos del crecimiento y la competitividad local (Leitner y Sheppard, 1998; Lovering, 1995; Peck y Tickell, 1994). En este sentido, la progresiva interiorización de las agendas y programas neoliberales en las políticas urbanas refleja los esfuerzos por parte de los gobiernos locales por adaptarse al nuevo contexto y participar en formas de competencia inter-territorial, marketing urbano, partenariados público-privados e iniciativas de apoyo directo al sector privado con el fin de mejorar su atraktividad y reposicionarse competitivamente en la nueva economía globalizada. El objetivo último de estas políticas es “movilizar espacios de la ciudad tanto para el crecimiento económico orientado al mercado como para las prácticas de consumo de las élites, asegurando al mismo tiempo el orden y control de las poblaciones ‘excluidas’” (Theodore, Peck y Brenner, 2011: 21). La urbanización del neoliberalismo (Ibid: 25) avanza así a medida que las ciudades y regiones urbanas se han transformado en los campos de prueba para la experimentación regulatoria y el despliegue de una amplia gama de iniciativas y proyectos alineados con los objetivos de la reestructuración neoliberal (Keil, 2002; 2009).

La expansión de la esfera de acción política local y la reorientación de la agenda urbana hacia el crecimiento y la competitividad discurre en paralelo a cambios radicales en los instrumentos, instituciones y modos actuación del urbanismo fordista-keynesiano, un proceso de “destrucción creativa regulatoria” que se expresa en el surgimiento de un nuevo urbanismo que replica a escala urbana la nueva lógica de intervención pública, a partir de un realineamiento productivista de la política urbana que subordina los objetivos redistributivos y de la reproducción social a escala local a las exigencias del ajuste competitivo global (Smith, 2002). Emerge así, una Nueva Política Urbana (NUP) que “incorpora, a escala urbana, los ingredientes principales de la Nueva Política Económica (NEP), plataforma política del (neo)liberalismo conservador, que busca desplazar la intervención pública desde la regulación monopolista del mercado hacia formas de canalización de recursos públicos para las

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pero dentro de redes económicas distanciadas, en un espacio global de flujos de circulación y organización económica (Sassen, 1991; Amin y Thrift, 2002).



infra- y super-estructuras sociales, físicas y geográficas que apoyan, financian, subsidian o, de algún otro modo, promueven nuevas formas de acumulación del capital proveyendo estructuras relativamente fijas que permitan una circulación acelerada de capital y el funcionamiento escasamente controlado de las fuerzas del mercado. Al mismo tiempo, el estado se inhibe, en mayor o menor medida, de impulsar políticas redistributivas de inclusión social universales y de intervenciones Keynesianas de demanda sustituyéndolas por políticas sociales focalizadas y de promoción indirecta del emprendedurismo, especialmente mediante desregulación selectiva, eliminación de barreras burocráticas y de formación de partenariados de inversión” (Swyngedouw et al, 2002:552)

Este nuevo urbanismo impugna la validez del modelo de urbanismo fordista-keynesiano, diseñado para controlar y orientar los procesos de crecimiento en la ciudad, que se revela impotente para afrontar los problemas derivados tanto de la crisis urbana como de la adaptación a las nuevas condiciones de la competencia global (Brindley et al, 1989). Cuestionado por su inoperancia –supuesta o efectiva– en el nuevo contexto socioeconómico, y debilitado por el auge del discurso neoliberal, el enfoque de la gestión urbana, característico del urbanismo fordista-keynesiano, basado en la asignación de inversiones públicas, mediante estructuras de organización burocráticas y formales, a partir de un marco regulador y normativo determinado y orientado por un sesgo redistributivo, deja paso -aunque de forma gradual y desigual- a un enfoque productivista, guiado por la búsqueda del crecimiento y la competitividad, con un énfasis manifiesto en la atracción de inversiones y actividades generadoras de empleo, basado en formas y estructuras de intervención más flexibles, menos formalizadas, y con una retórica de competitividad y eficiencia (Griffiths, 1998; Oatley, 1998). En este sentido, los cambios en las prioridades de la agenda política urbana subrayan los límites del urbanismo desarrollista de grandes planes de expansión, pero también la desconfianza en los instrumentos tradicionales del urbanismo, en particular, los Planes urbanísticos.

La crisis del planeamiento normativo y regulador moderno y la consiguiente quiebra de la visión hegemónica del planeamiento como instrumento de previsión y

control sobre la producción de la ciudad convirtió los megaproyectos urbanos en uno de los instrumentos medulares e imprescindibles de la urbanización neoliberal. Transformados en paradigma de la intervención urbana en las ciudades europeas desde mediados de los años 80, la nueva generación de megaproyectos (Portas, 2003; Mangada, 1991) está íntimamente ligada a las políticas de regeneración/revitalización urbana. Estos proyectos tienen como objetivo impulsar la transformación física y funcional de la ciudad a partir de operaciones singulares de reconversión de espacios degradados u ocupados por actividades obsoletas en áreas generadoras de dinamismo y centralidad. Más allá de la recuperación física de espacios degradados, estas operaciones tienen una clara orientación estratégica en la medida que la reurbanización de suelos degradados se percibe como una oportunidad excepcional para dotar a la ciudad de las condiciones físicas necesarias para acoger nuevos usos y funciones dinamizadoras capaces de relanzar una nueva fase de crecimiento urbano (Hall, 1995). En este sentido, los megaproyectos de este periodo reflejan una nueva forma de entender la producción urbana a partir de operaciones emblemáticas a gran escala que actúan como motores de un urbanismo estratégico y de la valorización en el que la identificación y aprovechamiento de oportunidades (urbanísticas) sirve (técnicamente) para organizar un conjunto de ofertas urbanas dirigidas a mejorar la posición competitiva de la ciudad y generar nuevas oportunidades de negocio y rentabilización del espacio urbano (Rodríguez et al, 2001). Las arquitecturas espectaculares, los arquitectos estrella y los macroeventos internacionales cumplen, en este esquema, una función propagandística y de marketing urbano al servicio de la formación tanto de consensos internos como de una nueva imagen urbana cuyo objetivo es atraer inversiones y/o consumidores y relanzar una nueva fase de crecimiento económico (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Kearns & Philo, 1993).

### ***De la gestión a la promoción urbana: la irresistible ascensión de la ciudad emprendedora***

El segundo vector de cambio en las estrategias urbanas remite a la reorientación del enfoque predominantemente gestor (gerenciador) y regulador de la política urbana

hacia un enfoque proactivo y empresarial. El cambio en las prioridades y la mayor implicación local en la gestión de la crisis transformaron radicalmente las bases para la intervención pública en la ciudad forzando una reconsideración del papel y el ámbito de la política urbana (Albrechts, 1992; Healey et al, 1995). La nueva agenda urbana no sólo incorpora el objetivo prioritario del crecimiento y la competitividad sino la movilización de la política local para la regeneración económica (Mayer, 1995, 2007). La descentralización de responsabilidades a nivel local y el énfasis en el crecimiento y la competitividad han favorecido el realineamiento productivista de la política urbana y la substitución paulatina del enfoque de la regulación y gestión urbanística, dominante durante las décadas de los 60 y 70, por una planificación y gestión estratégica orientada hacia la movilización de recursos y actores locales con el fin de maximizar la capacidad de atracción de la ciudad.

El enfoque empresarial en la intervención pública local remite a una orientación "empresarial", en el sentido schumpeteriano de crear/identificar oportunidades innovadoras de inversión y la asimilación por parte del sector público de los modos de funcionamiento del sector privado. La noción de proactividad sugiere que el liderazgo del mercado y el sector privado es sostenido activamente por el sector público local a través de formas más directas de apoyo a la participación del sector privado. El creciente protagonismo de los gobiernos locales y urbanos se asimila así a una mayor implicación de éstos en la promoción económica tanto en términos cuantitativos como cualitativos, adoptando un estilo dinámico, proactivo y empresarial. La ciudad se gestiona como una empresa que busca asegurar su ventaja competitiva en el marco de la competencia inter-urbana y se vende como un producto recurriendo para ello a técnicas auto-promocionales y publicitarias de marketing urbano, eventos internacionales y proyectos emblemáticos que tienen como objetivo proyectar una imagen de ciudad dinámica, innovadora, creativa y capaz de competir con éxito por la atracción tanto de inversiones productivas y funciones direccionales como consumidores internacionales. Ya no se trata tanto de minimizar las consecuencias negativas del crecimiento urbano mediante mecanismos de redistribución; se trata de maximizar las oportunidades en un contexto de recursos reducidos y en condiciones de creciente competencia inter-urbana. (Albrechts, 1992). La nueva agenda política

urbana sintetiza este giro estratégico hacia un urbanismo “empresarial” impulsado por un sector público convertido en promotor y facilitador en el marco de nuevas formas de gobernanza urbana neoliberal (Rodríguez et al., 2001; Moulaert et al., 2002; Swyngedouw et al., 2002).

El "empresarialismo urbano" se ha convertido en el paradigma dominante de respuesta a los problemas urbanos que comparten orientaciones estratégicas por demás muy dispares. De acuerdo con Jessop (1997) el común denominador es el objetivo de crear "nuevas combinaciones" de factores económicos y/o extraeconómicos que avancen la competitividad urbana (o regional). Estas "nuevas combinaciones", pueden bien contribuir a asegurar ventajas competitivas dinámicas para una ciudad (o región) o, en un sentido más débil, reforzar las ventajas competitivas estáticas (Jessop, 1997:31). Específicamente, la búsqueda de la competitividad incluye, para Harvey (1989), cuatro estrategias básicas de empresarialismo urbano: i) la búsqueda de ventajas competitivas respecto a la producción, mediante inversiones públicas y privadas en infraestructuras físicas y sociales que refuercen la base económica y la atracción de la región urbana; ii) la mejora de la posición competitiva respecto a la distribución espacial del consumo, a través de inversiones dirigidas a atraer consumidores que se centran cada vez más en la calidad de vida como la innovación cultural, los eventos e infraestructuras de ocio y la mejora física del medio ambiente urbano, que son un componente clave de las estrategias de regeneración urbana. iii) la competencia para captar funciones estratégicas de control y decisión en las finanzas, administración pública o en sectores de las comunicaciones e información, funciones que requieren infraestructuras específicas y, muy costosas que garanticen la eficiencia y centralidad de la región urbana en un contexto globalizado; y iv) la búsqueda de ventajas competitivas en la captación de excedentes del sector público que, a pesar de los cambios en las prioridades del gasto público, sigue siendo un mecanismo importante de redistribución. En cada uno de los casos, el objetivo es asegurar la formación de ventajas competitivas (ver Porter, 1995) y, por ende, el crecimiento.

La reorientación estratégica hacia el urbanismo empresarial asume la existencia de la competencia interurbana y, en consecuencia, la búsqueda de ventajas competitivas tanto respecto de la producción como del consumo del urbanismo empresarial exige proyectar una imagen de ciudad dinámica e innovadora, estimulante y creativa capaz de competir con éxito por la atracción tanto de inversiones productivas y funciones direccionales como consumidores internacionales. Y, aunque buena parte de lo que pasa por empresarialismo corresponde más a lo que Lovering (1995) denomina "mercantilización", es decir, un nuevo envoltorio para vender lo que ya existe (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Goodwin, 1993), lo cierto es que la adopción de técnicas autopromocionales y publicitarias, de marketing urbano, es uno de los componentes característicos del urbanismo empresarial (Hall y Hubbard, 1998; Paddison, 1993). La manipulación de la imagen urbana o la construcción de una nueva imagen de la ciudad, a la medida de las necesidades promocionales, se asocia con los esfuerzos por proyectar una identidad diferenciada a través de proyectos emblemáticos, eventos internacionales, festivales, etc. (Bianchini y Parkinson, 1993; Kearns y Philo, 1993; Rodríguez, Moulaert y Swyngedouw, 2001; Smyth, 1994).

### ***La gobernanza plural en la regeneración urbana***

La reorientación empresarial de la política urbana viene también acompañada de innovaciones radicales en la instrumentación de la política urbana y la aparición de nuevas formas de "gobernanza urbana", un tercer aspecto clave de la reestructuración de la intervención pública en las ciudades (Stoker & Young, 1993; Le Galès, 1995; Newman & Thornley, 1996; Healey, 1997). El término "gobernanza urbana" ha sustituido, a lo largo de los últimos años, al de "gobierno urbano" para referirse a la creciente complejidad de la intervención pública en la ciudad como consecuencia de una mayor implicación directa del sector privado, la incorporación de distintas agencias locales, regionales, nacionales y, en ocasiones, de la sociedad civil en el gobierno de la ciudad. Esta expansión de la esfera de la acción política local conlleva la fragmentación de las decisiones entre un abanico de agencias públicas, semi-públicas y privadas y un aumento del peso y la importancia de las coaliciones de

crecimiento, las redes multi-agentes, los consorcios público-privados y agencias privadas (Moulaert et al, 1988; Swyngedouw, 1997b; Preteceille, 1997). La gobernanza urbana se difumina entre una multiplicidad de agentes y relaciones sociales que conlleva la fragmentación y transferencia de responsabilidades que previamente detentaba el gobierno hacia el sector privado, el sector voluntario y hacia los hogares (Healey, 1997). El patrón institucional que emerge se caracteriza por la proliferación de instituciones y organizaciones, pero también de estructuras paralelas de coordinación: formación de consorcios de colaboración y partenariados público-privados y público-públicos, un rasgo característico de la gobernanza urbana (Newman & Thornley, 1996; Healey, 1997).

En resumen, los procesos de reestructuración socio-económica, política y urbana de las últimas cuatro décadas han transformado de manera fundamental el ámbito de la intervención pública en la mayor parte de las ciudades europeas y occidentales impulsando una nueva agenda estratégica urbana. Los grandes proyectos urbanísticos son la expresión material de esta Nueva Política Urbana (Rodríguez et al, 2001; Rodríguez y Martínez 2003) orientada hacia la búsqueda del crecimiento y la competitividad y la eficiencia en la intervención pública urbana; los megaproyectos son la manifestación material de una lógica desarrollista renovada que los considera como palancas de relanzamiento del crecimiento y la transformación funcional urbana. En este sentido, los megaproyectos urbanos de las últimas décadas operan como punta de lanza de innovaciones radicales en la formulación, justificación e instrumentación de la nueva agenda política urbana incorporando las nuevas prioridades de la agenda política y una nueva lógica intervencionista marcada por la flexibilidad, rentabilidad y espontaneismo oportunista y sometida, en última instancia, a los imperativos de la valorización inmobiliaria. La escala y dimensión generalizada de esta tendencia refleja así no sólo la refundación de la relación entre arquitectura, planeamiento y ciudad sino la creciente transformación del mundo en un gran proyecto de urbanización global. Sin embargo, el cambio de ciclo económico y la intensidad de sus efectos en el sector inmobiliario y financiero internacional, está forzando una revisión urgente de los efectos y límites de este urbanismo espec(tac)ular y especulador. En este sentido, la desaceleración inmobiliaria ofrece

una oportunidad única para evaluar y repensar un modelo de regeneración cuya viabilidad ha sido posible por un aumento continuo de las plusvalías derivadas de la recalificación de suelos y la revalorización producida en gran medida por el auge inmobiliario registrado a lo largo de la última década. No todo son malas noticias y la crisis inmobiliaria puede ser un marco favorable a la reflexión sobre la regeneración, la política urbana y la necesidad de nuevos esquemas de financiación de la inversión pública que garanticen una lógica de intervención menos especulativa y corto-placista y un modelo de desarrollo urbano más equilibrado, justo y duradero.

### **1.3.3. Los Grandes Proyectos de Regeneración Urbana como expresión material de las Nuevas Políticas Urbanas**

En toda Europa, las ciudades y regiones han puesto en marcha procesos de reestructuración competitiva a través de una variedad de estrategias de regeneración y revitalización urbana (Precedo, 1993; Fox-Przeworski, 1991). Pero, sin duda, el elemento recurrente de las estrategias de revitalización urbana son los grandes proyectos urbanísticos (GPU), las operaciones emblemáticas del urbanismo estratégico de los 90. Los GPU tienen como objetivo la reorganización estructural del tejido físico y económico urbano a través de la reconversión de amplios espacios degradados como consecuencia, generalmente, del desplazamiento o cese de actividades y funciones previas. La transformación de estos espacios en áreas cuidadosamente diseñadas para usos mixtos, integrando oficinas, viviendas, actividades comerciales, culturales y de ocio, se vincula a la creación de nuevos espacios de producción y de consumo adaptados a las exigencias de las nuevas realidades locales y globales. Al mismo tiempo, estas grandes operaciones emblemáticas persiguen la reconstrucción radical de la imagen urbana mediante una combinación de proyectos emblemáticos, arquitecturas de prestigio, parques temáticos, exposiciones internacionales, festivales de arte y cultura, y otros eventos que cumplen una función publicitaria importante de la nueva orientación y trayectoria para el futuro de la ciudad. Y, si bien es cierto que los grandes proyectos no son una innovación urbanística en sí mismos, la nueva generación de GPU se diferencia de las

intervenciones a gran escala de los años 60 y épocas anteriores en dos rasgos básicos: i) el objetivo de transformación y reconversión de espacios degradados en áreas de nueva centralidad adaptadas a las requerimientos locacionales de las nuevas formas de producción y consumo en el espacio, creando las condiciones físicas para una nueva fase de urbanización a partir de nuevas funcionalidades, y ii) la adopción de técnicas auto-promocionales de marketing urbano y de nuevas fórmulas de gestión empresariales guiadas por criterios de eficiencia y rentabilidad.

### ***Lógica desarrollista, búsqueda del crecimiento y el predominio físico y formal de los proyectos urbanísticos***

Sin excepción, todos los casos analizados en esta investigación revelan que en los últimos 15 años las estrategias de revitalización se han convertido en uno de los ejes centrales de la política urbana en Europa. Y uno de los elementos más visibles de estas estrategias de revitalización son los proyectos emblemáticos de renovación urbanística a gran escala que ocupan un lugar destacado en todos los casos estudiados.

Los grandes proyectos urbanísticos (GPU) son la expresión material de la reorientación de la agenda política urbana hacia la búsqueda del crecimiento y la competitividad y la eficiencia en la intervención pública urbana. En efecto, los GPU son la manifestación de una lógica desarrollista renovada que considera los megaproyectos como palancas de relanzamiento del crecimiento y la transformación funcional urbana. Como tales, estos proyectos operan en los intersticios entre el planeamiento físico y las políticas de desarrollo. Sin embargo, el predominio del sesgo físico y la banalización de la dinámica socioeconómica es uno de los rasgos más notorios y una de las principales limitaciones de esta estrategia de revitalización. El predominio del formalismo proyectual, el diseño y la morfología es consustancial a un modelo de urbanismo basado en intervenciones puntuales, fragmentadas y emblemáticas, un urbanismo “post-moderno” (Quero, 1985; Terán 1985), desprovisto en buena medida de una razón social, en el que la estética se convierte en su argumento principal, en una verdadera ética de la actividad urbanística (Leal 1989; Harvey, 1989). El abandono progresivo de las propuestas de renovación estructural e



integrada de la ciudad y la polarización del planeamiento en torno a proyectos singulares y emblemáticos revalida, de este modo, el predominio de los aspectos físicos y convierte la regeneración económica en un efecto quasi-automático de la renovación física.

La banalización de la dinámica de crecimiento económico es especialmente notoria en los proyectos donde el fuerte sesgo físico forma parte integral de la tradición urbanística. Este sesgo, es especialmente marcado en algunas ciudades de nuestra muestra, como Bilbao y Lisboa, donde las operaciones urbanas responden fundamentalmente a una lógica de determinaciones físicas desconectadas efectivamente de parámetros sociales y económicos que no sean estrictamente derivativos o vinculados a la viabilidad financiera de la propia operación. Y, a pesar del recurso a una retórica integradora y global, estos proyectos siguen atrapados en una lógica predominantemente morfológica de asignación de usos del suelo, arquitecturas urbanas y dotación de infraestructuras. Los objetivos socioeconómicos de las operaciones se consideran dependientes de la reconversión física pero la relación entre renovación física y regeneración económica se presupone derivativa y no se problematiza. La ausencia de estudios prospectivos de demanda que sustenten decisiones en torno a la provisión de superficies terciarias o comerciales es solo un ejemplo de cómo estas decisiones vienen determinadas por criterios estrictamente inmobiliarios, cuando no especulativos.

### ***Empresarialismo de estado condicionado***

Los casos de estudio de esta investigación revelan el ascenso y progresiva consolidación del enfoque empresarial en la intervención urbanística en Europa en la década de los 90. Aunque con importantes variaciones en el grado y alcance, en las ciudades europeas se ha impuesto una dinámica competitiva en la que el estado local respalda la razón desarrollista de la regeneración urbana basada en grandes proyectos de inversión, que siguen una lógica financiera global, del capital inmobiliario y de la necesidad real o imaginada de la reestructuración competitiva. En otras palabras, el estado local lidera, de forma (pro)activa una Nueva Política Económica (NPE) a nivel

local promoviendo las inversiones privadas por medio de instrumentos de apoyo directo e indirectos, incluyendo el recurso a la desregulación, los incentivos fiscales y el marketing urbano (Cox, 1997; Moulaert et al, 2000). Al mismo tiempo, el estado local debe mediar en las relaciones políticas y sociales con distintos segmentos de la sociedad urbana: empresas locales, asociaciones de barrios y sus representantes, partidos políticos, activistas, etc. (Judge et al, 1995). Esta situación contradictoria a menudo lleva a las autoridades locales a perseguir estrategias oportunistas de gestión de las relaciones sociales. Entre estas, el recurso creciente a la excepcionalidad en los procedimientos de intervención (sobrepasando normas y regulaciones en curso), el establecimiento de instituciones no-gubernamentales y sin obligación de responder democráticamente de sus decisiones, la formación de redes de interés y la puesta en marcha de medidas compensatorias (generalmente escasas) de economía social. De este modo, las autoridades locales se ven atrapadas en una tensión triangular entre la Nueva Política Económica y el ambiguo discurso de legitimación en un intento por forjar una coexistencia más armónica entre lógicas de desarrollo intrínsecamente opuestas.

### ***Grandes Proyectos Urbanos y gestión adaptativa***

Una de los elementos centrales de las nuevas políticas de regeneración urbana es la relación de los procedimientos de planificación, y desarrollo de los GPU con los instrumentos y regulaciones de planeamiento. A menudo, encontramos que, aunque estos proyectos se insertan en el marco de las directrices y normas de planificación estatutaria, la concepción inicial, el diseño y la implementación se sitúan al margen, o en paralelo, de las estructuras formales de planeamiento. El carácter de “excepcionalidad” asociado con estas iniciativas favorece una dinámica de autonomización vinculada a planes especiales, a iniciativas emblemáticas y operaciones de ajuste a criterios parciales en que los procedimientos y normas estatutarias quedan relegadas.

La excepcionalidad de los GPU se justifica en base a diferentes factores: la escala, el carácter emblemático y bandera de la operación, las presiones de la agenda

temporal (por ejemplo, en el caso de eventos internacionales como Juegos Olímpicos, Exposiciones Universales, etc.), la necesidad de mayor flexibilidad en la toma de decisiones, los criterios de eficiencia, etc. La excepcionalidad es un rasgo esencial de los nuevos métodos de intervención que abrazan la primacía de las iniciativas basadas y centradas en proyectos por encima de los procedimientos y planes reguladores. De modo que, aunque los planes y las normas estatutarias no han desaparecido de la arena de la política urbana, su papel y poder ha sido seriamente recortado y los planes especiales y las medidas excepcionales a menudo se imponen. Además, frente a la crisis del planeamiento como previsión global e integral, el proyecto emblemático se presenta como una alternativa eficaz combinando las ventajas de la flexibilidad y de las acciones concentradas con una extraordinaria capacidad de significación simbólica. Y, en un contexto de permanente transformación e inestabilidad, la flexibilidad y la capacidad de adaptación rápida se convierte en una condición necesaria para resultados eficientes.

La regeneración basada en proyectos también refleja una reorientación de las prioridades de la planificación a favor de un mayor peso de los criterios de eficiencia en la gestión de la regeneración urbana. En un contexto marcado por fuertes restricciones presupuestarias, numerosas demandas y limitadas oportunidades financieras, la cuestión de la eficiencia en el desarrollo e implementación de la política urbana deja de ser un desideratum para convertirse en un requisito. Sin embargo, el significado de eficiencia es, a menudo ambiguo y se utiliza de forma retórica para justificar el desplazamiento de trabas y restricciones reguladoras y se mide en términos economicistas muy limitados y condicionados por objetivos de muy corto plazo. En la regeneración urbana, esto se reduce a un esfuerzo por maximizar la valorización inmobiliaria con un mínimo de costes de inversión en el más corto plazo de tiempo posible. Y, el carácter de intervención contenida de los GPU se presenta como más adaptada a los imperativos de la eficiencia.

La dictadura de la eficiencia y la rentabilidad suele ir acompañada de fuertes presiones para que los gobiernos locales adopten los modos de funcionamiento estratégico, empresarial y, si fuera necesario, oportunista asociados con el sector

privado. La proactividad, la visión empresarial y la asunción de riesgos están llamadas a reemplazar la gestión burocrática de los gobiernos locales. De este modo, un estilo de intervención afirmativo y empresarial se alinea con los objetivos de flexibilidad y eficiencia que se consideran básicos para el éxito en la regeneración y competitividad local.

***Conclusión: Empresarialismo urbano y la gobernanza local  
asediada***

Durante casi tres décadas, la política urbana en muchas ciudades europeas se ha realineado con los criterios y objetivos de la Nueva Política Económica (NPE). El objetivo de estas políticas era potenciar la reestructuración competitiva para responder a los efectos de la crisis y el estancamiento de la dinámica urbana desde finales de los años 70. Los GPU constituyen un ingrediente fundamental de estas nuevas políticas. La simple dimensión de estos proyectos los eleva a la categoría de iconos centrales de la remodelación de la imagen del futuro de las ciudades donde se localizan. No es necesario recalcar que la re-imaginación del futuro de la ciudad se articula directamente con las visiones de aquellos que son puntales en la formulación, planificación e implementación del proyecto. Consecuentemente, estos proyectos han sido y a menudo todavía son arenas que reflejan intensas disputas de poder y posicionamiento de elites económicas, políticas, sociales o culturales claves que son instrumentales en el ámbito urbano. La delineación de estos proyectos subraya y refleja las aspiraciones de un conjunto particular de actores locales, regionales, nacionales o, en ocasiones, también internacionales que dan forma, por medio del ejercicio de poder socioeconómico o político, a las trayectorias de desarrollo específicas de estas áreas.

En contraste con los discursos de empresarialismo y revitalización liderada por el mercado, los grandes proyectos urbanos son decididamente, y casi sin excepción, promovidos, liderados y, a menudo, financiados por el sector público y se inscriben en una lógica de gobernanza urbana. La regeneración urbana se considera una estrategia central para reequilibrar los desequilibrios fiscales de los gobiernos locales.

Las políticas territoriales, orientadas a aumentar los ingresos, alterando la base socioeconómica contributiva y las actividades económicas rentables, se encuentran entre las pocas opciones disponibles, especialmente en un contexto en el cual la estructura de los ingresos fiscales está cambiando rápidamente. La revalorización del suelo urbano continúa siendo uno de los pocos medios de que disponen los gobiernos locales para incrementar la recaudación fiscal. A pesar de la retórica del liderazgo del mercado y de inversiones financiadas por el sector privado, el Estado es aún uno de los actores centrales que lideran el proceso de reurbanización. Los riesgos son asumidos por el Estado, en ocasiones compartidos el sector privado, pero dado el carácter especulativo e inmobiliario de los proyectos, es bastante probable que se produzcan déficits que, a menudo, derivan en la socialización de los costes y riesgos y la privatización de los beneficios. Y, si en el pasado, se invocaban los beneficios sociales derivados de los proyectos para legitimar estas prácticas, en la actualidad se esconden detrás de contabilidades creativas, el desvío de fondos a través de organizaciones quasi-gubernamentales y empresas mixtas público/privadas. En consecuencia, los grandes proyectos urbanos se han convertido en un factor de gasto en los presupuestos públicos, bien directamente a través de inversiones públicas, o indirectamente, por las garantías de inversión del estado local. Una consecuencia de esta dinámica es que muchos proyectos de renovación de barrios se han reducido, retrasado o, en algunos casos, simplemente desaparecido. La combinación de una política basada en GPU, con sus rasgos de crecimiento desigual y la falta de acciones a nivel de los barrios, ha reforzado las desigualdades sociales entre barrios y ha acentuado procesos que ya eran graves de polarización y exclusión social.

Por otra parte, dadas las funciones socioeconómicas radicalmente nuevas asociadas con los GPU (como parte del esfuerzo por alinear el tejido socioeconómico urbano con las condiciones requeridas en un nuevo entorno competitivo internacional) es inevitable que se dé un proceso de transferencia y/o dislocación de empleos. Los mercados de trabajo espaciales se desarticulan o están desajustados. Las políticas de empleo direccionadas, pueden remediar algunas de estos desajustes, pero la misma amplitud de la reestructuración de los mercados de trabajo implica que, a menudo, procesos de adaptación muy penosos y la creciente separación entre los residentes

locales que se mantienen y la nueva fuerza de trabajo que se incorpora. Esto lleva a una dualización de dos bandas de los mercados de trabajo: durante la fase de construcción y en sus efectos. De forma creciente, los mercados de trabajo urbanos duales están surgiendo, con un segmento de alta cualificación y remuneración de un lado, y un segmento de trabajadores precarizados y, a menudo, irregulares. La profunda reestructuración de los mercados de trabajo, facilitada por la desregulación laboral y de otros marcos reguladores a nivel nacional, se consolida con la recomposición socioeconómica de los GPU. La inclusión de la reserva de mano de obra existente en el área se hace imposible mientras que las políticas de formación y reciclaje ocupacional dirigidas a facilitar la entrada en los mercados de trabajo tienden a ser poco efectivas, incluso aunque se prolonguen durante largos periodos.

Los GPU producen islas urbanas, espacios discretos con barreras de delimitación cada vez más pronunciadas (áreas comerciales, de ocio o residenciales vigiladas y enrejadas). Esta segregación se refuerza por medio de una combinación procesos de formación de obstáculos físicos, sociales y culturales. El resultado global es el ascenso de la ciudad fragmentada, la completa reorganización del tejido socio-espacial de la aglomeración urbana (Marcuse, 1989). En algunos casos, esto toma forma en la suburbanización de la pobreza a la vez que la diferenciación interna intensifica la diferenciación socio-espacial de la ciudad. El resultado es un aumento de la polarización socio-espacial, que a veces toma formas extremas de urbanización o revitalización a “dos velocidades” (Rodríguez, 1996; Moulaert et al, 2001).

Las Nuevas Políticas Urbanas han venido acompañadas por, y han facilitado, la formación de una nueva forma de gobernanza urbana que descansa principalmente en el desarrollo de nuevas relaciones entre el estado local y el sector privado y, consecuentemente, ha reorganizado las relaciones de poder político y social en gran medida. A menudo, la participación y la obligación de dar cuentas democráticamente se ha debilitado mientras que se ha impuesto una visión y perspectiva elitista en la reestructuración de la ciudad. Además, estos grandes proyectos urbanísticos han contribuido activamente a producir los procesos que más tarde han sido reconocidos como constituyentes de la globalización. De hecho, los GPU son la manifestación

material y político-económica a través de la cual se constituyen los actuales procesos de globalización económica, transnacionalización cultural y creciente competencia inter-urbana. Como tal, la globalización es un proceso intensamente localizado y que resulta de las dinámicas concretas de reestructuración territorial. Empujando hacia delante este modelo de urbanización globalizada exige la formación cohesionada de una configuración elitista orientada al crecimiento que retiene a la gobernanza local bajo su asedio hegemónico.

En resumen, los GPU se han convertido en una de componentes más visibles de las estrategias de revitalización urbana puestas en marcha por las ciudades en busca de crecimiento y competitividad. Estos proyectos sintetizan y son la expresión material de una lógica desarrollista renovada que los proyecta como instrumentos claves para generar crecimiento futuro y reforzar la competitividad urbana. Pero los proyectos urbanos de este tipo no son sólo la respuesta a los cambios económicos y políticos orquestados en otro lugar, estos proyectos son también catalizadores de esos mismos cambios, alimentando procesos que se manifiestan tanto a nivel local como regional, nacional e internacional. Son estas intervenciones concretas las que expresan y dan forma a los cambios en la configuración política y económica. De este modo, los GPU se han convertido en símbolos emblemáticos y en la manifestación concreta de los procesos de globalización que permiten comprender esta globalización no tanto como un proceso de transnacionalización sino principalmente como la reestructuración localizada que reconfigura las geometrías del poder que dan forma al tejido urbano.

#### **1.4. Metodología**

La metodología utilizada en la investigación que soporta esta tesis ha sido desarrollada en el marco de un grupo de investigación europea, el European Spatial Development Planning Research Network (ESDP), cuyos miembros llevan colaborando de forma ininterrumpida, durante más de 25 años, en diferentes proyectos de investigación de los Programas Marco de la Comisión Europea. Más específicamente, la metodología propuesta para el análisis de las estrategias de

regeneración urbana en ciudades europeas se define dentro de la investigación comparativa que bajo el título de “*Urban Redevelopment and Social Polarisation in the City*” (URSPIC) ha examinado los cambios en la formulación y gestión de la política urbana tomando como eje analítico los grandes proyectos urbanísticos (GPU) puestos en marcha desde mediados de la década de los 80 en trece ciudades europeas (ver tabla 1.1).

Financiado por el Programa Marco IV de la Comisión Europea, el proyecto URSPIC propone un marco teórico y metodológico detallado en el que abordar el análisis de la transformación y reformulación de la política urbana y la relación entre las estrategias de regeneración basadas en grandes proyectos urbanos y los procesos de reestructuración urbana a varias escalas. La investigación sitúa a las grandes operaciones o proyectos urbanos (GPU) en el centro de los procesos de neoliberalización de las políticas urbanas donde (re)emergen como contrapunto a la crisis del planeamiento funcionalista fordista-keynesiano, convirtiéndose en catalizadores de innovaciones radicales en la política urbana. La regeneración dirigida por GPUs ejemplifica el giro en las prioridades de la agenda política y en las formas de intervención pública, sometida a los imperativos de la rentabilidad financiera y de flexibilidad, viabilidad y eficiencia, y de la gestión estratégica de ciudades que están en la base de la formación del nuevo paradigma urbano. Desde esta perspectiva, los GPUs se consideran paradigmáticos de un nuevo modo de producción de la ciudad que se refleja en la presencia de diversos componentes innovadores compartidos: el desplazamiento de las prioridades de la intervención urbana hacia el crecimiento y la competitividad, la adopción de criterios empresariales en la gestión urbana, la aparición de nuevas configuraciones y estructuras institucionales, el énfasis en la coordinación y concertación, etc. (para una presentación detallada de la metodología, ver Moulaert, Swyngedouw y Rodríguez, 2003: cap 3).

A partir de esta reflexión, la elaboración del marco analítico comenzó con un análisis exhaustivo de los debates en la literatura académica y profesional sobre reestructuración urbana y políticas urbanas, especialmente en relación a las estrategias de regeneración urbana en el marco de los procesos de globalización y



neoliberalización de la ciudad. Con el fin de llegar a un marco conceptual consensuado y compartido para todos los casos de estudio, se realizaron diferentes seminarios técnicos con todo el equipo investigador. Paralelamente, la formulación del marco analítico se acompañó de una reflexión extensa pero detallada sobre cómo abordar empíricamente el estudio de la relación entre los grandes proyectos de desarrollo urbano y las múltiples dimensiones de la transformación socio-económica a diferentes escalas territoriales; en otras palabras: desenmarañar la dialéctica entre las dimensiones globales y locales de los GPU. El reto consistió en traducir esos procesos y mecanismos en pautas y guías para llevar a cabo la investigación empírica. Para orientar el análisis de los casos de estudio, se abordaron las siguientes cuestiones metodológicas:

- ✓ ¿Cómo analizar procesos de exclusión/integración social, económica y política en estas ciudades?
- ✓ ¿Cómo estudiar la concepción, planificación, implementación y valorización de los grandes proyectos urbanos, teniendo en cuenta la estructura de las ciudades y regiones urbanas en las que se localizan?
- ✓ ¿Cómo relacionar estos procesos con los mecanismos particulares de integración y exclusión generados por los GPUs?
- ✓ ¿Cómo posicionar las estrategias de desarrollo y regeneración urbana impulsadas por GPUs en relación a las tendencias en la ideología urbana y en los enfoques contemporáneos de políticas y estrategias urbanas?
- ✓ ¿Cómo hacer las trayectorias de investigación “local” comparables globalmente?

Estas cuestiones se sintetizaron en la guía metodológica siguiente:

**Tabla 1.1. Guía de dimensiones de los GPU examinadas para cada una de las etapas de su desarrollo**

<p><b>1) Formulación, diseño y planificación del Proyecto</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Promoción y propuestas:</b> ¿Quién, dónde, cómo, por qué y para qué?; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Participación local/internacional</li> <li>○ Iniciativa ¿pública/privada?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Proceso de toma de decisiones:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Racionalidades públicas/privadas</li> <li>○ Racionalidades de la toma de decisiones: principios de las políticas, fuerzas globales, ideologías, visiones culturales, retóricas y discursos, etc.</li> <li>○ Dinámicas de inclusión/exclusión: económica, financiera, ideológica y culturalmente ¿quién participa, quién está excluido?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>2) Construcción e implantación del Proyecto</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Flujos financieros:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Flujos de inversión directa (¿quién, cuánto, cómo?)</li> <li>○ Inversión indirecta (¿quién, cuánto, cómo?);</li> <li>○ análisis coste/beneficio: ¿cómo se reparten los costes y los beneficios?</li> <li>○ Contratas de bienes, servicios y mercados laborales...</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Estructura del empleo: directo/indirecto, local/nacional/internacional</b></li> <li>• <b>Impactos de la construcción del GPU</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In situ: efectos de desplazamiento en términos físicos, vivienda, culturales, identitarios, empleos y servicios.</li> <li>○ En la comunidad urbana más amplia (barrios vecinos, en la ciudad en su conjunto).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>3) Etapa operativa del Proyecto</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Estructura de financiación: inversión, gestión, flujos monetarios y financieros</b></li> <li>• <b>Renta, beneficios, distribución</b></li> <li>• <b>Estructura del empleo: volumen, cualificación,</b></li> <li>• <b>Estructura de subcontratación;</b></li> <li>• <b>Impactos</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ El Proyecto constituye o no una ruptura en relación con cuatro tipos de cuestiones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- la política y estrategia urbana,</li> <li>- los instrumentos y procedimientos de gestión urbana,</li> <li>- la dinámica institucional y los modos de gobernanza, y</li> <li>- la estructura urbana y los mercados de suelo (reestructuración de la trama urbana)</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Impactos directos e indirectos sobre la comunidad urbana: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Impactos específicos sobre la estructura productiva: diversificación, refuncionalización</li> <li>- Impactos en términos de segregación socio-espacial, polarización, gentrificación</li> <li>- Impactos en términos institucionales y de gobernanza</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Fuente: URSPIC network meetings

### ***1.4.1. Metodología para el análisis de los procesos de formulación e implantación de las operaciones de regeneración urbana***

Metodológicamente, el análisis de las estrategias de regeneración urbana dirigida por grandes proyectos urbanos se ha explorado a través de un conjunto de casos de estudio, de grandes operaciones urbanísticas desarrolladas en otras tantas ciudades europeas. Así, en esta investigación se analizan los GPU desplegados en trece ciudades: la Villa Olímpica en Atenas, *Adlershof* en Berlín, Abandoibarra en Bilbao, *International Convention Centre* en Birmingham, *Leopold Quarter* en Bruselas, *Orestaden* en Copenhague, *International Financial Services Centre* en Dublín, *Expo'98* en Lisboa, *South Bank Project* en Londres, *Centro Direzionale* en Nápoles, *Kop van Zuid* en Rotterdam, y *Donau-City/Nordbahnhof* en Viena. Cada uno de ellos refleja, al margen de evidentes particularidades relativas tanto al contexto geo-institucional y político específico en el que se desenvuelven, como a las dinámicas de adaptación y reajuste de las formas neoliberales de políticas urbanas, la lógica dominante de las estrategias de revitalización impulsadas por las ciudades europeas desde la década de los 80. En este sentido, puede decirse que estos proyectos son la expresión material de la realineación estratégica de las políticas urbanas en el marco de la consolidación progresiva del nuevo régimen/modo de regulación neoliberal.

Los casos seleccionados revelan la importancia de varios componentes innovadores de la intervención urbana: el desplazamiento de las prioridades de la intervención urbana hacia el crecimiento y la competitividad, la adopción de criterios empresariales en la gestión urbana, la aparición de nuevas configuraciones y estructuras institucionales, el énfasis en la coordinación y concertación, etc. Estos GPU se han analizado a lo largo de las sucesivas etapas de desarrollo, desde la fase de concepción, formulación a la implantación y fase operativa. Las etapas diferenciadas del proceso de desarrollo para cada uno de los casos/GPUs seleccionados distinguen: i) formulación, diseño y planificación; ii) construcción e implementación; y iii) fase operativa del GPU

**Tabla 1.2. Características generales de los GPU seleccionados (1996)**

Tipo de ciudad	Fase del Proyecto		
	Fase de Planificación	Fase de Implantación	Fase Operativa
<b>Ciudad Mundial</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Rotterdam-Randstad-Holanda:</b> Kop Van Zuid</li> <li>• <b>Londres:</b> The South Bank Project</li> </ul>	
<b>Ciudad Primaria Europea</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Berlin:</b> Adlershof</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bruselas:</b> Espace Leopold</li> </ul>
<b>Ciudad Primaria Nacional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Copenhague:</b> Orestaden</li> <li>• <b>Dublin:</b> International Financial Services Centre</li> <li>• <b>Atenas:</b> Olympic Village</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lisboa:</b> Expo</li> <li>• <b>Vienna:</b> International Centre</li> </ul>	
<b>Ciudad Secundaria Nacional</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bilbao:</b> Abandoibarra</li> <li>• <b>Birmingham:</b> CDB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nápoles:</b> Centro Direzionale</li> <li>• <b>Lille:</b> Euralile</li> </ul>

Fuente: URSPIC metodología

En cada una de estas etapas, se identificaron diferentes elementos cualificadores de la interacción global-local, en términos de las dimensiones económicas, políticas, culturales y sociales, que intentan capturar la complejidad del proceso multi-dimensional y multi-escalar de los GPU. El análisis y la reconstrucción de la interferencia de cada una de esas dimensiones en los casos específicos implicó, también, la identificación de los diversos actores y sectores sociales y políticos involucrados (“stakeholders”) en las diferentes etapas, así como de las dinámicas de integración/exclusión de éstos que se producen en cada una de las etapas de desarrollo de las operaciones urbanas.

Por otra parte, metodológicamente, la investigación se apoya en una combinación de fuentes primarias y secundarias. Las fuentes secundarias incluyen tanto el análisis de la literatura académica especializada como de informes técnicos, documentos de planeamiento, prensa local, páginas web, actas de comisiones urbanísticas y memorias de organizaciones públicas y privadas relacionadas con el urbanismo en general y las políticas de regeneración urbana en particular. Igualmente, la investigación ha recurrido a fuentes estadísticas diversas para analizar distintos aspectos de la dinámica

de reestructuración urbana a diferentes escalas espaciales y a lo largo del periodo estudiado.

En relación a las fuentes primarias utilizadas en la investigación, se trata de entrevistas en profundidad realizadas a agentes clave, expertos cualificados y representantes de las distintas partes interesadas. La selección de las personas entrevistadas se hizo en base a un conjunto de criterios como su participación destacada en las diferentes etapas de desarrollo de los GPU: en los procesos de formulación, desarrollo y planificación, en la fase de construcción e implementación, y en la etapa operativa del proyecto. También se seleccionaron para ser entrevistados personas pertenecientes a distintos cuerpos profesionales, técnicos municipales, académicos, promotores y agentes activos de la sociedad civil (movimientos sociales, ONGs, activistas barriales, etc.)<sup>8</sup>.

Aunque las entrevistas se han realizado con un formato abierto y flexible, sin cuestionario detallado, se elaboró una guía con los puntos principales a ser abordados para las diferentes etapas de desarrollo de los proyectos e iniciativas (ver tabla 1.1).

#### **1.4.2. Caso de estudio: Bilbao**

Aunque la investigación que aquí se presenta analiza la formulación, implantación y resultados de las estrategias de regeneración impulsadas en un amplio número de ciudades en Europa, el caso de estudio que se desarrolla en detalle es el de Bilbao y, más específicamente, la operación urbanística de Abandoibarra, buque insignia de la estrategia de regeneración de Bilbao.

La elección del caso de Bilbao tiene su fundamento, por una parte, en haber sido objeto de estudio destacado en mi tarea investigadora a lo largo de muchos años durante los cuales he participado en la elaboración de diversos diagnósticos socioeconómicos y territoriales centrados en Bilbao y que me han permitido acumular

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<sup>8</sup> En el caso concreto de Bilbao se llevaron a cabo 18 entrevistas locales y 6 con expertos de ámbito nacional o internacional.

un conocimiento exhaustivo de los procesos y dinámicas estructurales de la ciudad. Entre estos estudios se incluyen los trabajos de diagnóstico socioeconómico previos para la redacción del primer Plan General de Ordenación Urbana de Bilbao, estudios para la modificación del Plan Especial de Reforma Interior de Zorrotzaurre, los del Plan de Rehabilitación del Casco Viejo o los estudios previos para revisión en curso del Plan General de Ordenación Urbana.

Por otra parte, el proceso de transformación de Bilbao en las últimas décadas ocupa un lugar prominente en los estudios urbanos contemporáneos. Consolidada, desde finales del siglo XIX, como uno de los principales centros industriales, portuarios y financieros del país, Bilbao transita a lo largo del siglo XX del auge al declive y del declive, a principios del siglo XXI a la regeneración. Como un ave fénix, Bilbao renace de sus cenizas de la deindustrialización para reinventarse como una metrópolis post-industrial, dinámica, innovadora, vanguardista, etc. La intensidad, espectacularidad y proyección propagandística de su metamorfosis ha capturado la imaginación local e internacional, apuntalada inicialmente por la notoriedad de la arquitectura del Museo Guggenheim, y ha convertido la regeneración urbana de Bilbao en un modelo de referencia, ejemplo a estudiar y presumiblemente a imitar. En este sentido, Bilbao es un caso paradigmático para entender los elementos característicos de la regeneración urbana neoliberal y de las Nuevas Políticas Urbanas.

El análisis de la regeneración urbana de Bilbao se centra en la operación de Abandoibarra, un proyecto de marcado carácter emblemático, estratégico y de refuncionalización urbana. La propuesta de reconversión de esta antigua zona portuaria e industrial en un “centro direccional” post-industrial inaugura una nueva etapa en la política urbana de Bilbao que tiene como eje la actuación en áreas consolidadas de la ciudad, a través de la recuperación de suelos "liberados" por la reestructuración y el declive industrial, generando espacios de nueva centralidad sobre los que fundamentar el modelo futuro de desarrollo urbano. Estratégicamente vinculada a los objetivos de la revitalización socioeconómica y urbana-metropolitana pero de naturaleza eminentemente urbanística, Abandoibarra se transforma en el

buque insignia de la regeneración de Bilbao y modelo para futuras intervenciones, proyectándose como un ejemplo de eficiencia y maximización de oportunidades urbanísticas combinando la concertación pública con una gestión eficaz y solvente de la operación. Sin embargo, como intentaremos mostrar en el análisis que desarrollamos en esta investigación, el autoproclamado éxito de Abandoibarra y los innegables logros físicos y funcionales de la operación, no pueden ocultar las importantes limitaciones derivadas sobre todo del fracaso de la estrategia direccional y los efectos de elitización/gentrificación derivados de la operación. Además, los límites de la estrategia de regeneración de Abandoibarra se manifiestan en la incapacidad de reproducción de un modelo de intervención decisivamente marcado por una lógica oportunista donde el imperativo de la viabilidad financiera ha dejado a Abandoibarra cautiva de una lógica de maximización de plusvalías a corto plazo subordinando los componentes estratégicos a las exigencias de la revalorización urbanística especulativa.

## **1.5. Estructura de la tesis**

Esta tesis doctoral se presenta como compendio de cuatro artículos publicados en diversas revistas internacionales y seleccionados en función de una coherencia temática y argumentativa. Estos artículos forman parte de una misma línea de investigación centrada en el análisis de las estrategias de regeneración urbana llevadas a cabo en diferentes ciudades europeas desde mediados de la década de los 1980 hasta principios de la década del 2000. La investigación se ha desarrollado dentro de un grupo estable de investigadores de diferentes universidades europeas lo que ha permitido, por una parte, profundizar en la elaboración colectiva de un marco analítico común sobre los procesos de reestructuración socioeconómica y regulatoria en las áreas urbanas, especialmente en relación con la consolidación de un nuevo paradigma de la producción urbana; y, por otra, avanzar en la producción de una metodología de análisis comparativo que busca articular dialécticamente la tensión entre dinámicas generales de reorganización y cambio estructural con la variedad de

formas que adoptan y los efectos diferenciados (y diferenciadores) en distintos espacios, territorios y escalas.

El capítulo 1 presenta el marco conceptual y metodológico que fundamenta los resultados recogidos en los artículos incluidos en la tesis y establece el hilo conductor de los temas tratados en los capítulos siguientes. El marco analítico propone mostrar cómo las estrategias de regeneración/revitalización urbana (re)emergen en las últimas cuatro décadas, en paralelo a las tendencias apuntadas, convertidas en el principal vector de intervención en la ciudad y de la refundación de la política urbana y núcleo duro de la reurbanización neoliberal. Esta dinámica está relacionada con la progresiva consolidación de un nuevo paradigma de intervención en la ciudad a partir de innovaciones substantivas en la formulación, instrumentación y gestión de la política urbana; un paradigma que, en un marco de restitución de la centralidad del Mercado, se articula en torno a tres tendencias interdependientes de cambio: a) el desplazamiento de las prioridades de la agenda política urbana hacia el crecimiento y la reestructuración competitiva, b) la reorientación del enfoque predominantemente gestor y regulador hacia un enfoque proactivo y empresarial basado en la introducción de criterios de rentabilidad económica y eficiencia en la gestión y desarrollo de las operaciones y actuaciones urbanas y, c) la innovación en la instrumentación fundamentada en nuevas arquitecturas institucionales y un modelo de urbanismo negociado, de la concertación, como fundamento de la nueva gobernanza urbana. El elemento vertebrador del nuevo paradigma son los Grandes Proyectos (de regeneración/revitalización) Urbanos (GPUs), expresión material de una lógica desarrollista renovada y vanguardia de un modelo de gobernanza proactiva, estratégica y empresarial característica de las Nuevas Políticas Urbanas. Los GPUs de este periodo desenfocan la (desplazan el foco de) atención de las políticas de regeneración más allá de las actuaciones tradicionales sobre espacios vulnerables o degradados –típicamente, centros históricos o complejos residenciales en las periferias urbanas– y lo redirigen hacia los vacíos físicos y funcionales de la ciudad consolidada para su (re)conversión en áreas de nueva centralidad sobre las que impulsar un nuevo ciclo/modelo de desarrollo urbano, reflejando el carácter estratégico de estas operaciones y su papel cardinal como motores incontestables de la reestructuración de la ciudad contemporánea.



En el capítulo 2 se presenta el primero de los artículos publicados, “*Neoliberal Urbanization in Europe: Large-Scale Urban Development Projects and the New Urban Policy*”, que resume las principales aportaciones teóricas derivadas del análisis de los 13 GPUs integrados en la investigación original. El capítulo se centra, por una parte, en desgranar la manera en que los procesos de globalización y neoliberalización se articulan con el surgimiento de nuevas configuraciones escalares del gobierno y nuevos regímenes de gobernanza urbana; y, por otra parte, muestra cómo estas dinámicas se materializan de forma ejemplar a través de las grandes operaciones y proyectos urbanos – los GPUs – desplegados en las diferentes ciudades europeas, la manifestación más conspicua del realineamiento productivista y competitivo de las políticas urbanas y elemento vertebrador del nuevo paradigma de intervención en la ciudad.

El capítulo 3 presenta el segundo artículo: “*Social Polarization in Metropolitan Areas: the Role of New Urban Policy*”, que examina el impacto de los grandes proyectos de regeneración urbana en los procesos de segregación, polarización y exclusión social en la ciudad. El capítulo analiza las dinámicas que han acompañado la implantación de GPU en cinco ciudades europeas identificando los mecanismos a través de los cuales se materializan esos procesos en un contexto marcado por el avance de las políticas de reestructuración regulatoria neoliberal y su translación local en las Nuevas Políticas Urbanas.

El capítulo 4, presenta el tercer artículo publicado, “*Large Scale Development Projects and Local Governance: From Democratic Urban Planning to Besieged Local Governance*”, donde se analiza la interacción entre las dinámicas de exclusión/inclusión social en la ciudad, la implantación de grandes proyectos urbanos y los cambios en las formas de gobernanza urbana. La primera parte del artículo analiza la evolución de las tendencias de reestructuración urbana y sus consecuencias sobre los mecanismos de integración y exclusión social relacionándolos con cambios en la agenda política urbana. El capítulo se centra en los principales aspectos del giro neoliberal de las políticas urbanas que se desprenden de los casos de estudio analizados: las nuevas prioridades, el desplazamiento de los instrumentos estatutarios

por procedimientos excepcionales, los nuevos modelos de gestión estratégica, y las nuevas formas de empresarialismo y gobernanza urbana.

En el capítulo 5 se presenta el cuarto artículo del compendio: *Uneven Redevelopment: New Urban Policies and Socio-Spatial Fragmentation in Metropolitan Bilbao*, que analiza los procesos de reestructuración económica y fragmentación socio-espacial en el área metropolitana de Bilbao que se desarrollan desde principios de la década de los 80, tomando como eje de discusión los cambios en la política urbana y la formulación de nuevas estrategias para la revitalización metropolitana. El capítulo empieza situando el contexto de reestructuración socioeconómica y funcional del área metropolitana de Bilbao. A continuación, examina la reorientación de la política urbana y la formulación de estrategias para la revitalización urbana, poniendo el foco, seguidamente, en la instrumentación y gestión de las nuevas políticas urbanas en Bilbao. Finalmente, el texto presenta un balance crítico de las estrategias para la revitalización urbana en Bilbao a partir del proyecto de Abandoibarra, buque insignia de la regeneración urbana de Bilbao, que sintetiza la nueva lógica de intervención urbanística en la ciudad.

Finalmente, el capítulo 6 presenta las conclusiones más relevantes que se extraen de los diferentes trabajos que componen esta tesis y avanza algunas líneas de investigación que se han venido desarrollado desde entonces y de cara al futuro.

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## **CAPÍTULO 2**

### **Neoliberal Urbanization in Europe: Large-Scale Urban Development Projects and the New Urban Policy**

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## 2.1. Abstract

This paper summarizes the theoretical insights drawn from a study of thirteen large-scale urban development projects (UDPs) in twelve European Union countries. The project focused on the way in which globalization and liberalization articulate with the emergence of new forms of governance, on the formation of a new scalar gestalt of governing and on the relationship between large-scale urban development and political, social and economic power relations in the city. Among the most important conclusions, we found that:

- Large-scale UDPs have increasingly been used as a vehicle to establish exceptionality measures in planning and policy procedures. This is part of a neoliberal “New Urban Policy” approach and its selective “middle- and upper class” democracy. It is associated with new forms of “governing” urban interventions, characterized by less democratic and more elite-driven priorities.
- Local democratic participation mechanisms are not respected or are applied in a very “formalist” way, resulting in a new choreography of elite power. However, grassroots movements occasionally manage to turn the course of events in favor of local participation and of modest social returns for deprived social groups.
- The UDPs are poorly integrated at best into the wider urban process and planning system. As a consequence, their impact on a city as a whole and on the areas where the projects are located remains ambiguous.
- Most UDPs accentuate socioeconomic polarization through the working of real estate markets (price rises and displacement of social or low-income housing), changes in the priorities of public budgets that are increasingly redirected from social objectives to investments in the built environment and the restructuring of the labor market

- The UDPs reflect and embody a series of processes that are associated with changing spatial scales of governance; these changes, in turn, reflect a shifting geometry of power in the governing of urbanization.

## **2.2. Large-Scale Urban Development Projects as Urban Policy**

Over the past fifteen years or so, local authorities—alone or in concert with the private sector—have strongly relied on the planning and implementation of large-scale urban development projects (UDPs), such as museums, waterfronts, exhibition halls and parks, business centers, and international landmark events, as part of an effort to re-enforce the competitive position of their metropolitan economies in a context of rapidly changing local, national, and global competitive conditions. In many cases, these projects were supported by a majority of the local constituency, or at least by a silent majority. In other cases, they were initiated by means of “exceptionality” measures, such as the freezing of conventional planning tools, bypassing statutory regulations and institutional bodies, the creation of project agencies with special or exceptional powers of intervention and decision-making, and/or a change in national or regional regulations. On occasion, national governments became the main developers, setting aside both local authorities and constituencies.

This paper will examine the dynamics that have accompanied the implementation of large-scale UDPs in thirteen European cities within the European Union (EU). The analysis is based on research undertaken as part of a Targeted Socioeconomic Research Action (Framework IV program of the EU), “Urban Restructuring and Social Polarization in the City” (URSPIC). URSPIC examined whether large-scale UDPs, as emblematic examples of neoliberal forms of urban governance, contribute to accentuating processes of social exclusion and polarization, or whether they foster social integration and promote integrated urban development.<sup>1</sup> The project intended to contribute to the analysis of the relationship between urban restructuring and social

exclusion/integration in the context of the emergence of the new regimes of urban governance that parallel the Europe-wide—albeit geographically uneven and, on occasion, politically contested— consolidation of a neoliberal and market-driven ideology and politics. The selected UDPs embody and express processes that reflect global pressures and incorporate changing systems of local, regional, and/or national regulation and governance. These projects, while being decidedly local, capture global trends, express new forms of national and local policies, and incorporate them in a particular localized setting. The selected UDPs are listed in Table 2.1 according to their city’s ranking in the world urban hierarchy and their stage of development at the start of the research project in 1997.

### **2.3.Reordering the Urban: Large-Scale UDPs and the “Glocalization” of the City**

Cities are, of course, brooding places of imagination, creativity, innovation, and the ever new and different. However, cities also hide in their underbelly perverse and pervasive processes of social exclusion and marginalization and are rife with all manner of struggle, conflict, and often outright despair in the midst of the greatest affluence, abundance, and pleasure. These dynamics that define the urban experience have, if anything, taken on a heightened intensity over the past two decades or so. There is no need to recount here the tumultuous reordering of urban social, cultural, and economic life that has rampaged through the city. Many urban communities have been left in the doldrums of persistent decline and permanent upheaval and are still faced with the endless leisure time that comes with lasting unemployment. Others have risen to the challenge that restructuring sparks off and have plunged into the cracks and fissures that have opened up a vast arena of new possibilities of action and intervention, as governments and economies desperately seek out new niches for revitalizing the urban fabric.

**Table 2.1. The Thirteen Case-Study Projects of the URSPIC Project**

Type of City	Stage of the Project—1997		
	Design	Construction	Commercialization
<b>World cities</b>		<b>ROTTERDAM (RANDSTAD HOLLAND)</b> KOP VAN ZUID <b>LONDON</b> THE SOUTH BANK	
<b>Euro-city</b>	<b>BERLIN</b> ADLERSHOF		<b>BRUSSELS</b> ESPACE LEOPOLD/EU DISTRICT
<b>Big town</b>	<b>COPENHAGEN</b> ORESTADEN  <b>DUBLIN</b> DOCKLANDS -INTERN. FINANCIAL SERVICES CENTRE <b>ATHENS</b> OLYMPIC VILLAGE	<b>LISBON</b> EXPO 1998 <b>VIENNA</b> DONAU CITY	
<b>Secondary town</b>		<b>BILBAO</b> ABANDOIBARRA  <b>BIRMINGHAM</b> CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (CBD)	<b>NAPLES</b> CENTRO DIREZIONALE  <b>LILLE</b> EURALILLE

Source: <http://www.ifresi.univ-lille1.fr> (select Programmes de Recherche and then select URSPIC).

These urban transformations, exhaustively documented in many academic research and governmental documents, have invariably been situated in the context of a transforming spatial political, sociocultural, and economic system. While economic processes were rapidly globalizing and cities were trying to carve out their niche within the emerging new divisions of labor, of production, and of consumption, political transformations—pursued by local, regional, and national governments of all ideological stripes and colors—were initiated in an attempt to align local dynamics with the imagined, assumed, or real requirements of a deregulated international economic system, whose political elites were vigorously pursuing a neoliberal dogma. Heralded by some as the harbinger of a new era of potential prosperity and vilified by others as the source of enduring restructuring and accentuated social polarization and marginalization, the urban arena became a key space in which political-economic and social changes were enacted. The new urban policy, developing in parallel with the new neoliberal economic policy, squarely revolved around re-centering the city. Old forms and functions, traditional political and organizational configurations, had to give way to a new urbanity, a visionary urbanity that would stand the tests imposed by a global and presumably liberal world order. Repositioning the city on the map of the competitive landscape meant reimagining and recreating urban space, not just in the eyes of the master planners and city fathers and mothers, but primarily for the outsider, the investor, developer, businesswoman or –man, or the money-packed tourist.

The urban turned into ruin in the devastating restructuring of the 1970s and 1980s. Rebuilding the city—as in the aftermath of a war— became the leitmotif of urban policy. Large-scale and emblematic projects were the medicine the advocates of the new urban policy prescribed. Accommodation of the EU's encroaching office expansion in Brussels, the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao, the new financial district in the Dublin docklands, the science-university complex Adlershof in Berlin, Copenhagen's Orestaden project, and the 1998 World Expo in Lisbon, among many other examples that are dotted over the map of urban Europe, testify to the unshakeable belief of the city elites in the healing effects that the production of new urban complexes promises for the city's vitality.

While we agree that large-scale UDPs have indeed become one of the most visible and ubiquitous urban revitalization strategies pursued by city elites in search of economic growth and competitiveness, we also insist that it is exactly this sort of new urban policy that actively produces, enacts, embodies, and shapes the new political and economic regimes that are operative at local, regional, national, and global scales. These projects are the material expression of a developmental logic that views megaprojects and place-marketing as means for generating future growth and for waging a competitive struggle to attract investment capital. Urban projects of this kind are, therefore, not the mere result, response, or consequence of political and economic change choreographed elsewhere. On the contrary, we argue that such UDPs are the very catalysts of urban and political change, fueling processes that are felt not only locally, but regionally, nationally, and internationally as well. It is such concrete interventions that express and shape transformations in spatial political and economic configurations. They illustrate the actual concrete process through which postmodern forms, post-Fordist economic dynamics, and neoliberal systems of governance are crafted and through which a new articulation of regulatory and governmental scales is produced. UDPs are productive of and embody processes that operate in and over a variety of scales, from the local to the regional, the national, the European, and the global scale. From our vantage point, the urban project becomes the lens that permits the casting of light on (1) how the scalar interplay is etched into particular urban schemes; (2) how these projects, in turn, express the way forces operating at a variety of geographical scales intersect in the construction of new socioeconomic environments; and (3) how social polarization and exclusion/integration, as well as processes of empowerment/disempowerment, are shaped by and work through these forms of sociospatial restructuring.

This paper attempts to provide a panoramic view of changes in urban development strategies and policies in some of Europe's greatest cities. While being sensitive to the formative importance of local and national configurations, the case studies also suggest a series of similarities that point to a more general process of urban socioeconomic restructuring and of reorganization of the system of governance. The localization of the global and the globalization of the local become crafted in place-



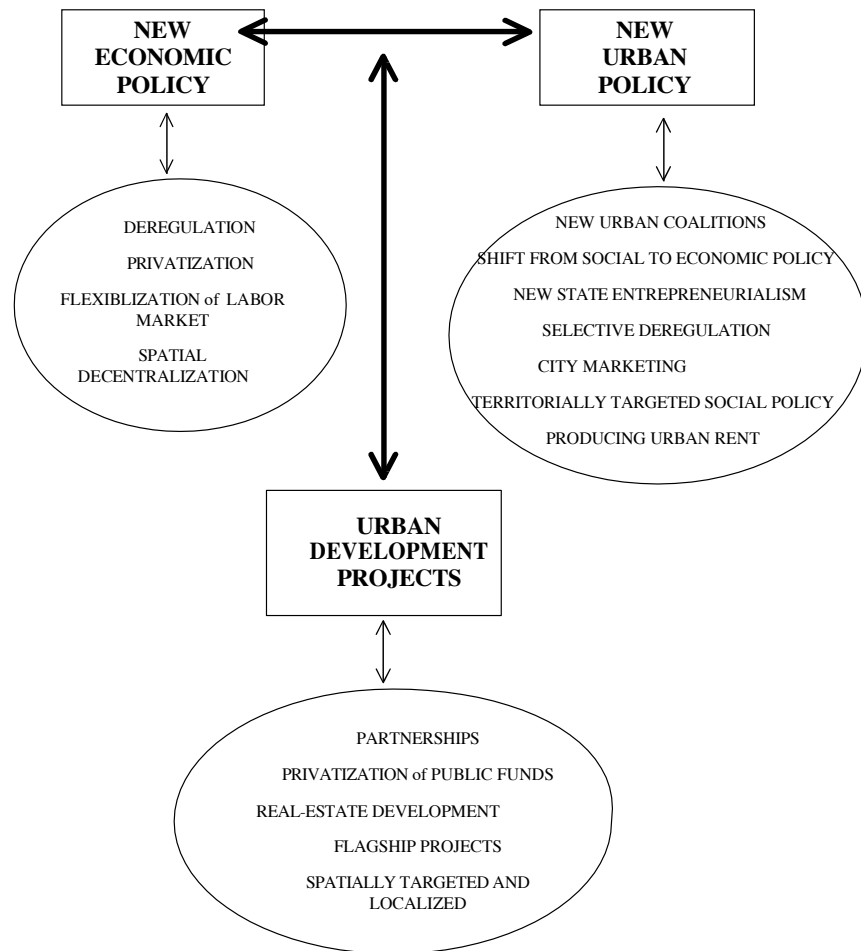
specific forms, yet they show perplexing—and often disturbing—common threads. In many ways, therefore, urban environments as constructed places are the condensed expression and incarnation of the transformation of sociospatial processes that operate on a variety of articulated geographical scales,

## **2.4. Urban Redevelopment Strategies in the European City: Autocratic Governance, Monumental Spaces, and Mythical Imaginations**

### *2.4.1. A New Urban Policy (NUP)? The Search for Growth and Competitive Restructuring*

Despite the differences between the case-study projects and the distinct political-economic and regulatory regimes of which they are part, they share a new approach in urban policy that strongly expresses, at the scale of the urban, the main ingredients of a New Economic Policy (NEP). New Economic Policy is the policy platform of conservative liberalism. Contrary to what its ideology sustains, conservative liberalism has always maintained a very special and intimate relationship with state intervention (see Keil this volume). It seeks to reorient state intervention away from monopoly market regulation and towards marshaling state resources into the social, physical, and geographical infra- and superstructures that support, finance, subsidize, or otherwise promote new forms of capital accumulation by providing the relatively fixed territorial structures that permit the accelerated circulation of capital and the relatively unhindered operation of market forces. At the same time, the state withdraws to a greater or lesser extent from socially inclusive blanket distribution-based policies and from Keynesian demand-led interventions and replaces them with spatially targeted social policies and indirect promotion of entrepreneurship, particularly via selective deregulation, stripping away red tape, and investment “partnerships” (see Peck and Tickell this volume).

The relationship between NEP, New Urban Policy (NUP), and UDPs is summarized in Figure 1 and will be explored further in the subsequent sections of this paper.



**Figure 2. 1: Relationship between NEP, NUP and UDPs**

One of the key components of the new mode of socioeconomic regulation in cities has been a gradual shift away from distributive policies, welfare considerations, and direct service provision towards more market-oriented and market-dependent approaches aimed at pursuing economic promotion and competitive restructuring. In most cities, urban revitalization is presented as an opportunity to change economic hierarchies and functions within the urban region, creating new jobs and

strengthening the city’s position in the urban division of labor. In this way, the search for growth turns urban renewal into a mediated objective, a necessary precondition for economic regeneration. Although this general trend takes quite distinct forms in different cities (see Table 2.2 for a description of six of these projects), project- based urban interventions generally involve critical changes in priorities and the ascent of a more assertive, dynamic, and entrepreneurial style of urban governance. Planners and local authorities adopt a more proactive and entrepreneurial approach aimed at identifying market opportunities and assisting private investors to take advantage of them. Table 2.2 also summarizes the developmental view promoted by the city’s economic and political elites and the associated boosterist discourses that legitimize the projects and the associated institutional and regulatory framework.

**Table 2. 1: The Role of UDPs in the City’s Growth Strategy: Main Functions and Development Logic for Six Projects**

Project	Size and Location New Functions	Main Development Logic
<p><b>Berlin</b> Adlershof</p>	<p>The development area is located in an outlying district (<i>Treptow</i>) in the Southeast of Berlin, 12 km from the center. It is connected to the suburban rail network. The area encompasses approximately 420 ha, with a site for science (R&amp;D activities), a business area, a Media City, a university campus, a park, sites for trade and industry, and several residential areas.</p>	<p>Urban renewal logic. Its main objectives are the restructuring of old industrial areas, the promotion of a future vision for an improved labor market based around high-technology and advanced services, and supporting the formation of small innovative businesses in the field of technology, to create new urban mix of science, economy, media services, living, and leisure.</p>
<p><b>Bilbao</b> Abandoibarra</p>	<p>Abandoibarra is a waterfront site of 345.000 m2 located in the heart of the city of Bilbao. Situated strategically on the edge of the 19th-century expansion of the city, one of the highest-income neighborhoods. The site is presented as the new cultural and business center for Bilbao. Two major sites, the Guggenheim Museum and the Euskalduna Conference and Concert Hall, are the key landmarks of a project that also includes the construction of 80.000 m2 for office space, a 27.000-m2 shopping center, a luxury hotel, university facilities, and 800 housing units, as well as an additional 122.000 m2 of green areas.</p>	<p>Urban renewal logic. The project aims to create a new directional center to lead economic regeneration in a declining industrial region/city; promote a postindustrial and international city, create a new economic structure, foster diversification of the urban sectoral mix, and support job creation in new and presumably dynamic and growth-oriented sectors such as culture and leisure</p>

<p><b>Brussels</b></p> <p>Leopold Quarter (Quartier Leopold)</p>	<p>The Leopold quarter is a site of approximately 1 square km north-east of the city center. It was the first extension of Brussels (1837) beyond its medieval walls.</p> <p>Originally conceived as an upper-class residential area, it is now one of the main office areas of Brussels and the central area for the expansion of a proliferating EU-related administration. It is served by an underground line and two railway stations.</p>	<p><i>From the developers' point of view:</i> capital accumulation facilitated by the rapid Europeanization and internationalization of Brussels.</p> <p><i>From the perspective of local government:</i> to assure the continuing presence and facilitate the further expansion of the European Union and related international institutions.</p> <p>Main objectives are: to provide office space to the EU and to whatever clients are attracted by Brussels' status as European capital; to reaffirm Brussels' role as Europe's capital and to cash in on the economic impact this has; and to raise the political and cultural position of the city in the European urban hierarchy</p>
<p><b>Dublin</b></p> <p>Docklands Development Project (with International Financial Services Centre [IFSC] as flagship)</p>	<p>Original area covered 11 ha. of downtown docklands on the north side of the river, which runs through the city center. This was subsequently widened to 29 ha and was recently extended to cover all 500 ha. of the port area on both sides of the river.</p> <p>Development of IFSC on the north side of the river; continued mix of residential, business, service and cultural activities on both sides of the river.</p>	<p>Economic growth for original site; social and economic growth and physical regeneration for extended 500-ha site (of which only about 100 ha are in need of redevelopment).</p>
<p><b>Naples</b></p> <p>Centro Direzionale (CD)</p>	<p>110 ha immediately east of the city center. The area is adjacent to the main railway station and well connected via major roads to the city harbor, airport, and motorway network. Only half of the area has actually been developed.</p> <p>Mixed uses: mainly offices for public institutions (courts, regional parliament and related functions, Public Register, fire-brigade headquarters, church, school, etc), but also offices for business, commercial activities, and sport facilities. Residence accounts for 30% of the total built volume.</p>	<p>Discourse of modernization to create a postindustrial city.</p> <p>Because of its mixed use, the CD is supposed to contribute to the economic regeneration of the city and to improve its urban quality. As host location of public and private service activities, the CD is also supposed to decrease congestion in the historical city center.</p>
<p><b>Vienna</b></p> <p>Donau City</p>	<p>The Donau-City (a multifunctional UDP) is located near the Danube, covering a subcenter with a size of about 17.4 ha. The housing projects on the same riverside cover 41,507 m<sup>2</sup>.</p> <p>The development axis— Lasallestrasse— runs across the Danube and connects the Donau-City with the inner city and the surrounding microregions on both riversides.</p> <p>Commercial and residential development: housing (1500 subsidized flats), offices, shopping, leisure and cultural facilities,</p>	<p>Presented as a "bridge to the future," fostering economic growth and the formation of an international image for Vienna; strong emphasis on symbolic capital formation.</p> <p>The Donau-City (including the Viennese site of the United Nations Organization (UNO)) is regarded as a flagship for Vienna, aimed at strengthening its role as an "international meeting place." The development axis is supposed to attract international business and foster and act as pivotal point in East-West (European) trade and investment; it offers housing for upper classes.</p>

	school and university buildings, research and development park, apartment hotel.	
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#### 2.4.2. *State-led or State-based: The Myth of the Absent State*

In contrast to discourses of market-led and entrepreneurial activity (risk taking, market-led investments), the UDPs are decidedly and almost without exception state-led and often state-financed. In a context of a liberalizing European metagovernance by the European Commission, of national deregulation, of shrinking or stable social redistributive policies, of the outright exclusion of some groups at the national or EU level (for example, immigrants), and of an often narrowing fiscal basis for local urban intervention, UDPs are marshaled as panaceas to fight polarization, to reinvigorate the local economy, and, most importantly—an explicit goal of these projects—to improve the tax basis of the city via a sociospatial and economic reorganization of metropolitan space. In some cases—such as Lille, Rotterdam, Brussels, Copenhagen, or Birmingham—a mix of projects is presented. Regardless of the efficacy of such a mix, the main objective of these projects is to obtain a higher social and economic return and to revalue prime urban land. The production of urban rent is central to such urban redevelopment strategies. Closing the rent gap and cashing in on the produced revalorization of the development land is a clear leitmotiv in most projects. Table 2.3 summarizes this for three of the case studies, but it is also clearly evident in Copenhagen, Brussels, Dublin, Bilbao, Athens, Vienna, and Birmingham.

Urban redevelopment is considered to be a central strategy in re-equilibrating the problematic fiscal balance sheet of local government. Spatially focused policies aimed at producing increasing rent income, altering the socioeconomic tax basis, and producing profitable economic activities are among the few options available, particularly in a context in which the structure of fiscal revenues is changing rapidly. As the financial-services sector and profit-making via global speculative transactions drain major financial means and investments, such activities simultaneously escape government control and generate very limited local fiscal returns. In such context, the

reevaluation of urban land remains one of the few means open to local governments to increase tax returns. Of course, closing rent gaps or producing high- rent-yielding spaces requires a production of built environments that permit significant surplus-value creation and/or realization. Yet the politics of rent-production through the production of the built environment has remained elusive in much of the recent literature on urban change.

Despite the rhetoric of market-led and privately covered investments, the state is invariably one of the leading actors in the process: in ten of the thirteen cases discussed in this paper, its role is outspoken. Risks are taken by the state, shared on occasion with the private sector, but given the speculative, real-estate-based nature of the projects, deficits are likely to occur. Traditional and well-documented processes of socialization of cost and risk and privatization of the possible benefits are central characteristics of most UDPs. While, in the past, invoking the social return of the projects legitimized such practices, they are now usually hidden behind a veil of creative accounting or by means of channeling funds via quasigovernmental organizations or mixed private/public companies. As can be gleaned from Table 2.3, in the cases of Berlin's Adlershof and Lisbon's Expo 1998, the state became increasingly involved in covering deficits, a condition true in many of the other cases. It is only in the redevelopment of London's South Bank that no state guarantee is involved and that the state only contributes through spending on social programs, training, and the provision of basic infrastructure.

**Table 2. 2: The Financial Risks of the UDP and the Role of the State in Three UDPs**

UDP	Original Financial Construction (1997)	Financial Risks for the State
<b>Berlin</b> Adlershof	<p><i>Developers:</i> BAAG (Berlin Adlershof Aufbaugesellschaft mbH) is a developer with a trusteeship and negotiates between the public administration and the private investors. Main functions: public relations, consultation, coordination. A control group of seven state secretaries decides the development and the economic plan, as well as timing and funding.</p> <p>WISTA Management GmbH is the operating company and has been founded for the development and the marketing of the science and commercial technology site. It is a 100% subsidiary of the City of Berlin.</p> <p><i>Financing:</i> The main idea of the planning instrument applied in Adlershof is to use means from the trust fund to develop and open up the area to make it available for building. Property values are frozen for a set number of years, and a portion of profits is recaptured by the city when the land is sold to investors. This legal tool and its self-financing philosophy are highly dependent on an increase of the land-value levels, which makes them vulnerable to changes in the real-estate market. Since land prices have been declining since 1994 in Berlin and consequently in the development area, there is less turnover than expected, and the income from selling the land is too low for this plan to work out. As a consequence, BAAG receives loans in order to prefinance the development measures. Thus, the development of Adlershof depends mainly on public funding. Until now, there have been no financially strong investors. Furthermore, regional and national financial support is combined with money from the European Structural Funds to build up the infrastructure on the science and technology site (WISTA); the non-university research institutions are supported by the state; most companies rely on subsidized rents and on different aid programs; the construction of the campus depends on funds from the federal government and the regional government (Land) of Berlin.</p>	<p>BAAG estimates that up to the year 2010, private and public investment will amount to 2.81 billion Euro in Adlershof. Of that, 2.19 billion Euro is estimated to come from private sources, while 610 million Euro will be public investments. Until 2000, only 23,1% of these resources were committed or already spent. By the end of 2001, 560 million Euro had been invested in Adlershof, mainly public funding.</p> <p>The debts of BAAG's trust fund reached 122.9 million Euro in December 1999, for which the state is liable. By September 2000, the level of indebtedness had risen to 127.3 million Euro.</p> <p>This growing debt puts a great burden on the public budget. The financial committee of the parliament agreed in June 1998 to invite the Auditor-General's Office to inspect the financial situation of the Adlershof project and of other development areas in the city.</p> <p>Today, in 2002, Berlin's financial situation causes great concern. The greatest number of large urban development projects (Adlershof is only one among several)—constitute a long-term drain on public finances. This is especially the case in the five development areas where the deficits have continuously risen. The commitment to the long-term financial scheme of the big projects is not matched by the expected tax income or the returns of sales of public land. They absorb financial resources that could be used for much-needed improvements in other areas. The impending fiscal stress was discussed at the beginning of the 1990s, but the policy-makers failed to reduce the projects to a reasonable number and size.</p>
<b>Lisbon</b>	<p><i>Developers:</i> Parque EXPO 98 SA (a newly created state company) has extensive development powers and is underwritten by the Portuguese</p>	<p>Apart from being the main shareholder, the state guaranteed and provided the conditions for releasing the land at no cost to Parque Expo</p>

## Capítulo 2: Neoliberal Urbanization in Europe

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Expo 1998	<p>government; the social capital is entirely public; the main shareholders are the state and the municipalities of Lisbon and Loures. Parque Expo is the main shareholder of six other companies constituted to run the real-estate operation (Expo Urbe), Exposition 1998, and some of the facilities remaining after the exposition (the Oceanarium, the multipurpose pavilion, the refuse treatment plant, and the transport terminal, train, and metro).</p> <p><i>Financing:</i> The financial model was designed to implement the exposition at zero cost, not including the external operations supported by EU funds. The main revenues for implementing the Expo and the urban project came from the exposition and the sale of the land. However, the expected returns were not achieved.</p> <p><i>Parque Expo 1997 budget:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exposition (ticket sales, publicity, sponsors): 309 million Euro</li> <li>Sale of land and property: 653 million Euro</li> <li>Other companies (sale of company shares): 77 million Euro</li> <li>• European Funding (ERDF and Cohesion Fund): 304 million Euro (includes funding for primary infrastructure works inside the Expo site and for external operations: transport infrastructure, metro and train station, multipurpose pavilion, and environmental works)</li> <li>State-direct funding (social capital): 87 million Euro</li> <li>Other (renting of spaces): 51 million Euro.</li> </ul>	<p>and for allocating EU funding of the project. The amount allocated directly to the Expo under the Urban Renovation Program of the EU's Community Support Framework was about half of the total sum for urban renovation for the whole country for five years—around 240 million Euro. The final balance between costs and revenues is still unknown. It was estimated that accumulated expenses until the year 2009 would make a total of 1850 million Euro, of which 375 million Euro were financial costs (Parque EXPO 98, Budget Report, Lisbon, March 1999). The main changes to the initial budget were the higher building and infrastructure costs and lower-than-expected revenue from the sale of tickets and sponsors (250 million Euro). In addition, Parque Expo will receive revenues (60 million Euro) from the sale of a few of the Expo pavilions to the state for the installation of administrative activities and cultural facilities. In order to make up for the increasing deficit, Parque Expo raised land prices and changed previous costs and agreements. It is expected that revenue from land sales will bring an income of 850 million Euro by 2009—an increase of 30 percent from the initial estimate. These trends pushed property values up at the Expo site: Expo flats are now, on average, the most expensive in Lisbon. Thus, the state, through a public developer, is competing with the local market for raising house prices. Accounts have also to be settled with the municipalities of Lisbon and Loures for the investment in infrastructure works (the equivalent of 187 million Euro) when the site is handed back to the city.</p>
<p><b>London</b> South Bank</p>	<p><i>Developers:</i> The developers are public institutions and not-for-profit companies that have initiated the regeneration schemes. Some private developers are also active in the area.</p> <p><i>Financing:</i> housing schemes are mainly financed by loans (Hambros Bank), revenues from rents (car park, shops) and grants from the Housing Corporation Grant. Public space improvements are financed by grants from the Single Regeneration Budget, local councils, the National Lottery, and the businesses' own funds. Public funds are used for new transport infrastructures. Private investors have turned the County Hall into a hotel and leisure center. Part of the Shell offices has been turned into luxury apartments by private investors.</p>	<p>No state guarantees. National state involvement through Single Regeneration Budget subsidies. The consequences for public budget are negligible. The consequences for other spending sectors (social, education, training, basic urban infrastructure, and so on) are negligible</p>





A common theme is that most of the projects are decidedly rent-extraction-based. Their success rests fundamentally on (1) the production of potential extra rent and (2) the subsequent realization of the produced land rent. The employment and economic activity generating consequences of the projects, however important they may turn out to be, are all subject to the successful appropriation of the “manufactured” land rent embodied in the new built environment. The public-private or public-public initiatives rework the urban fabric such that the potential rent from new developments is significantly higher than existing rent levels. Sinking capital and investment into the production of a new built environment revalues, at least potentially, the monetary value of the land and the built environment—benefits that are almost always reaped by the private sector. This is particularly noticeable in the cases of Dublin, Brussels, Bilbao, Berlin, Athens, Copenhagen, and Naples (for greater detail on these cases, see sources cited in the acknowledgments).

#### *2.4.3. Institutional Fragmentation and “Pluralistic” Governance*

The newly emerging regimes of governing urban revitalization involve the subordination of formal government structures to new institutions and agencies, often paralleled by a significant redistribution of policy-making powers, competencies, and responsibilities. In the name of greater flexibility and efficiency, these quasi-private and highly autonomous organizations compete with and often supersede local and regional authorities as protagonists and managers of urban renewal. Moreover, the fragmentation of agencies and the multiplicity of institutions, both formal and informal, are often portrayed as positive signs, suggesting enabling institutional thickness, a considerable degree of local embeddedness, and significant social capacity-building. In addition, these institutional and regulatory configurations are celebrated as a new form of governing, signaling a better and more transparent articulation between government (state) and civil society. The “stakeholder” participation on which partnerships are based becomes a normative model that is presented as a democratic forum that permits open and non-distorted communication and action.

Yet the actual configuration of such project-based institutions reveals an extraordinary degree of selectivity. Although a varying choreography of state, private sector, and

nongovernmental organization (NGO) participation is usually present (see Table 2.4 for a comparative overview), these forms of urban governance show a significant deficit with respect to accountability, representation, and the presence of formal rules of inclusion or participation. Indeed, accountability channels are often gray, non-formalized, and nontransparent, frequently circumventing traditional democratic channels of accountability (eg. to a representative elected body). As Table 2.4 suggests, the structures of representation of the participating partners are diffuse and unregulated. There are rarely formalized mechanisms of representation, and it is often difficult, if not impossible, to identify who represents what, who, and how. Finally—and most importantly—participation is rarely statutory, but operates through co-optation and invitation, usually by the key power brokers within the institutions. This invariably influences the regulatory environment, shapes the interventions, and produces a particular imagination of the urban in line with the demands, dreams, and aspirations of the included, while marginalized or otherwise excluded groups remain symptomatically absent. This process has become the dominant mode of institutional organization and suggests a shift from a system of representative urban government to one of stakeholder urban governance that is centered on newly established institutional arrangements. In our case studies (and this is especially clear in Berlin, Athens, Brussels, Lisbon, and Bilbao—see Table 2.4), a complex range of public, semipublic, and private actors shape an interactive system in which different, but allied, views and interests are “negotiated.” Public-private partnerships epitomize the ideal of this cooperative and coordinated mode of “pluralistic” governance.

The emergence of a more fragmented and pluralistic mode of urban governance has also contributed to the redefinition of roles played by local authorities. In particular, it has served to reinforce the tendency towards a more proactive approach, letting local authorities act simultaneously as enablers, partners, and clients. At the same time, the new structures of governance also express the outcomes of an ongoing renegotiation between the different levels of government—local, regional, and national—regarding competencies and powers in the management of urban revitalization. These institutions are bunkered against popular participation and influence by local community groups and, indeed, against democratic control and accountability. The cases of London, Lisbon, Brussels, and Bilbao reveal an extraordinary degree of autonomy and impermeability of the

managing organizations. Often, this organic autonomy has helped to reinforce the tendency to avoid a social and political debate over alternative paths and strategies. Of course, as Table 2.4 illustrates, the level and degree of institutional reorganization of the systems and institutions of urban governance is highly variegated and context-dependent. Moreover, as the process of planning and implementation is confronted with social protest or critique, institutional and organizational forms adjust or transform in order to maintain legitimacy, social cohesion, and sufficient political support. Despite the great diversity of local, regional, and national changes in the forms of urban governance and despite their often very different agendas (ranging from merely economic growth-based initiatives to integrated projects aimed at improving social conditions in the city), the project-based nature of these interventions is accompanied by new institutional configurations, characterized by power geometries that differ from those of the traditional arenas of government. A veil of secrecy pre-empts criticism and discussion, and a highly selective leaking of information is justified on the grounds of commercial confidentiality and technical impartiality. Indeed, a conspicuous feature of these large-scale projects is the relatively low resistance and conflict they generate. With the exception of Dublin and Brussels, there has been no major “grassroots” contestation of the UDPs. In this sense, the role of local growth coalitions is critical in framing a discourse of renewal, innovation, achievement, and success.

**Table 2. 3: From Planning to Projects: Exceptionality Measures and Local Democracy**

<b>UDP</b>	<b>Territorial Fragmentation</b>	<b>Exceptionality Measures/ Accountability</b>	<b>Inclusion of Neighborhood Population in Decision-making</b>	<b>Institutional Complexity</b>	<b>Social Returns</b>
<b>Rotterdam</b> Kop van Zuid	Attempt to construct physical link/bridge with central city	No exceptionality measures, but erosion of trust in political process. Elected borough councils	In later stage of project and in an indirect way	Highly complex. Independent State-Municipal Partnership for Kop van Zuid. Involvement of private investors. Complex of policies for urban regeneration and social renewal difficult to coordinate	Yes, but very limited and in adjacent neighborhoods. 1990s: stronger stress on social projects in adjacent neighborhoods
<b>London</b> The South Bank	Detachment from adjacent wards. Bridge with central London	One of the most democratic models in URSPIC sample	Yes	Not complex: from grassroots organization to partner-dominated planning	Yes
<b>Berlin</b> Adlershof	Detachment; filling gaps	Democratic control on public overspending	No	Partnership between the public sector (Berlin) and semiprivate developer. Little state/municipality coordination	Indirect
<b>Brussels</b> Espace Leopold (EU)	Detachment	Permissive attitude of authorities towards private developers	No	Proliferating number of private developers and of “informal” public/private relations	No (negative social returns)
<b>Lisbon</b> Expo 1998	Few or no links with oriental zones of Lisbon	Discretionary planning agency	No	No relations with overall planning in Lisbon; no links with other UDPs in Lisbon	Ambiguous

Table 2.3. Continued

UDP	Territorial Fragmentation	Exceptionality Measures/ Accountability	Inclusion of Neighborhood Population in Decision-making	Institutional Complexity	Social Returns
<b>Copenhagen</b>	Attempt to connect Oeresmeden to the city	Linked to the Oeresund Regionalization Strategy. Democratic deficit in the initial phase	No. No linkages to community empowerment programs in deprived districts of Copenhagen	Very complex. Independent state-municipal partnership/ company. In reality, controlled by the Ministry of Finance in Denmark	Ambiguous. Perhaps social returns to the city as a whole and in the long run
<b>Dublin</b>	Detachment in early phase— attempt to create new sector to the east of existing CBD. Attempt to build bridges and fill gaps in latest phase	Development Authority: responsible to national government. Local government and local communities initially excluded from decision-making. Now the most democratic model in the URSPIC sample	Initially No, but subsequently Yes: local neighborhood excluded in first phase but now directly represented on the Governing Council of the Urban Development Corporation (UDC).	Initially an exclusive, executive-style Quango with own complete planning powers. Changed to local social-partnership model of regeneration in 1997 with own planning powers coexisting alongside those of local government. Dual planning regime (local authority and UDC) now yielding complex development scenarios	Local: none in the initial stage of the project but local social programs now well developed and other initiatives coming on stream (including social housing); a major contributor through IFSC activities and tax revenues to gross domestic product and exchequer resources
<b>Bilbao</b>	Filling gaps; building bridges	Combination of statutory planning instruments and discretionary	No	No, but innovations in managing structures and public-public partnerships for “concerted” urbanism	Ambiguous. Benefits for adjacent areas but no trickle-down effects

Table 2.3 Continued

UDP	Territorial Fragmentation	Exceptionality Measures/ Accountability	Inclusion of Neighborhood Population in Decision-making	Institutional Complexity	Social Returns
		management by a special purpose urban development company (mixed economy firm)			
<b>Athens Olympic Village</b>	Detachment; undermining social and economic coherence of surrounding localities	Central state level controls the redevelopment process and contains involvement of the local authorities and population	No. Virtually nothing has been done to involve neighborhood populations in the decision-making process	The development project depends on two governance/government systems, a “normal” and an “exceptional” one. The normal system deals with regular developmental issues, while the “exceptional” is the system that prepares and administers the Olympics	Ambiguous. The project’s social returns include some potential gains in employment during the construction phase. The Olympic Village also includes a public housing scheme for the post-Olympic era. No central commitment exists that guarantees housing for local population
<b>Vienna Donau-City</b>	Filling gaps; bridge to central city	Only superficial democracy: hearings without power	Ambiguous	Proliferation of private developers and public authorities	Negative social returns: institutionalization of public-private partnerships, high-income groups as clientele of social democracy

Table 2.3 Continued

UDP	Territorial Fragmentation	Exceptionality Measures/ Accountability	Inclusion of Neighborhood Population in Decision-making	Institutional Complexity	Social Returns
<b>Naples</b> Centro Direzionale	The project has increased fragmentation in the city	The private developer had a dominating influence on national, regional, and local government	No: only through formal political representation in the city council. No provision of information and/or direct consultation	No coordination with other projects. No relations with planning in the city and metropolitan area	Improvements of public transport infrastructures
<b>Birmingham</b> CBD	Filling gaps	Urban machine politics. Costs hidden from council and public	No	The City Council diverted finance from their education and housing budgets through a private sector company that they own. This was used as matched funding for EU Regional Funds	Negligible for deprived communities in the immediate area
<b>Lille</b> Euralille	Filling gaps	Use of special structure for development company	Formally, consultation with citizens	Coordination with other UDPs only on paper	Some trickle-down effects. Improved public transport system

Key: Territorial fragmentation: functional and physical separation from adjoining poorer neighborhoods; building bridges with neighborhoods; filling gaps in abandoned, deindustrialized, or emptied-out zones. Exceptionality measures: special laws, special planning tools, new non- or quasigovernmental systems or agencies, avoidance of democratic control, and so on.





#### *2.4.4. From Planning to Projects*

Large-scale urban projects are often presented as project-focused market-led initiatives, which have replaced statutory planning as the primary means of intervention in cities. Planning through urban “projects” has indeed emerged as the main strategy to stimulate economic growth and to “organize innovation,” both organizationally and economically (see Table 2.4). Large-scale projects and events are perceived as strategic instruments aiming at reshaping the city. Against the crisis of the comprehensive Plan—the classic policy instrument of the Fordist age—the large, emblematic Project has emerged as a viable alternative, allegedly combining the advantages of flexibility and targeted actions with a tremendous symbolic capacity. Essentially fragmented, this form of intervention goes hand in hand with an eclectic planning style where attention to design, detail, morphology, and aesthetics is paramount. The emblematic Project captures a segment of the city and turns it into the symbol of the new restructured/ revitalized metropolis cast with a powerful image of innovation, creativity, and success. And yet, despite the rhetoric, the replacement of the Plan by the Project has not displaced planning from the urban arena. In fact, the case studies reveal that in most examples there is a strong strategic component and a significant role for planning. However, in the process, there has been a drastic reorganization of the planning and urban policy-making structures and a rise of new modes of intervention, planning goals, tools, and institutions.

### **2.5. Urban Projects and the Neoliberal Urban Order**

#### *2.5.1. Visioning the City as an Elite Playing Field*

The UDPs included in our study have a variety of characteristics, but their sheer dimensions elevate them to central icons in the scripting of the image of the future of the cities in which they are located.

Invariably, the main aspiration is to turn the city into a global competitive actor in the domain in which the elites feel it has some competitive advantage. Needless to say, the imagin(eer)ing of the city's future is directly articulated with the visions of those who are pivotal to the formulation, planning, and implementation of the project. Consequently, these projects have been and often still are arenas that reflect profound power struggles and position-taking of key economic, political, social, or cultural elites. The scripting of the project highlights and reflects the aspirations of a particular set of local, regional, and national—and sometimes also international—actors that shape, through the exercise of their socioeconomic, cultural, or political power, the development trajectories of each of the areas. As such, the UDPs can be considered as “elite playing fields,” on which the stake is to shape an urban future in line with the aspirations of the most powerful segment(s) among the participants.

Clearly, the association of coalitions of elite players changes over time and from place to place, and alliance formation and break-up redefines development trajectories in important ways. Struggles for inclusion in or exclusion from the elite circles become pivotal in shaping wider process of social, cultural, political, and economic integration or exclusion. Each case study narrates the sociohistorical dynamics of alliances in the choreography of social-power struggles (for detailed accounts, see sources listed in acknowledgments). In conjunction with structural socioeconomic changes, these are instrumental in shaping the fortunes of urban environments, as they decide fundamental rights to housing, access to services, access to land and the like. Again, the role of the state, the system of governance, and the position of the citizens vis-à-vis these institutional forms will be central in determining the mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion that are shaped by the new urban development trajectories. Yet, the underlying motive is to reinvigorate a successful accumulation strategy and accompanying hegemony of vision that revolves around the requirement to turn the projects into viable—that is, profitable— economic ventures.

### *2.5.2. From a Social to a Spatial Definition of Development: Targeting Places rather than People*

Almost all of the case-study projects pay at least rhetorical attention to social issues associated with the planning and implementation of the project. The assumed trickle-down mechanisms, occasionally accompanied by targeted policies to facilitate social inclusion processes (see Table 2.4), are considered of sufficient strength to permit a socially balanced and successful development. However, in contrast to the universal, inclusive, and blanket support policies that characterized Keynesian and welfare-state interventionism, economic regeneration is now primarily achieved via place-bound and spatially targeted redevelopment schemes. While national funding and incentives are diminishing, private development capital (of local, national, or extranational origin) is being mobilized for the implementation of territorially defined urban projects. In addition, given the reduction in universal welfare programs, the “territorial” approach or “targeted”- area approach have replaced universal support structures. Moreover, the slimming-down of national social redistribution is accompanied by policies that direct funds and attention to particular social groups, identified on the basis of their location, their place, and the characteristics of their living environment. Similarly, the EU’s urban social programs take on an outspoken, spatially focused character.

In sum, there has been a shift from universalist to spatially targeted and place-focused approaches in the 1990s. Targeting policies/interventions to geographically circumscribed areas and to economically dynamic or promising activities is presented as a path to remedy socioeconomic exclusion. Indeed, in the policy discourse, UDPs are presented as instruments that can also help to overcome social exclusion. The official rhetorical attention to social issues is mobilized politically to legitimize projects, while the underlying and sometimes explicit objective is different. The assumption of trickle-down, however, does not hold true in a context characterized by an absence of regulatory (labor, financial, and income) standards or income redistribution systems at the national or EU level. This accounts, of course, for the significant differences in socio-spatial inequality between, for example, Denmark,

with its long social-democratic tradition, and the UK, with its much more liberal-conservative legacy. The targeting of spaces for “development” permits recasting particular social groups as problematic, excluded, marginalized, and nonintegrated. Consequently —so the official argument goes—strategies of integration and inclusion should be pursued by means of territorial, place-based policies, rather than through national or European-wide socioeconomic measures, redistribution, and political-economic strategies. From the perspective of this NUP, it is places that need to be integrated, not citizens; it is places that need redevelopment, not people that require jobs and income. Of course, the above is not a plea for dismissing community capacity-building and local-level initiatives, but they need to be framed in more general redistribution and regulatory policies at higher-scale levels—those of the national state and, more importantly, the European Union.

### *2.5.3. Interurban Competition for National or European Funds*

As most of the UDPs are nationally or EU (co-)funded (see Table 2.3), municipalities or other forms of local governance compete for targeted funding. In general, the concentration of public investments in these large-scale project locations involves redistributing resources away from other uses and areas. In addition, funds are allocated on a project-formulation basis, not on the basis of social needs or considerations of fostering the social economy. Either explicitly or implicitly, the competitive tendering process by national or international organizations favors projects that have a sound institutional and organizational basis capable of engaging in the complex tasks of project formulation, lobbying, negotiation, and implementation. This requires not only a set of sophisticated skills, but also significant financial resources, as well as easy access to the centers of power. All of this is usually not available to the weaker social groups and areas in the city, which are consequently falling behind and are dependent on ad hoc measures imposed from above. Moreover, given the need to foster alliances between often-rival economic and political elite groups to create the necessary hegemony of vision to compete successfully for state support and private investment, the development activities are

often masked in a web of secrecy and hidden behind a screen of commercial confidentiality.

In the context of more targeted interventions and reduced universal social support, which is increasingly organized and conducted by and through elite coalition formation, public resources are drained from universal programs to targeted territorial projects geared at supporting a particular social configuration—a process that itself harbors exclusionary mechanisms. The misty organizational structures in Brussels, the exclusive elite coalitions of Birmingham, and the shifting alliances in Copenhagen and Naples illustrate the variety of processes through which this takes place.

#### *2.5.4. Authoritarian Management, Exclusion, and Client Formation*

The new systems of urban governance—the quasigovernmental institutional framework based upon forging synergies between the public sector and the elite fractions of civil society—also justify the adoption of discretionary forms of management. Thus, the way the process develops creates the conditions for the establishment of centralized and more autocratic management, which privileges direct appointments. Thus, the role of lobbies, family ties, business connections, and forms of “clientelism” become dominant. These forms of coalition-formation at the level of project formulation and implementation accentuate a growing gap between actual governance and civil society, intensify processes of political exclusion, and promote a dual society in terms of a coalition of public/private interests on the one hand and a growing group of disenfranchised on the other. While the above suggests that growth machines, elite coalitions, and networks of power are centrally important in shaping development trajectories, it is evident from our case studies that different growth machines are associated with different interests and lead to different mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion.

Nonetheless, the “coalitions” of public and semipublic actors invariably produce an exclusive group involved in a common discourse on the progress of the project, a discourse that is not easily opened to public scrutiny or that would invite or permit

dissidence. Important decisions and arrangements are made by steering committees, boards of directors of operating companies, non-accountable quasigovernmental organizations, and the like, and are often kept away from public scrutiny. Outsiders are usually not tolerated. There is, at best, only a highly formalized form of public participation that maintains key power in the hands of the existing elite structure and even prevents newly emerging elites (such as, for example, immigrant entrepreneurs and an emerging group of sociocultural elites in the transnational communities in cities like Brussels or Vienna) to enter the established networks of governance and dominant elite coalitions. These coalitions create a public discourse on the importance of the project and define it as a particular milestone in the shaping of the future of the city, and their interventions are presented as essential to maintaining a viable position in the interurban competition at a pan-European or global scale.

The reactions of the local state to exogenous and endogenous pressures manifest in the establishment of these new forms of urban governance (public-private partnerships, development co-operations, new administrative structures, and new political forums) that circumvent, bypass, ignore, or marginalize certain social groups. The national state itself is often instrumental in shaping and organizing such exclusive growth coalitions and in providing the extraordinary regulatory environment in which they can operate outside a system of public accountability. In some cases, such as Copenhagen, Brussels, and Vienna, such growth-coalitions reproduce or re-enforce existing but threatened corporatist forms of governance. Informal networks of a relatively small number of individuals occupying key positions in public administration, business, or design/architecture form a new field of power. In the tendering of large-scale projects, these networks are of crucial importance. Needless to say, the projects are therefore closely associated with the interests of the particular coalition sets (and their clients); they are usually self-referential, closed circles that consolidate their power while preventing access to others.

### *2.5.5. UDPs, Speculation and the Production of Land Rent*

As producers of urban space, UDPs are inherently speculative and hence highly risky, in the sense that their financial and economic viability depends on the future realization of the produced increased urban rents. Of course, the latter depend not only on the particular characteristics of the project or the vitality of the local economy, but also on national and international economic conditions. In addition, such projects provide opportunities to extract from the state (at a local, national, or EU level), in addition to its direct contributions, further resources in terms of public investment for infrastructures, services, and buildings. Most of the project's development costs are supposed to be met from the sale or renting of land or buildings— the value of which has been jacked up through state support, re-regulation, zoning changes, infrastructure investment, and the like. All this suggests that it is financially very attractive for real-estate developers to concentrate on developing projects for the more well- to-do customers, for housing as well as for businesses. In fact, the financial viability of market-driven urban revitalization projects is, of course, invariably predicated upon closing existing rent gaps by means of the production of a new built environment that is at least potentially capable of generating high income. The uncertain and, hence, intrinsically speculative character of the production of new land rent points towards the key role of the state as the preferred interlocutor for carrying the financial risks associated with such real- estate-based urban restructuring (see also the chapters by Smith and Weber this volume).

Whether successful or not, the dependence on rent returns for the feasibility of UDPs invariably targets high-income segments of the population or potentially high-productivity-based economic activities and makes the success of the project dependent on the dynamics of the real-estate sector (see Table 2.5). This does not contribute to alleviating the process of social segmentation and exclusion and often leads to the creation of islands of wealth in an impoverished environment, resulting in the city becoming a patchwork of socioeconomically highly diversified and more mutually exclusive areas. To the extent that low-cost or social housing is included in the project, the lower revenue from such targeted housing policy undermines the



financial feasibility of the project and requires, in turn, considerable state support or subsidies. Table 2.5 summarizes the relationships between real-estate development, the production of high rental returns, and a project's financing structure. Moreover, given the real-estate-based nature of these projects, the public funding is, through private rent appropriation, transferred to the private sector. Consequently, there is a flow of capital from the public to the private sector via the built environment, often without mediation by means of socially targeted policies or instruments.

#### *2.5.6. The City as Patchwork*

Given the often radically new socioeconomic functions associated with UDPs, a process of transfer and of dislocation of jobs inevitably takes place. Spatial labor markets become out of joint or are mismatched. Targeted labor-market policies might remedy some of this disjuncture, but the sheer scale of labor-market restructuring often implies prolonged stress on the labor market combined with painful processes of adaptation and, frequently, a growing separation between remaining local communities and the incoming new workforce. This separation is often accentuated through now-generalized processes of deregulation of labor markets at national and EU levels. This leads to a double-edged dualization of labor markets. Increasingly, dual or segmented labor markets are seen, with a group of highly paid and skilled executives on the one hand and large groups of less secure— often informal— workers on the other, and many other categories in between. The segmentation of labor markets, which is facilitated by the national deregulation of labor-market rules and other changes in the national regulatory frameworks, becomes cemented in and expressed by the socioeconomic composition of the UDPs. The inclusion of the existing labor pool proves difficult or impossible, while retraining and targeted labor-market entry policies tend not to be very successful, despite the prolonged support for such programs.

**Table 2. 4: Relationship between Dynamics in the Real-Estate Market and UDP Development: Nine Cases**

Project	Real-Estate Market, the Production of Rent and the Development of the UDP
<b>Berlin</b> Adlershof	The reunification of Germany was decisive for the development of Berlin’s real-estate market and triggered a sudden rush of initiatives from international and national investors and developers. This was reinforced by a strong competition for attractive sites. Today, the Berlin real-estate market shows increasing supply-side reserves and demand structures that fall short of expectation. These developments have had a major impact on the progress and pace of the project implementation in Adlershof. Here, a high volume of office and housing sites has been planned without considering the decreasing demand. Due to the restraint of private investors, project development has slowed down in Adlershof.
<b>Bilbao</b> Abandoibarra	As in most other cities throughout Spain, since the mid-1980s, the real-estate market in Bilbao has experienced an extraordinary boom. During the 90s, housing prices in the city continued to rise, although the rate of growth decreased in the last third of the decade. Real-estate prices in Abandoibarra both benefited from and contributed to this boom. In the less than four years that separated the beginning of redevelopment works and the marketing of the first housing land slots, land prices in Abandoibarra more than doubled (2.3 times). Real-estate price increases have spread throughout the city, but they tend to be proportionally higher in Abandoibarra’s adjoining neighborhoods. And, while it cannot be said that land price increases in the city are exclusively related to Abandoibarra’s redevelopment, it is nonetheless certain that this scheme is contributing significantly to this trend as well as to the alteration of housing prices differentials among different neighborhoods across the city.
<b>Brussels</b> Leopold Quarter	Due to the continuous demand for additional office space in the Leopold Quarter—a demand led by the EU institutions, but Quarter also by both national and international banking and insurance sectors—rental values have systematically increased over the past decades. Rents in the Leopold Quarter are now amongst the highest in the country (up to 200 Euro per m <sup>2</sup> ). The increasing demand for office space has also generated speculative activities in the area: remaining residential blocks are systematically bought by property developers and eventually demolished and replaced with offices, regardless of land-use planning regulations. Other residential pockets have been upgraded and made available for wealthy (international) residents, or are now de facto (and illegally) used as offices for smaller organizations (for example, lobby groups and law firms). Globally operating real-estate agents (such as Jones Lang Wootton and Healey & Baker) have come to dominate the Leopold Quarter market, while construction and property development remains mainly in Belgian (and French) hands.
<b>Copenhagen</b> Orestaden	In general, the prices in the housing market skyrocketed during the second half of the 1990s and the social geography within the city has become more polarized. There still exists an important social-housing sector, but the role of this sector has gradually declined, because housing construction subsidized by the municipality and the state has almost stopped since the beginning of the nineties. The municipal housing policy has increasingly been used as a tool to regulate the tax base of Copenhagen, favoring the middle classes. The UDP follows this trend.

<b>Lille</b> Euralille	Euralille and other UDPs in the Lille agglomeration did not lead to skyrocketing increases of land and housing prices. However, inside the agglomeration, real-estate market dynamics have produced a displacement of lower-middle-class and working-class population to “cheaper” areas. Gentrification projects in particular (first Vieux Lille, then Euralille, Wazemmes, and Moulins) with more offices, exquisite services, and middle- to upper-class housing estates, led to local price rises, driving deprived population groups to other neighborhoods, especially to the south of Lille or even outside the agglomeration. The UDP has contributed to this growing spatial differentiation of real-estate and rental values.
<b>Vienna</b> Donau-City	Rents skyrocketed in the second half of the 1980s and have been stagnating since then. This can be explained by a contradictory movement. On the one hand, there still exists an important public-housing sector. Housing construction subsidized by the municipality was intensive until 1996, and restrictive rent laws were applied until 1982. On the other hand, liberal regulation is advancing: subsidies for construction of housing have been dramatically reduced over the last years. Furthermore, publicly subsidized housing is increasingly oriented towards the upper middle classes. The UDP is a paradigmatic case illustrating these changes.
<b>Napoles</b> Centro Direzionale	During the 1980s, prices in the real-estate market grew dramatically to reach record levels in 1991 and 1992, particularly in selected central areas. They subsequently declined almost as fast as they had previously risen, continuing to fall until 1997, when the first signs of recovery appeared and prices stabilized or began to increase again. Apartments in the Centro Direzionale di Napoli (CDN) became available at the peak of the market price for prime location units and thus could be expected to yield quite significant returns. The developer, however, sold 90% of the residential units to a state-run pension fund for the employees of public companies and guaranteed his return. By law, only families working for state agencies are entitled to rent those apartments, and rental prices are set lower than the market price according to the rules of the 1978 Fair Rent Act. This decision removed these units from the sale and rental markets, creating a separate segment that is somewhat insulated from market dynamics. The project had also a depressing effect on the value of building land for other office projects in the city.
<b>Dublin</b> Docklands (with IFSC as flagship)	Property demand in both the housing and office markets, both within the UDP site and in the surrounding neighborhoods, has Development grown rapidly in the 1990s and land prices in the area have Project soared due to the presence of the IFSC. With companies queuing to get into the successful IFSC site as the economy boomed in the 1990s, the intense demand for office space squeezed other real-estate markets, most notably the provision of social and affordable housing within and around the UDP. Average house prices tripled between 1989 to 1999, while the provision of social housing evaporated due to the post-1986 retrenchment of public-sector welfare spending. The housing situation is particularly acute in the docklands UDP and neighboring areas. Local residents cannot compete with investors or the predominantly young professionals who purchase or rent the limited supply of private residential units available in the area. The result has been gentrification of the initial UDC site and the exclusion from the life of the area, through the property market, of many of the latest generation of the indigenous population.

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<b>London</b> South Bank	The real-estate market on the South Bank is subject to contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, the South Bank is one of the most expensive spots in central London because of its central location opposite the City and Westminster. In terms of real-estate prices, it is exceeded only by those two areas. On the other hand, the South Bank's community development group, Coin Street Community Builders, owns 6.5 acres of land on the South Bank, which is designated for the construction of cooperative housing schemes and public spaces. This has a certain downward effect on real-estate prices. However, the recently opened new underground line (the Jubilee Line) has significantly improved the South Bank's connections with the rest of Central London and will certainly have an upward effect on real-estate prices. Furthermore, the successful "reimagineering" efforts through public space improvements and consistent place marketing, together with the opening of major nearby attractions such as the new Tate Gallery, will also have an effect on real-estate prices. Meanwhile, the housing market remains strongly dominated by Local Authority housing (38%), housing co-operatives (28%), and semipublic institutions (17%). Only 15% of residents live in privately owned houses and 2% in privately rented flats. Another estimated 2000 adults live in hostels, on the streets, and in other nonpermanent accommodation (estimates for 1994).
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This socioeconomic restructuring, combined with a mosaic of newly constructed built environments with their associated increased rents, produces urban islands, a patchwork of discrete spaces with increasingly sharp boundaries (gated business centers, leisure, or community spaces). This is reinforced through a combination of physical, social, and cultural boundary formation processes. The overall result is the consolidation of a fragmented city, which accompanies the reorganization of the sociospatial fabric of the urban agglomeration (see also MacLeod this volume). In some cases, this mosaic takes the form of suburbanization of poverty, while internal differentiation accentuates sociospatial differentiation and polarization, a process that often takes outspoken racialized forms (notably in Brussels, Berlin, Rotterdam, and Vienna).

## **2.6. Conclusion: Neoliberal Urbanism and Democratic Deficit**

Urban regeneration and development policies in the European city, in the context of national and EU-wide tendencies towards the implementation of neoliberal socioeconomic policies, brought about critical shifts in domains and levels of

intervention and in the composition and characteristics of actors and agents, institutional structures, and policy tools. Over the last decade and a half, urban regeneration policy has become an increasingly central component of urban policy. For the most part, urban regeneration schemes based on large-scale UDPs have emerged as a response to urban restructuring processes associated with the transformation of production and demand conditions locally, nationally, and globally; they generally combine physical upgrading with socioeconomic development objectives. In particular, such projects have become an integral part of neoliberal policies to replace more traditional redistribution-driven approaches. The search for growth and competitive redevelopment has become the leading objective of the NUP in an attempt to reassert the position of cities in the emerging global economy. Enhancing the competitive advantage of cities is seen as largely dependent on improving and adapting the built environment to the accumulation strategies of a city's key elites. Therefore, physical reconstruction and economic recovery tend to go hand in hand and, very often, are perceived as quasi-simultaneous processes: megaprojects are viewed as providing a solid foundation for fostering future growth and functional transformation. At the same time, urban revitalization is projected beyond the cities' limits and linked to regional recovery and internationalization strategies.

How do the various UDPs reflect this NUP? Figure 1 already summarized various critical dimensions of this policy. Most UDPs have caused increased physical and social fragmentation in the city. Notable exceptions include Kop van Zuid in Rotterdam, which established a physical-functional—but not a social—“bridge” with the rest of the city, and Oerestaden in Copenhagen, which has—after prolonged protest—recovered some housing and service functions that would otherwise have been lost. The other projects have primarily filled gaps for the (higher) middle-class real-estate and consumption-good markets, but not for other, usually poorer and/or immigrant sections of the urban population. While economic gaps have been “plugged,” greater social disparities and sociospatial fragmentation have been produced.

A central issue involved in urban regeneration policies is the relation of UDPs to existing planning instruments and regulations. While these projects are generally inserted into existing statutory planning guidelines, the initial conception, design, and implementation lies at the margins of formal planning structures. The framework of “exceptionality” associated with these initiatives favors a more autonomous, if not autocratic, dynamic marked by special plans and projects that relegate statutory norms and procedures to a secondary and subordinated place. Many local authorities and national governments justify the exceptionality of a UDP on the basis of different factors: scale, the emblematic character of the operation, timing pressures, the need for greater flexibility, efficiency criteria, and the like. “Exceptionality” is a fundamental feature of the new urban policy, based on the primacy of project-based initiatives over regulatory plans and procedures. These changes involve, among other things, the emergence of new policy tools, actors, and institutions, and they have important consequences for urban policy-making in general and for local democracy in particular. These projects exemplify like no other the trends towards a new local mode of regulation of urban (re)development and management shaped by the pressures of competitive restructuring and changing social and economic priorities, as well as by major political and ideological shifts. Indeed, the emergence of the NUP rests significantly on the establishment of new forms of intervention at the local level that, to a large extent, constitute a rupture with traditional forms. Entrepreneurialism is about the public sector running cities in a more businesslike manner, in which institutions of local governance operate like the private sector or are replaced by private-sector-based systems. Indeed, the NUP is closely associated with fundamental shifts from traditional government structures to a more diffused, fragmented, and flexible mode of governance. The combination of different spatial and administrative scales in urban policy-making and the increasing fragmentation of competencies and responsibilities is one of its most striking aspects. In most cities, the full dimension of urban regeneration cannot be adequately apprehended without reference to the multiplicity of agents, the articulation of spatial scales at which they operate, and the fragmentation of agency responsibility within the urban arena. In some cases, this trend seems to be linked to a shift from hierarchical relationships (in terms of the

traditional territorial hierarchy of statutory planning procedures) to a more collaborative and stakeholder-based, but often socially highly exclusive, scheme in which partnerships between and networks of a variety of elites play a key role. However, at the same time, fragmentation and diversity are also accompanied by tendencies towards the exclusion of certain groups and collectives from participating in the decision-making process. A democratic deficit emerges as a central element of this strategic approach.

The fragmentation of the mode of governance redefines the role and position of local authorities. Indeed, in the name of greater flexibility and efficiency, these new institutions compete with and often supplant local and regional authorities as protagonists and managers of urban renewal. In fact, the new governance structures express the outcomes of an ongoing renegotiation between the different levels of government—local, regional, national, and European—and between public and private actors over competencies, decision-making powers, and funding. The establishment of these new structures frequently involves massive redistribution of policy-making powers, competencies, and responsibilities away from local governments to often highly exclusive partnership agencies, a process that can be described as the “privatization of urban governance.”

The fragmented character of many of the UDPs—which are often self-contained, isolated, and disconnected from the general dynamics of the city—contrasts sharply with the strong emphasis on coordinated action of different actors, the encouragement of partnerships, and the building of networks and support coalitions. These are presented as providing a potentially superior form of urban management, more flexible and efficient, and thus better adapted to the competitive trends of global urban change. The trend towards a more flexible and network-oriented approach is often perceived as a validation of “bottom-up,” less hierarchical, and more participatory dynamics. However, participation is often limited to selected professionals—architects, planners, economists, engineers, and so on—who have become increasingly influential, while the nonprofessional sector and less powerful social groups are largely excluded.

In the same way, the shift from centralist, formalized, bureaucratized, hierarchical, top-down planning approaches to decentralized, more horizontal, informal, flexibilized, bottom-up, and network planning approaches has gone hand in hand with increasing inequality in access to decision-making. The role of experts is strengthened at the expense of a diminishing role of the public in general and of traditional organized groups in particular, with a consequent loss of democratic accountability. Yet these new forms of governance are often legitimized on the basis of their superior ability to offer a more inclusive, non-hierarchical, and participatory approach to planning. However, the realities of a network based on the primacy of the expert and dominated by the fusion of technical, economic, and political elites suggest a selective exclusion of major sections of civil society in terms of access to decision-making processes.

As is succinctly summarized in the Viennese case study, “the advantage of these personalized networks is mutual trust and high adaptability; its disadvantage is a decrease of public accountability, a weakening of civil society and an erosion of the existing parliamentary democracy.” In those cases, in which neighborhood movements reacted to the initial lack of local democracy (Rotterdam, Dublin), participation had to be partly restored, and neighborhood demands, as well as concerns about social issues, climbed a few notches up the policy priority list. Nevertheless, the limited and spatially targeted interventions associated with project-based urban restructuring policies prevent these movements from transcending the localized issues associated with a project’s implementation and from translating these social demands into more generalized policy models at higher spatial scales. This is arguably the most significant implication of the NUP. The downscaling of urban policies to place-specific interventions in a context in which traditional redistributive policies are being reduced at higher-scale levels forces social movements to operate through localized actions. This, in turn, militates against the urgent need to translate these place-specific actions and demands into more general social and economic programs articulated at the national, EU, or international scale.



## 2.7. Acknowledgments and References

The analysis presented in this paper draws upon the results of a thirty-month research project on Urban Redevelopment and Social Polarization in the City (URPIC). The support of the European Union's IVth Framework Program is gratefully acknowledged.

The project was coordinated by Frank Moulaert, Arantxa Rodriguez, and Erik Swyngedouw. Although the present paper cannot provide full empirical details on each of the thirteen city cases, detailed case-study results have been published in the following journals: *Journal of European Urban and Regional Studies* 8(2) 2001, *Geographische Zeitung* 89 (2 and 3), 2002, *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia* 41(4), 2001, and *Ciudad y Territorio—Estudios Territoriales (CiTET)*, November 2001 and forthcoming 2002.

Case studies will also be published in *Urbanising Globalisation*, by F Moulaert, A Rodriguez, and E Swyngedouw, Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2002.

The project reports, images and further details on each of the projects can be found on the World-Wide Web at <http://www.ifresi.univ-lille1.fr> (select Programmes de Recherche and then select URSPIC). Many of the insights reported in this paper come from a large number of participants in this project. We would like to acknowledge our debt in writing this contribution to all those who worked with us on this project. Their fieldwork, data collection, interviews, and surveys provided the foundation and material and many of the insights for this project, and their thoughts and writings were used extensively in the preparation of this paper. We are very much indebted to: Serena Vicari and Lucia Cavoli (Naples), Pavlos Delladetsimas (Athens), João Cabral (Lisbon), Elodie Salin and Thomas Werquin (Lille), Elena Martinez (Bilbao), Guy Baeten (London and Brussels), Louis Albrechts (Brussels), Hartmut Hauserman and Katja Simons (Berlin), Andreas Novy, Vanessa Redak, and Johachim Becker (Vienna), John Anderson (Copenhagen), Brendan Bartley and Kasey

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## **2.8. Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on a large number of research reports from the URSPIC project, written by more than twenty-five academics working on each of the thirteen cases. The paper presented here digests material that comes from all of these papers, and parts were actually written by one or another of our collaborators. References in the original research documents often come from our partners' national sources (Danish, Greek, Italian, Spanish, German, and so forth). We considered including an exhaustive trans-national literature list, but this would have been unacceptably long and not all that useful for many people. Alternatively, we could have opted for inserting just a standard list of mainly Anglo-Saxon references, but this would not do justice to the wide variety of national insights on which we drew. Therefore, we chose not to have references at all, but decided instead on the following. The names of the individuals involved in the project are listed in the acknowledgments. All project reports, individual case studies, references, images, and other materials are available on the World-Wide Web at <http://www.ifresi.univ-lille1.fr>; select Programmes de Recherche and then select URSPIC). In addition, five special journal issues (of which two are in English) and a forthcoming book (to be published in 2002) give detailed information on various aspects of the research for many of the case studies (see Acknowledgments section for details). In fact, all of the case studies are covered in one way or another in these publications. People interested in particular details of and further information on any of the case study projects and cities can consult either the web site or these publications.





## **CAPÍTULO 3**

### **Social Polarization in Metropolitan Areas:**

### **The Role of New Urban Policy**

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### **3.1. Abstract**

This special issue of European Urban and Regional Studies draws from an EU Framework IV Targeted Socio-Economic Research Project on ‘Urban Restructuring and Social Polarization in the City’ (URSPIC). The project examines the impact of large-scale urban development projects (UDPs) on social integration and polarization in metropolitan cities.

For this special issue, five case studies have been selected: Euralille, Lille (France); Abandoibarra, Bilbao (Spain); Donau-City, Vienna (Austria); Leopold Quarter, Brussels (Belgium); and the Centro Direzionale, Naples (Italy). In each of these case studies the polarizing mechanisms of the UDPs and the New Urban Policy of which they are main ingredients are evaluated.

### **3.2. Social polarization: an old story**

There is a tendency in current social theory and analysis to portray socio-economic phenomena and their spatial characteristics as fundamentally ‘new’ and radically diverting from the trajectories of the past. Examples are by now well known, but still worth reciting. Many authors have depicted globalization as a new capital-logic dynamics.

Apparently and for the first time in the history of capitalism – in stark contrast with the diabolic eras of imperialism and colonialism – globalization will create opportunities for all people and regions in the world. The rhetoric and practice of globalization have apparently replaced the adagio of development through modernizing that was popular in the 1960s and 1970s. Flexible production systems and their geographies – with Industrial Districts and Regional.

Innovation Complexes as their Nirvana – will lead to decentralized opportunities for most places, whatever the spatial perspective: global, national or local. They will

replace the old-fashioned monolithic Fordist production machines agglomerated in multi-functional metropolises, the protagonists of small-scale flexibility argue. The New Economic Policy or NEP, based on encouraging private investment, deregulation and privatization and a reduced but more managerial role for the State in general, will for the first time in history consign the State to its appropriate limited place and leave the economic initiative to those actors who by some strange twist of nature are seen to be 'naturally gifted' to be investors, i.e. private firms and banks. The local offspring of NEP, i.e. NUP or the New Urban Policy, will finally restore the economic vitality of cities. NUP will launch cities onto a new path of wealth creation and finally ban the poverty trap for all urban communities, regardless of their ethnic or class position.

Of course, urban reality shows us day after day that these grand stories have little scientific grounds. Their content and discourse may be decidedly contemporary, but their substance relates a certain *déjà-vu* of earlier debates and struggles about the impact of economic development and its spatial expressions. Globalization, flexible production systems, or NEP/NUP, like the economic modernization debates of yesteryear, have all reproduced the structural tendencies of inequality among communities and among social groups within cities, regions and nations. Of course, in Western Europe, certain inter-regional discrepancies or urban socio-spatial inequalities have been smoothed out, only to reproduce other inequalities and uneven socio-spatial power relations elsewhere. And, of course, debates over the causes of and remedies for urban socio-economic inequalities are certainly not new. From early modern times and as far back as the Renaissance, debates about the contrasts between regions and within urban regions have pre-occupied researchers as well as policy-makers and politicians. More recently, the debates about local and regional development within the German Historical School (starting mid 19th century), the Scandinavian Institutional-Economic School that started in the 20th century (thinking especially of Gunnar Myrdal), the French Growth Pole theory (after the Second World War, with François Perroux), French urban sociology and the Anglo-Saxon radical geography currents of the 1970s all addressed and explored (both in theory and practice) the mechanisms of regional and urban growth and distribution – or lack



thereof – and the inherent processes of uneven geographical development that accompany each new round of capital accumulation. Most of these ‘schools’ have shown that, whatever its spatial scale, the dynamics of capital, however new its configuration and character may be, produces serious and disturbing spatial unevenness. More importantly, these perspectives, however different their epistemological basis may be, agreed that only collective action could counter or even-out such disparities. In general, the State as a central collective actor – at whatever scale – has since the beginning of modernity been singled out as the pivotal arena for action aimed at redistribution of economic and political power and for regulating the just distribution of assets and resources.

### **3.3. The old recipes of the New Urban Policy**

And yet, in today’s economic and political climate, new analyses and policy models are presented as if historical insights have been wiped off the hard disk of collective historical memory. Comparisons with past experiences are rarely made. ‘Renegade’ critics that try to instill some historical consciousness are hardly noticed. The New Urban Policy, which is under scrutiny here, is one case in point. It does not refer to any historical anchor points: no evidence from past and similar episodes is provided.

According to the protagonists of the NUP, there is of course no need for this. The absence of historical memory is not a matter of scientific omission. Is it not the case, so they argue, that the NUP is radically new and breaks fundamentally with all earlier histories and perspectives. NUP is ‘truly’ innovative; it has never been before.

New Urban Policy, rooted in the hyper free- market based liberalism of New Economic Policy, is an ideological and class-based reaction against the predominance of economic Keynesianism – as, for example, the Vienna case study shows quite clearly. In the postwar period, economic Keynesian interventionism promoted the accumulation of capital as no other; but part of its programme included, of course, also a partial redistribution of income with minimum guarantees for social justice.

The conjectured failure of this Keynesian policy vis-à-vis the economic crisis starting in the late 1970s seemed to be a sufficient ground for revanchist neo-liberals to take over the socio-economic policy agenda in the 1980s.

This is clearly 'neo'-liberal and revanchist, because NEP–NUP is not a new policy approach, but part of the liberal economic view that has emerged or submerged in cyclical ways since its birth in the late 17th century with the English bourgeois revolution – is there anyone out there who still remembers? And if in its proclamations it sounds like the pronouncement of a new bourgeois class – instilling an image of a new free and liberal utopia that looms just around the corner, provided we wait long enough for its fruits to filter down – in practice, liberalism justifies a return to new levels of socio-economic exploitation. In fact, it re-invents and re-implements the basic institutional norms of untrammelled capitalism.

Today, at the local level, the New Urban Policy translates the NEP principles of deregulation, privatization, flexibilization of labour markets and spatial decentralization to the benefit of private capital into a shift from (local) social to (local) economic policy, a 'new' elite coalition formation favouring private sector agents and 'new' forms of state entrepreneurialism that include large-scale urban development projects and city marketing. Deregulation at the local level is especially visible in the deregulation of planning procedures.

Exceptionality measures, such as the creation of semi-private planning agencies, implementing projects for the public sector that are especially beneficial to private investors, are the classic route for a newly competitive city as most of the case-studies in this special issue show.

Is this really different from city governance in medieval cities such as Venice or Bruges, or the city planning escapades in Haussmannian Paris, Victorian London or late 19th century Vienna that extolled the virtues of unchecked speculative urban development? Vast areas in all of these cities were built by their own elites of large-scale project developers. The basic logic of capital is exactly the same: a grand discourse lauding free trade, while in practice justifying public–private development

and trade monopolies that invest in urban elite construction, leading to the displacement of lower- income housing and the reshuffling of property markets. Never did these policies reduce or eliminate social polarization; most of the time they re-enforced it, by privileging large-scale economic projects over social projects. Of course, the social doldrums associated with such ruthless social restructuring often swung the pendulum of ideological discourse and political practice to the other side. There have always been cycles in political regimes, even in the pre-capitalist medieval cities.

Looking at social policy, by the late Middle Ages Bruges, for example, medieval trading metropolis par excellence, reinforced the social dimension of its political regime, granting a greater role to the City (local State) in combating poverty, by subsidizing the poor, creating jobs and promoting the construction of almshouses (Godshuizen). In Bruges in the early Middle Ages charity had been mainly an initiative of rich freemen, guilds and religious communities, while the City Magistrates, who cared more about the economic prosperity of the city, played only a limited role. This changed substantially in the Burgundy period and even more so under the Habsburgs when Bruges, under the influence of Humanism, played a pioneering role in City-led poor relief policy.

### **3.4. The contemporary urban regime(s)**

Even if many contemporary analysts accept the existence of historical cycles – and therefore the regular recurrence of particular policy approaches – they would stress that current market mechanisms are more constructive and beneficial to all than ever before. Therefore, market forces should be given more ‘political’ freedom, as they will pave the way to a socially inclusive social and economic order. This is of course a very complicated issue, and a final verdict as to its true course is still open. But, in any case, there is nothing particularly new under the sun. The observation that in contemporary society market, finance, politics and policy are so closely interwoven that these ‘networked’ configurations provide the ideal path to economic prosperity,

reflects an age-old strategy that was pioneered successfully from the early days of mercantilist- based urban development. Consider, for example, how the Medici were at the same time the political rulers of Florence, the investors and financiers of its ‘pre-colonial’ expansion and the bankers of many West European cities and royal or ducal princes. In the late 19th and early 20th century, it was the National State, of course, that helped the market survive the transition from competitive to monopoly capital. In the late 1970s and 1980s, the State funded and guided its own partial transformation from centralist Keynesian to local entrepreneurialism. In timeless terms: the State is the nurse that nourishes capitalism from disease to disease, guaranteeing its survival, but does not heal the wounds it invariably inflicts. But the good nurse is ‘flexible’; (s)he finds endless new ways to facilitate investment and capital accumulation. Today, (s)he is especially well inspired by the new governance style and new types of privatization of public capital. The planning, implementation and marketing of the metropolitan Urban Development Projects under investigation in this issue are quite instructive in this respect.

The change in local governance is exemplified by the emergence and active construction of new partnerships. The UDPs are carried by consensus- based coalitions involving agents from both the public and private sector, partly locally rooted, but mainly regionally, nationally and sometimes also internationally embedded. Especially the cases of Abandoibarra, Euralille and the Leopold Quarter show how the interpenetrating elite-based social and economic networks construct new domains of governance at the expense of traditional urban policy making. The dividing line between the public and private sector is often blurred, as all cases show. The privatization of public banks and other institutions has resulted in the topography of boundaries between public and private sectors becoming increasingly complex. In all cases, with the possible exception of Vienna, civil society has been increasingly marginalized and excluded from the key arenas of power.

There are various degrees of keeping democratic control from UDP operations. In the case of the Naples UDP, the State and private sector partners virtually coincide and democratic control therefore acquires a fairly narcissist flavour, with a Centro

Direzionale that is relegated to the exclusive use of the clientelistic networks of the main developers. In Brussels, as another example, democratic control is washed away by the institutional confusion arising from the competence paralysis between various public agencies. The de facto planning and implementation agencies are the ad hoc coalitions of firms and developers that are not really hindered or obstructed by the hideously complex institutional webs of ineffective planning regulations.

Most UDPs involve also the mobilization (what turns out to be the ‘privatization’) of public funds (land, infrastructure, financial means, personnel) for the building of semi-private projects such as shopping malls, conference centres, culture temples, etc. Most of these projects, in the few instances they actually include housing, only carry up-market dwellings and provide no social housing whatsoever.

Again, the presumed ‘newness’ and ‘innovative character’ of political instruments to achieve UDPs looks somewhat faded. Planning for exclusivity, be it by the Renaissance prince or the technocratic city planning office, is basically the same. Today the legal texts are probably more complex, the financial strings wider and better spread out in time and over space, the regulations more privy, and the technology of construction and communication more advanced, but the social cobwebs and consequences are predictable enough. The ‘old’ historical concepts and well-trodden insights remain as incisive as ever. In our case studies appear, albeit with differing degrees of intensity: displacement and paternalistic pampering of poor people, the sacrificing of popular functions in deprived neighbourhoods to the benefit of their ‘new commercial vocation’, the distortion and inflation of real estate markets, the exclusion of the most affected parts of the population from evaluation and decision-making, the seclusion of information and decision-making networks.



## CAPÍTULO 4

### **Large Scale Development Projects and Local Governance: From Democratic Urban Planning to Besieged Local Governance**

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## 4.1. Abstract

This article analyses the interaction between social exclusion in the city, the implementation of large-scale development projects and changes in urban governance.

The first part of the article analyses the evolution in urban restructuring tendencies and its consequences for social exclusion and integration mechanisms. The relationships between urban restructuring and changes in urban public policy are reflected in the rise of the 'New Urban Policy' that has provided increasing freedom of action to urban developers and public-private ventures in which the market logic predominates.

The remainder of the article focuses on specific features of urban policy and governance as they appear from the case-studies covered in this issue: the physical bias of urban policy, the challenge of mainstream policy by integrated approaches to neighbourhood development, the rise of 'exceptionality' procedures in urban planning, and the threat of New Urban Policy to the good working of local democracy.

Dieser Beitrag behandelt die Interaktion zwischen sozialer Exklusion, der Durchführung großer Entwicklungsprojekte und dem Wandel der *governance* in der Stadt. Im ersten Teil analysieren wir das Aufkommen neuer Tendenzen im Stadtbau und ihrer Wirkungen auf Mechanismen der sozialen Exklusion und Integration. Der Zusammenhang zwischen der Stadterneuerung und dem Wandel der Stadtpolitik spiegelt sich im Aufkommen der 'Neuen Stadtpolitik' wider; diese hat den städtischen Entwicklern und public-private Partnerschaften eine zunehmende Handlungsfreiheit gegeben, in der die Logik des Marktes vorherrscht.

Im weiteren konzentriert sich der Beitrag auf die besonderen Merkmale der Stadtpolitik und städtischen *governance*, wie sie in den Fallstudien dieses Themenheftes angesprochen werden: die Verzerrung der Stadtpolitik zugunsten von



BaumaBnahmen, die neuen Anforderungen, die sich der herrschenden Politik der Nachbarschafts-Entwicklung durch integrierte Ansätze stellen, dem Aufkommen von Ausnah- me-Regeln in der Stadtplanung sowie die Bedrohung, die die Neue Stadtpolitik für das gute Funktionieren lokaler Demokratie bedeutet.

## 4.2. Introduction

Intensifying processes of social exclusion and polarization have been among the most prominent and visible outcomes of urban socio-economic restructuring over the past two decades (Fainstein/Gordon/Harloe 1992). These processes have been analysed predominantly in terms of a combination of and articulation between global socio-economic transformations on the one hand and local, regional and/or national structural adjustment policies on the other (Hamnett 1994). In an attempt to strengthen their competitive position in an intensifying globally challenging environment (Group of Lisbon 1994, Sassen 1991), urban social environments have undergone fundamental socio-economic change. These restructuring processes have not only generated economic activity and employment, but have also re-enforced mechanisms of social exclusion and social polarization (Soja 2000).

It is now commonly recognised (Townsend 1993, Hingel/Fridberg 1994, Guidicini/Piretti 1994) that poverty and exclusion are multi- dimensional processes that operate at a variety of intertwined spatial scales. Yet, at the same time, it is people living in specific places that are embedded in particular socio-spatial environments that actually experience these conditions. In addition, these exclusion-inclusion processes operate through concrete actions and material interventions. General abstract theories often fail to capture this complexity and multi-dimensionality, and do not succeed in grasping the spatial basis of such epochal changes. Our perspective, therefore, starts from the vantage point of concrete interventions in the urban fabric and aims at reconstructing the concrete multi-dimensional and multi-scaled processes of restructuring. This approach, we hold, will allow us to identify the mechanisms through which either social integration or exclusion and polarization take concrete shape, and what the role of governance dynamics therein is.

The objective of this contribution is, first, to ground these processes in a theoretically informed and empirically substantiated reconstruction of urban restructuring, with particular reference to urban governance dynamics. We shall focus on Large Scale Urban Development Projects (UDPs), their role in re-scripting the competitive environment of urban economies, and their relationship to changing forms of urban governance. Second, we seek to summarise the key trends in terms of changing governance dynamics that have been etched in and expressed by these UDPs. These trends are exemplified by the case studies presented in the subsequent contributions of this issue. However, this paper also draws on insights derived from the other case-study projects of the URSPIC program (see introduction to the thematic issue).

### **4.3. Towards a New Urban Governance?**

#### *4.3.1. Economic restructuring and social exclusion*

Rapidly changing conditions of global production, consumption and distribution that have transformed the structure of employment, are generally recognized as central factors behind increasing poverty and rising levels of social marginalization. In most advanced industrial countries, these changes have led to massive job loss, the rapid sectoral recomposition of labour markets, and the emergence of a new socio-economic fabric. This has made it increasingly difficult for large sections of the population to (re-)enter the formal labour market and to adjust to the imperatives of the 'New Urban Economy'. These epochal changes have been theorised as Post-Fordist, Flexible, Neo-Fordist or After-Fordist developments (Moulaert/Swyngedouw 1989, Amin 1994). Yet, despite the grand debates over the actual conceptualization of these transformations, it is often forgotten that they take place in and through the reconstruction of concrete urban landscapes and their accompanying social, political, and economic characteristics. We argue that these concrete urban transformations are in fact the expression of and the medium through which these general changes take shape. In other words, the reconstruction of concrete urban fabrics produces the processes that ex-post become theorised or conceptualised as post-fordist, flexible, or whatever other abstract metaphor is proposed.

It has been argued that, while the promotion of growth and job creation may be the most important means to combat social exclusion, it could, at the same time, increase the risks of exclusion for vulnerable groups through the extension of flexible and precarious employment (Moulaert et al. 2000, chapter 1). This concern is supported by mounting evidence that economic growth and uneven redevelopment during the short-lived recovery of the mid 1980s and the current wave of sustained growth, far from weakening, has in fact contributed to aggravate social polarization and exclusion processes that were initiated during the recession<sup>1</sup>. Notwithstanding trickle-down effects, economic growth is simply not enough to fight social exclusion. In short, the market imperative, while capable of generating economic growth and selective job creation (at least conjuncturally), fails to generate distributional effects that promote social integration and greater socially inclusive development.

The dynamics of productive reorganization, however, have not been the only factor in social exclusion. Shifting priorities in government policies and transformations of governance dynamics have also played a critical part. The dominance of macroeconomic monetary and fiscal as well as structural adjustment policies, and the search for economic growth have – at least since the second half of the 1970s – gradually pushed income redistribution and social welfare concerns to the periphery of the policy arena exacerbating, as a result, the vulnerability of an expanding part of the population to the vagaries of economic restructuring.

Recent research on poverty has moved from single variable analysis to a multi-dimensional construction of poverty, which includes cultural, political and identity issues alongside more traditional economic and employment parameters. Attention

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<sup>1</sup> Townsend (1994), for example, notes that in the United Kingdom, between 1979 and 1989, the share of total income after tax of the richest 20 % of households increased from 38.1 % to 43.0 % (the richest 1 % saw a rise of three-quarters). At the same time, for the poorest 20 %, this share fell from 6.5 % to 5 %. He also shows that a widening income gap has been found to occur in other industrialized countries. This pattern is most striking in particular metropolitan areas. For example, an analysis of increasing inequalities in London and New York during the 1980s (Loganffaylor-Gooby/Reuter 1992) shows that income inequalities increased dramatically in the mid- and late 1980s despite significant revival in parts of both cities' economies. In London, the ratio of incomes of the top and bottom quartile increased from 2.77 in 1977 to 4.37 in 1988. The notion of polarization refers to the simultaneous disjunctive evolution of income distribution. However, the metaphor of

has moved away from a static analysis of disadvantage (measuring, mapping and describing poverty) to a process-based approach, captured by the conceptual shift from 'poverty' to 'exclusion and polarization'. This shift emphasises the relational character and the conditions under which excluded and marginalised populations are produced. Attention has also shifted from a focus on individuals or households to a community based approach in recognition of the fact that processes of polarization and exclusion are not abstract, but unfold in and through the restructuring of 'localized' and concrete communities and places (Room 1994, Moulaert 1996).

#### *4.3.2. The urban dimension of socio-economic re-structuring*

Social exclusion processes can hardly be understood without reference to their spatial dimensions. The concentration of excluded populations in certain geographical areas is a fundamental part of socio-economic transformation. Processes of exclusion always operate in and through social space and nowhere has this been more evident than in urban areas. World-wide economic restructuring has significantly altered the functions and hierarchy of cities and, consequently, their social structure (Sassen 1991, Commission of the European Communities 1992, Fainstein 1994). For many cities, especially those in old industrial regions, it has meant systematic divestment from manufacturing activities, plant closures, environmental degradation, massive unemployment and rising poverty and marginality.

Since the end of the 1970s, and until very recently, research into exclusion mechanisms within cities and regions has been highly neglected. After some early research by Harvey (1973), Castells (1972), Godard (1973), Preteceille (1974) and others, there was a symptomatic silence on the side of researchers and policy-makers alike. The relative success of the welfare state and the modernising developmental views about the future fermented a belief in a

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straightforward duality is unable to grasp fully the processes of social stratification generated by economic restructuring.

progressive, more or less socially balanced, future. The focus of research shifted to inter-regional differences and inequalities rather than intra-regional or intra-urban exclusion mechanisms.

However, the deepening and highly uneven spatial impact of the recession of the 1970s, combined with fundamental economic, techno-logical, cultural and social processes of 'creative destruction' and transformation, shattered the dream of perpetual progress. In addition to structural unemployment and increasing numbers of long-term unemployables in the labour market, cultural, political and social mechanisms of exclusion intensified. This took place in a context of a rapidly transforming society, which propelled new strata of economic, social and cultural elites to the foreground and resulted in a process of significant social polarization. The affluence and success of one part of the population is confronted with increasing deprivation, disempowerment and marginalization of another (Merrifield/Swyngedouw 1996, Swyngedouw 1997a). This trend favoured not only a renewed interest in social exclusion mechanisms but contributed to place them in the context of urban and regional reorganization.

Valuable recent cross-national research on social exclusion highlights the significance of spatial variation by focusing on the local character of global trends. A comprehensive and Union-wide assessment of social exclusion and integration mechanisms at the local level is provided, for example, by the report on 'Local development strategies in economically disintegrated areas: a proactive strategy against poverty in the European Community', carried out within the Poverty III programme (Moulaert/ Delladetsima/Leontidou 1994, Moulaert et al. 2000).

#### *4.3.3. Social exclusion: a multi-dimensional and multi-scaled process*

While economic restructuring is considered to be the central exclusion mechanism, it is increasingly recognised that the specific character of national, regional and local

state responses to the imperatives of structural change plays a critical part in shaping the fortunes of cities and urban regions as well as processes of social inclusion/exclusion (Painter 1995). Economic restructuring generates exclusion in direct and indirect ways. Directly speaking, unemployment, income loss, wage cuts, etc. cause diminishing purchasing power but also exclusion of individuals from work and consumption-related social networks. Indirectly, the required skill levels, the socialization norms on the shop floor or in the office, become increasingly less attainable by a larger portion of the active population. The latter are also least able in securing institutional access to social protection or welfare-based income. The interaction between socio-economic restructuring processes that affect, albeit to different degrees, most socio-professional categories, the shifts in the central focus of urban socio-economic policy, and more restrictive access to the welfare system have created a wide diversity of new categories of urban poor, whose socio-cultural identity is often hard to reconstruct (Benassi/Kazepov/Mingione 1997).

#### *4.3.4. Urban restructuring policy: the choice for mega-projects*

The emergence of urban crisis spurred a profound reappraisal of the form, functions and scope of urban policy and led to shifting priorities, new modes of intervention and the development of new planning goals, tools and institutions. In contrast to the 1970s, the 1980s witnessed a gradual move away from (re-)distribution and a growing interest in economic promotion and competitive restructuring as the basis for urban and metropolitan revitalization. The imbalance between developmental and redistributive programmes increased as the lion's share of urban revitalisation programmes went to large infrastructure and property redevelopment projects, while support for growth initiatives meant enhancing the resources of the most dynamic and entrepreneurial sectors of the urban economy. Moreover, mega-projects and place marketing have been introduced as major leverages for generating future growth and for waging a competitive struggle to attract investment capital (Voogd/Ashworth 1990, Kearns/ Philo 1993, Olds 2001).

Throughout Europe, cities and regions have launched on a path of competitive re-development by means of a variety of strategies, mainly large-scale business inspired urban renewal projects, but in some cases also integrated action plans and community-based local reconversion efforts. Such projects are dotted over the European urban and regional landscape (Moulaert/Swyngedouw/Rodriguez 2001). They operate in a variety of local and national regulatory, political and socio-economic contexts, welfare regimes and public policy frameworks and combine private and public initiatives and funds in a variety of ways. However, they are comparable in the sense that they are inserted in and grapple with epochal European and global trends and attempt to re-assert the position of the city in the new global economic competitive climate and its associated technological, cultural and social transformations.

Large Scale Urban Development Projects or urban mega-projects – that is projects aimed at a structural re-organization of the city's physical fabric while constituting an emblematic symbol signaling a new image and trajectory for the city's future -contribute to, influence and shape processes either of socio-economic polarization and exclusion or, as the case may be, of socio-economic integration. Our focus is on large-scale urban redevelopment projects with a predominantly business oriented and urban renewal logic, because these projects are exceptionally illustrative of the means through which current processes of social inclusion/exclusion operate in urban areas where the majority of the European Union's population live. Furthermore, these mega-developments are increasingly portrayed as the most effective urban revitalization strategy, often overlooking their built-in exclusionary powers<sup>2</sup>. In addition, UDPs have become emblematic symbols and material manifestations of processes of economic globalization and shifting

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<sup>2</sup> The risks of a two- or multi-speed metropolitanisation and the polarising potential of large-scale urban renewal operations have been highlighted in recent years. Social and spatial polarisation, where downtown prosperity contrasts with neighbourhood decline, have been identified in many The risks of a two- or multi-speed metropolitanisation and the polarising potential of large-scale urban renewal operations have been highlighted in recent years. Social and spatial polarisation, where downtown prosperity contrasts with neighbourhood decline, have been identified in many proclaimed urban revitalization 'successes' in places like Baltimore (Harvey 1989; 2000), Pittsburg and Cleveland (Holcomb 1993), London and New York (Fainstein/Gordon/Harloe 1992).

systems of governance. They permit casting globalization not so much as a process of transnationalization, but primarily as a place-based restructuring that reconfigures the power geometries that shape the urban fabric.

#### *4.3.5. The complexity of contemporary urban governance*

Throughout the Fordist era, governance of social and economic development was primarily articulated by and through the national State. The national governmental scale served a variety of social and economic functions, among which the redistribution of produced wealth and the regulation of class relations. In addition, the State actively participated in the accumulation process through direct and indirect investments. The debates on the role of the National State are well covered in the heterodox social science literature (Jessop 1990, O'Connor 1973, Becker 2001). Under Fordism, governance coincided with the struggle over and the political control of the national State. Social and economic processes operated through institutional configurations in which national governments played a pivotal role.

With the crisis of Fordism, however, the national State became accused of all sins of Jericho: a bad manager of public resources, incapable of sound investment decisions and management, insufficient as a redistributive agent. Voices in favour of devolution of public competences from the national to the regional level became louder, and certain state functions like those of direct investor and regulator of market mechanisms were questioned. Decentralization from the national to the regional and local state, and functional reorganizations had to solve the State's legitimization crisis, especially in the direction of strengthening the role of market forces in state policy and strategy. The shift from the national Keynesian to the local entrepreneurial state led to a growing importance of local growth coalitions, multi-agent networking, public-private partnerships, externalising services from the public state to private agencies (Moulaert/Swyngedouw/Wilson 1988, Preteceille 1997, Swyngedouw 1997b). At the same time, a process of transnationalization and



the emergence or consolidation of supernational forms of governance further accentuated the reshuffling of governance, and produced a new '*scalar gestalt*' of institutional organisation and regulatory operation (Swyngedouw 1998, 2000a).

In tune with the growing complexity of socio-economic restructuring dynamics, the mechanisms of managing the local community, the city, the region, etc. became increasingly viewed as multi-dimensional processes. Today, local governance does not only include 'government', but also the relations of the local state – local government in the limited sense of the word – with the various urban districts (e.g. through the establishment of neighbourhood mayors, local development agencies), and the relationships between the different governmental scales that are mobilised for policy and action. At the same time, the role of the private sector in 'governance' is re-invented (Andrew/Goldsmith 1998, Moulaert et al. 2000, p. 43-45). This private sector consists of at least two large segments: the market sector with its SMEs (Small and Medium Sized Enterprises) and mega corporate world, and civil society with both its progressive and conservative components. Significant attention is given to building close relationships between market and civil society organizations on the one hand and the local State on the other (Le Gales 1995). The resulting institutional pattern is characterised by the rise of a proliferating number of institutions and organizations, usually organised as social-movement rooted associations or as one or other form of public-private partnership. In contrast to traditional forms of government that provide an arena to articulate the state/civil society relationships, these new forms of governance tend to be based on a rather limited representation from civil society (Swyngedouw, 2000b). While under certain conditions, these new forms of 'horizontal' governance give a greater voice and participating power to deprived neighbourhoods or excluded social groups, and civil society associations can provide more democracy than the absent state or market sector has been able to grant, this 'empowering' condition is not always met. Local political and social struggle and the presence of strong grass-roots movements are indispensable to generate a democratic and inclusive system of governance.

This complex form of governance constitutes the institutional background against which the public sector's relations to the UDPs should be situated. The local State defends the developmental logic of urban regeneration based on large-scale urban investment projects, following the rationale of global finance, real estate capital, and the real or imagined need for competitive restructuring. In other words, the local state pro-actively leads a New Economic Policy by promoting private investments through deregulation, providing fiscal relief and public city marketing actions (Cox 1997, Moulaert et al. 2000). At the same time, it has to wrestle in its social and political relations with the various parts of urban society: local SMEs, neighbourhood groups and their representatives, political parties and activists, etc. (Judge/Wolman/Stoker 1995). This contradictory situation often drives local authorities to pursue rather opportunistic strategies for managing social relations. Among them, the growing importance of exceptionality procedures (circumventing standing rules and regulations), calls on the regional or national state for financial assistance, the establishment of non-governmental and non-accountable institutions, the formation of 'stake-holder' interest networks, the emergence of compensating -but unfortunately often low budget- social economy measures. In this way, local authorities become trapped in a triangular tension between the New Economic Policy, an ambiguous legitimization discourse in an attempt to forge a more harmonious coexistence of inherently conflicting development logics, and increasingly louder calls from populations in depressed neighbourhoods for new initiatives in the social economy and in neighbourhood social services. This triangular tension is portrayed in fig. 1. In what follows, we shall attempt to illustrate, substantiate and explore the above, drawing on material presented in the subsequent papers as well on findings from other case-study projects.

#### **4.4. Urban regeneration and policy: the link with urban governance**

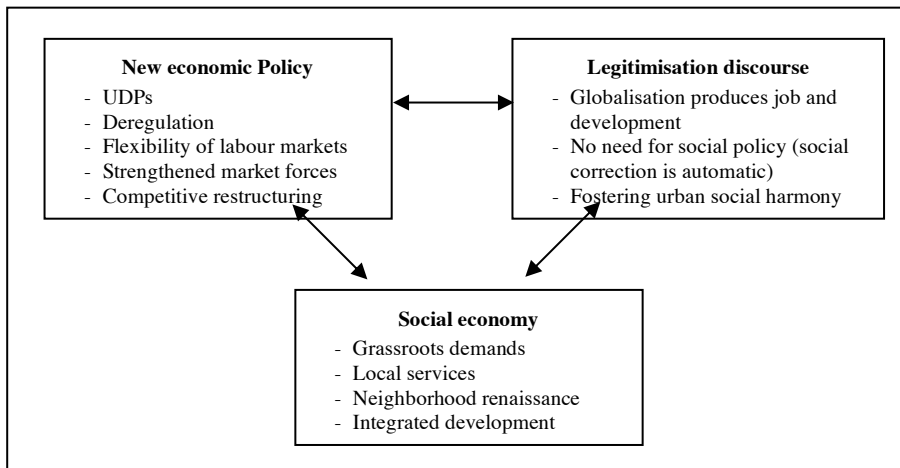
A key objective of the comparative analysis presented in this issue was to determine the actual weight of the urban development projects (UDPs) in the urban policy and strategy approach of the public – and possibly also the private – sector and their relationship to changing governance dynamics. To do this, we had to first situate urban regeneration policy as a part of urban policy as a whole, asking whether the UDP is representative for the urban policy in the city or urban region or whether it is just one type of strategy among many others. However, locating the place of urban regeneration policy in a wider context requires an examination of dominant views of urban policy and planning methods used in each case study.

In addition, urban development policy is set against a background of radically changing governance dynamics. The case studies analysed in this special issue reveal that the policy models used for urban regeneration and development incorporate critical shifts in scale, domains of intervention, actors and agents, institutional structures, and policy tools. In this sense, the case studies selected here illustrate the significance of various innovative components of the new urban policies: the rise in importance of growth coalitions, the re-alignment of political networks, the emergence of new institutional arrangements, the use of ad hoc and exceptional policy and planning procedures, etc. Of course, some of these conclusions also have been drawn from the analysis of other case studies in the URSPIC research programme. These cases have been extensively covered in Moulaert/Swynge-douw/Rodriguez (2001, 2002).

##### *4.4.1. Developmental logic, economic growth and the physical bias of urban policy*

Without exception, all case studies reveal that over the last decade and a half, urban regeneration policy has become an increasingly central component of urban policy. For the most part, urban regeneration schemes based on large-scale UDPs

were aimed at combining physical up- grading with socio-economic development objectives. They emerged as a response to urban restructuring processes associated with the trans- formation of production and demand conditions globally. In particular, such projects became an integral part of alternative policies to replace more traditional redistributive social policy schemes. The new socio-economic realities of the 1980s pushed the focus of urban policy gradually away from managing city growth and the negative externalities of accelerated urbanization towards coping with the consequences of economic crisis and restructuring. The search for growth and competitive redevelopment be- came the leading objective of the new urban policies in an attempt to reassert the position of cities in the emerging global economy.



**Figure 4.1: The triangular tension in contemporary urban governance**

A fundamental component of many of the urban regeneration initiatives discussed in the case studies is the stress placed on developing and strengthening the competitiveness of cities. Enhancing the competitive advantage of cities is seen as largely dependent on improving and adapting the built environment to the demands and requirements of emerging sectors and firms. Therefore, physical reconversion and economic recovery in designated geographical areas tend to go

hand in hand in these urban regeneration strategies and, very often, are perceived as quasi-simultaneous processes.

At the same time, as argued in section 2, all UDPs respond to the imperatives of socio-economic change and represent the material expression of a developmental logic that views mega-projects as major leverages for future growth and functional transformation. As such, they operate at the interstices between physical planning and development policies. But, although a radical transformation of the physical environment is, indeed, an integral part of urban regeneration, in some cases the overriding physical bias of these schemes renders economic recovery and growth almost an assumedly automatic consequence.

A strong "physicist" approach dominates not only urban regeneration initiatives, but also urban policy as a whole in Naples, Athens and Bilbao. In Athens, urban policy develops on purely physical deterministic grounds and is largely disconnected from economic and especially social parameters. In Naples, the predominant view of urban policy is based on large-scale renewal projects, which are expected to improve the quality of the urban fabric. And in Bilbao, the traditional strong physical bias of statutory urban planning has permeated urban regeneration schemes, which despite an integrative rhetoric remain fully trapped in the logic of land use allocation, imaginative urban architectures, and infrastructure developments. In these cases, socio-economic objectives are seen as dependent upon reconversion of abandoned or derelict sites or the speculative use of 'virgin' land, a condition that transforms physical renewal into a mediated economic objective. A strong physical bias, but with a less mechanistic connection between urban regeneration and the reconversion of derelict sites, is also present in Lisbon and Dublin, whereas in Lille, Copenhagen, and Berlin property valorization is integrated into a more ambitious notion of strategic redevelopment and regeneration. Finally, in the cases of Vienna, Brussels and Birmingham, the UDP aims at providing a more effective physical environment for the concentration of business and public administration functions.

Nonetheless, the search for growth and the transformation of the economic structure of cities from a manufacturing to a post-industrial service-based economy is a common theme across all case studies. An accompanying rhetoric advocating the need for post-industrial development presents the UDPs as spearheading a process of functional restructuring. This is especially true in cities badly affected by the decline of traditional manufacturing industries such as Bilbao, Lille or Birmingham and, to a lesser extent, Rotterdam or Vienna.

At the same time, urban revitalization is projected beyond the cities' limits and linked to regional recovery and an internationalization strategy. For example, in Copenhagen the UDP is the critical node in the promotion of the cross-border Oeresund Region; in Berlin, it is part of the renewed political and economic centrality of the capital city; in Bilbao the UDP aims at strengthening the articulating capacity of the city within the Atlantic Are. In Brussels, Vienna, Lisbon, Athens, Birmingham, and Rotterdam, competitive restructuring is associated with their attempted transformation to become a central hub for the new service economy.

#### *4.4.2. The (timid) return of social questions and the move towards more integrated approaches*

The overwhelming weight of property redevelopment approaches and unqualified economic goals, which have dominated urban regeneration schemes during the 1980s, have not gone unchallenged. Several of our case studies reveal that there have been very fundamental changes in urban development planning during the 1990s when a belated attention to social issues and problems surfaced. However, the lack of "trickle-down" processes has forced a re-appraisal of urban regeneration policies and the recognition of the need to deal with social needs and exclusion dynamics in a more direct way. The overthrow of conservative governments and the return of social democratic, socialist and more progressive coalitions have been a major factor in this shift. For example, in Rotterdam (this issue), the perception at the end of the 1980s that the benefits of economic prosperity

were not trickling down to the disadvantaged groups of society forced a reconsideration of urban regeneration initiatives. Closing the gap between economic and social development led to a new set of policies for "social renewal" and to a more integrated approach launched during the mid 1990s.

In Birmingham and London (this issue), during the 1990s, urban policy priorities have shifted away from earlier notions of urban regeneration as mere economic regeneration. The latter had become synonymous with physical redevelopment, image promotion to attract private investment and a downgrading of services, coupled with a belief that this in itself would be sufficient to initiate processes to mitigate social exclusion. The pursuit of property-led development at any cost has been replaced by a broader view of what constitutes regeneration and gives greater emphasis to social issues and the delivery of a broad range of services. Nonetheless, the principles of competitive planning, introduced by the Conservatives in the early 1990s, still permeate urban regeneration policies to-day, despite a renewed accent on tackling "deprivation".

Berlin, Copenhagen (this issue) Lille and Vienna stand out as examples where clear economic considerations are placed at the forefront of urban regeneration policies. In Berlin, regeneration strategies, both in the inner city as well as in the large-scale operations of the 'development areas' and 'new suburbs', are closely tied to the provision or improvement of housing for specific social groups. In the 'development arc- as', urban renewal and property development is combined with economic and labour market policy. In Lille, despite a clear separation between sectoral – i.e. targeted social and economic functions – and territorial – i.e. spatial planning – measures, urban regeneration policy has effectively integrated land and infrastructure developments with a series of social and economic development initiatives through the application of contractual arrangements between institutions.

The overriding physical bias of urban regeneration is being somewhat tempered by the incorporation of socio-economic considerations in cities like Naples where, in the 1990s, the development of a more integrated, multidimensional approach to urban regeneration, bringing together construction initiatives and socio-economic

actions, has gained legitimacy and begins slowly to permeate strategies and policies. In Athens, too, even if there is no evidence yet of a real move towards developing an integrated policy approach, at least lip-service is paid to the need to change from a predominantly physical determinist policy model to a more integrated approach taking into account social and economic objectives, especially employment issues. And, in Bilbao, attempts to move beyond the traditional separation between sectoral and territorially sensitive policies are evidenced by the increasing involvement of the city in local economic development planning and in strategic territorial planning.

Finally, greater attention to socio-economic considerations and the increasing recognition of the importance and validity of more integrated, multidimensional approaches to urban regeneration is partly driven by European Union policy demands concerning access to programmes and funding. In this sense, EU conditions provide a strong incentive to act in a more integrated manner, combining physical, economic, social and cultural objectives. The example of Italy is highly illustrative. In this case, the creation in 1997 of a new generation of programmes by the Ministry of Public Works intended to promote and finance public-private partnerships for urban regeneration projects aimed not only at improving the planning, managerial and networking capacity of municipalities in carrying out projects, but also at increasing the effectiveness of municipalities and to better equip them with respect to new opportunities created by the reform of the EU structural funds. This is also the case in Lisbon, Bilbao and Athens where the possibility of integrating various domains of intervention (infrastructure, spatial planning, housing, employment, welfare), traditionally dispersed among different government levels and departments, is facilitated by the requirements of EU programmes (URBAN, for example).

#### *4.4.3. Large UDPs and 'exceptionality' procedures*

A central issue of current urban regeneration policies is the relation of UDPs to existing planning instruments and regulations. It is often the case that, even while



these projects are generally inserted into existing statutory planning guide- lines, the initial conception, design and implementation lies at the margins of formal planning structures. The framework of 'exceptionality' associated with these initiatives favours an autonomised dynamic marked by special plans and projects that relegate statutory norms and procedures to a secondary and subordinated place. This is the case not only in Athens and Lisbon, where the UDPs are developed in relation to an international hallmark event, but also in cities like Dublin or Bilbao and even Copenhagen or Berlin. In these cases, the project assumes the form of an 'exceptional' policy action, which severely impacts on all aspects of planning and related policies.

The exceptionality of the UDP is justified on the basis of different factors: their scale, the emblematic character of the operation, timing pressures (for example in case of international events), the need for greater flexibility, efficiency criteria, etc. 'Exceptionality' is essentially a fundamental feature of the new planning methods embracing the primacy of project-based initiatives over regulatory plans and procedures. So, while statutory plans and norms have not disappeared from the urban policy arena, their role has been seriously curtailed and special plans and exceptional measures often overrule them. Moreover, against the crisis of comprehensive planning, project-led redevelopment is presented as an effective planning alternative, combining the advantages of flexibility and targeted actions with a tremendous signifying capacity. And, in a constantly changing and increasingly uncertain environment, flexibility is seen as a necessary condition for effective results.

Project-led urban regeneration also reflects a shift in planning priorities that assigns a greater role to efficiency criteria in the management of urban regeneration. In a context of strong budgetary constraints, numerous competing demands, and limited financial opportunities, the question of efficiency in urban policy development and implementation is no longer a request but a requirement. However, the meaning of efficiency really remains rather blurred. The concept is used in a highly rhetorical manner to justify any move away from regulatory norms and procedures. Overall,

efficiency is measured against very narrow, economic and short-term goals. In urban regeneration, this boils down to an effort to maximise property valorization with minimum investment costs in the least possible time. Moreover, the focused, self-contained and delimited character of UDPs is portrayed as making them more adapted to the imperatives of efficiency.

The ascent of efficiency rules is associated with increasing pressure on local governments to become more 'business-like' and adopt a modus operandi modelled after the private sector. Pro-activity, entrepreneurship, and risk-taking approaches are called for to replace the so called bureaucratic dynamics of local governments. As a result, a more assertive and entrepreneurial style of intervention emerges, which relates greater flexibility and efficiency to successful urban regeneration and local competitiveness. The UDPs clearly express this trend, serving to advertise the commitment of the city to urban revitalization, projecting both locally and externally, an image of strong pro-activity and dynamism while the combination of large scale and emblematic projects or international events act as an essential publicity mechanism aimed at attracting private investors, residents, and/or visitors.

#### **4.5. Conclusion: Urban Entrepreneurialism and Besieged Local governance**

Over the last fifteen years, many metropolitan governments have opted for a New Economic Policy (NEP) for their cities and neighbourhoods. These policies were meant as leading economic restructuring strategies in response to the consequences of the crisis mechanisms that had rampaged through Western cities since the end of the 1970s. UDPs or mega-investment projects constituted a major ingredient of this NEP. The sheer dimensions of the UDPs elevate them to central icons in the scripting of the image of the future of the cities where they are located. Needless to say, that the imagin(eer)ing of the city's future is directly articulated with the visions of those who are pivotal to the formulation, planning and implementation of the projects. Consequently, these projects have been and often

still are, arenas that reflect profound power struggles and position taking of key economic, political, social or cultural elites that are instrumental in the urban arena. The scriptings of the projects highlight and reflect the aspirations of a particular set of local, regional, national or sometimes also international actors that shape, through the exercise of socio-economic or political power, the development trajectories of each of the areas. As such, the UDPs can be considered as 'elite playing fields', where the stake is to shape an urban future in line with the aspirations of the most powerful segments among the participants. Clearly, the association of coalitions of elite players changes over time and alliance formation and break-up redefine development trajectories in important ways. Struggles for inclusion in or exclusion from the elite circles become a pivotal element in shaping wider processes of social integration or exclusion. The management and political governance of and interference with the planning and construction of these UDPs vary significantly between cities. Similarly, a great variety of responses by various groups of citizens can be observed.

In contrast to discourses of market-led and entrepreneurial activity (risk taking, market-led investments), UDPs are decidedly and almost without exception state-led, often state-financed, and inscribed in a logic of urban governance. Urban redevelopment is considered to be a central strategy in re-equilibrating the problematic fiscal balance sheet of local government. Territorial policies, aimed at producing increasing rent income, altering the socio-economic tax basis and producing profitable economic activities, are among the few options available, particularly in a context in which the structure of fiscal revenues is changing rapidly. The re-valuation of urban land remains one of the few means open to local governments to increase tax returns. Despite the rhetoric of market led and privately covered investments, the State is still one of the leading actors in the process. Risks are taken by the state, on occasion shared with the private sector, but given the speculative, real estate based nature of the projects, deficits are likely to occur. Well-known processes of socialization of the cost and risk, and privatization of the possible benefits can be identified. While in the past, invoking the social return of the projects legitimised such practices, they are now usually hidden behind a

veil of creative accounting, the channelling of funds via quasi-governmental organizations and mixed private/public companies. Consequently, the UDP became a major spending item on public budgets, either directly through public investment, or indirectly, because of the (local) state's investment guarantees. As a consequence, many neighbourhood redevelopment projects were slimmed down, postponed or they plainly disappeared. The combination of UDP policy with its unbalanced growth features and the lack of neighbourhood level actions have reinforced social inequality among neighbourhoods and accentuated already acute processes of social exclusion and polarization.

Given the often radically new socio-economic functions associated with UDPs -in an effort to align the urban socio-economic fabric with the expected conditions in a new international competitive environment -there is inevitably a process of transfer and of dislocation of jobs taking place. Spatial labour markets become out of joint or are mismatched. Targeted labour market policies might remedy some of these disjunctions, but the sheer vastness of the labour market restructuring often implies painful processes of adaptation and growing separation between remaining local communities and the incoming new workforce. This leads to a double-edged dualisation of labour markets, both in the construction phase of projects and in their effects. Increasingly, dual urban labour markets are emerging, with a group of highly paid and educated executives on the one hand, and a large group of less secure – often informal – workers on the other. The fundamental restructuring of labour markets, which is facilitated by national de-regulation of labour market rules and other changes in the national regulatory frameworks, becomes cemented in and expressed by the socio-economic composition of the UDPs. The inclusion of the existing labour pool proves difficult or impossible, while re-training and targeted labour market entry policies tend not to be very successful, despite the prolonged support for such programs.

UDP's produce urban islands, discrete spaces with increasingly sharp boundaries (gated and surveilled business, leisure or living community spaces). This is re-enforced through a combination of physical, social, and cultural boundary formation

processes. The overall result is the rise of the fragmented city, the culminated reorganization of the socio-spatial fabric of the urban agglomeration (Marcuse 1989). In some cases, it takes the form of suburbanisation of poverty, while internal differentiation accentuates socio-spatial differentiation in the city. This leads to increasing socio-spatial polarization, which at times takes outspoken racialised forms. This New Urban Policy was accompanied and often facilitated by the formation of a new form of urban governance that rested principally on fostering new relations between the local state and the private sector and, consequently, re-shuffled social and political power relations in important ways. Accountability and participation often declined, while elite visions took over the actual restructuring of the city. In addition, these large scale UDPs actively co-produced the processes that were later recognized as constituting globalization. UDPs are, in fact, the material and political-economic manifestations through which actual processes of economic globalization, cultural transnationalization and increased inter-urban competition become constituted. As such, globalization is a process that is profoundly localised and results from concrete territorial restructuring dynamics. Pushing through this model of globalizing urbanization demands the cohesive formation of a growth-oriented elite configuration that holds local governance under its hegemonic siege.

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## CAPÍTULO 5

### **Uneven Redevelopment: New Urban Policies and Socio-Spatial Fragmentation in Metropolitan Bilbao**

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## 5.1. Abstract

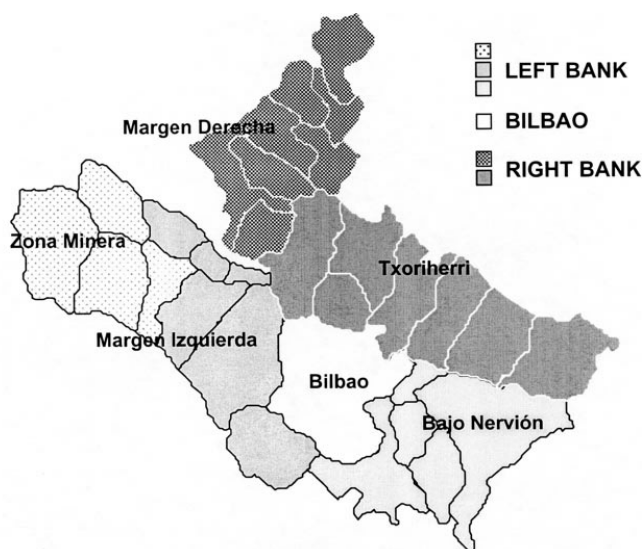
Since the mid 1980s, European cities and regions have become increasingly concerned with competitive restructuring and economic growth. This concern goes hand in hand with a rediscovery of the central role of cities in the performance of regional and national economies as a whole. But, in a context of radical transformation of production and demand conditions globally, the performance of cities is mediated by their capacity to lead a process of competitive redevelopment. To meet the challenges posed by the changing global competitive climate, the policy agenda of many cities has been drastically reorganized. On the one hand, the search for growth has transformed urban revitalization in one of the main domains of urban intervention. On the other, the new urban policy agenda is singularly framed in a language of competitiveness, improved efficiency, flexibility, entrepreneurship, partnership and collaborative advantage that underwrite the remaking of planning objectives, functions and instruments. In this article, we examine the rise of new urban policies in Bilbao (Spain), a city where two decades of manufacturing decline and economic restructuring are gradually giving way to so-called urban renaissance. During the 1990s, Bilbao has followed on the tracks of other old industrial cities adopting a revitalization strategy focused around large-scale and emblematic redevelopment projects. The article discusses one of these projects, Abandoibarra, a paradigmatic waterfront development that embodies the new logic of urban intervention. The first section of the paper presents an analysis of economic restructuring and socio-spatial fragmentation dynamics in the city in the last two decades. The second section discusses changes in urban policy-making locating Bilbao's regeneration strategy in the context of the 'New Urban Policies'. The third section focuses on emerging governance dynamics and the critical role of new governance institutions in the management of Abandoibarra's redevelopment scheme. Finally, the fourth part of the article attempts to provide an evaluation of the impact of the project, highlighting the shadows behind what is presented as a new success story in urban revitalization.

**Keywords:** urban regeneration, new urban policies, social and spatial polarization, Bilbao.

## **5.2. Remaking the Fordist city: economic restructuring and socio-spatial fragmentation in Bilbao**

### *5.2.1. Industrialization and urban development*

For more than a century, the dynamics of change in metropolitan Bilbao have followed closely the cycles of expansion and contraction of manufacturing activities. From the early outbursts of industrialization in the second half of the 19th century, the city's socio-economic and spatial structure has been moulded primarily by the changing requirements of manufacturing activity. The location determinants of the propulsive sectors of the first round of industrial development, iron ore extraction and export, prefigured a social and functional division of space along the axis of the Nervión river that has only deepened over time (Urrutia, 1985; Martínez and Vicario, 1997). In the Left Bank (Margen Izquierda: see Fig. 3), where the mines and port facilities are located, the development of manufacturing followed by intense immigration transformed this area into the heart of industry and working class communities. In Bilbao, a new rationality of segregated functions and classes drove the development of residential and business locations for the industrial and financial bourgeoisie in the centre and working class neighbourhoods in the periphery. The Right Bank (Margen Derecha), initially a recreational and summer residence area for the city's upper classes, was gradually transformed into a residential centre of higher quality, up-market housing and, later on, tertiary activities.



**Figure 5. 1: Metropolitan Bilbao Functional Areas**

After the impasse of the civil war, a decade of economic stagnation and political isolation of the Francoist regime gave way to a period of accelerated industrialization and urban development in the 1950s and 60s. Together with Madrid and Barcelona, Bilbao became a major pole of attraction for both capital and labour. Capital investments in this ‘second’ wave of industrialization built upon and intensified the city’s specialization on heavy manufacturing and metal products, a factor that would bear critically on the early loss of dynamism and the differential impact of economic crisis in the 1970s (Escudero, 1985). On the other hand, population growth, fuelled by a continuous flow of immigrants from disadvantaged Spanish regions, created the basis for an extraordinary demographic and physical expansion. Between 1950 and 1970, population doubled (111 percent increase) in the eight largest municipalities<sup>1</sup> of metropolitan Bilbao and tripled in the Left Bank (182 percent increase). Population growth continued during the 1970s but at a much lower rate (14 percent). This trend was accompanied by a frenzy of building in a context dominated by the spontaneous activities of real estate agents and a permissive government constrained by rising demands, structural deficits and limited material and financial resources (Terán, 1999). An ‘urbanism of tolerance’, subservient to the interests and pressures of

<sup>1</sup> Bilbao, Barakaldo, Basauri, Galdakao, Getxo, Portugalete, Santurtzi and Sestao.

promoters and developers, turned speculation into the key dynamic of rapid urbanization (Perez-Agote, 1978; Leonardo, 1989).

The combination of accelerated growth and untamed urbanism favoured the reproduction of socio-spatial segregation patterns in the metropolitan area. The industrial and working class character of the Left Bank was accentuated by the expansion of manufacturing and port activity and by the concentration of immigrant labour in this area. In the municipality of Bilbao, the growth of centrality functions associated with the concentration of financial activities and advanced services in the central business district was the most important dynamic. But the central district also retained its residential character for higher income groups while the working classes settled in the periphery of the municipality. The growth of the Right Bank was primarily tied to its role as the residential centre for the new middle classes and higher income groups. However, throughout the 1970s, some of the Right Bank municipalities started to attract an important share of expanding tertiary activities, thus reinforcing the social and functional divisions of the metropolitan area.

After two decades of intense growth, the metropolitan economy was badly hit by the crisis of Fordism and the restructuring of production and demand globally. Manufacturing activities, the engine of growth during the expansive phase, now led the dynamics of contraction and decline. Between 1975 and 1996, metropolitan Bilbao lost almost half (47 percent) of its manufacturing jobs and the proportion of industrial employment dropped from 46 percent to 23 percent. Most of these losses took place in traditional Fordist industries such as shipbuilding, steel, chemicals and electrical equipment, dominated by large firms<sup>2</sup>. The growth of tertiary activities during this period helped offset partly the impact of industrial decline and after 1986 provided practically all net job growth. By 1996, the share of services in the city had grown from 42 percent to 65 percent, revealing a fundamental reorganization of the

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<sup>2</sup> In 1975 basic industries and metal transformation activities concentrated more than 70 percent of total industrial employment in metropolitan Bilbao. These activities still accounted for 68 percent of manufacturing employment in 1986, but its share of total metropolitan employment had dropped from 22 percent to 12 percent.



urban economy and a shift in its specialization away from manufacturing towards services (Table 5.1).

**Table 5. 1: Employment distribution by sectors in Metropolitan Bilbao 1975–96 (in thousands)**

	1975	1981	1986	1991	1996
Agriculture	2.5	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.6
Manufacturing	136.3	116.0	96.3	94.0	75.1
Building	32.8	24.9	17.8	24.5	20.3
Services	124.9	130.6	143.4	176.3	182.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>296.5</b>	<b>273.1</b>	<b>259.1</b>	<b>296.3</b>	<b>279.0</b>

*Source: Eustat (1986, 1996).*

Manufacturing decline and changes in the hierarchy of sectors have gone hand in hand with a profound reorganization of labour market and income opportunities. In Bilbao, unemployment rates jumped from 2.3 percent in 1975 to 26 percent in 1986; a decade later, unemployment figures continued to be at an alarming 27 percent, but the return of economic dynamism in the last half of the 1990s drove this rate down to 16 percent in 1998. However, falling unemployment rates are closely linked to the growing casualization of labour relations and the extension of precarious jobs that has institutionalized vulnerability and increased the risks of exclusion for large segments of the population. The extent to which this trend permeates the reorganization of the labour market in the city is reflected in the rising proportion of non-tenured contracts that in 1998 amounted to almost 40 percent of all contracts (Egailan, 1999). Thus, while unemployment remains the key variable in explaining changing living conditions and social exclusion dynamics, it reveals only the tip of an iceberg of uncertainty, instability and increasing risk for a growing share of the urban population.

### *5.2.2. Changing patterns of socio-spatial segregation and polarization*

Changes in the urban economy have not taken place homogeneously inside the metropolitan area. On the contrary, processes of socio-economic restructuring unfold along the lines of existing social and functional divisions of space. Table 5.2 reveals

critical differences in the distribution of employment change for different sub-areas of the metropolitan area.

**Table 5. 2: Employment distribution by sectors in Metropolitan Bilbao by sub-areas, 1981-96**

(thousands)	Agriculture				Manufacturing				Building industry				Services			
	1981	1986	1991	1996	1981	1986	1991	1996	1981	1986	1991	1996	1981	1986	1991	1996
<b>Bilbao</b>	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	37.9	30.9	31.3	24.6	8.5	6.0	8.5	6.9	68.1	70.5	81.7	80.1
<b>Left Bank</b>	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	60.8	48.7	48.8	35.8	12.2	9.2	12.4	10.3	41.5	47.0	60.6	63.7
Bajo Nervión	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	17.2	14.0	14.1	11.6	2.8	2.3	3.0	2.8	9.9	11.9	16.8	18.2
Margen Izquierda	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	38.3	30.2	27.1	20.7	8.1	6.1	8.1	6.4	28.4	31.3	38.6	39.7
Zona Minera	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	5.3	4.5	4.2	3.5	1.3	0.8	1.3	1.1	3.2	3.8	5.2	5.8
<b>Right Bank</b>	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.6	17.4	16.7	17.3	14.6	4.2	2.7	3.6	3.2	21.0	26.1	34.0	38.2
Margen Derecha	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	8.2	8.7	9.3	8.1	2.5	1.6	1.9	1.7	13.6	17.4	22.4	25.3
Txorierri	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	9.2	8.0	8.0	6.5	1.7	1.1	1.7	1.5	7.4	8.7	11.6	12.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>96.3</b>	<b>94.0</b>	<b>75.1</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>130.6</b>	<b>143.4</b>	<b>176.3</b>	<b>182.0</b>

Source: Eustat (1986, 1996).

The Left Bank supplies an inordinate proportion of total job loss and plant closures and, consequently, has the highest rates of unemployment; two thirds of all job losses in manufacturing correspond to the Left Bank, as opposed to only 7 percent to the Right Bank. The concentration of job loss and decline means that more than 40 percent of the Left Bank's industrial employment has been destroyed since 1981. This area also lags behind in terms of the growth of services that account in 1996 for 58 percent of its employment as opposed to around 70 percent in Bilbao and the Right Bank. Moreover, the initial specialization in residential functions and tertiary activities of the Right Bank has been reinforced both by significant residential transfers from the Left Bank municipalities (Martínez and Vicario, 1997) and by the decentralization of new services from the city itself, which has contributed to deepen the Left-Right divide. However, the structural dynamics of the Txorierri, an industrial enclave within the Right Bank, remain functionally assimilated to the Left Bank.

Industrial decline and tertiarization dynamics are closely related to changes in the occupational structure, which also contribute to redefine socio- spatial segregation

and polarization patterns in the city. Table 5.3 reveals fundamental shifts in the occupational structure of metropolitan Bilbao between 1986 and 1996.

**Table 5.3: Changing occupational structure in Metropolitan Bilbao, 1986–96  
(% of total employment)**

	Specialists		Managers		Administrative		Commercial		Services		Manual labour	
	1986	1996	1986	1996	1986	1996	1986	1996	1986	1996	1986	1996
<b>Bilbao</b>	<b>19.7</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>25.6</b>
Left Bank	11.3	16.6	0.5	2.1	12.7	13.9	10.8	11.3	11.6	13.4	53.0	42.8
Bajo Nervión	9.3	16.6	0.6	2.3	13.8	15.4	11.5	12.2	10.2	11.8	54.7	43.7
Margen Izquierda	12.	17.	0.5	2.0	12.	13.	10.	11.	12.	13.	52.	42.
Zona Minera	10.	15.	0.1	2.7	12.	12.	11.	9.3	11.	14.	54.	46.
Right Bank	25.9	30.7	1.7	5.6	16.7	16.2	13.5	11.1	10.4	10.3	31.7	26.0
Margen Derecha	33.5	37.9	2.3	7.1	18.9	17.3	14.9	11.4	9.1	7.9	21.0	18.5
Txoriherri	14.0	18.7	0.4	3.3	13.3	14.5	11.3	10.7	12.6	14.2	48.5	38.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>40.7</b>	<b>32.5</b>

*Source: Eustat (1986, 1996).*

These data show that there is a significant increase in the absolute numbers and proportion of specialists and managerial occupations throughout the city; people employed in the metropolitan area as managers almost tripled and the number of specialists increased by one third in that decade. All the sub-areas, without exception, increased the number and share of jobs in these occupations. Growing professionalization runs parallel to a reduction in the numbers and proportion of manual labour in all sub-areas.

However, overall trends in the occupational structure of the city also present an uneven spatial distribution. In the Right Bank and, especially, in the municipality of Bilbao, these changes involve a fundamental redistribution of jobs away from manual labour in manufacturing activities (cf. Table 5.3) towards qualified specialists and, to a lesser extent, medium and low qualification service jobs. As a result, occupational change is contributing to strengthen these areas' original specialization in technical, professional and managerial occupations. In contrast, manual labour remains the largest occupational category in the Left Bank areas despite the absolute loss in the numbers employed and the falling share of these occupations in the employment structure. In the Left Bank, occupational change involves a more levelled redistribution to tertiary occupations: administrative, commercial and services.

Nonetheless, the proportion of specialists and managers in the Left Bank increases significantly although the weight of these higher qualification jobs remains low. In sum, occupational shifts over the last decade encroach upon and provide for new socio-spatial polarization patterns within the metropolitan area.

A measure of increasing inequality and polarization dynamics within the metropolitan area is also provided by the distribution of poverty. Table 5.4 reveals the higher incidence of poverty conditions, real and potential, in the Left Bank and in the municipality of Bilbao.

**Table 5. 4: Poverty conditions, 1996–2000 (% of households)**

	Potential poverty			Real poverty		
	1996	2000	variation	1996	2000	variation
Bilbao	5.7	8.9	3.2	2.1	3.7	1.6
Left Bank	6.7	8.3	1.6	2.7	4.2	1.5
Right Bank	3.6	3.9	0.3	0.0	1.1	1.1
Basque autonomy	4.6	5.5	0.9	1.6	2.1	0.5

*Source: Gobierno Vasco (1996, 2000).*

In 2000, 12.5 percent of the Left Bank households lived in poverty or were coping with severe difficulties to meet basic needs (potential poverty). A similar proportion of households in the municipality of Bilbao lived, or were dangerously close to living, in poverty. Together, the Left Bank and the city of Bilbao concentrated in 1996 almost 60 percent of all households in the Basque Autonomy suffering from poverty and half of the most vulnerable ones. Significantly, the extension of vulnerability among the Bilbao municipality's households in the last four years takes place during a phase of economic dynamism and of massive investments in urban renewal. In contrast, the Right Bank shows very low levels of real and potential poverty, although the trend is towards a rising proportion of households living in poverty.

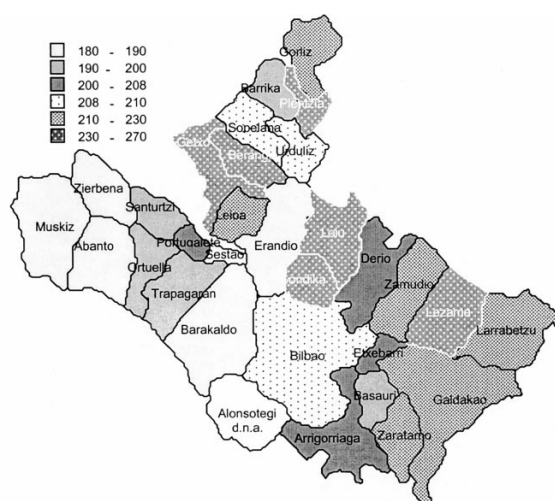
Finally, the evolution of average per capita income among the different sub-areas also provides a dimension of changing inequalities in metropolitan Bilbao. Table 5.5 and Figure 4 reveal a dynamic of increasing differentiation and polarization between 1982 and 1997.

While average per capita income for metropolitan Bilbao doubled during this period, this increase was not distributed evenly. Starting from a below-average position, the Left Bank registered a reduction of average per capita income both in absolute and relative terms during this period. In contrast, the Right Bank maintained and even strengthened its advantage, increasing almost 10 percentage points and thus expanding the income gap relative to the Left Bank. Polarization dynamics were particularly intense during the 1980s, as shown by the high standard deviation, when the gap between the Left and the Right Bank increased every year until 1988. During the 1990s, however, differences between the two areas remained constant.

**Table 5.5: Average per capita income 1982–97 (Met. Bilbao = 100)**

	1982	1988	1997	variation
<b>Bilbao</b>	<b>111.4</b>	<b>117.5</b>	<b>111.0</b>	<b>209.3</b>
Left Bank	86.1	77.6	81.3	
• Bajo Nervión	85.8	82.7	84.0	204.0
• Margen Izquierda	86.0	79.0	80.1	189.2
• Zona Minera	84.4	76.5	79.5	192.9
Right Bank	109.1	115.2	118.9	
• Margen Derecha	123.5	134.3	137.4	245.2
• Txorierri	87.3	82.1	88.9	216.1
<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>23.0</b>	-
<b>Max – Min</b>	<b>39.1</b>	<b>57.8</b>	<b>57.8</b>	-

Source: Own calculations. Diputación Foral de Bizkaia (1997).



**Figure 5.2: Average per capita income growth, Metropolitan Bilbao municipalities 1982–1997**

This trend is also confirmed by the evolution of income distribution as shown by Martínez and Vicario (1997). According to these authors, between 1982 and 1988<sup>3</sup> the critical period of restructuring, social inequality increased as the top income segments increased their average income by 97 percent while the lowest income increased only 26 percent. As a result, the top 20 percent increased their wealth share from 44 percent to 47 percent while the lowest 20 percent decreased their proportion from 7 percent to 5 percent.

In sum, over the last two decades, industrial decline and economic restructuring have contributed to heighten social and spatial divisions in metropolitan Bilbao. Contrasting demographic, employment, sector and income dynamics along the historical divisions provide the conditions for the reproduction of uneven development. The relative structure of differentiation is consolidated as a decaying Left Bank continues to drift apart from the dynamism of the Right Bank. Moreover, changes in the urban economic base during the last decade have created the conditions for new forms of segregation and polarization in the city.

### **5.3. New Urban Policies (NUP) for urban regeneration**

#### *5.3.1. Urban regeneration in the 1990s: the search for growth and competitive restructuring*

Throughout Europe, urban regeneration has become the primary component of urban policy. The changing socio-economic realities of the 1980s have gradually shifted the focus of urban policy away from managing city growth and the negative externalities of accelerated urbanization towards coping with the consequences of economic crisis and restructuring (Moulaert and Scott, 1997; Fainstein, 1991). The strategic shift in urban regeneration has evolved in the context of a critical reappraisal of the form, functions and scope of urban policy and the rise of new forms of urban governance (Brindley et al., 1989). And, while a variety of competing styles of

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<sup>3</sup> Data availability makes it impossible to update the authors' calculations for the years after 1988. The fiscal statistics no longer contain the personal distribution by deciles.

planning and governance coexist throughout the urban landscape, urban regeneration is, nonetheless, framed in a common language of flexibility, improved efficiency, competitiveness, state entrepreneurship, partnership and collaborative advantage (Healey, 1997; Jessop, 1998; Oatley, 1998). The emerging governance system places urban policy developments of the last decade and a half in line with what Cox refers to as a 'New Urban Politics' (Cox, 1993), a view that subordinates urban government strategies to the imperatives of globalized capital accumulation. Indeed, the shifts in policy are underlined by the increasing pressures for cities to perform effectively in an increasingly competitive global environment dominated by the globalization of economic activity and the growing internationalization of investment flows. The 'New Urban Policies' are therefore fully inserted in the macroeconomic and regulatory changes of the global space economy and liberalized Economic Policy. They imply a radical redefinition of objectives but also of forms and patterns of intervention as well as institutional relations (Moulaert et al., 2000).

Under the new agenda, enhancing the competitive advantage of cities has meant the need to adapt their built environment and socio-economic conditions to the demands of the new growth sectors and investment dynamics (Fainstein, 1990; Judd and Parkinson, 1990). This is especially true for old industrial cities where a weakened economy and a deteriorated physical base severely undermine their capacity to attract new functions and economic activities. In this case, competitive advantage means strengthening the local basis of advantage relative to other cities by finding new roles in the functional hierarchy (Porter, 1995). The emphasis on inter-area competition for the attraction of capital, innovative sectors and command functions makes 'putting cities on the map' a strategic imperative that provides the rationale for place marketing initiatives, flagship projects and emblematic operations (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990).

On the other hand, internalizing the goals of competitive restructuring has contributed to the emergence of a more proactive and entrepreneurial approach on the part of urban governments (Harvey, 1989; Albrechts, 1992). In the name of improving public sector performance, new interorganizational bodies are set up, displacing traditional planning institutions and subordinating formal government structures in

policy design and implementation processes. The new governance system often involves massive redistribution of policy making powers, competencies and responsibilities away from local governments to partnership agencies, a process that has been described in terms of deregulation and ‘privatization’ of urban policy making (Jessop, 1998; Harvey, 1989). Paradoxically, the focused and fragmented character of many of these urban operations contrasts sharply with a strong emphasis on co-ordinated action, partnerships, networks and support coalitions (Leitner, 1990; Healey et al., 1995). Thus, the imperative of efficiency in management and competitiveness in urban performance compounds a framework dominated by the emergence of a more assertive style of urban governance where a multiplicity of agents, including the local government, compete for access and control over the urban policy agenda (Healey, 1997).

In sum, urban regeneration is located at the core of urban policy change, spearheading the shift to a post-Keynesian mode of urban intervention (Gaffikin and Warf, 1993). In this mode, the primacy of economic performance and competitiveness takes over, displacing the integrative functions of urban intervention to the limbo of trickle down redistribution. The overwhelming concern with physical factors and a marked downtown bias create the conditions for the concentration of public investments in central locations and the redistribution of resources away from other less conspicuous uses and areas. Not surprisingly, the benefits of renewal among neighbourhoods and social groups tend to reflect an equivalent distribution. Indeed, a pattern of two- speed revitalization has come to be increasingly associated with urban regeneration as downtown regeneration proceeds alongside continuing unemployment, widespread poverty and environmental degradation in its surrounding area (Hula, 1990; Fainstein, 1991; Holcomb, 1993).

### *5.3.2. The changing context of urban policy in Bilbao*

Until the mid-1970s, urban plans in Spain were mostly concerned with coping with accelerated economic and urban growth, allocating land uses and providing the necessary infrastructure for metropolitan expansion. Yet, by the end of the decade,



radical economic, social and political transformation brought about significant changes in urban planning practice. First, economic crisis and restructuring forced cities and localities to concentrate on consolidating the existing urban structure, paying special attention to critical deficits and problems derived from accelerated and disorganized urbanization. Second, the transition to democracy enhanced the means for political and social representation; the effective pressure of rising urban social movements succeeded in securing greater popular participation in urban planning and management as well as shifting the emphasis of planning towards the provision of services and social infrastructures.

After a period of highly speculative and disorganized urban growth, the 1980s opened up a decade of increasing concern with social justice and equity considerations in urban planning (Leal, 1989; Terán, 1999). However, the greater redistributive focus did not alter in a fundamental way the character of urban planning and, aside from a few remarkable exceptions, most plans retained a strong physical bias trapped by the logic of urban architectures and short term remedial planning. By the mid 1980s, considerable debate on the 'crisis of the plan' was already underway on the grounds of poor results, lack of flexibility of the planning system, lengthy plan elaboration processes and weaknesses in implementation (Campos Venuti et al., 1985). By the end of the decade, challenges to statutory planning extended to its inability to respond effectively to economic and urban restructuring and to lead urban regeneration (Vegara, 1993). The crisis of planning encouraged a search for more flexible and effective modes of urban intervention (Busquets Grau, 1993; Mangada, 1991). Urban operations and emblematic projects emerged then as a viable alternative to statutory plans. And, while municipalities continued to produce statutory plans, the logic of the project imposed itself upon the most conspicuous urban initiatives of the 1990s, displacing regulatory instruments. The urban operations of Barcelona and Seville, driven by international events, inaugurated this new phase of project-led urban policy (Borja and Castells, 1997).

### *5.3.3. Urban regeneration in Bilbao: waterfront redevelopment*

Urban policy in Bilbao was not recognized as a legitimate field of intervention to address urban crisis and restructuring until the late 1980s. On the part of regional authorities, urban decline was generally viewed as the spatial dimension of structural reorganization processes in the global economy that had to be dealt with primarily at the macroeconomic level. At the local scale, urban planning, tightly contained by the logic of functionalist land use planning, did not seem qualified to lead a process of regeneration of the city's physical and socio-economic base. A crucial turning point was the drafting of the new Master Plan for the city in the late 1980s that, after years of passivity, opened up the social and political debate on urban decline and the prospects for revitalization in metropolitan Bilbao. The commission, by the Basque Government, of a strategic plan for the revitalization of metropolitan Bilbao to guide the revitalization process provided further impetus to this process. By the end of that decade, the new Master Plan of Bilbao established the basis for transformation, identifying a series of key locations ('opportunity sites') left out by deindustrialization and decline that could be redeveloped to lead the process of urban revitalization. Abandoibarra, a centrally located area on the river waterfront, was singled out as the most representative of these 'opportunity sites' (Fig. 5).

From the end of the 19th century until the mid 1980s, Abandoibarra developed as an urban enclave with port and manufacturing activities. Physically cut off from the surrounding residential areas by a railroad track, the economic functions of this area contributed to reinforce its segregated quality. During the 1970s, Abandoibarra suffered from steady decline resulting from the transfer of dock activity to outer port locations and the crisis of manufacturing that reached its zenith after the closure of the Euskalduna shipyards in the mid 1980s.



**Figure 5.3: Abandoibarra waterfront redevelopment project**

In a context of dramatic restructuring of the urban economy, the plight of Abandoibarra did not seem, at first, any different from that of many other industrial sites in the metropolitan area<sup>4</sup>. However, the drafting of the new Master Plan for Bilbao identified this site as an opportunity location and granted it a key strategic role. The Plan highlighted the paradoxical nature of Abandoibarra as a high centrality location, in the heart of the bourgeois city, and its continuing specialization in low value and obsolete functions. Deindustrialization and the reorganization of port activity provided a unique opportunity to correct this ‘dysfunction’. The Plan, therefore, proposed its conversion into a new directional area capable of driving the process of restructuring of the metropolitan economy as a whole and articulating a leadership position for Bilbao in the so called Atlantic axis of European development (Ayuntamiento de Bilbao, 1989).

<sup>4</sup> Manufacturing plant closures and rationalization of facilities contributed to the abandonment and obsolescence of numerous industrial locations. By 1989 it was estimated that the volume of industrial ruins surpassed 140 Ha.

The transformation of Abandoibarra into a new business centre involved the creation of a mixed land use area for advanced services, high-income housing, retail and leisure areas and cultural infrastructures. The project was to be the jewel in the crown of the city's urban regeneration scheme, an exemplary operation that would not only transform the functionality of the area but would also become a symbol of a renovated, innovative and successful Bilbao (Rodríguez, 1995). Thus while the immediate objective of this operation was to reclaim a derelict site and turn it into a new functional pole capable of attracting local and international capital investments and key command and control functions, the symbolic and representational content of the operation was not insignificant. Indeed, both in relation to the external projection goals as well as in terms of internal legitimization, the remaking of Bilbao's image, from a declining manufacturing city into a new post-industrial revitalized metropolis, has been a critical element of this operation.

The new Master Plan established the framework for Abandoibarra but the detailed proposal was defined only after an international competition of ideas organized by the City Council of Bilbao in 1992. The project presented by Cesar Pelli, the renowned architect in charge of the Battery Park regeneration scheme in New York, was the winner of the competition. Pelli's initial project fixed the directional and strategic character of Abandoibarra's redevelopment by the designation of over 200,000 m<sup>2</sup> of 'high level' tertiary space and key infrastructures such as an international Conference and Concert Hall and the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum, the flagship icon of the operation. However, the initial project has seen successive amendments involving a fundamental displacement of the Urban Plan's initial focus on tertiary and economic uses towards residential and retail functions (Table 5.6).

This shift reflected the difficulties perceived by the managing institutions to valorize Abandoibarra's land on the basis of strategic office developments while the market for high income housing offered greater financial returns in the short term (Esteban, 1999). Given the constraints on financial self-sufficiency, the feasibility of the project was then secured by the speculative increase in housing prices tagged to the expansion of demand in luxury housing in the city and the effect of the real estate boom of the mid 1990s. By 1994, the strategic character of the project had been

minimized despite an enduring rhetoric of strategic goals, post- industrial development and supra-regional leadership. The decision adopted by the provincial government, the Diputación, in the summer of 1997, to relocate all its offices (55,000 m<sup>2</sup>) in Abandoibarra’s emblematic business tower, contributed to undermine the strategic pull of the area. The public, not the private, sector and the local, not the international, initiative continued to secure the impetus for the development of the area.

**Table 5.6: Distribution of building areas in Abandoibarra’s Master Plan (PERI) 1999**

PERI 1999	m <sup>2</sup>	%
Offices	90,575	40.8
Residential (800 housing units)	72,369	32.6
Retail	31,121	14.0
Hotel	13,000	5.9
Other	15,000	6.8
<b>Subtotal A (building areas)</b>	<b>222,065</b>	<b>100/52.5%</b>
Cultural and university infrastructures*	30,354	15.2
Green and open areas	170,418	84.8
<b>Subtotal B (open spaces and infrastructures)</b>	<b>200,772</b>	<b>100/47.5%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>422,837</b>	<b>100</b>

*\*Includes a series of collective infrastructures such as the Guggenheim Museum, the Euskalduna Conference and Concert Hall, the Maritime Museum and several university infrastructures.*

*Source: Ayuntamiento de Bilbao (1999).*

#### **5.4. New governance structures for urban regeneration: Bilbao Ría 2000, S.A.**

A critical component of the new urban policies of the last decade has been a shift from urban government to governance. In the case of Bilbao, the Abandoibarra operation inaugurates this shift to a new mode of intervention legitimized on the basis of increased flexibility, proactivity and efficiency. This emerging mode of urban governance involves notably the transfer of planning and implementation powers traditionally held by local institutions to a new managing institution, Bilbao Ría 2000. The setting up of this organization is the single most important innovation in urban policy in Bilbao and a fundamental component of Abandoibarra’s revitalization scheme.

The creation of Ría 2000 can be explained by the combination of three critical factors. First, there was the emerging consensus on the need to concentrate efforts and carry out coordinated actions for the revitalization of Bilbao. Cooperation, partnership and collaborative advantage became synonyms of good governance. A second factor was the recognition of extraordinary land management difficulties related to land ownership structure of derelict sites that required ‘concertación’ among the different agents involved. And a third factor involved the extremely high costs of renewal operations and the imperative of financial self-sufficiency as a condition for urban renovation initiatives, a factor that called for more entrepreneurial forms of management. The three factors converge in the complex distribution of competencies, powers and funds created by the decentralization of the Spanish state during the transition to democracy. Far from settled, the administrative/political division of labour creates a constant arena of conflict and negotiation. In the case of urban regeneration in Abandoibarra, this dynamic is further complicated by the location of urban planning powers at the local level and fiscal powers at the regional one while land ownership was overwhelmingly (95 percent) held by public firms and institutions of the central administration.

Following the managing model established in the urban operations of Seville and Barcelona, the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and the Environment (MOPTMA) proposed the creation of Bilbao Ría 2000, S.A., to co-ordinate and carry out regeneration initiatives in Bilbao. Set up in November 1992 as a private firm of public shareholders (50 percent central and 50 percent local and regional administration), Ría 2000 operates in practice as a quasi-public agency, a planning and executive body in charge of specific urban renewal operations in the metropolitan area of Bilbao.

In the aftermath of the post-1992 hangover in Spain, the mandate of Ría 2000 has been to achieve maximum efficiency in the use of resources and financial self-sufficiency so as to minimize the need for public investment. Thus, Abandoibarra’s redevelopment scheme is self-financed through land valorization mechanisms without any direct investment costs imputed to the public sector.

The only direct contribution of the public partners–shareholders (local, regional, central administrations) is the land, which for the purposes of the redevelopment operation is written off assuming an initial value of zero (or negative). Revenues obtained from profitable sales of redeveloped land are used to fund projects that could not be self-financed. This is the case of the Variante Sur Rail line whose reorganization costs are included in the repercussion values of Abandoibarra’s land sales and a third connected operation, Ametzola. Abandoibarra is financially feasible only by integrating costs and revenue flows of the three operations (Table 5.7)<sup>5</sup>.

**Table 5.7: Costs and revenues associated with urbanization of Abandoibarra, Ametzola and Variante Sur**

	Revenues	Costs Million Euro
Abandoibarra	95.4	56.6
Variante Sur Rail	–	68.6
Ametzola	41.1	24.9
EU Structural Funds (total 3 operations 15%)	24.3	–
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>160.8</b>	<b>150.1</b>

*Source: Bilbao Ría 2000 (1998).*

The possibility of compensating financial flows from different initiatives confers upon Ría 2000 a unique managing capacity in a context of strained public budgets. This mechanism allows for the extension of regeneration initiatives to other derelict sites in the metropolitan area, especially less central locations. However, financial feasibility in peripheral locations may be severely constrained by two considerations. First, because land valorization and rent-producing mechanisms are more complex in areas that are not only less central but also placed in the midst of low-income and often highly degraded neighbourhoods. And second, because of the unlikely reproduction of Abandoibarra’s extraordinary rent extraction levels in other urban regeneration initiatives, which raises questions about the need for revenue-producing

<sup>5</sup> The starting point of the Abandoibarra operation is the removal of a railroad track which acts as a physical and functional barrier between the site and the surrounding urban environment, and the setting up of the alternative new passenger and goods line, the Variante Sur Rail. The investments required for the urbanization and redevelopment of Abandoibarra are estimated at 62.5 million Euro while the repositioning costs of the Variante Sur Rail amount to 56.3 million Euro, which with an effective ‘aprovechamiento’ of 210,965 m<sup>2</sup> renders a repercussion value of 564 Euro/m<sup>2</sup> (PERI, 1999). These costs are absorbed by Ría 2000, which manages the financial gaps between the costs and the revenues that will be obtained from the redeveloped land sales for the offices, housing, hotel, university infrastructures and commercial areas.

initiatives to fund regeneration in low rent production areas. Thus, the generalization possibilities of this financial scheme are limited. And, for a metropolitan area with an estimated 340 ha of ‘industrial ruins and reconversion sites’, over 20 percent of its total industrial land, these considerations are definitely not a trifling matter<sup>6</sup>.

Finally, despite the significance of market-led land valorization dynamics, urban regeneration in Abandoibarra has required more direct public funding than is generally recognized. Thus, collective infrastructures built in Abandoibarra, the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum (GBM) opened in 1997, and the Conference and Concert Hall, which started operating in 1999, required large funding from the public sector. In the case of the Guggenheim, the operation costs amounted to almost 150 million Euros while the Euskalduna Concert and Conference Hall added 56 million Euros for the Hall. Most of these funds came from the Diputación – the county level administration and the tax collecting and fiscal authority – and from the Basque Government. In the case of the GBM, the Basque Government is also committed to finance yearly the operating deficit of the Museum through the General Budget of the Basque Autonomy. To the extent that these investments were considered strategic in producing land valorization in Abandoibarra, we can argue that they represented a vital rent transfer from the public to the private sector.

A key feature of Ría 2000 is that it acts as a form of partnership to manage urban renewal operations in cases where the property or the decision-making capacity is shared among several institutional bodies. It manages the concerted decisions for strategic intervention. Although these operations are determined through standard planning procedures, Ría 2000 retains considerable planning powers regarding priorities for intervention, disposal of land and other property, building characteristics and the management of public funds for redevelopment. And, while regulatory planning instruments are still the legal reference, in the dynamics of implementation their relevance as guiding tools has diminished considerably. Indeed, this agency has gradually displaced the local municipalities’ planning departments to a secondary role

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<sup>6</sup> The update of the ‘Inventario de Ruinas Industriales’ made by the Department of Urbanism, Housing and the Environment of the Basque Government in 1994 estimated that there were 461,600 ha in the Basque Country, 72 percent of which were located in metropolitan Bilbao.



by assuming an increasing number of powers related to urban renewal, including the management of the more emblematic operations and projects in the city and the metropolitan area.

In sum, the significance of Ría 2000 lies in its considerable potential as a coordinating and executive agency and its capacity to act as a unified body in urban redevelopment schemes in metropolitan Bilbao that has vastly improved the prospects of implementation. However, Ría 2000's status as a private firm poses critical questions regarding the 'privatization' of planning and lack of political accountability. Moreover, the self-financing restrictions imposed upon Ría 2000 may drastically limit its capacity to carry out other regeneration initiatives in derelict areas outside of central locations. In fact, the overwhelming concern with financial feasibility as a guiding principle for intervention may well prove this model to be inapplicable to sites other than central areas of high commercial potential. In this sense, the social and political legitimization of quasi-privatized planning, on the grounds of superior technical efficiency, may be jeopardized. Moreover, the imperative of short-term profit logic introduces a speculative bend to the agency's operation, which severely undermines its regeneration objectives. If urban regeneration means something more than physical renewal, then equity and redistributive considerations must mediate efficiency criteria.

### **5.5. Lights and shadows of success in Abandoibarra**

The Abandoibarra operation is widely presented as a success story of urban regeneration. This assessment rests predominantly on the perceived impact of this development on the physical renovation, functional reorganization and image transformation of the metropolis. However, a detailed analysis of the initiative suggests reasons for a more sober evaluation.

At the level of the city as a whole, the impact of the Abandoibarra operation should be measured against its capacity to achieve its original strategic objectives: enhance the competitiveness of the city, attract international investments, acquire key

command functions and high level producer services and diversify its productive base. Since the project is still in its early implementation phase, a whole assessment in these terms will have to wait. Nonetheless, some patterns of change can already be distinguished by looking at the impact of Abandoibarra's regeneration scheme on real estate markets and on the development of new functions in the city.

### *5.5.1. Speculative renewal and the impact on the real estate market*

For the most part, the impact on real estate markets affects predominantly the neighbouring districts. The overriding tendency in the last four years has been towards reinforcing price increase tensions in the adjoining areas, especially in the most expensive neighbourhoods: Abando-Indautxu but also the Campo Volantín and Duesto, on the opposite side of the river facing the project. This perception is supported by evidence from the dynamics of the housing sector during 1998 and 1999; while housing prices in the city increased an average of 10 to 15 percent<sup>7</sup>, in the Abando district the increase was 30 to 40 percent. A highly contained supply relative to demand, limited land available for construction, and the high expectations created by the Abandoibarra project are considered to account for this differential rise. Already, the estimated price for these units has more than tripled the initial valuation of Ría 2000 from 810 Euros/m<sup>2</sup> in 1995 to 2,810 Euros/m<sup>2</sup> in 1999. The diffusion of this increase to the housing market in surrounding neighbourhoods is already underway. In this sense, the permutation of the required legal quota of lower-income housing initially located in Abandoibarra to another urban operation in Ametzola has formidably locked the luxury and elitist character of this development.

The market for office space will also be strongly affected by the development of almost 90,000 m<sup>2</sup> in Abandoibarra. A large share of this supply, almost 60 percent, is already allocated to the Diputación, the provincial level government. The transfer of all the Diputación's departments and services to Abandoibarra's singular skyrise will

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<sup>7</sup> General factors have contributed to this increase, notably, changes in the mortgage loan market associated with falling interest rates and the process of European monetary integration and the single currency that is forcing the emergence of black money and undeclared savings. In the case of Bilbao, there is also the prospect of economic regeneration and urban growth.

liberate over 40,000 m<sup>2</sup> of prime office space in the centre of the city. The selling of that stock to one or more promoters is a precondition to finance the costs of transferring its facilities to Abandoibarra. The release and placing into circulation of that stock is considered to be the ‘most important real estate market operation in the history of Bilbao’ for which the Diputación actively seeks the engagement of international promoters. This is a risky operation because of the potential saturating impact of the market, especially if developments in alternative locations, currently underway, prosper. Alternatively, this effect could be somewhat compensated by market reallocation dynamics of part of the housing stock currently being used for office purposes to residential uses as a result of the transfer of service firms to the new facilities in Abandoibarra.

The market for retail space is also being affected by the allocation of over 30,000 m<sup>2</sup> in Abandoibarra. Local retail associations have stressed the threats that the shopping mall poses to traditional commercial areas of the city centre, notably Casco Viejo, Abando and Indautxu. However, it is too early to anticipate the potential shifts and displacements in this market. So far, the most visible is an increase of close to 30 percent in the price of retail spaces in the area next to the Guggenheim as well as the opening up of fast-food places and tourist-oriented shops.

Finally, the spill-over effects of Abandoibarra on the real estate market would depend very much on price-setting dynamics of the final products of the site itself. But some preliminary signs are provided by escalating reference prices last year.

### *5.5.2. The Guggenheim ‘effect’*

Alternatively, the impact of the Abandoibarra development operation can be considered in relation to the effects of the location of one of its most emblematic projects: the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum (GBM). This project was born in the early part of the 1990s, at a time when the whole scheme for Abandoibarra was still being drafted. And, while the decision to locate the Museum in the Abandoibarra site was made a posteriori, the initiative was clearly in tune with the strategic objectives of the

urban regeneration operation. In both cases, the search for alternative economic activities capable of replacing the manufacturing sector as the engine of economic and urban growth was part of the general philosophy of the project.

The so-called 'Guggenheim effect' operates, firstly, in the realm of the symbolic. Already before its opening date in October 1997, the GBM had become the outstanding icon for the revitalization of Metropolitan Bilbao. Designed by Frank Gehry, this 24,000 m<sup>2</sup> museum was soon recognized as an architectural landmark and the new icon in the representation of the city. The parallels between the original, innovative and highly seductive design of the building and the city itself have been purposefully underlined as part of an image reconstruction operation and a city marketing strategy. And, indeed, from this perspective, the GBM can be considered a complete success.

However, both the marketing and the image reconstruction aspects are mediated objectives of a strategy aimed at enhancing the city's capacity to compete for the attraction of international capital investments, the acquisition of key command functions, high level producer services and also visitors. And, from this point of view, the 'Guggenheim effect' is still to be shown. So far, the most important positive impacts have to be with the dramatic increase in the number of visitors to the museum/ city that has exceeded even the most optimistic expectations. For a city that has been traditionally out of the tourist track, the attraction of almost 1,400,000 visitors during the first year of operation of the museum is considered a big success. The international dimension of the museum is highlighted by the fact that almost 30 percent of the visitors came from abroad; 32 percent came from the rest of Spain and 40 percent from the Basque Country.

A recent evaluation carried out by the international consulting firm KPMG Peat Marwick (1999; also Table 5.8) estimates that direct expenditures made by visitors to the GBM during the first year of operation amounted to 194 million Euros, that is, almost 180 Euros per visitor. The sectors that have benefited the most are hotels, transport, restaurants, bars and coffee shops and retail establishments. According to the study, the expenses associated with the operation of the GBM during the first 12

months of activity have generated a value added of more than 150 million Euros that amounts to approximately 0.47 percent of the gross regional product. This value is considered to contribute to the maintenance of around 3,800 jobs in the mentioned sectors. At the same time, the value added generated have produced an increase in local fiscal capacity and tax revenues (value added taxes, capital taxes and income tax) estimated at close to 28.1 million Euros. Thus, in financial terms, the operation can be considered a success as the initial investment has been fully recovered.

**Table 5.8: Estimated impacts of the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum in the Basque Country**

	First year		1998		1999	
Number of visitors	1,360,000		1,300,000		825,000	
Employment maintenance (jobs)	3,816		3,681		2,636	
<i>Estimated impacts</i>	<i>million Euros</i>	<i>% contrib.</i>	<i>million Euros</i>	<i>% contrib.</i>	<i>million Euros</i>	<i>% contrib.</i>
Value added generated	150.3	0.47	144.9	0.45	103.8	0.32
Tax revenues	28.0	0.66	27.2	0.64	19.3	0.46

*Source: KPMG Peat Marwick (1999).*

In view of these results, local and regional authorities have emphasized the strategic significance of the museum for the city's (and the region's) development of a cultural tourist industry contributing not only to revitalization but also to the diversification of the area's economic base. Yet, the possibility that the GBM could act as the propulsive firm for the development of a cultural sector remains indeterminate. The reasons for skepticism exist at several levels: first, the lack of a coherent strategy and the ad hoc way in which decisions have been made without any clear strategic framework. A second factor relates to the narrow focus on consumption-oriented aspects and the disregard for the production-related aspects of the GBM operation. But a production-based strategy would require a more proactive policy of support of local firms and investments in the sector which until now has been missing. Third, the propulsive role of the GBM would depend largely on its capacity to create local upstream and downstream linkages. But in order for these linkages to develop, a carefully targeted strategy but also a greater degree of autonomy of the Bilbao Museum vis à vis the New York office is required. So far the Bilbao Museum operates very much as a franchise, a factor that severely undermines its potential multiplier effects. And fourth, the regeneration potential of this project

may be also impaired by the internationalization strategy of the Guggenheim Foundation as the serial production of new branches throughout the global urban landscape erodes the uniqueness of the Bilbao branch. The recent agreement passed by the Foundation to build a new Guggenheim in Manhattan in the likeness of the Bilbao Museum is the first in a potentially long list of cities ready to host another branch. Thus, unless the Bilbao Museum is integrated in a wider socio-economic and urban strategy, there is a high risk that the attraction capacity of the city might be soon rendered ephemeral as the novelty effect wears out.

Finally, in terms of attracting international capital investments and key command functions, the impact of the Guggenheim Museum is still very limited. So far, all direct investments associated with the setting up of the GBM have come from the Basque public administration, an event made possible by the special fiscal autonomy status of the Basque region. However, the original expectations regarding the attraction of direct foreign investment and command functions to the city have not been met. Thus far the undeniably strong advertising capacity of the GBM has had little impact in attracting international capital investments for Abandoibarra's regeneration process itself. Foreign investments are limited to the luxury hotel that will be developed by the Starwood holding that operates the Sheraton Hotels worldwide. Aside from this, only the shopping centre, Ría 21, incorporates a limited presence of international capital. More significantly, the attraction of command functions or headquarters to the site is, so far, nil.

In sum, a preliminary analysis of the impact of Abandoibarra's redevelopment scheme suggests that its success lies predominantly in the consumption and circulation realms. The production side of this project, its directional and strategic quality, has all but disappeared under the dominance of a short-term return maximization logic that has weakened the strategic component of the scheme and heightened its speculative dimension. Socio-spatial considerations have been gradually removed from the debate while diffused growth and trickle down income effects are projected at an even more remote level. This is highly relevant in the context of the socio-spatial polarization dynamics identified above that are under way.

## 5.6. Concluding remarks

An analysis of revitalization strategies in metropolitan Bilbao reveals critical shifts in the urban policy agenda in line with what we have referred to as New Urban Policies. These shifts include the subordination of statutory planning to the needs of large-scale emblematic projects where focused and fragmented intervention operates as a laboratory for urban policy innovations.

As in other redevelopment schemes, the Abandoibarra project is originally presented as an emblematic intervention firmly anchored in a strategic framework whose final objective is to provide the physical and functional conditions for competitive restructuring in the urban economy. However, the overwhelming emphasis on efficiency and financial feasibility has left the project captive of a short-term return maximization logic that subordinates the strategic component to the requirements of speculative redevelopment. This shift is all too evident in Abandoibarra's turn from a production oriented development to a consumption based renovated space catering to the demands of the urban elite.

The weakening of the strategic component of Abandoibarra impinges upon the economic objectives of the project and its capacity to lead a process of competitive restructuring of the urban economy. And, while there is some evidence of economic recovery in metropolitan Bilbao, the question remains as to whether property-led redevelopment schemes such as this provide a sound base for urban revitalization. This is a critical issue since this scheme is presented as a test case of a policy to be generalized for the whole urban region.

The speculative character and the potentially regressive consequences of narrow short-term feasibility also challenge the financial sustainability of this model. Thus, the bias introduced by the diffusion of a financial maximizing logic can have extremely negative consequences as speculative increases filter through the metropolitan land market. Needless to say, the consequences on access to housing for less favoured income groups can be devastating. Notwithstanding trickle down effects, the new urban policies epitomised by Abandoibarra's redevelopment scheme

incorporate a not insignificant risk of social and spatial exclusion as uneven redevelopment may exacerbate existing social and functional divisions of space within the metropolitan area.

Finally, improvements in urban policy in metropolitan Bilbao would require overcoming the limits imposed by the overriding emphasis on economic feasibility and short-term maximization and acknowledging the need for a more integrated socio-economic strategy. This means the need to re-focus in a more direct way on the consequences of both economic decline as well as uneven redevelopment; that is, to incorporate both an economic and social strategy for integrated development in the new urban agenda.

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## **CAPÍTULO 6:**

### **Conclusiones**





## **6.1. Conclusiones Generales**

## **6.2. Líneas de Investigación Futuras**

## **6.3.**

## **6.4. Conclusiones generales**

## **6.5. Futuras líneas de investigación**



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## **CAPÍTULO 3**

# **Social Polarization in Metropolitan Areas: The Role of New Urban Policy**

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### **3.1. Abstract**

This special issue of European Urban and Regional Studies draws from an EU Framework IV Targeted Socio-Economic Research Project on ‘Urban Restructuring and Social Polarization in the City’ (URSPIC). The project examines the impact of large-scale urban development projects (UDPs) on social integration and polarization in metropolitan cities.

For this special issue, five case studies have been selected: Euralille, Lille (France); Abandoibarra, Bilbao (Spain); Donau-City, Vienna (Austria); Leopold Quarter, Brussels (Belgium); and the Centro Direzionale, Naples (Italy). In each of these case studies the polarizing mechanisms of the UDPs and the New Urban Policy of which they are main ingredients are evaluated.

### **3.2. Social polarization: an old story**

There is a tendency in current social theory and analysis to portray socio-economic phenomena and their spatial characteristics as fundamentally ‘new’ and radically diverting from the trajectories of the past. Examples are by now well known, but still worth reciting. Many authors have depicted globalization as a new capital-logic dynamics.

Apparently and for the first time in the history of capitalism – in stark contrast with the diabolic eras of imperialism and colonialism – globalization will create opportunities for all people and regions in the world. The rhetoric and practice of globalization have apparently replaced the adagio of development through modernizing that was popular in the 1960s and 1970s. Flexible production systems and their geographies – with Industrial Districts and Regional.

Innovation Complexes as their Nirvana – will lead to decentralized opportunities for most places, whatever the spatial perspective: global, national or local. They will

replace the old-fashioned monolithic Fordist production machines agglomerated in multi-functional metropolises, the protagonists of small-scale flexibility argue. The New Economic Policy or NEP, based on encouraging private investment, deregulation and privatization and a reduced but more managerial role for the State in general, will for the first time in history consign the State to its appropriate limited place and leave the economic initiative to those actors who by some strange twist of nature are seen to be ‘naturally gifted’ to be investors, i.e. private firms and banks. The local offspring of NEP, i.e. NUP or the New Urban Policy, will finally restore the economic vitality of cities. NUP will launch cities onto a new path of wealth creation and finally ban the poverty trap for all urban communities, regardless of their ethnic or class position.

Of course, urban reality shows us day after day that these grand stories have little scientific grounds. Their content and discourse may be decidedly contemporary, but their substance relates a certain *déjà-vu* of earlier debates and struggles about the impact of economic development and its spatial expressions. Globalization, flexible production systems, or NEP/NUP, like the economic modernization debates of yesteryear, have all reproduced the structural tendencies of inequality among communities and among social groups within cities, regions and nations. Of course, in Western Europe, certain inter-regional discrepancies or urban socio-spatial inequalities have been smoothed out, only to reproduce other inequalities and uneven socio-spatial power relations elsewhere. And, of course, debates over the causes of and remedies for urban socio-economic inequalities are certainly not new. From early modern times and as far back as the Renaissance, debates about the contrasts between regions and within urban regions have pre-occupied researchers as well as policy-makers and politicians. More recently, the debates about local and regional development within the German Historical School (starting mid 19th century), the Scandinavian Institutional-Economic School that started in the 20th century (thinking especially of Gunnar Myrdal), the French Growth Pole theory (after the Second World War, with François Perroux), French urban sociology and the Anglo-Saxon radical geography currents of the 1970s all addressed and explored (both in theory and practice) the mechanisms of regional and urban growth and distribution – or lack

thereof – and the inherent processes of uneven geographical development that accompany each new round of capital accumulation. Most of these ‘schools’ have shown that, whatever its spatial scale, the dynamics of capital, however new its configuration and character may be, produces serious and disturbing spatial unevenness. More importantly, these perspectives, however different their epistemological basis may be, agreed that only collective action could counter or even-out such disparities. In general, the State as a central collective actor – at whatever scale – has since the beginning of modernity been singled out as the pivotal arena for action aimed at redistribution of economic and political power and for regulating the just distribution of assets and resources.

### **3.3. The old recipes of the New Urban Policy**

And yet, in today’s economic and political climate, new analyses and policy models are presented as if historical insights have been wiped off the hard disk of collective historical memory. Comparisons with past experiences are rarely made. ‘Renegade’ critics that try to instill some historical consciousness are hardly noticed. The New Urban Policy, which is under scrutiny here, is one case in point. It does not refer to any historical anchor points: no evidence from past and similar episodes is provided.

According to the protagonists of the NUP, there is of course no need for this. The absence of historical memory is not a matter of scientific omission. Is it not the case, so they argue, that the NUP is radically new and breaks fundamentally with all earlier histories and perspectives. NUP is ‘truly’ innovative; it has never been before.

New Urban Policy, rooted in the hyper free- market based liberalism of New Economic Policy, is an ideological and class-based reaction against the predominance of economic Keynesianism – as, for example, the Vienna case study shows quite clearly. In the postwar period, economic Keynesian interventionism promoted the accumulation of capital as no other; but part of its programme included, of course, also a partial redistribution of income with minimum guarantees for social justice.

The conjectured failure of this Keynesian policy vis-à-vis the economic crisis starting in the late 1970s seemed to be a sufficient ground for revanchist neo-liberals to take over the socio-economic policy agenda in the 1980s.

This is clearly 'neo'-liberal and revanchist, because NEP-NUP is not a new policy approach, but part of the liberal economic view that has emerged or submerged in cyclical ways since its birth in the late 17th century with the English bourgeois revolution – is there anyone out there who still remembers? And if in its proclamations it sounds like the pronouncement of a new bourgeois class – instilling an image of a new free and liberal utopia that looms just around the corner, provided we wait long enough for its fruits to filter down – in practice, liberalism justifies a return to new levels of socio-economic exploitation. In fact, it re-invents and re-implements the basic institutional norms of untrammelled capitalism.

Today, at the local level, the New Urban Policy translates the NEP principles of deregulation, privatization, flexibilization of labour markets and spatial decentralization to the benefit of private capital into a shift from (local) social to (local) economic policy, a 'new' elite coalition formation favouring private sector agents and 'new' forms of state entrepreneurialism that include large-scale urban development projects and city marketing. Deregulation at the local level is especially visible in the deregulation of planning procedures.

Exceptionality measures, such as the creation of semi-private planning agencies, implementing projects for the public sector that are especially beneficial to private investors, are the classic route for a newly competitive city as most of the case-studies in this special issue show.

Is this really different from city governance in medieval cities such as Venice or Bruges, or the city planning escapades in Haussmannean Paris, Victorian London or late 19th century Vienna that extolled the virtues of unchecked speculative urban development? Vast areas in all of these cities were built by their own elites of large-scale project developers. The basic logic of capital is exactly the same: a grand discourse lauding free trade, while in practice justifying public-private development

and trade monopolies that invest in urban elite construction, leading to the displacement of lower- income housing and the reshuffling of property markets. Never did these policies reduce or eliminate social polarization; most of the time they re-enforced it, by privileging large-scale economic projects over social projects. Of course, the social doldrums associated with such ruthless social restructuring often swung the pendulum of ideological discourse and political practice to the other side. There have always been cycles in political regimes, even in the pre-capitalist medieval cities.

Looking at social policy, by the late Middle Ages Bruges, for example, medieval trading metropolis par excellence, reinforced the social dimension of its political regime, granting a greater role to the City (local State) in combating poverty, by subsidizing the poor, creating jobs and promoting the construction of almshouses (Godshuizen). In Bruges in the early Middle Ages charity had been mainly an initiative of rich freemen, guilds and religious communities, while the City Magistrates, who cared more about the economic prosperity of the city, played only a limited role. This changed substantially in the Burgundy period and even more so under the Habsburgs when Bruges, under the influence of Humanism, played a pioneering role in City-led poor relief policy.

### **3.4. The contemporary urban regime(s)**

Even if many contemporary analysts accept the existence of historical cycles – and therefore the regular recurrence of particular policy approaches – they would stress that current market mechanisms are more constructive and beneficial to all than ever before. Therefore, market forces should be given more ‘political’ freedom, as they will pave the way to a socially inclusive social and economic order. This is of course a very complicated issue, and a final verdict as to its true course is still open. But, in any case, there is nothing particularly new under the sun. The observation that in contemporary society market, finance, politics and policy are so closely interwoven that these ‘networked’ configurations provide the ideal path to economic prosperity,

reflects an age-old strategy that was pioneered successfully from the early days of mercantilist- based urban development. Consider, for example, how the Medici were at the same time the political rulers of Florence, the investors and financiers of its ‘pre-colonial’ expansion and the bankers of many West European cities and royal or ducal princes. In the late 19th and early 20th century, it was the National State, of course, that helped the market survive the transition from competitive to monopoly capital. In the late 1970s and 1980s, the State funded and guided its own partial transformation from centralist Keynesian to local entrepreneurialism. In timeless terms: the State is the nurse that nourishes capitalism from disease to disease, guaranteeing its survival, but does not heal the wounds it invariably inflicts. But the good nurse is ‘flexible’; (s)he finds endless new ways to facilitate investment and capital accumulation. Today, (s)he is especially well inspired by the new governance style and new types of privatization of public capital. The planning, implementation and marketing of the metropolitan Urban Development Projects under investigation in this issue are quite instructive in this respect.

The change in local governance is exemplified by the emergence and active construction of new partnerships. The UDPs are carried by consensus- based coalitions involving agents from both the public and private sector, partly locally rooted, but mainly regionally, nationally and sometimes also internationally embedded. Especially the cases of Abandoibarra, Euralille and the Leopold Quarter show how the interpenetrating elite-based social and economic networks construct new domains of governance at the expense of traditional urban policy making. The dividing line between the public and private sector is often blurred, as all cases show. The privatization of public banks and other institutions has resulted in the topography of boundaries between public and private sectors becoming increasingly complex. In all cases, with the possible exception of Vienna, civil society has been increasingly marginalized and excluded from the key arenas of power.

There are various degrees of keeping democratic control from UDP operations. In the case of the Naples UDP, the State and private sector partners virtually coincide and democratic control therefore acquires a fairly narcissist flavour, with a Centro

Direzionale that is relegated to the exclusive use of the clientelistic networks of the main developers. In Brussels, as another example, democratic control is washed away by the institutional confusion arising from the competence paralysis between various public agencies. The de facto planning and implementation agencies are the ad hoc coalitions of firms and developers that are not really hindered or obstructed by the hideously complex institutional webs of ineffective planning regulations.

Most UDPs involve also the mobilization (what turns out to be the ‘privatization’) of public funds (land, infrastructure, financial means, personnel) for the building of semi-private projects such as shopping malls, conference centres, culture temples, etc. Most of these projects, in the few instances they actually include housing, only carry up-market dwellings and provide no social housing whatsoever.

Again, the presumed ‘newness’ and ‘innovative character’ of political instruments to achieve UDPs looks somewhat faded. Planning for exclusivity, be it by the Renaissance prince or the technocratic city planning office, is basically the same. Today the legal texts are probably more complex, the financial strings wider and better spread out in time and over space, the regulations more privy, and the technology of construction and communication more advanced, but the social cobwebs and consequences are predictable enough. The ‘old’ historical concepts and well-trodden insights remain as incisive as ever. In our case studies appear, albeit with differing degrees of intensity: displacement and paternalistic pampering of poor people, the sacrificing of popular functions in deprived neighbourhoods to the benefit of their ‘new commercial vocation’, the distortion and inflation of real estate markets, the exclusion of the most affected parts of the population from evaluation and decision-making, the seclusion of information and decision-making networks.





## CAPÍTULO 4

### **Large Scale Development Projects and Local Governance: From Democratic Urban Planning to Besieged Local Governance**

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## 4.1. Abstract

This article analyses the interaction between social exclusion in the city, the implementation of large-scale development projects and changes in urban governance.

The first part of the article analyses the evolution in urban restructuring tendencies and its consequences for social exclusion and integration mechanisms. The relationships between urban restructuring and changes in urban public policy are reflected in the rise of the 'New Urban Policy' that has provided increasing freedom of action to urban developers and public-private ventures in which the market logic predominates.

The remainder of the article focuses on specific features of urban policy and governance as they appear from the case-studies covered in this issue: the physical bias of urban policy, the challenge of mainstream policy by integrated approaches to neighbourhood development, the rise of 'exceptionality' procedures in urban planning, and the threat of New Urban Policy to the good working of local democracy.

Dieser Beitrag behandelt die Interaktion zwischen sozialer Exklusion, der Durchführung großer Entwicklungsprojekte und dem Wandel der *governance* in der Stadt. Im ersten Teil analysieren wir das Aufkommen neuer Tendenzen im Stadtbau und ihrer Wirkungen auf Mechanismen der sozialen Exklusion und Integration. Der Zusammenhang zwischen der Stadterneuerung und dem Wandel der Stadtpolitik spiegelt sich im Aufkommen der 'Neuen Stadtpolitik' wider; diese hat den städtischen Entwicklern und public-private Partnerschaften eine zunehmende Handlungsfreiheit gegeben, in der die Logik des Marktes vorherrscht.

Im weiteren konzentriert sich der Beitrag auf die besonderen Merkmale der Stadtpolitik und städtischen *governance*, wie sie in den Fallstudien dieses Themenheftes angesprochen werden: die Verzerrung der Stadtpolitik zugunsten von

BaumaBnahmen, die neuen Anforderungen, die sich der herrschenden Politik der Nachbarschafts-Entwicklung durch integrierte Ansätze stellen, dem Aufkommen von Ausnahme-Regeln in der Stadtplanung sowie die Bedrohung, die die Neue Stadtpolitik für das gute Funktionieren lokaler Demokratie bedeutet.

## **4.2. Introduction**

Intensifying processes of social exclusion and polarization have been among the most prominent and visible outcomes of urban socio-economic restructuring over the past two decades (Fainstein/Gordon/Harloe 1992). These processes have been analysed predominantly in terms of a combination of and articulation between global socio-economic transformations on the one hand and local, regional and/or national structural adjustment policies on the other (Hamnett 1994). In an attempt to strengthen their competitive position in an intensifying globally challenging environment (Group of Lisbon 1994, Sassen 1991), urban social environments have undergone fundamental socio-economic change. These restructuring processes have not only generated economic activity and employment, but have also re-enforced mechanisms of social exclusion and social polarization (Soja 2000).

It is now commonly recognised (Townsend 1993, Hingel/Fridberg 1994, Guidicini/Piretti 1994) that poverty and exclusion are multi-dimensional processes that operate at a variety of intertwined spatial scales. Yet, at the same time, it is people living in specific places that are embedded in particular socio-spatial environments that actually experience these conditions. In addition, these exclusion-inclusion processes operate through concrete actions and material interventions. General abstract theories often fail to capture this complexity and multi-dimensionality, and do not succeed in grasping the spatial basis of such epochal changes. Our perspective, therefore, starts from the vantage point of concrete interventions in the urban fabric and aims at reconstructing the concrete multi-dimensional and multi-scaled processes of

restructuring. This approach, we hold, will allow us to identify the mechanisms through which either social integration or exclusion and polarization take concrete shape, and what the role of governance dynamics therein is.

The objective of this contribution is, first, to ground these processes in a theoretically informed and empirically substantiated reconstruction of urban restructuring, with particular reference to urban governance dynamics. We shall focus on Large Scale Urban Development Projects (UDPs), their role in re-scripting the competitive environment of urban economies, and their relationship to changing forms of urban governance. Second, we seek to summarise the key trends in terms of changing governance dynamics that have been etched in and expressed by these UDPs. These trends are exemplified by the case studies presented in the subsequent contributions of this issue. However, this paper also draws on insights derived from the other case-study projects of the URSPIC program (see introduction to the thematic issue).

### **4.3. Towards a New Urban Governance?**

#### **4.3.1. *Economic restructuring and social exclusion***

Rapidly changing conditions of global production, consumption and distribution that have transformed the structure of employment, are generally recognized as central factors behind increasing poverty and rising levels of social marginalization. In most advanced industrial countries, these changes have led to massive job loss, the rapid sectoral recomposition of labour markets, and the emergence of a new socio-economic fabric. This has made it increasingly difficult for large sections of the population to (re-)enter the formal labour market and to adjust to the imperatives of the 'New Urban Economy'. These epochal changes have been theorised as Post-Fordist, Flexible, Neo-Fordist or After-Fordist developments (Moulaert/Swyngedouw 1989, Amin 1994). Yet, despite the grand debates over the actual conceptualization of these

transformations, it is often forgotten that they take place in and through the reconstruction of concrete urban landscapes and their accompanying social, political, and economic characteristics. We argue that these concrete urban transformations are in fact the expression of and the medium through which these general changes take shape. In other words, the reconstruction of concrete urban fabrics produces the processes that ex-post become theorised or conceptualised as post-fordist, flexible, or whatever other abstract metaphor is proposed.

It has been argued that, while the promotion of growth and job creation may be the most important means to combat social exclusion, it could, at the same time, increase the risks of exclusion for vulnerable groups through the extension of flexible and precarious employment (Moulaert et al. 2000, chapter 1). This concern is supported by mounting evidence that economic growth and uneven redevelopment during the short-lived recovery of the mid 1980s and the current wave of sustained growth, far from weakening, has in fact contributed to aggravate social polarization and exclusion processes that were initiated during the recession<sup>9</sup>. Notwithstanding trickle-down effects, economic growth is simply not enough to fight social exclusion. In short, the market imperative, while capable of generating economic growth and selective job creation (at least conjuncturally), fails to generate distributional effects that promote social integration and greater socially inclusive development.

The dynamics of productive reorganization, however, have not been the only factor in social exclusion. Shifting priorities in government policies and transformations of governance dynamics have also played a critical part. The

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<sup>9</sup> Townsend (1994), for example, notes that in the United Kingdom, between 1979 and 1989, the share of total income after tax of the richest 20 % of households increased from 38.1 % to 43.0 % (the richest 1 % saw a rise of three-quarters). At the same time, for the poorest 20 %, this share fell from 6.5 % to 5 %. He also shows that a widening income gap has been found to occur in other industrialized countries. This pattern is most striking in particular metropolitan areas. For example, an analysis of increasing inequalities in London and New York during the 1980s (Loganffaylor-Gooby/Reuter 1992) shows that income inequalities increased dramatically in the mid- and late 1980s despite significant revival in parts of both cities' economies. In London, the ratio of incomes of the top and bottom quartile increased from 2.77 in 1977 to 4.37 in 1988. The notion of polarization refers to the simultaneous disjunctive evolution of income distribution. However, the metaphor of straightforward duality is unable to grasp fully the processes of social stratification generated by economic restructuring.

dominance of macroeconomic monetary and fiscal as well as structural adjustment policies, and the search for economic growth have – at least since the second half of the 1970s -gradually pushed income redistribution and social welfare concerns to the periphery of the policy arena exacerbating, as a result, the vulnerability of an expanding part of the population to the vagaries of economic restructuring.

Recent research on poverty has moved from single variable analysis to a multi-dimensional construction of poverty, which includes cultural, political and identity issues alongside more traditional economic and employment parameters. Attention has moved away from a static analysis of disadvantage (measuring, mapping and describing poverty) to a process-based approach, captured by the conceptual shift from 'poverty' to 'exclusion and polarization'. This shift emphasises the relational character and the conditions under which excluded and marginalised populations are produced. Attention has also shifted from a focus on individuals or households to a community based approach in recognition of the fact that processes of polarization and exclusion are not abstract, but unfold in and through the restructuring of 'localized' and concrete communities and places (Room 1994, Moulaert 1996).

#### ***4.3.2. The urban dimension of socio-economic re-structuring***

Social exclusion processes can hardly be understood without reference to their spatial dimensions. The concentration of excluded populations in certain geographical areas is a fundamental part of socio-economic transformation. Processes of exclusion always operate in and through social space and nowhere has this been more evident than in urban areas. World-wide economic restructuring has significantly altered the functions and hierarchy of cities and, consequently, their social structure (Sassen 1991, Commission of the European Communities 1992, Fainstein 1994). For many cities, especially those in old industrial regions, it has meant systematic divestment from manufacturing activities, plant closures, environmental degradation, massive unemployment and rising poverty and marginality.



Since the end of the 1970s, and until very recently, research into exclusion mechanisms within cities and regions has been highly neglected. After some early research by Harvey (1973), Castells (1972), Godard (1973), Preteceille (1974) and others, there was a symptomatic silence on the side of researchers and policy-makers alike. The relative success of the welfare state and the modernising developmental views about the future fermented a belief in a progressive, more or less socially balanced, future. The focus of research shifted to inter-regional differences and inequalities rather than intra-regional or intra-urban exclusion mechanisms.

However, the deepening and highly uneven spatial impact of the recession of the 1970s, combined with fundamental economic, technological, cultural and social processes of 'creative destruction' and transformation, shattered the dream of perpetual progress. In addition to structural unemployment and increasing numbers of long-term unemployables in the labour market, cultural, political and social mechanisms of exclusion intensified. This took place in a context of a rapidly transforming society, which propelled new strata of economic, social and cultural elites to the foreground and resulted in a process of significant social polarization. The affluence and success of one part of the population is confronted with increasing deprivation, disempowerment and marginalization of another (Merrifield/Swyngedouw 1996, Swyngedouw 1997a). This trend favoured not only a renewed interest in social exclusion mechanisms but contributed to place them in the context of urban and regional reorganization.

Valuable recent cross-national research on social exclusion highlights the significance of spatial variation by focusing on the local character of global trends. A comprehensive and Union-wide assessment of social exclusion and integration mechanisms at the local level is provided, for example, by the report on 'Local development strategies in economically disintegrated areas: a proactive strategy against poverty in the European Community', carried out within

the Poverty III programme (Moulaert/ Delladetsima/Leontidou 1994, Moulaert et al. 2000).

### ***4.3.3. Social exclusion: a multi-dimensional and multi-scaled process***

While economic restructuring is considered to be the central exclusion mechanism, it is increasingly recognised that the specific character of national, regional and local state responses to the imperatives of structural change plays a critical part in shaping the fortunes of cities and urban regions as well as processes of social inclusion/exclusion (Painter 1995). Economic restructuring generates exclusion in direct and indirect ways. Directly speaking, unemployment, income loss, wage cuts, etc. cause diminishing purchasing power but also exclusion of individuals from work and consumption-related social networks. Indirectly, the required skill levels, the socialization norms on the shop floor or in the office, become increasingly less attainable by a larger portion of the active population. The latter are also least able in securing institutional access to social protection or welfare-based income. The interaction between socio-economic restructuring processes that affect, albeit to different degrees, most socio-professional categories, the shifts in the central focus of urban socio-economic policy, and more restrictive access to the welfare system have created a wide diversity of new categories of urban poor, whose socio-cultural identity is often hard to reconstruct (Benassi/Kazepov/Mingione 1997).

### ***4.3.4. Urban restructuring policy: the choice for mega-projects***

The emergence of urban crisis spurred a profound reappraisal of the form, functions and scope of urban policy and led to shifting priorities, new modes of intervention and the development of new planning goals, tools and institutions. In contrast to the 1970s, the 1980s witnessed a gradual move away from (re-)distribution and a growing interest in economic promotion and competitive

restructuring as the basis for urban and metropolitan revitalization. The imbalance between developmental and redistributive programmes increased as the lion's share of urban revitalisation programmes went to large infrastructure and property redevelopment projects, while support for growth initiatives meant enhancing the resources of the most dynamic and entrepreneurial sectors of the urban economy. Moreover, mega-projects and place marketing have been introduced as major leverages for generating future growth and for waging a competitive struggle to attract investment capital (Voogd/Ashworth 1990, Kearns/ Philo 1993, Olds 2001).

Throughout Europe, cities and regions have launched on a path of competitive re-development by means of a variety of strategies, mainly large-scale business inspired urban renewal projects, but in some cases also integrated action plans and community-based local reconversion efforts. Such projects are dotted over the European urban and regional landscape (Moulaert/Swyngedouw/Rodriguez 2001). They operate in a variety of local and national regulatory, political and socio-economic contexts, welfare regimes and public policy frameworks and combine private and public initiatives and funds in a variety of ways. However, they are comparable in the sense that they are inserted in and grapple with epochal European and global trends and attempt to re-assert the position of the city in the new global economic competitive climate and its associated technological, cultural and social transformations.

Large Scale Urban Development Projects or urban mega-projects – that is projects aimed at a structural re-organization of the city's physical fabric while constituting an emblematic symbol signaling a new image and trajectory for the city's future -contribute to, influence and shape processes either of socio-economic polarization and exclusion or, as the case may be, of socio-economic integration. Our focus is on large-scale urban redevelopment projects with a predominantly business oriented and urban renewal logic, because these projects are exceptionally illustrative of the means through which current processes of social inclusion/exclusion operate in urban areas where the majority of the European

Union's population live. Furthermore, these mega-developments are increasingly portrayed as the most effective urban revitalization strategy, often overlooking their built-in exclusionary powers<sup>10</sup>. In addition, UDPs have become emblematic symbols and material manifestations of processes of economic globalization and shifting systems of governance. They permit casting globalization not so much as a process of transnationalization, but primarily as a place-based restructuring that reconfigures the power geometries that shape the urban fabric.

#### **4.3.5. *The complexity of contemporary urban governance***

Throughout the Fordist era, governance of social and economic development was primarily articulated by and through the national State. The national governmental scale served a variety of social and economic functions, among which the redistribution of produced wealth and the regulation of class relations. In addition, the State actively participated in the accumulation process through direct and indirect investments. The debates on the role of the National State are well covered in the heterodox social science literature (Jessop 1990, O'Connor 1973, Becker 2001). Under Fordism, governance coincided with the struggle over and the political control of the national State. Social and economic processes operated through institutional configurations in which national governments played a pivotal role.

With the crisis of Fordism, however, the national State became accused of all sins of Jericho: a bad manager of public resources, incapable of sound investment decisions and management, insufficient as a redistributive agent. Voices in favour of devolution of public competences from the national to the regional level became

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<sup>10</sup>The risks of a two- or multi-speed metropolitanisation and the polarising potential of large-scale urban renewal operations have been highlighted in recent years. Social and spatial polarisation, where downtown prosperity contrasts with neighbourhood decline, have been identified in many The risks of a two- or multi-speed metropolitanisation and the polarising potential of large-scale urban renewal operations have been highlighted in recent years. Social and spatial polarisation, where downtown prosperity contrasts with neighbourhood decline, have been identified in many proclaimed urban revitalization 'successes' in places like Baltimore (Harvey 1989; 2000), Pittsburg and Cleveland (Holcomb 1993), London and New York (Fainstein/Gordon/ Harloe 1992).

louder, and certain state functions like those of direct investor and regulator of market mechanisms were questioned. Decentralization from the national to the regional and local state, and functional reorganizations had to solve the State's legitimization crisis, especially in the direction of strengthening the role of market forces in state policy and strategy. The shift from the national Keynesian to the local entrepreneurial state led to a growing importance of local growth coalitions, multi-agent networking, public-private partnerships, externalising services from the public state to private agencies (Moulaert/Swyngedouw/Wilson 1988, Preteceille 1997, Swyngedouw 1997b). At the same time, a process of transnationalization and the emergence or consolidation of supranational forms of governance further accentuated the reshuffling of governance, and produced a new '*scalar gestalt*' of institutional organisation and regulatory operation (Swyngedouw 1998, 2000a).

In tune with the growing complexity of socio-economic restructuring dynamics, the mechanisms of managing the local community, the city, the region, etc. became increasingly viewed as multi-dimensional processes. Today, local governance does not only include 'government', but also the relations of the local state – local government in the limited sense of the word – with the various urban districts (e.g. through the establishment of neighbourhood mayors, local development agencies), and the relationships between the different governmental scales that are mobilised for policy and action. At the same time, the role of the private sector in 'governance' is re-invented (Andrew/Goldsmith 1998, Moulaert et al. 2000, p. 43-45). This private sector consists of at least two large segments: the market sector with its SMEs (Small and Medium Sized Enterprises) and mega corporate world, and civil society with both its progressive and conservative components. Significant attention is given to building close relationships between market and civil society organizations on the one hand and the local State on the other (Le Gales 1995). The resulting institutional pattern is characterised by the rise of a proliferating number of institutions and organizations, usually organised as social-movement rooted associations or as one or other form of public-private partnership. In contrast to traditional forms of government that provide an arena to articulate the state/civil society relationships, these new forms of governance tend to be based on a rather

limited representation from civil society (Swyngedouw, 2000b). While under certain conditions, these new forms of 'horizontal' governance give a greater voice and participating power to deprived neighbourhoods or excluded social groups, and civil society associations can provide more democracy than the absent state or market sector has been able to grant, this 'empowering' condition is not always met. Local political and social struggle and the presence of strong grass-roots movements are indispensable to generate a democratic and inclusive system of governance.

This complex form of governance constitutes the institutional background against which the public sector's relations to the UDPs should be situated. The local State defends the developmental logic of urban regeneration based on large-scale urban investment projects, following the rationale of global finance, real estate capital, and the real or imagined need for competitive restructuring. In other words, the local state pro-actively leads a New Economic Policy by promoting private investments through deregulation, providing fiscal relief and public city marketing actions (Cox 1997, Moulaert et al. 2000). At the same time, it has to wrestle in its social and political relations with the various parts of urban society: local SMEs, neighbourhood groups and their representatives, political parties and activists, etc. (Judge/Wolman/Stoker 1995). This contradictory situation often drives local authorities to pursue rather opportunistic strategies for managing social relations. Among them, the growing importance of exceptionality procedures (circumventing standing rules and regulations), calls on the regional or national state for financial assistance, the establishment of non-governmental and non-accountable institutions, the formation of 'stake-holder' interest networks, the emergence of compensating -but unfortunately often low budget- social economy measures. In this way, local authorities become trapped in a triangular tension between the New Economic Policy, an ambiguous legitimization discourse in an attempt to forge a more harmonious coexistence of inherently conflicting development logics, and increasingly louder calls from populations in depressed neighbourhoods for new initiatives in the social economy and in neighbourhood social services. This triangular tension is portrayed in fig. 1. In what follows, we shall attempt to illustrate, substantiate and explore the above, drawing on material

presented in the subsequent papers as well on findings from other case-study projects.

#### **4.4. Urban regeneration and policy: the link with urban governance**

A key objective of the comparative analysis presented in this issue was to determine the actual weight of the urban development projects (UDPs) in the urban policy and strategy approach of the public – and possibly also the private – sector and their relationship to changing governance dynamics. To do this, we had to first situate urban regeneration policy as a part of urban policy as a whole, asking whether the UDP is representative for the urban policy in the city or urban region or whether it is just one type of strategy among many others. However, locating the place of urban regeneration policy in a wider context requires an examination of dominant views of urban policy and planning methods used in each case study.

In addition, urban development policy is set against a background of radically changing governance dynamics. The case studies analysed in this special issue reveal that the policy models used for urban regeneration and development incorporate critical shifts in scale, domains of intervention, actors and agents, institutional structures, and policy tools. In this sense, the case studies selected here illustrate the significance of various innovative components of the new urban policies: the rise in importance of growth coalitions, the re-alignment of political networks, the emergence of new institutional arrangements, the use of ad hoc and exceptional policy and planning procedures, etc. Of course, some of these conclusions also have been drawn from the analysis of other case studies in the URSPIC research programme. These cases have been extensively covered in Moulaert/Swynge-douw/Rodriguez (2001, 2002).

#### 4.4.1. *Developmental logic, economic growth and the physical bias of urban policy*

Without exception, all case studies reveal that over the last decade and a half, urban regeneration policy has become an increasingly central component of urban policy. For the most part, urban regeneration schemes based on large-scale UDPs were aimed at combining physical up- grading with socio-economic development objectives. They emerged as a response to urban restructuring processes associated with the trans- formation of production and demand conditions globally. In particular, such projects became an integral part of alternative policies to replace more traditional redistributive social policy schemes. The new socio-economic realities of the 1980s pushed the focus of urban policy gradually away from managing city growth and the negative externalities of accelerated urbanization towards coping with the consequences of economic crisis and restructuring. The search for growth and competitive redevelopment be- came the leading objective of the new urban policies in an attempt to reassert the position of cities in the emerging global economy.

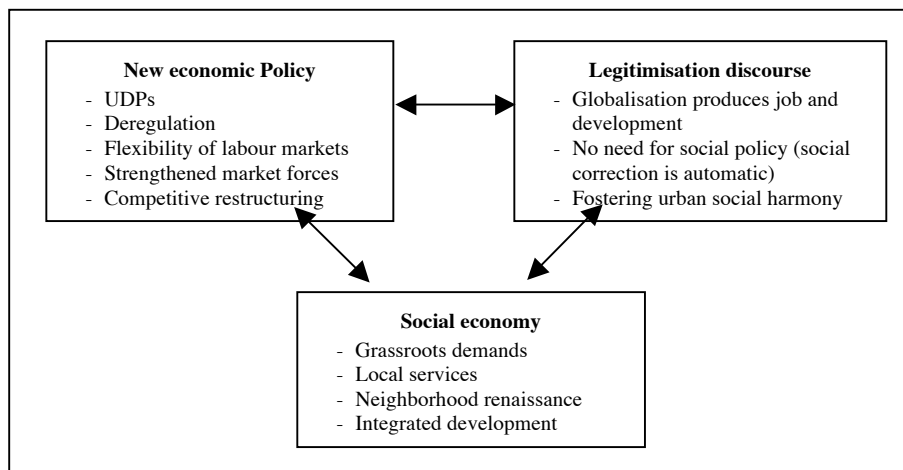


Figure 4. 1: The triangular tension in contemporary urban governance



A fundamental component of many of the urban regeneration initiatives discussed in the case studies is the stress placed on developing and strengthening the competitiveness of cities. Enhancing the competitive advantage of cities is seen as largely dependent on improving and adapting the built environment to the demands and requirements of emerging sectors and firms. Therefore, physical reconversion and economic recovery in designated geographical areas tend to go hand in hand in these urban regeneration strategies and, very often, are perceived as quasi-simultaneous processes.

At the same time, as argued in section 2, all UDPs respond to the imperatives of socio-economic change and represent the material expression of a developmental logic that views mega-projects as major leverages for future growth and functional transformation. As such, they operate at the interstices between physical planning and development policies. But, although a radical transformation of the physical environment is, indeed, an integral part of urban regeneration, in some cases the overriding physical bias of these schemes renders economic recovery and growth almost an assumedly automatic consequence.

A strong "physicist" approach dominates not only urban regeneration initiatives, but also urban policy as a whole in Naples, Athens and Bilbao. In Athens, urban policy develops on purely physical deterministic grounds and is largely disconnected from economic and especially social parameters. In Naples, the predominant view of urban policy is based on large-scale renewal projects, which are expected to improve the quality of the urban fabric. And in Bilbao, the traditional strong physical bias of statutory urban planning has permeated urban regeneration schemes, which despite an integrative rhetoric remain fully trapped in the logic of land use allocation, imaginative urban architectures, and infrastructure developments. In these cases, socio-economic objectives are seen as dependent upon reconversion of abandoned or derelict sites or the speculative use of 'virgin' land, a condition that transforms physical renewal into a mediated economic objective. A strong physical bias, but with a less mechanistic connection between urban regeneration and the reconversion of derelict sites, is also present in Lisbon and Dublin, whereas in Lille,

Copenhagen, and Berlin property valorization is integrated into a more ambitious notion of strategic redevelopment and regeneration. Finally, in the cases of Vienna, Brussels and Birmingham, the UDP aims at providing a more effective physical environment for the concentration of business and public administration functions.

Nonetheless, the search for growth and the transformation of the economic structure of cities from a manufacturing to a post-industrial service-based economy is a common theme across all case studies. An accompanying rhetoric advocating the need for post-industrial development presents the UDPs as spearheading a process of functional restructuring. This is especially true in cities badly affected by the decline of traditional manufacturing industries such as Bilbao, Lille or Birmingham and, to a lesser extent, Rotterdam or Vienna.

At the same time, urban revitalization is projected beyond the cities' limits and linked to regional recovery and an internationalization strategy. For example, in Copenhagen the UDP is the critical node in the promotion of the cross-border Oeresund Region; in Berlin, it is part of the renewed political and economic centrality of the capital city; in Bilbao the UDP aims at strengthening the articulating capacity of the city within the Atlantic Are. In Brussels, Vienna, Lisbon, Athens, Birmingham, and Rotterdam, competitive restructuring is associated with their attempted transformation to become a central hub for the new service economy.

#### ***4.4.2. The (timid) return of social questions and the move towards more integrated approaches***

The overwhelming weight of property redevelopment approaches and unqualified economic goals, which have dominated urban regeneration schemes during the 1980s, have not gone unchallenged. Several of our case studies reveal that there have been very fundamental changes in urban development planning during the 1990s when a belated attention to social issues and problems surfaced. However, the lack of "trickle-down" processes has forced a re-appraisal of urban

regeneration policies and the recognition of the need to deal with social needs and exclusion dynamics in a more direct way. The overthrow of conservative governments and the return of social democratic, socialist and more progressive coalitions have been a major factor in this shift. For example, in Rotterdam (this issue), the perception at the end of the 1980s that the benefits of economic prosperity were not trickling down to the disadvantaged groups of society forced a reconsideration of urban regeneration initiatives. Closing the gap between economic and social development led to a new set of policies for "social renewal" and to a more integrated approach launched during the mid 1990s.

In Birmingham and London (this issue), during the 1990s, urban policy priorities have shifted away from earlier notions of urban regeneration as mere economic regeneration. The latter had become synonymous with physical redevelopment, image promotion to attract private investment and a downgrading of services, coupled with a belief that this in itself would be sufficient to initiate processes to mitigate social exclusion. The pursuit of property-led development at any cost has been replaced by a broader view of what constitutes regeneration and gives greater emphasis to social issues and the delivery of a broad range of services. Nonetheless, the principles of competitive planning, introduced by the Conservatives in the early 1990s, still permeate urban regeneration policies to-day, despite a renewed accent on tackling "deprivation".

Berlin, Copenhagen (this issue) Lille and Vienna stand out as examples where clear economic considerations are placed at the forefront of urban regeneration policies. In Berlin, regeneration strategies, both in the inner city as well as in the large-scale operations of the 'development areas' and 'new suburbs', are closely tied to the provision or improvement of housing for specific social groups. In the 'development areas', urban renewal and property development is combined with economic and labour market policy. In Lille, despite a clear separation between sectoral – i.e. targeted social and economic functions – and territorial – i.e. spatial planning – measures, urban regeneration policy has effectively integrated land and infrastructure developments with a series of social and

economic development initiatives through the application of contractual arrangements between institutions.

The overriding physical bias of urban regeneration is being somewhat tempered by the incorporation of socio-economic considerations in cities like Naples where, in the 1990s, the development of a more integrated, multidimensional approach to urban regeneration, bringing together construction initiatives and socio-economic actions, has gained legitimacy and begins slowly to permeate strategies and policies. In Athens, too, even if there is no evidence yet of a real move towards developing an integrated policy approach, at least lip-service is paid to the need to change from a predominantly physical determinist policy model to a more integrated approach taking into account social and economic objectives, especially employment issues. And, in Bilbao, attempts to move beyond the traditional separation between sectoral and territorially sensitive policies are evidenced by the increasing involvement of the city in local economic development planning and in strategic territorial planning.

Finally, greater attention to socio-economic considerations and the increasing recognition of the importance and validity of more integrated, multidimensional approaches to urban regeneration is partly driven by European Union policy demands concerning access to programmes and funding. In this sense, EU conditions provide a strong incentive to act in a more integrated manner, combining physical, economic, social and cultural objectives. The example of Italy is highly illustrative. In this case, the creation in 1997 of a new generation of programmes by the Ministry of Public Works intended to promote and finance public-private partnerships for urban regeneration projects aimed not only at improving the planning, managerial and networking capacity of municipalities in carrying out projects, but also at increasing the effectiveness of municipalities and to better equip them with respect to new opportunities created by the reform of the EU structural funds. This is also the case in Lisbon, Bilbao and Athens where the possibility of integrating various domains of intervention (infrastructure, spatial planning, housing, employment, welfare), traditionally dispersed among different

government levels and departments, is facilitated by the requirements of EU programmes (UR- BAN, for example).

#### **4.4.3. Large UDPs and 'exceptionality' procedures**

A central issue of current urban regeneration policies is the relation of UDPs to existing planning instruments and regulations. It is often the case that, even while these projects are generally inserted into existing statutory planning guidelines, the initial conception, design and implementation lies at the margins of formal planning structures. The framework of 'exceptionality' associated with these initiatives favours an autonomised dynamic marked by special plans and projects that relegate statutory norms and procedures to a secondary and subordinated place. This is the case not only in Athens and Lisbon, where the UDPs are developed in relation to an international hallmark event, but also in cities like Dublin or Bilbao and even Copenhagen or Berlin. In these cases, the project assumes the form of an 'exceptional' policy action, which severely impacts on all aspects of planning and related policies.

The exceptionality of the UDP is justified on the basis of different factors: their scale, the emblematic character of the operation, timing pressures (for example in case of international events), the need for greater flexibility, efficiency criteria, etc. 'Exceptionality' is essentially a fundamental feature of the new planning methods embracing the primacy of project-based initiatives over regulatory plans and procedures. So, while statutory plans and norms have not disappeared from the urban policy arena, their role has been seriously curtailed and special plans and exceptional measures often overrule them. Moreover, against the crisis of comprehensive planning, project-led redevelopment is presented as an effective planning alternative, combining the advantages of flexibility and targeted actions with a tremendous signifying capacity. And, in a constantly changing and increasingly uncertain environment, flexibility is seen as a necessary condition for effective results.

Project-led urban regeneration also reflects a shift in planning priorities that assigns a greater role to efficiency criteria in the management of urban regeneration. In a context of strong budgetary constraints, numerous competing demands, and limited financial opportunities, the question of efficiency in urban policy development and implementation is no longer a request but a requirement. However, the meaning of efficiency really remains rather blurred. The concept is used in a highly rhetorical manner to justify any move away from regulatory norms and procedures. Overall, efficiency is measured against very narrow, economistic and short-term goals. In urban regeneration, this boils down to an effort to maximise property valorization with minimum investment costs in the least possible time. Moreover, the focused, self-contained and delimited character of UDPs is portrayed as making them more adapted to the imperatives of efficiency.

The ascent of efficiency rules is associated with increasing pressure on local governments to become more 'business-like' and adopt a modus operandi modelled after the private sector. Pro-activity, entrepreneurship, and risk-taking approaches are called for to replace the so called bureaucratic dynamics of local governments. As a result, a more assertive and entrepreneurial style of intervention emerges, which relates greater flexibility and efficiency to successful urban regeneration and local competitiveness. The UDPs clearly express this trend, serving to advertise the commitment of the city to urban revitalization, projecting both locally and externally, an image of strong pro-activity and dynamism while the combination of large scale and emblematic projects or international events act as an essential publicity mechanism aimed at attracting private investors, residents, and/or visitors.

#### **4.5. Conclusion: Urban Entrepreneurialism and Besieged Local governance**

Over the last fifteen years, many metropolitan governments have opted for a New Economic Policy (NEP) for their cities and neighbourhoods. These policies were meant as leading economy restructuring strategies in response to the

consequences of the crisis mechanisms that had rampaged through Western cities since the end of the 1970s. UDPs or mega-investment projects constituted a major ingredient of this NEP. The sheer dimensions of the UDPs elevate them to central icons in the scripting of the image of the future of the cities where they are located. Needless to say that the imagin(eer)ing of the city's future is directly articulated with the visions of those who are pivotal to the formulation, planning and implementation of the projects. Consequently, these projects have been and often still are, arenas that reflect profound power struggles and position taking of key economic, political, social or cultural elites that are instrumental in the urban arena. The scriptings of the projects highlight and reflect the aspirations of a particular set of local, regional, national or sometimes also international actors that shape, through the exercise of socio-economic or political power, the development trajectories of each of the areas. As such, the UDPs can be considered as 'elite playing fields', where the stake is to shape an urban future in line with the aspirations of the most powerful segments among the participants. Clearly, the association of coalitions of elite players changes over time and alliance formation and break- up redefine development trajectories in important ways. Struggles for inclusion in or exclusion from the elite circles become a pivotal element in shaping wider processes of social integration or exclusion. The management and political governance of and interference with the planning and construction of these UDPs vary significantly between cities. Similarly, a great variety of responses by various groups of citizens can be observed.

In contrast to discourses of market-led and entrepreneurial activity (risk taking, market-led investments), UDPs are decidedly and almost without exception state-led, often state-financed, and inscribed in a logic of urban governance. Urban redevelopment is considered to be a central strategy in re-equilibrating the problematic fiscal balance sheet of local government. Territorial policies, aimed at producing increasing rent income, altering the socio-economic tax basis and producing profitable economic activities, are among the few options available, particularly in a context in which the structure of fiscal revenues is changing rapidly. The re-valuation of urban land remains one of the few means open to local

governments to increase tax returns. Despite the rhetoric of market led and privately covered investments, the State is still one of the leading actors in the process. Risks are taken by the state, on occasion shared with the private sector, but given the speculative, real estate based nature of the projects, deficits are likely to occur. Well-known processes of socialization of the cost and risk, and privatization of the possible benefits can be identified. While in the past, invoking the social return of the projects legitimised such practices, they are now usually hidden behind a veil of creative accounting, the channelling of funds via quasi-governmental organizations and mixed private/public companies. Consequently, the UDP became a major spending item on public budgets, either directly through public investment, or indirectly, because of the (local) state's investment guarantees. As a consequence, many neighbourhood redevelopment projects were slimmed down, postponed or they plainly disappeared. The combination of UDP policy with its unbalanced growth features and the lack of neighbourhood level actions have reinforced social inequality among neighbourhoods and accentuated already acute processes of social exclusion and polarization.

Given the often radically new socio-economic functions associated with UDPs -in an effort to align the urban socio-economic fabric with the expected conditions in a new international competitive environment -there is inevitably a process of transfer and of dislocation of jobs taking place. Spatial labour markets become out of joint or are mismatched. Targeted labour market policies might remedy some of these disjunctions, but the sheer vastness of the labour market restructuring often implies painful processes of adaptation and growing separation between remaining local communities and the incoming new workforce. This leads to a double-edged dualisation of labour markets, both in the construction phase of projects and in their effects. Increasingly, dual urban labour markets are emerging, with a group of highly paid and educated executives on the one hand, and a large group of less secure – often informal – workers on the other. The fundamental restructuring of labour markets, which is facilitated by national de-regulation of labour market rules and other changes in the national regulatory frameworks, becomes cemented in and expressed by the socio-economic composition of the UDPs. The inclusion of



the existing labour pool proves difficult or impossible, while re-training and targeted labour market entry policies tend not to be very successful, despite the prolonged support for such programs.

UDPs produce urban islands, discrete spaces with increasingly sharp boundaries (gated and surveilled business, leisure or living community spaces). This is reinforced through a combination of physical, social, and cultural boundary formation processes. The overall result is the rise of the fragmented city, the culminated reorganization of the socio-spatial fabric of the urban agglomeration (Marcuse 1989). In some cases, it takes the form of suburbanisation of poverty, while internal differentiation accentuates socio-spatial differentiation in the city. This leads to increasing socio-spatial polarization, which at times takes outspoken racialised forms. This New Urban Policy was accompanied and often facilitated by the formation of a new form of urban governance that rested principally on fostering new relations between the local state and the private sector and, consequently, re-shuffled social and political power relations in important ways. Accountability and participation often declined, while elite visions took over the actual restructuring of the city. In addition, these large scale UDPs actively co-produced the processes that were later recognized as constituting globalization. UDPs are, in fact, the material and political-economic manifestations through which actual processes of economic globalization, cultural transnationalization and increased inter-urban competition become constituted. As such, globalization is a process that is profoundly localised and results from concrete territorial restructuring dynamics. Pushing through this model of globalizing urbanization demands the cohesive formation of a growth-oriented elite configuration that holds local governance under its hegemonic siege.

## CAPÍTULO 5

### **Uneven Redevelopment: New Urban Policies and Socio-Spatial Fragmentation in Metropolitan Bilbao**

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## 5.1. Abstract

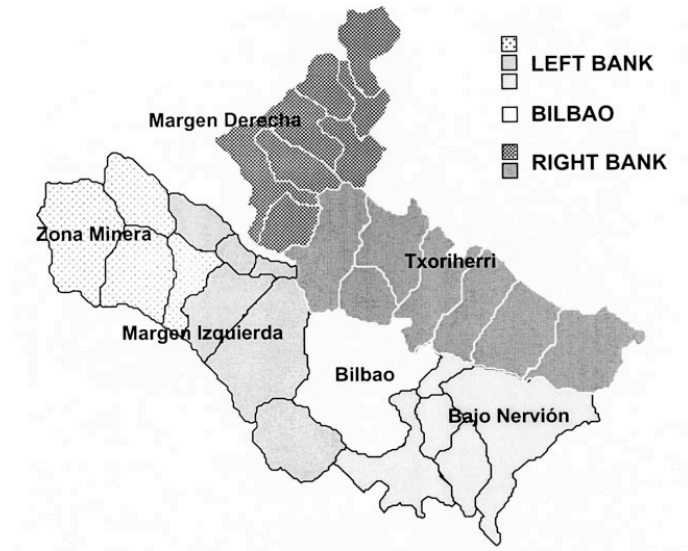
Since the mid 1980s, European cities and regions have become increasingly concerned with competitive restructuring and economic growth. This concern goes hand in hand with a rediscovery of the central role of cities in the performance of regional and national economies as a whole. But, in a context of radical transformation of production and demand conditions globally, the performance of cities is mediated by their capacity to lead a process of competitive redevelopment. To meet the challenges posed by the changing global competitive climate, the policy agenda of many cities has been drastically reorganized. On the one hand, the search for growth has transformed urban revitalization in one of the main domains of urban intervention. On the other, the new urban policy agenda is singularly framed in a language of competitiveness, improved efficiency, flexibility, entrepreneurship, partnership and collaborative advantage that underwrite the remaking of planning objectives, functions and instruments. In this article, we examine the rise of new urban policies in Bilbao (Spain), a city where two decades of manufacturing decline and economic restructuring are gradually giving way to so-called urban renaissance. During the 1990s, Bilbao has followed on the tracks of other old industrial cities adopting a revitalization strategy focused around large-scale and emblematic redevelopment projects. The article discusses one of these projects, Abandoibarra, a paradigmatic waterfront development that embodies the new logic of urban intervention. The first section of the paper presents an analysis of economic restructuring and socio-spatial fragmentation dynamics in the city in the last two decades. The second section discusses changes in urban policy-making locating Bilbao's regeneration strategy in the context of the 'New Urban Policies'. The third section focuses on emerging governance dynamics and the critical role of new governance institutions in the management of Abandoibarra's redevelopment scheme. Finally, the fourth part of the article attempts to provide an evaluation of the impact of the project, highlighting the shadows behind what is presented as a new success story in urban revitalization.

**Keywords:** urban regeneration, new urban policies, social and spatial polarization, Bilbao.

## **5.2. Remaking the Fordist city: economic restructuring and socio-spatial fragmentation in Bilbao**

### ***5.2.1. Industrialization and urban development***

For more than a century, the dynamics of change in metropolitan Bilbao have followed closely the cycles of expansion and contraction of manufacturing activities. From the early outbursts of industrialization in the second half of the 19th century, the city's socio-economic and spatial structure has been moulded primarily by the changing requirements of manufacturing activity. The location determinants of the propulsive sectors of the first round of industrial development, iron ore extraction and export, prefigured a social and functional division of space along the axis of the Nervión river that has only deepened over time (Urrutia, 1985; Martínez and Vicario, 1997). In the Left Bank (Margen Izquierda: see Fig. 3), where the mines and port facilities are located, the development of manufacturing followed by intense immigration transformed this area into the heart of industry and working class communities. In Bilbao, a new rationality of segregated functions and classes drove the development of residential and business locations for the industrial and financial bourgeoisie in the centre and working class neighbourhoods in the periphery. The Right Bank (Margen Derecha), initially a recreational and summer residence area for the city's upper classes, was gradually transformed into a residential centre of higher quality, up-market housing and, later on, tertiary activities.



**Figure 5. 1: Metropolitan Bilbao Functional Areas**

After the impasse of the civil war, a decade of economic stagnation and political isolation of the Francoist regime gave way to a period of accelerated industrialization and urban development in the 1950s and 60s. Together with Madrid and Barcelona, Bilbao became a major pole of attraction for both capital and labour. Capital investments in this ‘second’ wave of industrialization built upon and intensified the city’s specialization on heavy manufacturing and metal products, a factor that would bear critically on the early loss of dynamism and the differential impact of economic crisis in the 1970s (Escudero, 1985). On the other hand, population growth, fuelled by a continuous flow of immigrants from disadvantaged Spanish regions, created the basis for an extraordinary demographic and physical expansion. Between 1950 and 1970, population doubled (111 percent increase) in the eight largest municipalities<sup>11</sup> of metropolitan Bilbao and tripled in the Left Bank (182 percent increase). Population growth continued during the 1970s but at a much lower rate (14 percent). This trend was accompanied by a frenzy of building in a context dominated by the spontaneous

<sup>11</sup> Bilbao, Barakaldo, Basauri, Galdakao, Getxo, Portugalete, Santurtzi and Sestao.

activities of real estate agents and a permissive government constrained by rising demands, structural deficits and limited material and financial resources (Terán, 1999). An ‘urbanism of tolerance’, subservient to the interests and pressures of promoters and developers, turned speculation into the key dynamic of rapid urbanization (Perez-Agote, 1978; Leonardo, 1989).

The combination of accelerated growth and untamed urbanism favoured the reproduction of socio-spatial segregation patterns in the metropolitan area. The industrial and working class character of the Left Bank was accentuated by the expansion of manufacturing and port activity and by the concentration of immigrant labour in this area. In the municipality of Bilbao, the growth of centrality functions associated with the concentration of financial activities and advanced services in the central business district was the most important dynamic. But the central district also retained its residential character for higher income groups while the working classes settled in the periphery of the municipality. The growth of the Right Bank was primarily tied to its role as the residential centre for the new middle classes and higher income groups. However, throughout the 1970s, some of the Right Bank municipalities started to attract an important share of expanding tertiary activities, thus reinforcing the social and functional divisions of the metropolitan area.

After two decades of intense growth, the metropolitan economy was badly hit by the crisis of Fordism and the restructuring of production and demand globally. Manufacturing activities, the engine of growth during the expansive phase, now led the dynamics of contraction and decline. Between 1975 and 1996, metropolitan Bilbao lost almost half (47 percent) of its manufacturing jobs and the proportion of industrial employment dropped from 46 percent to 23 percent. Most of these losses took place in traditional Fordist industries such as shipbuilding, steel, chemicals and electrical equipment, dominated by large firms<sup>12</sup>. The growth of tertiary activities

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<sup>11</sup>In 1975 basic industries and metal transformation activities concentrated more than 70 percent of total industrial employment in metropolitan Bilbao. These activities still accounted for 68 percent of manufacturing employment in 1986, but its share of total metropolitan employment had dropped from 22 percent to 12 percent.

during this period helped offset partly the impact of industrial decline and after 1986 provided practically all net job growth. By 1996, the share of services in the city had grown from 42 percent to 65 percent, revealing a fundamental reorganization of the urban economy and a shift in its specialization away from manufacturing towards services (Table 5.1).

**Table 5. 1: Employment distribution by sectors in Metropolitan Bilbao 1975–96 (in thousands)**

	1975	1981	1986	1991	1996
Agriculture	2.5	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.6
Manufacturing	136.3	116.0	96.3	94.0	75.1
Building	32.8	24.9	17.8	24.5	20.3
Services	124.9	130.6	143.4	176.3	182.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>296.5</b>	<b>273.1</b>	<b>259.1</b>	<b>296.3</b>	<b>279.0</b>

*Source: Eustat (1986, 1996).*

Manufacturing decline and changes in the hierarchy of sectors have gone hand in hand with a profound reorganization of labour market and income opportunities. In Bilbao, unemployment rates jumped from 2.3 percent in 1975 to 26 percent in 1986; a decade later, unemployment figures continued to be at an alarming 27 percent, but the return of economic dynamism in the last half of the 1990s drove this rate down to 16 percent in 1998. However, falling unemployment rates are closely linked to the growing casualization of labour relations and the extension of precarious jobs that has institutionalized vulnerability and increased the risks of exclusion for large segments of the population. The extent to which this trend permeates the reorganization of the labour market in the city is reflected in the rising proportion of non-tenured contracts that in 1998 amounted to almost 40 percent of all contracts (Egailan, 1999). Thus, while unemployment remains the key variable in explaining changing living conditions and social exclusion dynamics, it reveals only the tip of an iceberg of uncertainty, instability and increasing risk for a growing share of the urban population.



### 5.2.2. Changing patterns of socio-spatial segregation and polarization

Changes in the urban economy have not taken place homogeneously inside the metropolitan area. On the contrary, processes of socio-economic restructuring unfold along the lines of existing social and functional divisions of space. Table 5.2 reveals critical differences in the distribution of employment change for different sub-areas of the metropolitan area.

**Table 5. 2: Employment distribution by sectors in Metropolitan Bilbao by sub-areas, 1981-96**

(thousands)	Agriculture				Manufacturing				Building industry				Services			
	1981	1986	1991	1996	1981	1986	1991	1996	1981	1986	1991	1996	1981	1986	1991	1996
<b>Bilbao</b>	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	37.9	30.9	31.3	24.6	8.5	6.0	8.5	6.9	68.1	70.5	81.7	80.1
<b>Left Bank</b>	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	60.8	48.7	48.8	35.8	12.2	9.2	12.4	10.3	41.5	47.0	60.6	63.7
Bajo Nervión	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	17.2	14.0	14.1	11.6	2.8	2.3	3.0	2.8	9.9	11.9	16.8	18.2
Margen Izquierda	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	38.3	30.2	27.1	20.7	8.1	6.1	8.1	6.4	28.4	31.3	38.6	39.7
Zona Minera	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	5.3	4.5	4.2	3.5	1.3	0.8	1.3	1.1	3.2	3.8	5.2	5.8
<b>Right Bank</b>	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.6	17.4	16.7	17.3	14.6	4.2	2.7	3.6	3.2	21.0	26.1	34.0	38.2
Margen Derecha	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	8.2	8.7	9.3	8.1	2.5	1.6	1.9	1.7	13.6	17.4	22.4	25.3
Txoriherri	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	9.2	8.0	8.0	6.5	1.7	1.1	1.7	1.5	7.4	8.7	11.6	12.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>96.3</b>	<b>94.0</b>	<b>75.1</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>130.6</b>	<b>143.4</b>	<b>176.3</b>	<b>182.0</b>

Source: Eustat (1986, 1996).

The Left Bank supplies an inordinate proportion of total job loss and plant closures and, consequently, has the highest rates of unemployment; two thirds of all job losses in manufacturing correspond to the Left Bank, as opposed to only 7 percent to the Right Bank. The concentration of job loss and decline means that more than 40 percent of the Left Bank's industrial employment has been destroyed since 1981. This area also lags behind in terms of the growth of services that account in 1996 for 58 percent of its employment as opposed to around 70 percent in Bilbao and the Right Bank. Moreover, the initial specialization in residential functions and tertiary activities of the Right Bank has been reinforced both by significant residential transfers from the Left Bank municipalities (Martínez and Vicario, 1997) and by the decentralization of new services from the city itself, which has contributed to deepen

the Left–Right divide. However, the structural dynamics of the Txoriherri, an industrial enclave within the Right Bank, remain functionally assimilated to the Left Bank.

Industrial decline and tertiarization dynamics are closely related to changes in the occupational structure, which also contribute to redefine socio- spatial segregation and polarization patterns in the city. Table 5.3 reveals fundamental shifts in the occupational structure of metropolitan Bilbao between 1986 and 1996.

**Table 5.3: Changing occupational structure in Metropolitan Bilbao, 1986–96**  
(% of total employment)

	Specialists		Managers		Administrative		Commercial		Services		Manual labour	
	1986	1996	1986	1996	1986	1996	1986	1996	1986	1996	1986	1996
<b>Bilbao</b>	<b>19.7</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>25.6</b>
Left Bank	11.3	16.6	0.5	2.1	12.7	13.9	10.8	11.3	11.6	13.4	53.0	42.8
Bajo Nervión	9.3	16.6	0.6	2.3	13.8	15.4	11.5	12.2	10.2	11.8	54.7	43.7
Margen	12.	17.	0.5	2.0	12.	13.	10.	11.	12.	13.	52.	42.
Zona Minera	10.	15.	0.1	2.7	12.	12.	11.	9.3	11.	14.	54.	46.
Right Bank	25.9	30.7	1.7	5.6	16.7	16.2	13.5	11.1	10.4	10.3	31.7	26.0
Margen	33.5	37.9	2.3	7.1	18.9	17.3	14.9	11.4	9.1	7.9	21.0	18.5
Txoriherri	14.0	18.7	0.4	3.3	13.3	14.5	11.3	10.7	12.6	14.2	48.5	38.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>40.7</b>	<b>32.5</b>

*Source: Eustat (1986, 1996).*

These data show that there is a significant increase in the absolute numbers and proportion of specialists and managerial occupations throughout the city; people employed in the metropolitan area as managers almost tripled and the number of specialists increased by one third in that decade. All the sub-areas, without exception, increased the number and share of jobs in these occupations. Growing professionalization runs parallel to a reduction in the numbers and proportion of manual labour in all sub-areas.

However, overall trends in the occupational structure of the city also present an uneven spatial distribution. In the Right Bank and, especially, in the municipality of Bilbao, these changes involve a fundamental redistribution of jobs away from manual labour in manufacturing activities (cf. Table 5.3) towards qualified specialists and, to

a lesser extent, medium and low qualification service jobs. As a result, occupational change is contributing to strengthen these areas' original specialization in technical, professional and managerial occupations. In contrast, manual labour remains the largest occupational category in the Left Bank areas despite the absolute loss in the numbers employed and the falling share of these occupations in the employment structure. In the Left Bank, occupational change involves a more levelled redistribution to tertiary occupations: administrative, commercial and services. Nonetheless, the proportion of specialists and managers in the Left Bank increases significantly although the weight of these higher qualification jobs remains low. In sum, occupational shifts over the last decade encroach upon and provide for new socio-spatial polarization patterns within the metropolitan area.

A measure of increasing inequality and polarization dynamics within the metropolitan area is also provided by the distribution of poverty. Table 5.4 reveals the higher incidence of poverty conditions, real and potential, in the Left Bank and in the municipality of Bilbao.

**Table 5. 4: Poverty conditions, 1996–2000 (% of households)**

	Potential poverty			Real poverty		
	1996	2000	variation	1996	2000	variation
Bilbao	5.7	8.9	3.2	2.1	3.7	1.6
Left Bank	6.7	8.3	1.6	2.7	4.2	1.5
Right Bank	3.6	3.9	0.3	0.0	1.1	1.1
Basque autonomy	4.6	5.5	0.9	1.6	2.1	0.5

*Source: Gobierno Vasco (1996, 2000).*

In 2000, 12.5 percent of the Left Bank households lived in poverty or were coping with severe difficulties to meet basic needs (potential poverty). A similar proportion of households in the municipality of Bilbao lived, or were dangerously close to living, in poverty. Together, the Left Bank and the city of Bilbao concentrated in 1996 almost 60 percent of all households in the Basque Autonomy suffering from poverty and half of the most vulnerable ones. Significantly, the extension of vulnerability among the Bilbao municipality's households in the last four years takes place during a phase of economic dynamism and of massive investments in urban renewal. In

contrast, the Right Bank shows very low levels of real and potential poverty, although the trend is towards a rising proportion of households living in poverty.

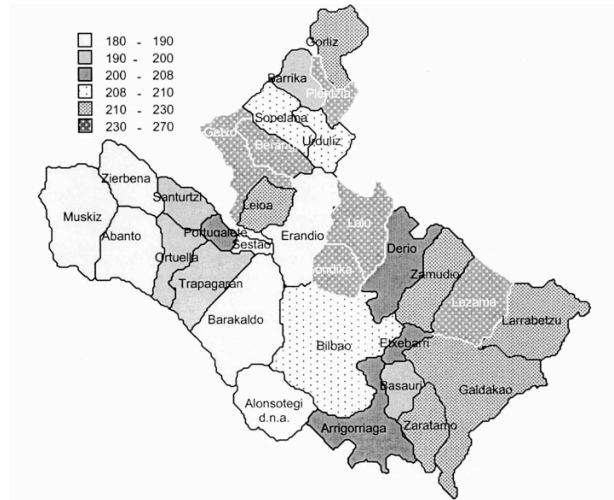
Finally, the evolution of average per capita income among the different sub-areas also provides a dimension of changing inequalities in metropolitan Bilbao. Table 5.5 and Figure 4 reveal a dynamic of increasing differentiation and polarization between 1982 and 1997.

While average per capita income for metropolitan Bilbao doubled during this period, this increase was not distributed evenly. Starting from a below-average position, the Left Bank registered a reduction of average per capita income both in absolute and relative terms during this period. In contrast, the Right Bank maintained and even strengthened its advantage, increasing almost 10 percentage points and thus expanding the income gap relative to the Left Bank. Polarization dynamics were particularly intense during the 1980s, as shown by the high standard deviation, when the gap between the Left and the Right Bank increased every year until 1988. During the 1990s, however, differences between the two areas remained constant.

**Table 5. 5: Average per capita income 1982–97 (Met. Bilbao = 100)**

	1982	1988	1997	variation
<b>Bilbao</b>	<b>111.4</b>	<b>117.5</b>	<b>111.0</b>	<b>209.3</b>
Left Bank	86.1	77.6	81.3	
• Bajo Nervión	85.8	82.7	84.0	204.0
• Margen Izquierda	86.0	79.0	80.1	189.2
• ZonaMinera	84.4	76.5	79.5	192.9
Right Bank	109.1	115.2	118.9	
• MargenDerecha	123.5	134.3	137.4	245.2
• Txorierri	87.3	82.1	88.9	216.1
<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>23.0</b>	-
<b>Max – Min</b>	<b>39.1</b>	<b>57.8</b>	<b>57.8</b>	-

*Source: Own calculations. Diputación Foral de Bizkaia (1997).*



**Figure 5. 2: Average per capita income growth, Metropolitan Bilbao municipalities 1982–1997**

This trend is also confirmed by the evolution of income distribution as shown by Martínez and Vicario (1997). According to these authors, between 1982 and 1988<sup>13</sup> the critical period of restructuring, social inequality increased as the top income segments increased their average income by 97 percent while the lowest income increased only 26 percent. As a result, the top 20 percent increased their wealth share from 44 percent to 47 percent while the lowest 20 percent decreased their proportion from 7 percent to 5 percent.

In sum, over the last two decades, industrial decline and economic restructuring have contributed to heighten social and spatial divisions in metropolitan Bilbao. Contrasting demographic, employment, sector and income dynamics along the historical divisions provide the conditions for the reproduction of uneven development. The relative structure of differentiation is consolidated as a decaying Left Bank continues to drift apart from the dynamism of the Right Bank. Moreover, changes in the urban economic base during the last decade have created the conditions for new forms of segregation and polarization in the city.

<sup>13</sup>Data availability makes it impossible to update the authors' calculations for the years after 1988. The fiscal statistics no longer contain the personal distribution by deciles.

### **5.3. New Urban Policies (NUP) for urban regeneration**

#### ***5.3.1. Urban regeneration in the 1990s: the search for growth and competitive restructuring***

Throughout Europe, urban regeneration has become the primary component of urban policy. The changing socio-economic realities of the 1980s have gradually shifted the focus of urban policy away from managing city growth and the negative externalities of accelerated urbanization towards coping with the consequences of economic crisis and restructuring (Moulaert and Scott, 1997; Fainstein, 1991). The strategic shift in urban regeneration has evolved in the context of a critical reappraisal of the form, functions and scope of urban policy and the rise of new forms of urban governance (Brindley et al., 1989). And, while a variety of competing styles of planning and governance coexist throughout the urban landscape, urban regeneration is, nonetheless, framed in a common language of flexibility, improved efficiency, competitiveness, state entrepreneurship, partnership and collaborative advantage (Healey, 1997; Jessop, 1998; Oatley, 1998). The emerging governance system places urban policy developments of the last decade and a half in line with what Cox refers to as a 'New Urban Politics' (Cox, 1993), a view that subordinates urban government strategies to the imperatives of globalized capital accumulation. Indeed, the shifts in policy are underlined by the increasing pressures for cities to perform effectively in an increasingly competitive global environment dominated by the globalization of economic activity and the growing internationalization of investment flows. The 'New Urban Policies' are therefore fully inserted in the macroeconomic and regulatory changes of the global space economy and liberalized Economic Policy. They imply a radical redefinition of objectives but also of forms and patterns of intervention as well as institutional relations (Moulaert et al., 2000).

Under the new agenda, enhancing the competitive advantage of cities has meant the need to adapt their built environment and socio-economic conditions to the demands of the new growth sectors and investment dynamics (Fainstein, 1990; Judd and Parkinson, 1990). This is especially true for old industrial cities where a

weakened economy and a deteriorated physical base severely undermine their capacity to attract new functions and economic activities. In this case, competitive advantage means strengthening the local basis of advantage relative to other cities by finding new roles in the functional hierarchy (Porter, 1995). The emphasis on inter-area competition for the attraction of capital, innovative sectors and command functions makes 'putting cities on the map' a strategic imperative that provides the rationale for place marketing initiatives, flagship projects and emblematic operations (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990).

On the other hand, internalizing the goals of competitive restructuring has contributed to the emergence of a more proactive and entrepreneurial approach on the part of urban governments (Harvey, 1989; Albrechts, 1992). In the name of improving public sector performance, new interorganizational bodies are set up, displacing traditional planning institutions and subordinating formal government structures in policy design and implementation processes. The new governance system often involves massive redistribution of policy making powers, competencies and responsibilities away from local governments to partnership agencies, a process that has been described in terms of deregulation and 'privatization' of urban policy making (Jessop, 1998; Harvey, 1989). Paradoxically, the focused and fragmented character of many of these urban operations contrasts sharply with a strong emphasis on co-ordinated action, partnerships, networks and support coalitions (Leitner, 1990; Healey et al., 1995). Thus, the imperative of efficiency in management and competitiveness in urban performance compounds a framework dominated by the emergence of a more assertive style of urban governance where a multiplicity of agents, including the local government, compete for access and control over the urban policy agenda (Healey, 1997).

In sum, urban regeneration is located at the core of urban policy change, spearheading the shift to a post-Keynesian mode of urban intervention (Gaffikin and Warf, 1993). In this mode, the primacy of economic performance and competitiveness takes over, displacing the integrative functions of urban intervention to the limbo of trickle down redistribution. The overwhelming concern with physical factors and a

marked downtown bias create the conditions for the concentration of public investments in central locations and the redistribution of resources away from other less conspicuous uses and areas. Not surprisingly, the benefits of renewal among neighbourhoods and social groups tend to reflect an equivalent distribution. Indeed, a pattern of two- speed revitalization has come to be increasingly associated with urban regeneration as downtown regeneration proceeds alongside continuing unemployment, widespread poverty and environmental degradation in its surrounding area (Hula, 1990; Fainstein, 1991; Holcomb, 1993).

### ***5.3.2. The changing context of urban policy in Bilbao***

Until the mid-1970s, urban plans in Spain were mostly concerned with coping with accelerated economic and urban growth, allocating land uses and providing the necessary infrastructure for metropolitan expansion. Yet, by the end of the decade, radical economic, social and political transformation brought about significant changes in urban planning practice. First, economic crisis and restructuring forced cities and localities to concentrate on consolidating the existing urban structure, paying special attention to critical deficits and problems derived from accelerated and disorganized urbanization. Second, the transition to democracy enhanced the means for political and social representation; the effective pressure of rising urban social movements succeeded in securing greater popular participation in urban planning and management as well as shifting the emphasis of planning towards the provision of services and social infrastructures.

After a period of highly speculative and disorganized urban growth, the 1980s opened up a decade of increasing concern with social justice and equity considerations in urban planning (Leal, 1989; Terán, 1999). However, the greater redistributive focus did not alter in a fundamental way the character of urban planning and, aside from a few remarkable exceptions, most plans retained a strong physical bias trapped by the logic of urban architectures and short term remedial planning. By the mid 1980s, considerable debate on the 'crisis of the plan' was already underway on the grounds of poor results, lack of flexibility of the planning system, lengthy plan

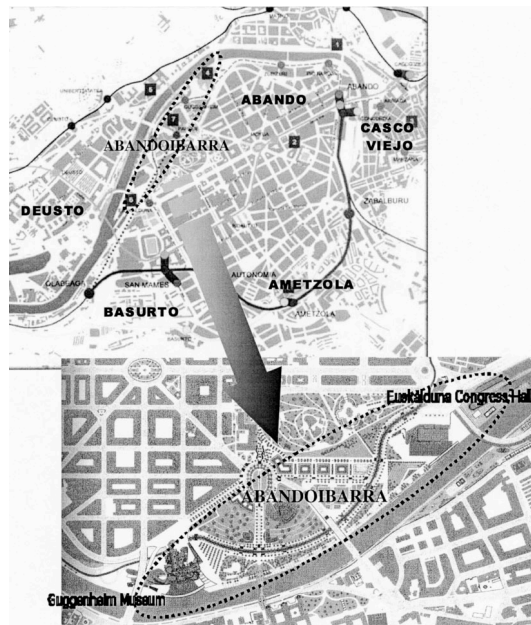


elaboration processes and weaknesses in implementation (Campos Venuti et al., 1985). By the end of the decade, challenges to statutory planning extended to its inability to respond effectively to economic and urban restructuring and to lead urban regeneration (Vegara, 1993). The crisis of planning encouraged a search for more flexible and effective modes of urban intervention (Busquets Grau, 1993; Mangada, 1991). Urban operations and emblematic projects emerged then as a viable alternative to statutory plans. And, while municipalities continued to produce statutory plans, the logic of the project imposed itself upon the most conspicuous urban initiatives of the 1990s, displacing regulatory instruments. The urban operations of Barcelona and Seville, driven by international events, inaugurated this new phase of project-led urban policy (Borja and Castells, 1997).

### ***5.3.3. Urban regeneration in Bilbao: waterfront redevelopment***

Urban policy in Bilbao was not recognized as a legitimate field of intervention to address urban crisis and restructuring until the late 1980s. On the part of regional authorities, urban decline was generally viewed as the spatial dimension of structural reorganization processes in the global economy that had to be dealt with primarily at the macroeconomic level. At the local scale, urban planning, tightly contained by the logic of functionalist land use planning, did not seem qualified to lead a process of regeneration of the city's physical and socio-economic base. A crucial turning point was the drafting of the new Master Plan for the city in the late 1980s that, after years of passivity, opened up the social and political debate on urban decline and the prospects for revitalization in metropolitan Bilbao. The commission, by the Basque Government, of a strategic plan for the revitalization of metropolitan Bilbao to guide the revitalization process provided further impetus to this process. By the end of that decade, the new Master Plan of Bilbao established the basis for transformation, identifying a series of key locations ('opportunity sites') left out by deindustrialization and decline that could be redeveloped to lead the process of urban revitalization. Abandoibarra, a centrally located area on the river waterfront, was singled out as the most representative of these 'opportunity sites' (Fig. 5).

From the end of the 19th century until the mid 1980s, Abandoibarra developed as an urban enclave with port and manufacturing activities. Physically cut off from the surrounding residential areas by a railroad track, the economic functions of this area contributed to reinforce its segregated quality. During the 1970s, Abandoibarra suffered from steady decline resulting from the transfer of dock activity to outer port locations and the crisis of manufacturing that reached its zenith after the closure of the Euskalduna shipyards in the mid 1980s.



**Figure 5.3: Abandoibarra waterfront redevelopment project**

In a context of dramatic restructuring of the urban economy, the plight of Abandoibarra did not seem, at first, any different from that of many other industrial sites in the metropolitan area<sup>14</sup>. However, the drafting of the new Master Plan for Bilbao identified this site as an opportunity location and granted it a key strategic role. The Plan highlighted the paradoxical nature of Abandoibarra as a high centrality

<sup>14</sup>Manufacturing plant closures and rationalization of facilities contributed to the abandonment and obsolescence of numerous industrial locations. By 1989 it was estimated that the volume of industrial ruins surpassed 140 Ha.

location, in the heart of the bourgeois city, and its continuing specialization in low value and obsolete functions. Deindustrialization and the reorganization of port activity provided a unique opportunity to correct this 'dysfunction'. The Plan, therefore, proposed its conversion into a new directional area capable of driving the process of restructuring of the metropolitan economy as a whole and articulating a leadership position for Bilbao in the so called Atlantic axis of European development (Ayuntamiento de Bilbao, 1989).

The transformation of Abandoibarra into a new business centre involved the creation of a mixed land use area for advanced services, high-income housing, retail and leisure areas and cultural infrastructures. The project was to be the jewel in the crown of the city's urban regeneration scheme, an exemplary operation that would not only transform the functionality of the area but would also become a symbol of a renovated, innovative and successful Bilbao (Rodríguez, 1995). Thus while the immediate objective of this operation was to reclaim a derelict site and turn it into a new functional pole capable of attracting local and international capital investments and key command and control functions, the symbolic and representational content of the operation was not insignificant. Indeed, both in relation to the external projection goals as well as in terms of internal legitimization, the remaking of Bilbao's image, from a declining manufacturing city into a new post-industrial revitalized metropolis, has been a critical element of this operation.

The new Master Plan established the framework for Abandoibarra but the detailed proposal was defined only after an international competition of ideas organized by the City Council of Bilbao in 1992. The project presented by Cesar Pelli, the renowned architect in charge of the Battery Park regeneration scheme in New York, was the winner of the competition. Pelli's initial project fixed the directional and strategic character of Abandoibarra's redevelopment by the designation of over 200,000 m<sup>2</sup> of 'high level' tertiary space and key infrastructures such as an international Conference and Concert Hall and the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum, the flagship icon of the operation. However, the initial project has seen successive amendments involving a

fundamental displacement of the Urban Plan's initial focus on tertiary and economic uses towards residential and retail functions (Table 5.6).

This shift reflected the difficulties perceived by the managing institutions to valorize Abandoibarra's land on the basis of strategic office developments while the market for high income housing offered greater financial returns in the short term (Esteban, 1999). Given the constraints on financial self-sufficiency, the feasibility of the project was then secured by the speculative increase in housing prices tagged to the expansion of demand in luxury housing in the city and the effect of the real estate boom of the mid 1990s. By 1994, the strategic character of the project had been minimized despite an enduring rhetoric of strategic goals, post-industrial development and supra-regional leadership. The decision adopted by the provincial government, the Diputación, in the summer of 1997, to relocate all its offices (55,000 m<sup>2</sup>) in Abandoibarra's emblematic business tower, contributed to undermine the strategic pull of the area. The public, not the private, sector and the local, not the international, initiative continued to secure the impetus for the development of the area.

**Table 5. 6: Distribution of building areas in Abandoibarra's Master Plan (PERI) 1999**

PERI 1999	m <sup>2</sup>	%
Offices	90,575	40.8
Residential (800 housing units)	72,369	32.6
Retail	31,121	14.0
Hotel	13,000	5.9
Other	15,000	6.8
<b>Subtotal A (building areas)</b>	<b>222,065</b>	<b>100/52.5%</b>
Cultural and university infrastructures*	30,354	15.2
Green and open areas	170,418	84.8
<b>Subtotal B (open spaces and infrastructures)</b>	<b>200,772</b>	<b>100/47.5%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>422,837</b>	<b>100</b>

*\*Includes a series of collective infrastructures such as the Guggenheim Museum, the Euskalduna Conference and Concert Hall, the Maritime Museum and several university infrastructures.*

*Source: Ayuntamiento de Bilbao (1999).*

### **5.3. New governance structures for urban regeneration: Bilbao Ría 2000, S.A.**

A critical component of the new urban policies of the last decade has been a shift from urban government to governance. In the case of Bilbao, the Abandoibarra operation inaugurates this shift to a new mode of intervention legitimized on the basis of increased flexibility, proactivity and efficiency. This emerging mode of urban governance involves notably the transfer of planning and implementation powers traditionally held by local institutions to a new managing institution, Bilbao Ría 2000. The setting up of this organization is the single most important innovation in urban policy in Bilbao and a fundamental component of Abandoibarra's revitalization scheme.

The creation of Ría 2000 can be explained by the combination of three critical factors. First, there was the emerging consensus on the need to concentrate efforts and carry out coordinated actions for the revitalization of Bilbao. Cooperation, partnership and collaborative advantage became synonyms of good governance. A second factor was the recognition of extraordinary land management difficulties related to land ownership structure of derelict sites that required 'concertación' among the different agents involved. And a third factor involved the extremely high costs of renewal operations and the imperative of financial self-sufficiency as a condition for urban renovation initiatives, a factor that called for more entrepreneurial forms of management. The three factors converge in the complex distribution of competencies, powers and funds created by the decentralization of the Spanish state during the transition to democracy. Far from settled, the administrative/political division of labour creates a constant arena of conflict and negotiation. In the case of urban regeneration in Abandoibarra, this dynamic is further complicated by the location of urban planning powers at the local level and fiscal powers at the regional one while land ownership was overwhelmingly (95 percent) held by public firms and institutions of the central administration.

Following the managing model established in the urban operations of Seville and Barcelona, the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and the Environment (MOPTMA) proposed the creation of Bilbao Ría 2000, S.A., to co-ordinate and carry out regeneration initiatives in Bilbao. Set up in November 1992 as a private firm of public shareholders (50 percent central and 50 percent local and regional administration), Ría 2000 operates in practice as a quasi-public agency, a planning and executive body in charge of specific urban renewal operations in the metropolitan area of Bilbao.

In the aftermath of the post-1992 hangover in Spain, the mandate of Ría 2000 has been to achieve maximum efficiency in the use of resources and financial self-sufficiency so as to minimize the need for public investment. Thus, Abandoibarra's redevelopment scheme is self-financed through land valorization mechanisms without any direct investment costs imputed to the public sector.

The only direct contribution of the public partners—shareholders (local, regional, central administrations) is the land, which for the purposes of the redevelopment operation is written off assuming an initial value of zero (or negative). Revenues obtained from profitable sales of redeveloped land are used to fund projects that could not be self-financed. This is the case of the Variante Sur Rail line whose reorganization costs are included in the repercussion values of Abandoibarra's land sales and a third connected operation, Ametzola. Abandoibarra is financially feasible only by integrating costs and revenue flows of the three operations (Table 5.7)<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup>The starting point of the Abandoibarra operation is the removal of a railroad track which acts as a physical and functional barrier between the site and the surrounding urban environment, and the setting up of the alternative new passenger and goods line, the Variante Sur Rail. The investments required for the urbanization and redevelopment of Abandoibarra are estimated at 62.5 million Euro while the repositioning costs of the Variante Sur Rail amount to 56.3 million Euro, which with an effective 'aprovechamiento' of 210,965 m<sup>2</sup> renders a repercussion value of 564 Euro/m<sup>2</sup> (PERI, 1999). These costs are absorbed by Ría 2000, which manages the financial gaps between the costs and the revenues that will be obtained from the redeveloped land sales for the offices, housing, hotel, university infrastructures and commercial areas.

**Table 5. 7: Costs and revenues associated with urbanization of Abandoibarra, Ametzola and Variante Sur**

	Revenues	Costs Million Euro
Abandoibarra	95.4	56.6
Variante Sur Rail	–	68.6
Ametzola	41.1	24.9
EU Structural Funds (total 3 operations 15%)	24.3	–
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>160.8</b>	<b>150.1</b>

*Source: Bilbao Ría 2000 (1998).*

The possibility of compensating financial flows from different initiatives confers upon Ría 2000 a unique managing capacity in a context of strained public budgets. This mechanism allows for the extension of regeneration initiatives to other derelict sites in the metropolitan area, especially less central locations. However, financial feasibility in peripheral locations may be severely constrained by two considerations. First, because land valorization and rent-producing mechanisms are more complex in areas that are not only less central but also placed in the midst of low-income and often highly degraded neighbourhoods. And second, because of the unlikely reproduction of Abandoibarra’s extraordinary rent extraction levels in other urban regeneration initiatives, which raises questions about the need for revenue-producing initiatives to fund regeneration in low rent production areas. Thus, the generalization possibilities of this financial scheme are limited. And, for a metropolitan area with an estimated 340 ha of ‘industrial ruins and reconversion sites’, over 20 percent of its total industrial land, these considerations are definitely not a trifling matter<sup>16</sup>.

Finally, despite the significance of market-led land valorization dynamics, urban regeneration in Abandoibarra has required more direct public funding than is generally recognized. Thus, collective infrastructures built in Abandoibarra, the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum (GBM) opened in 1997, and the Conference and Concert Hall, which started operating in 1999, required large funding from the public sector. In the case of the Guggenheim, the operation costs amounted to almost 150 million Euros while the Euskalduna Concert and Conference Hall added 56 million

Euros for the Hall. Most of these funds came from the Diputación – the county level administration and the tax collecting and fiscal authority – and from the Basque Government. In the case of the GBM, the Basque Government is also committed to finance yearly the operating deficit of the Museum through the General Budget of the Basque Autonomy. To the extent that these investments were considered strategic in producing land valorization in Abandoibarra, we can argue that they represented a vital rent transfer from the public to the private sector.

A key feature of Ría 2000 is that it acts as a form of partnership to manage urban renewal operations in cases where the property or the decision-making capacity is shared among several institutional bodies. It manages the concerted decisions for strategic intervention. Although these operations are determined through standard planning procedures, Ría 2000 retains considerable planning powers regarding priorities for intervention, disposal of land and other property, building characteristics and the management of public funds for redevelopment. And, while regulatory planning instruments are still the legal reference, in the dynamics of implementation their relevance as guiding tools has diminished considerably. Indeed, this agency has gradually displaced the local municipalities' planning departments to a secondary role by assuming an increasing number of powers related to urban renewal, including the management of the more emblematic operations and projects in the city and the metropolitan area.

In sum, the significance of Ría 2000 lies in its considerable potential as a coordinating and executive agency and its capacity to act as a unified body in urban redevelopment schemes in metropolitan Bilbao that has vastly improved the prospects of implementation. However, Ría 2000's status as a private firm poses critical questions regarding the 'privatization' of planning and lack of political accountability. Moreover, the self-financing restrictions imposed upon Ría 2000 may drastically limit its capacity to carry out other regeneration initiatives in derelict areas outside of central locations. In fact, the overwhelming concern with financial feasibility as a

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<sup>16</sup> The update of the 'Inventario de Ruinas Industriales' made by the Department of Urbanism, Housing and the Environment of the Basque Government in 1994 estimated that there were 461,600 ha in the Basque



guiding principle for intervention may well prove this model to be inapplicable to sites other than central areas of high commercial potential. In this sense, the social and political legitimization of quasi-privatized planning, on the grounds of superior technical efficiency, may be jeopardized. Moreover, the imperative of short-term profit logic introduces a speculative bend to the agency's operation, which severely undermines its regeneration objectives. If urban regeneration means something more than physical renewal, then equity and redistributive considerations must mediate efficiency criteria.

### **5.5. Lights and shadows of success in Abandoibarra**

The Abandoibarra operation is widely presented as a success story of urban regeneration. This assessment rests predominantly on the perceived impact of this development on the physical renovation, functional reorganization and image transformation of the metropolis. However, a detailed analysis of the initiative suggests reasons for a more sober evaluation.

At the level of the city as a whole, the impact of the Abandoibarra operation should be measured against its capacity to achieve its original strategic objectives: enhance the competitiveness of the city, attract international investments, acquire key command functions and high level producer services and diversify its productive base. Since the project is still in its early implementation phase, a whole assessment in these terms will have to wait. Nonetheless, some patterns of change can already be distinguished by looking at the impact of Abandoibarra's regeneration scheme on real estate markets and on the development of new functions in the city.

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Country, 72 percent of which were located in metropolitan Bilbao.

### ***5.5.1. Speculative renewal and the impact on the real estate market***

For the most part, the impact on real estate markets affects predominantly the neighbouring districts. The overriding tendency in the last four years has been towards reinforcing price increase tensions in the adjoining areas, especially in the most expensive neighbourhoods: Abando-Indautxu but also the Campo Volantín and Duesto, on the opposite side of the river facing the project. This perception is supported by evidence from the dynamics of the housing sector during 1998 and 1999; while housing prices in the city increased an average of 10 to 15 percent<sup>17</sup>, in the Abando district the increase was 30 to 40 percent. A highly contained supply relative to demand, limited land available for construction, and the high expectations created by the Abandoibarra project are considered to account for this differential rise. Already, the estimated price for these units has more than tripled the initial valuation of Ría 2000 from 810 Euros/m<sup>2</sup> in 1995 to 2,810 Euros/m<sup>2</sup> in 1999. The diffusion of this increase to the housing market in surrounding neighbourhoods is already underway. In this sense, the permutation of the required legal quota of lower-income housing initially located in Abandoibarra to another urban operation in Ametzola has formidably locked the luxury and elitist character of this development.

The market for office space will also be strongly affected by the development of almost 90,000 m<sup>2</sup> in Abandoibarra. A large share of this supply, almost 60 percent, is already allocated to the Diputación, the provincial level government. The transfer of all the Diputación's departments and services to Abandoibarra's singular skyscraper will liberate over 40,000 m<sup>2</sup> of prime office space in the centre of the city. The selling of that stock to one or more promoters is a precondition to finance the costs of transferring its facilities to Abandoibarra. The release and placing into circulation of that stock is considered to be the 'most important real estate market operation in the history of Bilbao' for which the Diputación actively seeks the engagement of

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<sup>17</sup>General factors have contributed to this increase, notably, changes in the mortgage loan market associated with falling interest rates and the process of European monetary integration and the single currency that is forcing the emergence of black money and undeclared savings. In the case of Bilbao, there is also the prospect of economic regeneration and urban growth.

international promoters. This is a risky operation because of the potential saturating impact of the market, especially if developments in alternative locations, currently underway, prosper. Alternatively, this effect could be somewhat compensated by market reallocation dynamics of part of the housing stock currently being used for office purposes to residential uses as a result of the transfer of service firms to the new facilities in Abandoibarra.

The market for retail space is also being affected by the allocation of over 30,000 m<sup>2</sup> in Abandoibarra. Local retail associations have stressed the threats that the shopping mall poses to traditional commercial areas of the city centre, notably Casco Viejo, Abando and Indautxu. However, it is too early to anticipate the potential shifts and displacements in this market. So far, the most visible is an increase of close to 30 percent in the price of retail spaces in the area next to the Guggenheim as well as the opening up of fast-food places and tourist-oriented shops.

Finally, the spill-over effects of Abandoibarra on the real estate market would depend very much on price-setting dynamics of the final products of the site itself. But some preliminary signs are provided by escalating reference prices last year.

### **5.5.2. The Guggenheim 'effect'**

Alternatively, the impact of the Abandoibarra development operation can be considered in relation to the effects of the location of one of its most emblematic projects: the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum (GBM). This project was born in the early part of the 1990s, at a time when the whole scheme for Abandoibarra was still being drafted. And, while the decision to locate the Museum in the Abandoibarra site was made a posteriori, the initiative was clearly in tune with the strategic objectives of the urban regeneration operation. In both cases, the search for alternative economic activities capable of replacing the manufacturing sector as the engine of economic and urban growth was part of the general philosophy of the project.

The so-called 'Guggenheim effect' operates, firstly, in the realm of the symbolic. Already before its opening date in October 1997, the GBM had become the outstanding icon for the revitalization of Metropolitan Bilbao. Designed by Frank Gehry, this 24,000 m<sup>2</sup> museum was soon recognized as an architectural landmark and the new icon in the representation of the city. The parallels between the original, innovative and highly seductive design of the building and the city itself have been purposefully underlined as part of an image reconstruction operation and a city marketing strategy. And, indeed, from this perspective, the GBM can be considered a complete success.

However, both the marketing and the image reconstruction aspects are mediated objectives of a strategy aimed at enhancing the city's capacity to compete for the attraction of international capital investments, the acquisition of key command functions, high level producer services and also visitors. And, from this point of view, the 'Guggenheim effect' is still to be shown. So far, the most important positive impacts have to be with the dramatic increase in the number of visitors to the museum/ city that has exceeded even the most optimistic expectations. For a city that has been traditionally out of the tourist track, the attraction of almost 1,400,000 visitors during the first year of operation of the museum is considered a big success. The international dimension of the museum is highlighted by the fact that almost 30 percent of the visitors came from abroad; 32 percent came from the rest of Spain and 40 percent from the Basque Country.

A recent evaluation carried out by the international consulting firm KPMG Peat Marwick (1999; also Table 5.8) estimates that direct expenditures made by visitors to the GBM during the first year of operation amounted to 194 million Euros, that is, almost 180 Euros per visitor. The sectors that have benefited the most are hotels, transport, restaurants, bars and coffee shops and retail establishments. According to the study, the expenses associated with the operation of the GBM during the first 12 months of activity have generated a value added of more than 150 million Euros that amounts to approximately 0.47 percent of the gross regional product. This value is considered to contribute to the maintenance of around 3,800 jobs in the mentioned

sectors. At the same time, the value added generated have produced an increase in local fiscal capacity and tax revenues (value added taxes, capital taxes and income tax) estimated at close to 28.1 million Euros. Thus, in financial terms, the operation can be considered a success as the initial investment has been fully recovered.

**Table 5. 8: Estimated impacts of the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum in the Basque Country**

	<b>First year</b>		<b>1998</b>		<b>1999</b>	
Number of visitors	1,360,000		1,300,000		825,000	
Employment maintenance (jobs)	3,816		3,681		2,636	
<i>Estimated impacts</i>	<i>million Euros</i>	<i>% contrib.</i>	<i>million Euros</i>	<i>% contrib.</i>	<i>million Euros</i>	<i>% contrib.</i>
Value added generated	150.3	0.47	144.9	0.45	103.8	0.32
Tax revenues	28.0	0.66	27.2	0.64	19.3	0.46

*Source: KPMG Peat Marwick (1999).*

In view of these results, local and regional authorities have emphasized the strategic significance of the museum for the city's (and the region's) development of a cultural tourist industry contributing not only to revitalization but also to the diversification of the area's economic base. Yet, the possibility that the GBM could act as the propulsive firm for the development of a cultural sector remains indeterminate. The reasons for skepticism exist at several levels: first, the lack of a coherent strategy and the ad hoc way in which decisions have been made without any clear strategic framework. A second factor relates to the narrow focus on consumption-oriented aspects and the disregard for the production-related aspects of the GBM operation. But a production-based strategy would require a more proactive policy of support of local firms and investments in the sector which until now has been missing. Third, the propulsive role of the GBM would depend largely on its capacity to create local upstream and downstream linkages. But in order for these linkages to develop, a carefully targeted strategy but also a greater degree of autonomy of the Bilbao Museum vis à vis the New York office is required. So far the Bilbao Museum operates very much as a franchise, a factor that severely undermines its potential multiplier effects. And fourth, the regeneration potential of this project may be also impaired by the internationalization strategy of the Guggenheim

Foundation as the serial production of new branches throughout the global urban landscape erodes the uniqueness of the Bilbao branch. The recent agreement passed by the Foundation to build a new Guggenheim in Manhattan in the likeness of the Bilbao Museum is the first in a potentially long list of cities ready to host another branch. Thus, unless the Bilbao Museum is integrated in a wider socio-economic and urban strategy, there is a high risk that the attraction capacity of the city might be soon rendered ephemeral as the novelty effect wears out.

Finally, in terms of attracting international capital investments and key command functions, the impact of the Guggenheim Museum is still very limited. So far, all direct investments associated with the setting up of the GBM have come from the Basque public administration, an event made possible by the special fiscal autonomy status of the Basque region. However, the original expectations regarding the attraction of direct foreign investment and command functions to the city have not been met. Thus far the undeniably strong advertising capacity of the GBM has had little impact in attracting international capital investments for Abandoibarra's regeneration process itself. Foreign investments are limited to the luxury hotel that will be developed by the Starwood holding that operates the Sheraton Hotels worldwide. Aside from this, only the shopping centre, Ría 21, incorporates a limited presence of international capital. More significantly, the attraction of command functions or headquarters to the site is, so far, nil.

In sum, a preliminary analysis of the impact of Abandoibarra's redevelopment scheme suggests that its success lies predominantly in the consumption and circulation realms. The production side of this project, its directional and strategic quality, has all but disappeared under the dominance of a short-term return maximization logic that has weakened the strategic component of the scheme and heightened its speculative dimension. Socio-spatial considerations have been gradually removed from the debate while diffused growth and trickle down income effects are projected at an even more remote level. This is highly relevant in the context of the socio-spatial polarization dynamics identified above that are under way.

## 5.6. Concluding remarks

An analysis of revitalization strategies in metropolitan Bilbao reveals critical shifts in the urban policy agenda in line with what we have referred to as New Urban Policies. These shifts include the subordination of statutory planning to the needs of large-scale emblematic projects where focused and fragmented intervention operates as a laboratory for urban policy innovations.

As in other redevelopment schemes, the Abandoibarra project is originally presented as an emblematic intervention firmly anchored in a strategic framework whose final objective is to provide the physical and functional conditions for competitive restructuring in the urban economy. However, the overwhelming emphasis on efficiency and financial feasibility has left the project captive of a short-term return maximization logic that subordinates the strategic component to the requirements of speculative redevelopment. This shift is all too evident in Abandoibarra's turn from a production oriented development to a consumption based renovated space catering to the demands of the urban elite.

The weakening of the strategic component of Abandoibarra impinges upon the economic objectives of the project and its capacity to lead a process of competitive restructuring of the urban economy. And, while there is some evidence of economic recovery in metropolitan Bilbao, the question remains as to whether property-led redevelopment schemes such as this provide a sound base for urban revitalization. This is a critical issue since this scheme is presented as a test case of a policy to be generalized for the whole urban region.

The speculative character and the potentially regressive consequences of narrow short-term feasibility also challenge the financial sustainability of this model. Thus, the bias introduced by the diffusion of a financial maximizing logic can have extremely negative consequences as speculative increases filter through the metropolitan land market. Needless to say, the consequences on access to housing for less favoured income groups can be devastating. Notwithstanding trickle down

effects, the new urban policies epitomised by Abandoibarra's redevelopment scheme incorporate a not insignificant risk of social and spatial exclusion as uneven redevelopment may exacerbate existing social and functional divisions of space within the metropolitan area.

Finally, improvements in urban policy in metropolitan Bilbao would require overcoming the limits imposed by the overriding emphasis on economic feasibility and short-term maximization and acknowledging the need for a more integrated socio-economic strategy. This means the need to re-focus in a more direct way on the consequences of both economic decline as well as uneven redevelopment; that is, to incorporate both an economic and social strategy for integrated development in the new urban agenda.

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## **CAPÍTULO 6:**

### **Conclusiones**







## 6.1. Conclusiones generales

A continuación, se exponen las principales conclusiones alcanzadas en el desarrollo de la Tesis Doctoral. Debido a que se han tratado diferentes temas interrelacionados, las conclusiones se han agrupado en dos bloques: por una parte, las conclusiones que se derivan de los capítulos 2, 3 y 4 sobre las estrategias de regeneración urbana desplegadas en las ciudades europeas desde mediados de la década de 1980 hasta principios de la década del 2000, y que son conclusiones de carácter más analítico y, por otra parte, las conclusiones del capítulo 5 sobre la regeneración urbana en Bilbao.

1. *La Urbanización Neoliberal en Europa: Grandes Proyectos Urbanos y la Nueva Política Urbana*
  2. *Polarización Social en Áreas Metropolitanas: El Papel de la Nueva Política Urbana*
  3. *Grandes Proyectos Urbanos y Gobernanza local: De la Planificación Urbana Democrática a la Gobernanza Local Asediada*
- El análisis desarrollado en este capítulo en las ciudades europeas, muestra que, en las ciudades europeas, las estrategias de regeneración/revitalización urbana emergen en las últimas décadas convertidas en el principal vector de intervención en la ciudad y de la neoliberalización urbana.
  - Los casos estudiados revelan la progresiva consolidación de un Nuevo Paradigma de intervención en la ciudad a partir de innovaciones substantivas en la formulación, instrumentación y gestión de la política urbana en un marco de restauración de la centralidad de la lógica del Mercado y de repliegue de las estructuras reguladoras del urbanismo fordista-Keynesiano. Esta tendencia se manifiesta en el realineamiento productivista de la agenda política urbana, el auge del empresarialismo urbano y la consolidación de nuevas formas de

gobernanza plural y concertada.

- Las Nuevas Políticas Urbanas. se extienden a lo largo de la geografía urbana europea, pero adoptando formas diversas y específicas en función de los diferentes contextos geo-institucionales en los que se despliegan. Sin embargo, comparten un repertorio común de narrativas, instrumentos, y modos de intervención que se expanden a través de sistemas de transferencia de políticas y circuitos para la promoción, legitimación y puesta a disposición de modelos y “buenas prácticas” a escala global.
- Los Grandes Proyectos Urbanos (GPUs) son la expresión material y punta de lanza de las Nuevas Políticas para la regeneración urbana; estos megaproyectos emblemáticos son además la manifestación de una lógica desarrollista renovada que los considera como palancas de relanzamiento del crecimiento y la transformación funcional urbana. Los GPU son instrumentales en la reconstrucción de un nuevo imaginario identitario urbano que cumple funciones propagandísticas esenciales tanto hacia el exterior (marketing urbano para la mejora de la atraktividad urbana) como hacia el interior (formación de consensos ciudadanos herméticos y neutralización de oposición). A pesar de ello, estos proyectos han sido y a menudo todavía son espacios de contestación que reflejan intensas disputas de poder y posicionamiento de elites económicas, políticas, sociales o culturales claves que son instrumentales en el ámbito urbano.
- Los efectos de los GPU son variados y dependen de un conjunto de factores espacio-temporales específicos. Sin embargo, a menudo producen espacios fuertemente segregados y elitizados, islas urbanas, espacios discretos con barreras de delimitación cada vez más pronunciadas (áreas comerciales, de ocio o residenciales vigiladas y enrejadas) y son un factor de fragmentación y segregación socio-espacial.
- Los GPU se han convertido en símbolos emblemáticos y en la manifestación espacial concreta de los procesos de globalización que permiten comprender esta

globalización no tanto como un proceso de transnacionalización sino principalmente como la reestructuración localizada que reconfigura las geometrías del poder que dan forma al tejido urbano.

- Un tema central de las políticas de regeneración urbana es la relación de los GPU con los instrumentos de planificación y las regulaciones existentes. Si bien estos proyectos se insertan generalmente en las directrices de planificación estatutaria existentes, la concepción, diseño e implementación iniciales se encuentran al margen de las estructuras de planificación formal. El marco de "excepcionalidad" asociado a estas iniciativas favorece una dinámica más autónoma, si no autocrática, marcada por planes y proyectos especiales que relegan las normas y procedimientos estatutarios a un lugar secundario y subordinado. Esta subordinación del planeamiento urbano a la intervención vía GPUs contribuye a la despolitización del urbanismo sustituyendo el debate y la participación efectiva por la construcción de narrativas y discursos blindados y justificativas técnicas o financieras. El papel de los expertos se refuerza a expensas de un papel cada vez menor del público en general y de los grupos organizados tradicionales en particular, con la consiguiente pérdida de la responsabilidad democrática. Sin embargo, estas nuevas formas de gobernanza se legitiman a menudo sobre la base de su capacidad superior para ofrecer un enfoque más inclusivo, no jerárquico y participativo de la planificación. Sin embargo, las realidades de una red basada en la primacía del experto y dominada por la fusión de las elites técnicas, económicas y políticas sugieren una exclusión selectiva de importantes sectores de la sociedad civil en términos de acceso a los procesos de toma de decisiones.
- La "excepcionalidad" es un rasgo fundamental de la nueva política urbana, basada en la primacía de las iniciativas basadas en proyectos sobre los planes y procedimientos normativos. Estos cambios implican, entre otras cosas, el surgimiento de nuevos instrumentos de política, actores e instituciones, y tienen importantes consecuencias para la formulación de políticas urbanas en general y para la democracia local en particular. Estos proyectos ejemplifican como

ningún otro las tendencias hacia un nuevo modo local de regulación del desarrollo y la gestión urbana, moldeado por las presiones de la reestructuración competitiva y las cambiantes prioridades sociales y económicas, así como por importantes cambios políticos e ideológicos.

- La fragmentación del modo de gobernanza redefine el papel y la posición de las autoridades locales. En efecto, en nombre de una mayor flexibilidad y eficacia, estas nuevas instituciones compiten y a menudo suplantán a las autoridades locales y regionales como protagonistas y gestores de la renovación urbana. De hecho, las nuevas estructuras de gobernanza ex-presionan los resultados de una renegociación en curso entre los diferentes niveles de gobierno -local, regional, nacional y europeo- y entre los actores públicos y privados sobre las competencias, los poderes de decisión y la financiación. El establecimiento de estas nuevas estructuras suele implicar una redistribución masiva de los poderes de formulación de políticas, las competencias y las responsabilidades, que pasan de los gobiernos locales a organismos de asociación a menudo muy exclusivos, proceso que puede describirse como la "privatización de la gobernanza urbana".
- Al mismo tiempo, los GPU están estrechamente asociados con cambios fundamentales de las estructuras de gobierno tradicionales a un modo de gobierno más difuso, fragmentado y flexible. La combinación de diferentes escalas espaciales y administrativas en la elaboración de políticas urbanas y la creciente fragmentación de competencias y responsabilidades es uno de sus aspectos más llamativos. En la mayoría de las ciudades, no se puede entender adecuadamente la dimensión completa de la regeneración urbana sin hacer referencia a la multiplicidad de agentes, la articulación de las escalas espaciales en las que operan y la fragmentación de la responsabilidad de los agentes en el ámbito urbano.

**4. *La Reurbanización Desigual: Nuevas Políticas Urbanas y Fragmentación Socio-Espacial en el Bilbao Metropolitano***

- El análisis de las estrategias de revitalización del Bilbao metropolitano revela cambios críticos en la agenda de las políticas urbanas en línea con lo que hemos denominado Nuevas Políticas Urbanas. Estos cambios incluyen la subordinación de la planificación estatutaria a las necesidades de proyectos emblemáticos a gran escala, donde la intervención focalizada y fragmentada funciona como un laboratorio para las innovaciones de las políticas urbanas.
- A lo largo de las dos últimas décadas, Bilbao ha vivido un intenso proceso de reestructuración y transformación socioeconómica, física y funcional. Durante este periodo el área metropolitana ha pasado de la prosperidad al declive y del declive a la regeneración, un proceso que ha ido dejando paso a un nuevo modelo urbano. El motor del “renacimiento urbano” de Bilbao ha sido el urbanismo, protagonista absoluto de la dinámica de reconversión física y funcional metropolitana
- Al igual que en otros planes de reurbanización, el proyecto Abandoibarra se presenta originalmente como una intervención emblemática firmemente anclada en un marco estratégico cuyo objetivo final es proporcionar las condiciones físicas y funcionales para una reestructuración competitiva de la economía urbana. Sin embargo, el énfasis abrumador en la eficiencia y la viabilidad financiera ha dejado al proyecto cautivo de una lógica de maximización del rendimiento a corto plazo que subordina el componente estratégico a los requisitos de la reurbanización especulativa. Este cambio es muy evidente en el giro de Abandoibarra de un desarrollo orientado a la producción a un espacio renovado basado en el consumo que atiende las demandas de la élite urbana.
- La estrategia de regeneración urbana de Bilbao pone el urbanismo al servicio de una regeneración cuyo objetivo central es frenar la pérdida de centralidad urbana-regional de Bilbao y reforzar su capacidad para actuar como centro

direcciona y articulador de un amplio espacio regional. En el marco de la crisis del Fordismo la intervención urbana se orienta hacia el impulso de un proceso de re-ajuste metropolitano y de consolidación de un proyecto de metrópoli post-Fordista. En este marco, la construcción del “nuevo Bilbao” buscaba transformar la centralidad urbana en un factor atractor de capitales internacionales, en particular de servicios superiores, a partir de la creación de espacios urbanos emblemáticos y atractivos.

- El debilitamiento del componente estratégico de Abandoibarra incide en los objetivos económicos del proyecto y en su capacidad para liderar un proceso de reestructuración competitiva de la economía urbana. Y, aunque hay algunas evidencias de recuperación económica en el Bilbao metropolitano, queda pendiente la cuestión de si este tipo de planes de regeneración basada en la valorización inmobiliaria constituyen una base sólida para la revitalización urbana. Se trata de una cuestión crítica, ya que este esquema se presenta como un caso de prueba de una política a generalizar para toda la región urbana.
- El carácter especulativo y las consecuencias potencialmente regresivas de la viabilidad limitada a corto plazo también ponen en tela de juicio la sostenibilidad financiera de este modelo. Así, el sesgo introducido por la difusión de una lógica de maximización financiera puede tener consecuencias extremadamente negativas a medida que los incrementos especulativos se filtran a través del mercado de suelo metropolitano. Huelga decir que las consecuencias sobre el acceso a la vivienda de los grupos de ingresos menos favorecidos pueden ser devastadoras. A pesar de los efectos de goteo, las nuevas políticas urbanas personificadas en el plan de reurbanización de Abandoibarra incorporan un riesgo nada despreciable de exclusión social y espacial, ya que una reurbanización desigual puede exacerbar las divisiones sociales y funcionales del espacio existentes en el área metropolitana.
- El naufragio de la estrategia direccional de Abandoibarra y su transformación en un nuevo centro de carácter residencial y de ocio superior, asimilado e integrado



en la lógica de ocupación y usos mixtos tradicional del Ensanche de Bilbao, revela la incapacidad del proyecto del “nuevo Bilbao” para impulsar una nueva centralidad en la ciudad. Sin embargo, en el marco del tsunami inmobiliario vivido por las ciudades del Estado a lo largo de la última década (en la década del 2000) Abandoibarra ha producido una nueva (re)centralidad inesperada a partir de la atracción de segmentos sociales de ingresos superiores a partir de su reconversión para usos urbanos. En contraste con el objetivo de atracción de capitales, Abandoibarra produce una respuesta anticipada a la crisis inmobiliaria a partir de la oferta de viviendas para sectores de altos ingresos que mantienen su localización en la ciudad central. Así, frente al fracaso de la consolidación de una centralidad funcional terciaria post-Fordista, se contraponen el éxito de la centralidad tradicional Fordista reforzando inesperadamente los factores tradicionales de atracción de la centralidad urbana para los segmentos sociales de altos ingresos: equipamientos de alto rango de ocio y accesibilidad.

- Por último, la mejora de la política urbana en el Bilbao metropolitano requeriría superar los límites impuestos por el énfasis primordial en la viabilidad económica y la maximización a corto plazo, y reconocer la necesidad de una estrategia socioeconómica más integrada. Esto significa la necesidad de volver a centrar de forma más directa las consecuencias tanto del declive económico como de la reurbanización desigual; es decir, incorporar en la nueva agenda urbana una estrategia tanto económica como social para el desarrollo integrado.

## 6.2. Futuras líneas de investigación

Los resultados de este Tesis Doctoral conforman una línea de investigación en la que se ha profundizado a lo largo de casi tres décadas de trabajo teórico y empírico. El análisis de las políticas urbanas, y, en particular, el de las estrategias de regeneración urbana ocupa una parte significativa de la investigación académica y de asesoría técnica a Ayuntamientos y organizaciones diversas.

Así, por una parte, estos trabajos se han ampliado y diversificado en diversas investigaciones posteriores y en distintas publicaciones sobre dimensiones relacionadas con la gentrificación, las ciudades creativas, los procesos de segregación y diferenciación socio-espacial en distintas ciudades., etc.

Por otra parte, el trabajo académico se ha completado con asesorías cualificadas como en el caso de la dirección de los estudios previos de la revisión del Plan General de Ordenación Urbana de Bilbao que está siendo aprobado actualmente. Estos trabajos se han prolongado a lo largo de varios años y entroncan con investigaciones realizadas en el marco de esta Tesis.

A futuro, solo puedo expresar que, sin duda, el tema es lo suficientemente amplio, diverso, complejo e interesante como para estimular muchos años más de investigación sobre las estrategias y políticas urbanas.



