

Centre on  
Housing Rights  
and Evictions



## **BARCELONA 1992: INTERNATIONAL EVENTS AND HOUSING RIGHTS: A FOCUS ON THE OLYMPIC GAMES**

COHRE's *Mega-Events, Olympic Games and Housing Rights Project* is supported by the Geneva International Academic Network (GIAN)



2007

© COHRE, 2007

Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions  
Rue de Montbrillant 83  
1202 Geneva  
Switzerland  
Tel: +41.22.734.1028  
Fax: +41.22.733.8336  
Email: [cohre@cohre.org](mailto:cohre@cohre.org)  
<http://www.cohre.org>

**Prepared by** Anna B. Sánchez, Roser Plandiura, and Vanesa Valiño, Observatori DESC  
**Edited by** Claire Mahon

This report is an edited translation of the original written in Spanish.

### **Acknowledgements**

This project was funded by the Geneva International Academic Network (GIAN).

### **Background**

This background research paper is part of the COHRE Mega-Events, Olympic Games and Housing Rights Project. It was prepared as a preliminary independent study of the impact of the Barcelona Olympics on housing rights. Similar studies were done for the cities of Athens, Atlanta, Beijing, London, Seoul and Sydney. The background research papers were used in the preparation of COHRE's *Fair Play for Housing Rights: Mega-Events, Olympic Games and Housing Rights* report, launched in Geneva on 5 June 2007. The contents and opinions of the material available in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily correspond with those of COHRE. All documents published as part of this project are available at: [www.cohre.org/mega-events/](http://www.cohre.org/mega-events/).

### **Observatori DESC**

[mail@descweb.org](mailto:mail@descweb.org) – <http://www.descweb.org>  
Sant Honorat, 7 - 08002 Barcelona  
Spain

### **Publications in the COHRE Mega-Events, Olympic Games and Housing Rights Project series**

*Fair Play for Housing Rights: Mega-Events, Olympic Games and Housing Rights*

*Multi-Stakeholder Guidelines on Mega-Events and the Protection and Promotion of Housing Rights*

*Housing Evictions and the Seoul 1988 Summer Olympic Games*, by Lisa Kim Davis

*Barcelona 1992: International Events and Housing Rights: a Focus on the Olympic Games*, by Observatorio DESC

*Atlanta's Olympic Legacy*, by Anita Beaty

*The Impacts of the Sydney Olympic Games on Housing Rights*, by Dr Hazel Blunden

*The Housing Impact of the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens*, by the Greek Helsinki Monitor

*New Beijing, New Olympics: Urban Transformation at What Cost?*

*Hosting the 2012 Olympic Games: London's Olympic Preparations and Housing Rights Concerns*, by Claire Mahon

# CONTENTS

<u>I. Introduction</u> .....	4
<u>II. Background to the Olympic Games and Housing</u> .....	7
<u>II.1. Political, economic and social context</u> .....	7
<u>II.2. Existing protection in relation to housing</u> .....	8
<u>II.3. Urban planning and its strategies</u> .....	13
<u>III. Housing and the preparations for the Olympic Games</u> .....	18
<u>III.1. The Olympic candidature: urban approximation and social issues</u> .....	18
<u>III.2. Managerial and Political Structures</u> .....	23
<u>III.3. Were there forced evictions in preparation for the Barcelona Olympic Games?</u> .....	26
<u>III.4. The management and conditions of the rehousing</u> .....	27
<u>III.5. The construction of the Olympic Village</u> .....	31
<u>III.6. The eradication of shanty towns</u> .....	32
<u>III.7. The construction of the Rondas</u> .....	37
<u>III.8. The homeless</u> .....	39
<u>IV. Participation, social movements, media and social activism</u> .....	41
<u>IV.1. Associations</u> .....	41
<u>IV.2. The Media</u> .....	42
<u>IV.3. Social activism in response to the Olympic projects</u> .....	42
<u>V. The impact of the Olympic Games on Access to Housing</u> .....	47
<u>V.1. The supply of housing</u> .....	48
<u>V.2. The prices of houses for sale and to rent</u> .....	49
<u>V.3. Public housing</u> .....	50
<u>V.4. The Olympic housing</u> .....	51
<u>VI. Conclusions</u> .....	55
<u>VI.1. Prior considerations</u> .....	55
<u>VI.2. Rehousing</u> .....	55
<u>VI.3. Impact on the access to housing</u> .....	56
<u>VI.4. Final considerations</u> .....	57

## I. Introduction

There have been numerous articles, essays and publications on the organisation, celebration and impact of the 1992 Olympic Games on the city of Barcelona. Although the literature has approached the event from various perspectives (including urban, economic, political, and cultural), there has been no specific study of the impact of the Olympic Games on the enjoyment of the right to adequate housing. This study seeks to fill this vacuum, by focussing on the impact of the 1992 Olympic Games on the components of the right to adequate housing, such as legal security of tenure as a protection against eviction; access to amenities and infrastructures such as work places, schools and medical centres; reasonable expenses that do not compromise the satisfaction of basic needs such as food and education; living conditions, accessibility, location, and cultural adaptation. This analysis also considers the processes available for civil society participation in the planning for the Olympic Games and the extent to which the planning arrangements were the subject of public discussion and comment.

In order to analyse the impact of the Olympic Games on the enjoyment of the right to adequate housing, this study evaluates the effect of the Olympic Games on the metropolitan housing market, notably in relation to matters such as price increases, the impact of the Olympic infrastructures on the availability of public spaces, the rehousing of those affected, the processes for civic participation, and the availability of housing for vulnerable groups.

The research is founded on the premise that access to adequate housing is a fundamental right that imposes duties on both public and private entities. From this starting point, main objective of the research is to review the Barcelona Olympic Games; first in order to assess the possible relationship between the preparations for the Olympic Games and the practice of forced evictions; and secondly, to establish whether the Olympic Games were the decisive factor in these evictions, or whether other factors played a role (in which case, the relationship between those factors and the Olympic Games is also examined). Finally, in order to explore the possible alternatives to forced evictions, the research aims to offer a general overview of housing policies and urban planning and legal measures that were in place during the relevant period.

The report is divided into 3 main parts:

The first part, *Background to the Olympic Games and Housing*, reviews the socio-political context in which the Olympic candidature took place, the characteristics and development of housing policies in Spain, the guidelines for urban planning in the city of Barcelona, and the preparation of the Olympic candidature.

The second part, *Housing in the Preparations for the Olympic Games*, shows how the preparation for the Olympic Games was mainly concerned with a new strategy for the city; namely, the recovery of the sea front and the transformation of a number of neighbourhoods. The individuals who were affected by the preparations are divided into two groups:

- Those directly affected by the construction of Olympic buildings, which created the need to re-house and negotiate with the residents of the affected areas; and

- Those indirectly affected as a result of the close relationship between the organisation of the Olympic Games and the existing process of urban regeneration, involving the complete elimination of the city's shantytowns and improvement of road networks, which was accelerated so as to be completed in time for the Olympic Games celebrations.

In terms of consultations with the potentially affected groups, it is evident from the research that the Barcelona City Council initiated the policies relating to design of the different Olympic areas and new infrastructures, and that the residents of the affected areas were only approached at the point in the process where their rehousing was to be negotiated.

The third part, *Impact of the Olympic Games on Housing*, analyses changes to access to housing in the city of Barcelona during the period from the beginning of the preparations for the Olympic Games (1981) until one year after the event (1993). The most decisive impact on the enjoyment of the right to adequate housing appears to have been in relation to the conditions of accessibility in the mid- and long-term. Periods of growth in the property market, an increase in house prices, the weakening of public housing policies and a reduction in the amount of available state-subsidized housing must also be taken into account.

The final part of the report scrutinises the rehousing processes carried out in Barcelona against international legal standards.

The objective of the research is to answer **two questions**:

- *Were any forced evictions carried out as a result of projects relating to the Barcelona Olympic Games in 1992?*
- *What impact did the Olympic Games have on the enjoyment of the right to adequate housing in the city?*

The research began with a number of *exploratory consultations* with experts, professionals and members of residents' movements linked to urbanisation, housing, and the city during the preparation for the Olympic Games (March 2005).

During this same period, a *bibliography* of publications concerning the organisation of the Olympic Games and the urban and social transformation of Barcelona was compiled (April & May 2005).

The section dealing with the negotiations carried out between public entities and the evictees was carried out by interviews with professionals and representatives of the residents' movements.

This first part of the research showed that *no forced evictions were carried out in relation to the Olympic Games*. It is important to note that this conclusion was unanimous, having been expressed not only by politicians, who may have been reluctant to recognise the practice of forced evictions during this period, but also by professional groups, the most active members of the residents' movements and the media.

Following from this finding, it was revealed that *the main infringements on the right to adequate housing that occurred as a result of the rehousing process concerned the lack of communication with, and participation of, the affected groups and the community as a whole*. In particular, the following trends were observed:

- Limited communication with residents in the initial stages of the urban transformation projects.
- Decisions were made in some cases to negotiate individually with affected persons rather than on a collective basis.
- Lack of descriptive and continued reports on the rehoused groups.
- Lack of transparency in the rehousing of Roma families.

These findings led to a reformulation of the initial question. Rather than seeking to uncover examples of forced evictions, the focus of the research shifted to an examination of the processes that were used to inform, negotiate with and rehouse the affected residents, as well as the mechanisms that were employed for civic participation in the Olympics preparations. Given the impossibility of accessing the confidential records of the affected individuals, the main sources for this information were *interviews with the leading members of the public institutions and associations involved* (June and July 2005).

The *research examines the period between 1981 and 1993*, although in order to understand the context, policies, strategies and proceedings it has been necessary to refer on many occasions to the earlier pre-democracy period.<sup>1</sup>

Based on the bibliography and some initial contact with relevant professionals and representatives of the residents' movements, a list of key people to interview was established, including members of the institutions responsible for rehousing, neighbourhood associations, affected residents and the media.

Also considered are the views of the people responsible for the Olympic projects (Olympic officials, engineers and architects) and representatives of the Barcelona City Council who led the urban strategy, and held talks, negotiated or confronted the affected residents.

Information obtained from these interviews led to new names and sources of information, which had previously been restricted, and which proved extremely useful to the research (such as the reports of the *Patronat Municipal de l'Habitatge*, the Housing Department of the Barcelona City Council, and documents about the transformation of affected neighbourhoods).

The *main disadvantage* of these sources of information is that statistical data, such as the *distribution by sex and age* of the affected groups, is approximate and their interpretation has to take into account the possibility of bias in the sample. This also affects findings concerning *the time taken to effect the rehousing*, which in some cases was over one year, while in other cases was less than a few months. The exact start and finish dates are for the rehousing of individuals are, however, contained in confidential records that can only be accessed by the individuals affected.

Finally, articles and statistics were gathered concerning the evolution of the property market in the city and the conditions of access to housing (based on the sale prices and availability of state-subsidized housing) which, together with an overview of housing policy in the pre- and post- Olympics period, assisted the evaluation of the general impact of the Olympic Games on housing and the role played by the public authorities.

---

<sup>1</sup> Spain's first democratic elections occurred in 1979 after the death of dictator Franco.

## II. Background to the Olympic Games and Housing

### II. 1. Political, economic and social context

The socio-political climate in Barcelona was a determining factor in the decision to present the Olympic candidature, and in the characteristics of that candidature. The newly-democratic Barcelona City Council, which included professionals and leaders of the residents' associations, was faced with the challenge of overcoming problems inherited from years of speculative urbanisation during the dictatorship. Despite the instability of the young democracy, an economic crisis, and industrial rationalisation, the Olympic candidature became a collective dream. No other event has since managed to attract such a level of support in Barcelona.

In 1979, following 40 years of dictatorship, the first municipal elections provided the city with a democratically-elected Council. The legacy of the Franco regime included not only the absence of a number of freedoms, as well as economic and social isolation, but also exacerbated the problems of urban growth.

During the 'development' years (between 1960 and 1970), the whole metropolitan region of Barcelona, and especially within the city itself, experienced industrial and economic growth accompanied by a lack of planning and urban chaos. A large number of poor quality housing estates emerged in order to house workers. Their construction was viewed as a speculative process in which the provision of basic services, public spaces and amenities was forgotten or ignored.

In some neighbourhoods, such as the Nou Barris, residents' associations had achieved significant improvement in the provision of services such as electricity, water, and sewage, and in the basic urbanisation of the area, for example, through the sealing of roads. Nevertheless, further action was required in order to resolve defects in the construction of properties, to create public spaces, and to provide the area with social, educational and health services, as well as recreational and sports facilities.

The first challenge for the new Council was to deal with these problems. The city of Barcelona entered a significant new phase for the development of infrastructure and re-urbanisation, but faced difficulties in relation to financing planned projects which urgently needed to be completed.

In 1980, in the *context of political and social transition*, and against the echoes of the 1973 crisis, the idea of presenting the candidature to host the 1992 Olympic Games emerged.

The development of the idea coincided with the first years of democracy, and therefore with the definition of the different political and administrative institutions in Spain, the selection of their respective representatives, and the organisation of the new State into autonomous regions and municipal bodies.

*This distribution of competencies among the different administrative institutions in relation to the planning and preparation of the Olympic Games, reflects the delicate balance of power between the various levels of government and the relationships between them.*

The central Spanish Government was led by the PSOE (Spanish Workers' Socialist Party) from the time of the Olympic Bid in 1982 until the Olympic Games took place in 1992.

From 1980 until 2003, the autonomous government of the *Generalitat of Catalunya* was led by the conservative nationalist coalition CiU (*Convergència i Unió*, Convergence and Union), which is currently the main opposition party.

Since the first free elections in 1979, Barcelona City Council has been led by the PSC (*Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya*, Catalanian socialist party) in coalition with other progressive political groups (*Iniciativa per Catalunya*, Catalanian Initiative, and *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*, Republican Left of Catalonia).

During the first half of the 1980s, Spain was undergoing a severe social and economic crisis, with inflation, industrial rationalisation and an increase in unemployment.

The entry of Spain into the European Economic Community (now the EU) in 1986 led to a change of direction, and despite the restructuring that occurred in some industrial sectors (such as agriculture and industry) the Spanish economy entered into a phase of expansion. This economic boom lasted until the early 1990s, with the Olympic Games and the Universal Exhibition of 1992 disguising a rising social cohesion and social inclusion crisis until the early 1990s.

## II.2. Existing protection in relation to housing

This section analyses the housing regulations and policies applied during the preparation of the Olympic candidature, and provides the following conclusions:

- **Constitutional regulation of the right to adequate housing is regarded as a right of normative development, and mandate of public authorities, rather than a subjective right.** Housing rights are recognised on a constitutional level, along with the need to interpret these rights to conform to the relevant international treaties. However, since these rights are included in a chapter of the Spanish Constitution which deals mainly with “social rights” (Third Chapter of Part I, *Principles governing Economic and Social Policy*) and are therefore set apart from the “fundamental rights” (listed in Part I, Chapter 1, Title 1; *Fundamental Rights and Public Freedoms*), they have always been less developed and less protected than the so-called “individual rights”.
- **Limited normative development of housing rights as a consequence of the unclear distribution of competencies among the different administrative levels.** The complexity of the national administrative framework (composed of state, regional and local levels) has led, in practice, and after a number of conflicts, to an excessive centralisation of the regulation of public housing policies. At that level, public housing policy is driven more by economic considerations (e.g. the impact on the national economy and employment levels in the construction sector) than on social considerations (e.g. guaranteed access to housing) or territorial proximity (e.g. non-centralised planning).
- **Linkages between the right to housing and public housing policies promoting state-subsidised housing through Housing Plans, and the close relationship**



**between public housing policies and the needs of the construction sector.** Public housing policies (subsidies to housing developers to build houses which are then sold to families who are able to obtain a mortgage to buy them) have been used to counteract the cyclical crises in the construction sector, rather than to address social needs. As the construction sector in Spain was in expansion at the time of the presentation of the Olympic candidature, the construction of public housing was dramatically curtailed.

- **The radical liberalisation of rented housing.** In 1985 (one year before the presentation of the Olympic candidature), landlords were permitted to freely decide on the rent and duration of the tenancy agreement, leaving tenants defenceless. The problem was not resolved until 1994 (two years after the celebration of the Olympic Games) with the introduction of a regulation that awarded a number of rights to those tenants with a minimum period of 5 years of rental contracts.

Therefore, as regards the protection of the right to adequate housing, not only was there a lack of regulation or specific policies relating to the Olympic Games at the local administrative level (see 3.3. and 4.1), but the protection of this right was especially weakened at the higher administrative levels (particularly the state level).

#### *II.2.1. Constitutional regulation of housing rights is regarded as a right of normative development, and mandate of public authorities, rather than a subjective right*

The 1978 Spanish Constitution (article 47) recognises the **right to adequate housing**. *“All Spaniards have the right to enjoy decent and adequate housing. The public authorities shall promote the necessary conditions and establish appropriate standards in order to make this right effective, regulating land use in accordance with the general interest in order to prevent speculation. The community shall have a share in the benefits accruing from the town-planning policies of public bodies.”*

In relation to the **right to ownership of property**, the Constitution (article 33) establishes that: *“The right to private property and inheritance is recognised. The social function of these rights shall determine the limits of their content in accordance with the law and that no one may be deprived of his or her property and rights, except on justified grounds of public utility or social interest and with a proper compensation in accordance with the law.”*

Further, the Constitution (article 10.2) establishes that *“Provisions relating to the fundamental rights and liberties recognised by the Constitution shall be construed in conformity with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international treaties and agreements thereon ratified by Spain”.*

Among the international treaties signed by Spain, two stand out in terms of their special reference to, and recognition of, housing rights:

- The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948**, article 25, establishes that “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.”
- The **International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1996**, establishes in article 11 that “The States Parties to present Covenant recognise the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the

realisation of this right, recognising to this effect the essential importance of international co-operation based on free consent”.

The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, whose purpose is to monitor the implementation of the Covenant by the state parties, was not constituted until 1985. The Committee has adopted two General Comments in relation to article 11; General Comment No. 4 in 1991 on the right to adequate housing and General Comment No. 7 in 1997 in relation to forced evictions.

General Comment No. 3 on the nature of States parties' obligations (art. 2, para. 1, of the Covenant) explains the meaning of expressions used such as “all appropriate means”, “progressive realisation” and the full justification of “retrogressive measures” and “the minimum core obligation to ensure the satisfaction of, at the very least, minimum essential levels of each of the rights incumbent upon every State party”<sup>2</sup>.

The right to adequate housing is also protected by the Council of Europe in the 1950 **Convention for the protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms** and, in the framework of the European Union, in the 1961 **European Social Charter**, although in general terms only.

Despite these considerations, given the position of Article 47 in the Spanish Constitution under the title “*principles governing economic and social policy*” rather than under “*fundamental rights and public freedoms*”, the protection of the right to adequate housing as a fundamental human right has, in practical terms, been significantly weakened and its normative development has been made dependent on executive rather than legislative action.

#### ***II.2.2. Limited normative development of housing rights as a consequence of the unclear distribution of competencies among the different administrative levels.***

Both the Spanish Constitution (article 148.1.3) and the Catalanian Autonomy Statute of 1979 (article 9.9) establish that the competencies with regards to “territory, by-law, urbanisation and housing” fall within the remit of the Autonomous Community government.

On the other hand, the Spanish Constitution declares certain matters to be within the exclusive competence of the central State. These include:

- “Regulation of basic conditions guaranteeing the equality of all Spaniards in the exercise of their rights and in the fulfilment of their constitutional duties” (article 149.1.1)
- Renting (article 149.1.8)
- “Monetary system: foreign currency, exchange and convertibility; bases for the regulations concerning credit, banking and insurance”. (art. 149.1.11)
- “Basic rules and coordination of general economic planning”. (article 149.1.13)
- “Forced evictions” (article 149.1.18)

Some years after the constitutional process, and through three decrees (called “transference decrees” since their mission was to transfer state competencies to the new autonomous regions), the following competency framework relating to housing policy was established:

---

<sup>2</sup> These Comments, which establishes interpretative criteria for the effectiveness of the rights, were created after the preparation and celebration of the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games, but have nevertheless been used as a reference for this analysis.

- The regulation of state subsidies, loans and other financial methods that help families with low incomes to access housing, through purchase, renting or regeneration, is a State competency.
- The region of Catalunya holds the competency to manage state subsidies, loans and state financial instruments within its territory, and to regulate aids complementary to the ones of the State.
- Catalunya has the competency to carry out state-subsidized housing promotions and to manage its own state-subsidised housing department.

The Constitutional Court confirmed that this distribution of competencies was in accordance with the Constitution, given that the housing market (promotion, building and financing) is directly related to loan regulation and to Spain's general economy, and in consequence, that this was a State-level competence.

As noted previously, during the years under review (1980-1992), Spanish public housing policies were developed through "State Housing Plans" which were based more on supply-side considerations (incentives to housing developers) than on demand-side imperatives (needs of low income families) and used building subsidies as the main policy tool. These policies resulted in the transfer of public money to housing developers for the construction of housing which would be sold (not rented). This took place with increased intensity when the construction sector experienced periods of cyclical crisis (e.g. 1992-1995) and with less intensity when the free housing market was in a phase of expansion (e.g. 1986-1991).

Finally, local councils were awarded competencies in housing promotion and management and in the protection of public health.

### *III.2.3. Linkages between the right to housing and public housing policies promoting state-subsidized housing through Housing Plans, and the close relationship between public housing policies and the needs of the construction sector.*

In the late seventies, the State passed the Public Housing Act (1976) and the *State Subsidised Housing Regulations* (1978).

These norms institutionalised the main concepts of Spain's housing policies, and are still applicable. They regulate the public financing (investment grants and subsidies) awarded to housing developers that build new state-subsidised housing to be sold to low-income families.

The main features of the state-subsidised housing system are:

- Private building: mostly through private housing developers (businesses and co-operatives), and to a lesser extent through public housing developers.
- Public Financing: mostly through building subsidies to private developers (supply), and to a lesser extent, to the purchasers of the homes (demand).
- Ownership: houses are generally intended to be sold (transfer of ownership to the families), and to a lesser extent, rented (public property). This means that state-subsidised housing is addressed to middle class families (with a sufficiently high income to buy a house) rather than to lower class families.
- Public standards: sale price (and rent) are below market rate; qualifying families are subject to a maximum income limit (for the purchase of a house a minimum income is required); but minimum building quality standards are applied.

- Temporary public standards: owners of a state-subsidised house may sell it at any time, under public standardised prices during an initial period, and at market rate to any buyer after that time (during the period studied in this research 1980-1993, this initial period lasted 30 years).

The system of state-subsidised housing in Spain is organised through different *Housing Plans*. During the period of the preparation of the Olympic candidature and during the Olympic Games, the following Housing Plans were developed:

- 1981-1984 Housing Plan
- 1984-1987 Housing Plan
- Period in-between plans and short term regulation: 1988-1989
- 1992-1995 Housing Plan

Between 1988-1989, there was an increase in the total number of houses being built, which had a detrimental impact on state-subsidised housing (decreased even though the State had failed to finance the number of subsidised houses that it was supposed to).

The economic adjustment of the summer of 1989 made the financing of housing difficult (lack of loans and interest rates of around 15%). This led to a reduction in demand and reduced purchasing power due to the continuous increase in housing prices.

The 1992-1995 housing plan was an attempt to resolve this crisis from the standpoint of private developers. The plan created a system parallel to the state-subsidised housing, called "*housing at restricted prices*" which allowed private developers to transfer unsold housing built for the free market to the new system of restricted price housing (a mixture of free and public housing systems), and obtain public financing with less monitoring than in the state-subsidised housing system (restricted price housing became free housing in five years, compared with 30 years for state subsidised housing).

#### II.2.4. *The radical liberation of rented housing*

There are two main Acts to consider for the period studied:

- *Urban Lettings Act 1964 (Ley de Arrendamientos Urbanos de 1964)*: Public control of rents (frozen rents), indefinite rent contracts and the right of the tenant's family to take over the tenancy on the tenant's death, under the same conditions (forced extension).
- *Urban Lettings Act 1985 (Ley de Arrendamientos Urbanos de 1985)*: rent liberalisation and temporary contracts. The house owner is free to decide the rent and duration of the contract.

As a result, contracts related to the 1964 Act coexisted with contracts under the 1985 Act, although the number of contracts created under the 1964 Act decreased. The number of houses for rent declined as a result of these two laws: after 1964, landlords preferred not to rent their houses under contracts that were so favourable to the tenant, and after 1985, potential tenants were reluctant to rent because of the contract's temporary character and the risk of the constant increase of the rent. Despite the different aims of both laws, neither resulted in a representative renting system.

In 1994, after the Olympic Games, the current Urban Lettings Act was passed, establishing freedom in renting and the right to a minimum tenancy of five years during which the rent can only be increased in line with the consumer price (inflation) index.

### II.3. Urban planning and its strategies

The preparation of the Olympic candidature and the urban and infrastructure reform projects carried out for the Olympic Games did not bring about a change of direction in urban planning. They did, however, lead to a change in priorities. The Olympic projects were adapted to existing planning and incorporated into the major plans, mainly as regards the opening out of the city to the sea, the improvement of public spaces and facilities, the development of major ring roads in the city and the promotion of new central areas.

On the other hand, the objective that the financing of the Olympic works should not result in a deficit limited the social dimension of the projects. This meant that, in relation to housing, plans to construct public housing in the improved areas of the city were nearly fully abandoned.

From 1979, the city's urban planning comprised 3 levels:

- Metropolitan planning: until 1987 favoured by a metropolitan administration with urban competences (Metropolitan Corporation)
- Municipal level planning: re-launched with the Olympic projects.
- Urban sector projects: planning with a view to approximating and improving existing urban networks.

Barcelona's urban project was developed balancing the general planning framework and the possible action logic, precise and formal.<sup>3</sup>

The planning objectives are encapsulated by the expression *recover the city centre and value the outskirts*<sup>4</sup>. Urban planning sought to address two main problems: the degradation of parts of the city centre and the lack of urban consolidation of the outskirts.

The main urban planning projects were: the General Metropolitan Plan (PGM), the Interior Reform Special Plans (PERI) and the New Center Areas (ANC).

#### II.3.1. *The General Metropolitan Plan (1976)*

The General Metropolitan Plan (PGM) was the starting point and had been Barcelona's urban planning framework since 1976. Its normative ambit included the city of Barcelona and 26 surrounding municipal areas (which mostly belonged to Barcelona's Metropolitan Area). This plan still applies today.

The PGM firmly established a new urban order through a clear layout of public spaces, especially the road network, which had an important effect on many parcels of land and on some buildings.

---

<sup>3</sup> Esteban, J. (1999)

<sup>4</sup> Esteban, J. (1999:11)

One of the main objectives of the PGM was to reduce existing excessive population densities and to prevent the creation of new ones. Further, it proposed that a significant amount of land be reserved for green areas, therefore reducing the amount of land available for the housing market.

In relation to private action, the PGM sought to contain the urban area and to reduce building in urban areas to prevent congestion.

The key to the PGM's long-term validity has been its wide margin of interpretation, its ability to be modified, and its metropolitan context.

### *II.3.2. The special Interior Reform Plans (PERI)*

During the first few years of the democratic City Council, plans were made to improve the city through small-scale actions, (reforming squares, neighbourhoods or estates), which have a positive effect on the surrounding areas and on the city as a whole.

The reference action figure in the intermediate sectors was the PERI or Special Interior Reform Plans, developed by the municipal administration between 1980 and 1986, amid significant controversy over its composition and debates regarding the city.

The PERIS were conceived as a means for taking into account the specific conditions of the sector when applying the uniform resolutions of general planning.

- This was normally a way to assert the particularities of different neighbourhoods, as opposed to the general regulations of the PGM.
- The PERIS were a means of channelling citizens' demands for green areas, facilities and the conservation of spaces and important buildings that were not covered by the PGM.
- They were also an instrument used to oppose plans (especially related to roads) proposed or maintained by the PGM.

### *II.3.3. City Projects*

From 1982 onwards, with the drawing up of ideas for the Olympic project, the city as a whole was revived as the city mobilised around large-scale development. Several strategic projects for the city's transformation were proposed, the most notable of which were:

- New centre plans
- Olympic structures
- Road plans

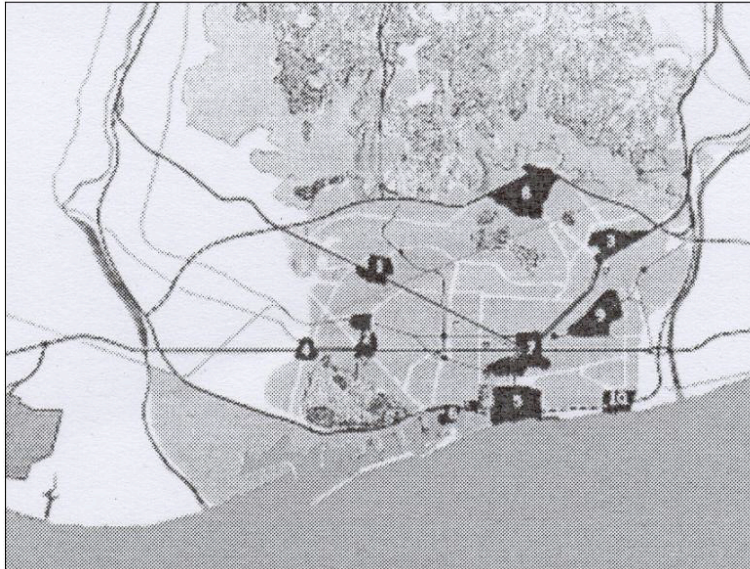
Plans for the *New Centre Areas (ANC)* were conceived before the Olympic candidature. These ten undeveloped areas were to receive a concentration of services and facilities that would make them a new focus in the city.

The Olympic areas of Vall d'Hebron and Olympic Village were included in the initial plans, while the areas of Montjuïc and Diagonal, given that their contents were exclusively facilities, were added as eleventh and twelfth areas.

Because of the diversity of the project, it was possible to *include the Olympic areas* and the plans would then continue to serve a purpose even if the Olympic bid was not successful.

1. - Vall d'Hebron
- 2.- Vil·la Olímpica (the Olympic Village)
- 3.- RENFE -Meridiana
4. - Diagonal Mar
5. – Plaça de les Glòries
6. – Plaça Cerda
7. – Calle Tarragona (near Sants Train Station)
8. - Sagrera Station (currently under construction)
9. - Diagonal Avenue extension axis
10. - Port Vell

Location of the 10 New Areas<sup>5</sup>:



After 1992 the focus changed in relation to the two classic components of urban planning: housing and industry.

#### *II.3.4. Urban proposals and urban strategies*

Much of the urban planning was carried out before the Olympic bid was presented.

- From *1981 to 1987 works in preparation for the Olympic Games* were carried out, strategies were developed, possible urban planning actions and their alternatives were studied and the ability to rehouse in existing public housing was considered.
- Between *1985 and 1990* the City Council worked on the **procurement of the necessary land** with the intention of dedicating the subsequent years (from 1990 to 1992) to carrying out construction. During this period 1,000,000 m<sup>2</sup> of roofing material was obtained in order to build the Olympic villas, the ring roads and other Olympic facilities.

The main urban developments in relation to the Olympic Games were the building of the Olympic Village in Poble Nou and the ring roads to the city (the *Rondes*).

---

<sup>5</sup> Esteban, J. (1999)

These plans were made according to *territorial criteria*, with an urban planning strategy based on two key factors: the recovery of the sea front (Sea Front Directive Plan) and a metropolitan vision (Barcelona's Metropolitan Corporation).

In relation to the *metropolitan perspective*, the Council's clear objective was to facilitate the circulation of traffic in the city. This required the building of ring roads such as the *Ronda de Dalt* and the two roads leading to these:

- The “*Pata Sur*” (link to ease access to the airport at *Prat de Llobregat* and to the southern metropolitan area); and
- The “*Pata Norte*” (located in *Sta. Coloma de Gramanet*, connecting the northern zone).

The *Generalitat* strongly opposed this project, which therefore required numerous negotiations in order to continue.

Another important aspect was the involvement of other towns:

- Banyoles: the lake in this town offered excellent conditions for rowing practice.
- Urgell: due to its location in the Pyrenees with its rough water rivers.
- Badalona: based on its affiliation with basketball.
- Gavà: rowing channel.
- Viladecans: based on its affiliation with baseball.

The building of the **Olympic Village** would be the main element of the process of the *recovery of the sea front*. The main difficulties were the train lines dividing the city and the sea and the environmental and social degradation of the surrounding area.

The location of the Olympic Village in this area had to be agreed with the *Generalitat* which had proposed other locations (such as *El Prat de Llobregat* and *Sant Cugat*).

The location of the Olympic Village in Poblenou offered a number of *advantages* to the city:

- Elimination of the train lines along the sea front, which although unused, had not been removed due to a lack of agreement between the public train company, RENFE, and the State Government.
- Completion of the coastal Ring Road.
- Recovery of the beaches.

However, the construction of the Olympic Village on urban land which was already in use and which already housed residents also gave rise to a number of *disadvantages*:

- Complication of the expropriation process. Given the numerous and diverse situations of the affected groups (home owners, tenants, factory owners, land owners, etc.) there was a greater risk of legal proceedings arising out of the expropriations.
- Deficiencies in the existing infrastructure. The area was subject to a high risk of flooding (a new sewer network was built) and this further complicated the urbanisation of the area.

*Six municipal guidelines determined the design and building of the Olympic Village:*

- All Olympic projects should continue to benefit the city of Barcelona after the event itself.
- The games should finish without deficit. In order to ensure greater flexibility in the management of the works, a state-owned company, VOSA, was created, as an instrument through which the investments in the Olympic Village were made.



- The creation of a new area of the city, which would retain its vitality after the Olympic Games. The residents would therefore need to have the financial resources to develop the neighbourhood themselves and stimulate the development of trade and activities in the area.
- The eventual extension of the new neighbourhood to the East, creating a continuation of the dynamic of the recovery process along the rest of the sea front.
- Obtaining of resources for the sewer infrastructure project.
- Ability to compensate business owners and residents of the area.

The Council considered these directives to be incompatible with the inclusion of public housing, whether for sale or rental. “The objective of the Olympic Games was not to develop a housing policy”.<sup>6</sup> This decision was even questioned within the municipal government, by the same party, PSC. Although it was unofficially proposed to expand the expropriation area further than the Olympic Village, in order to develop a public housing policy, the proposal ultimately failed due to lack of finance.

---

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Jordi Parpal, 19/7/2005.

### III. Housing and the preparations for the Olympic Games

#### III.1. The Olympic candidature: urban approximation and social issues

The Olympic candidature, designed in line with the urban planning scheme, was an excuse to go ahead with the planned urban transformation. In record time, the public-private financing provided the city and the surrounding metropolitan region with infrastructure and substantial sports facilities.

**No citizen participation was sought in this process of urban transformation, and was only later introduced in response to citizen demands during the construction phase.** The only public involvement foreseen by the administration was volunteering in the Olympic Games events.

The Olympic Games aspirations of Barcelona were raised in public for the first time during a prize gala in 1980. The then Head of the Council, Narcís Serra, discussed with Juan Antonio Samaranch the idea of proposing Barcelona as a candidate for the 1992 Olympic Games.

In 1981, the Municipal Plenary Council agreed unanimously to begin the necessary formalities and procedures to enable Barcelona to host the XXV Olympic Games. A Civic Commission was created, with representation from different sectors of the community and citizen entities, to carry out the necessary research to prepare the Olympic bid.

In October 1982, Romà Cuyás, the Candidature Commissioner, presented the essay *First Approaches to the Project of the Barcelona Olympic Games 1992* (Known as the *Cuyás Report*). The report was positively received and work continued not only in the form of further research, but also through concrete preparations. The Olympic Office was created and contacts established with members of the sporting world.

The general objectives set by the Council<sup>7</sup> were:

- To host the Olympic Games in 1992.
- To take advantage of the organisation of the Olympic Games to provide Barcelona and Catalonia with urban infrastructures.
- To promote a large-scale urban regeneration of the city to improve the quality of life and the attractiveness of the city.
- To mobilise the citizens in their city.

#### III.1.2. *Preliminary Report of the Candidature (1983)*

The preparatory work culminated in the *Preliminary report of the candidature*, carried out by the Olympic office, setting out the philosophy of and criteria for Barcelona's candidature.

The main features of Barcelona's Olympic project, as well as its management and implementation style, may be discerned from the contents of this preliminary plan.

As general principles and criteria, the report proposed grouping the facilities into nine Olympic Areas: four located in the city, three in the surrounding areas, and two whose

---

<sup>7</sup> Raventós, F. (2000:33)

location depended on the specific conditions required (e.g. rowing competitions in the Banyoles area and sailing in an undecided location<sup>8</sup>).

The **location criteria** were:

- to optimize accessibility
- to locate the facilities where they would be most appropriate for the urban structure.
- to adapt the location of the sports facilities to a program of transformation of the neighbourhoods.
- to adopt a metropolitan concept in the transformation, within the scope of the metropolitan corporation.

Therefore the project aspired to go further than the mere hosting of the Olympic Games, and purported to be the engine and justification for a community effort.

The Olympic Games were not considered to be a panacea for the problems of the city and its metropolitan area, but as an instrument of political decision-making and collaboration with the citizens in order to accelerate the pending urban improvement activities.

The *Preliminary Report* included economic forecasts, approximations of the costs of and income from the Olympic Games, and estimated a highly positive general impact on the economy.

The report manifests the Council's intention that the construction of the large Olympic facilities (the stadium, the sports palace, the swimming pool, and the velodrome) would be independent of the celebration of the Olympic Games.

Another important criterion in the design and location of the facilities was to ensure that non-profitable investments would be kept to an absolute minimum, which necessitated consideration of the future re-utilisation of the Olympic structures.

The construction of the Olympic Villages required the largest investment, but was not meant to lead to an increase in the already high cost of hosting the event. It was estimated that 95% of the investment would need to be from private sources if the project were to be completed. Everyone involved was confident that the main development, the Olympic Village located in the Poble Nou, with 15,000 spaces, would be popular with homebuyers, as it was located in a central area and close to the sea.

It should be noted that, at a moment when the market conditions began to hinder the access to housing of the weakest groups, the Preliminary Report did not consider or make any reference to the need for a public housing policy.<sup>9</sup>

The Preliminary Report, which considers the different possibilities for developing the Olympic project and its impact over the city, does not establish mechanisms for citizen participation, or protocols to rehouse groups affected by the Olympic building works.

Nor did the report make reference to the acceleration of the eradication of shantytowns that would occur as a result of the Olympic Games.

---

<sup>8</sup> In the end a harbour was built in the area of Poblenou.

<sup>9</sup> As previously noted, the implementation of a housing policy was not an objective of the creation of the Olympic Village.

### III.1.3. *Olympic Candidature of Barcelona 1992 (1986)*

Barcelona's candidature was the first presented to the IOC (International Olympic Committee) for the Olympic Games of 1992. From its contents, we will highlight aspects related to the organisational structure (linked to the way in which the management and execution of the Olympic projects were structured), answers to the IOC's questionnaire describing the Olympic Areas and Villages, and the financing of the Olympic Games (since this was a determining factor in the management of the housing in the Olympic Villages).

Structure of the Candidature:

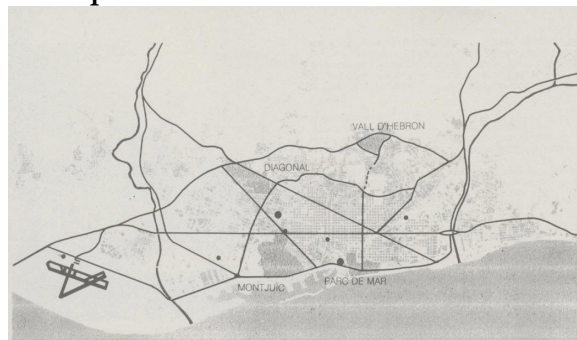
- Governing Council: established the main guidelines for the candidature and included representatives from all institutions involved in the project (the municipal government, the central state government, the "Barcelona Olimpica '92 Association", and the Chamber of Commerce, etc.)
- The Olympic Office: focused on the preparation of the projects and documents required to complete the IOC petition and promotion initiatives that favoured the nomination.
- Two organisations to co-ordinate specific building works: the *Anell Olímpic de Montjuïc, SA* (AOMSA) and the *Òrgan Especial de Gestió del Front Marítim del Poble Nou* (Olympic village)

With regards to the *answers to the IOC's questionnaire*, it was questioned whether the IOC's regulations on political compromises and technical or logistical capacity to adapt to the requirements of the Olympic Charter had been respected.

Barcelona's Olympic project was defined and supported in relation to the description of the Olympic areas and Villages and the financing arrangements.

The existing road network was a determining factor in the location of the four Olympic areas.

#### Metropolitan Road Network



Source: Barcelona'92 Olympic Candidature

Of the 37 *sports facilities* required in order to celebrate the Olympic Games, 27 were already built, five were under construction in 1985-1986 and five were being planned.

It was decided to concentrate the facilities within the city's *Olympic areas* (see map A) based on three objectives:

- To go beyond the use of sport as entertainment through the concentration of activities.

- To avoid the excessive concentration of facilities in one area of the city, given the difficulty of locating them in urban areas and the subsequent issue of their re-use after the event
- To obtain good accessibility to all locations, so that although they were not concentrated in one area, the locations were close to one another and well- connected.

According to these criteria, areas close to the main intersections, which were well serviced by public transport, were chosen.

*The area of Montjuïc* already included public sports facilities, mostly from Barcelona's previous candidatures for the Olympic Games. The new key piece in this area was the "Olympic Ring" which included the renovation of the Stadium, the renovation and extension of the Picornell swimming pools, the construction of a new Sports centre and the New Headquarters of the National Institute of Physical Education.

Although the candidature did not mention it, Montjuïc Mountain was in a state of degradation where people still lived in shantytowns.

*The area of Diagonal* already had a large number of sports facilities, mostly private, which would be supplemented by the building of the Municipal Sports Centre in l'Hospitalet, Pubilla Casas. This area also included one of the hotels proposed for the lodging of the IOC members.

The reason given for choosing this area was to take advantage of and improve the existing sports facilities.

*The area of Vall d'Hebron* already had a velodrome, built in 1984. El Parque de la Valle, a Project foreseen and budget by the Council, would complete the sports facilities in this area by adding a Sports Centre and two playing fields.

The International Youth Camp would be located in this area, as well as residences for the referees, judges and media.

*The area of Parc de Mar.* The main feature of this area would be the Olympic Village, which would house most of the athletes and would also have a large number of training facilities that would then be at the disposal of the "new" neighbourhood after the Olympic Games.

The development of facilities in the areas of Vall d'Hebron and Parc de Mar demonstrated a willingness to adapt the sports facilities to the urban framework, favouring the initiatives of sport development and urban renovation.

Some facilities were situated outside of the city, but based on two criteria:

- Operative criteria: i.e. facilities that could not be located within the city such as rowing, white water rafting, and shooting.
- Functionality: some competitions were held in towns within the metropolitan area, which were well connected with the city, where the towns had a special tradition in the particular sport.

*Olympic Villages.* The part of the candidature that described the Olympic Villages explained their location in terms of the Olympic Games, urban renovation and housing.

It was proposed to place the main Olympic Village, with an area of 43 hectares, in the zone of Poble Nou, between the Parque de la Ciudadela and the cemetery. After the Olympic Games, it would become in a new high quality residential neighbourhood.

In the candidature, this neighbourhood was described as an old city district that took part in the first wave of Catalan industrialisation in the nineteenth century, and that required a residential renovation. The candidature also talked of opening the city out to the sea, which required urbanisation and the creation of underground tunnels for the train lines that had until that time divided the city from the beach.

The short description of the current nature of the area did not mention the urban and environmental degradation, the number of residents in the area, or the nature of activities in the area.

The *Plan Especial de Ordenacion Urbana de la Fachada de Mar de Barcelona* (Plan of Urban Arrangement of the Sea Front) in the area of the Paseo de Carlos I and Avenida Icaria included the description of the transformation of the neighbourhood, devised and carried out by a team of architects, MBM (*Martorell, Bobigas, Mackay y Puigdomènech*).

Approved in June 1986, the Plan included an initial economic evaluation of the necessary expropriations, particularly of local industries.

The other residences for the athletes and their entourages were planned for Seu d'Urgell and Banyoles (where the white water rafting and rowing events were held).<sup>10</sup>

The last aspect of the candidature that must be considered in order to understand the treatment of housing in the Olympic project is the *financing*.

Barcelona's financing came from the Organising Committee and from the public administrations (central, autonomous and local) that assumed specific aspects of the investments in the installations. The public administration was also responsible for the urbanisation of the areas where the Olympic sites would be built and for the development of road infrastructures, communications and transport. Any infrastructure investments besides these would be outside the Olympic Games budget.

There was significant private investment in the construction of the residences, as they would be used as private housing after accommodating the athletes during the Olympic Games.

The Organising Committee would be responsible for adapting the buildings for the Olympic Games and then for their re-adaptation as private houses following the Olympic Games. "This way the private initiatives financing their construction would be compensated for the period that they could not use them without having to incur any additional expense"<sup>11</sup>.

The candidature also defended the ability to take on the volume of new housing generated for the Olympic Village, arguing that this was in line with the dynamic evolution of metropolitan demand. The number of new houses built within this area represented 18% of the total number of houses built within the metropolitan area between 1981 and 1985.

---

<sup>10</sup> In Seu d'Urgell the residence would be a hotel, while in Banyoles, a residence would be built with enough space for 1,500 people, which would be opened to the property market after the Olympic Games.

<sup>11</sup> Barcelona 1992 Olympic Candidature (1986:96)

There is no reference in this part of the candidature to the situation of the metropolitan property market at the time, nor does it assess the need to introduce public housing, or to implement public housing policies.

In the chapter on the conditions required to be fulfilled by the candidate cities, no mention is made of the procedure that groups affected by the Olympic works should follow, or measures to alleviate the adverse impact of the Olympic project on access to housing for the population as a whole.

#### ***III.1.4. Official Report of the XXV Olympic Games (1993)***

This was the final report required by the IOC to be presented after the Olympic Games had been celebrated, with the purpose of describing the projects carried out, the reaction of the media, and the organisation of the event, especially in relation to sport-related benefits.

Discussion of citizenship participation focuses on the success of the Olympic volunteering and on the citizens' support and enthusiasm for, and general collaboration with, the Olympic Games.

With regards to the renovated areas, the report highlights the positive aspects of the urban renovation, especially in the area of Parc de Mar Olympic Village, on the neighbourhoods and the city in general, highlighting once more the opening out of the city to the sea.

### **III.2. Managerial and Political Structures**

The preparation of the Barcelona Olympic Games was highly political. The project initiative was directly managed by public institutions at all levels of government. This led to strong political competitiveness (the process coincided with different electoral processes at the local, autonomous and central levels), and linguistic and cultural tensions of significant symbolic intensity.<sup>12</sup>

The basic outline of the organisation was based on three elements<sup>13</sup>:

- The institutional agreement between the City Council of Barcelona (as promoter and authority responsible for the initiative), the Spanish Government and the *Generalitat de Catalunya* (Catalonian government), the Spanish Olympic Committee (COE) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC).
- The private-public collaboration for the preparation of the project.
- The creation of a special managerial organisation independent of the public administration, with a divide between the investment and organisational functions.

#### ***III.2.1. Institutional cooperation.***

Each level of administration involved represented different political ideals with specific interests, which did not always converge.

---

<sup>12</sup> Botella M. y Moragas M. (2002:178-185)

<sup>13</sup> Raventós, F. (2000:33)

- The central government was interested in promoting Spain to the international community through the two big events taking place in 1992 (Seville's Universal Exhibition and the Olympic Games in Barcelona). It intended to control the decision-making.
- The autonomous Catalanian government (*Generalitat*) had as its objective the promotion of Catalonia and its specific reality - the Catalan language. Its strategy was to participate in the celebration of the event.
- The City Council had a very clear objective that consisted not only in the promotion of Barcelona but of urban transformation, and for this, required a high level of autonomy.

The first stage of the project (1986-1989) involved the greatest tension between the different institutions. From 1990 onwards the administrative levels cooperated more effectively, employing the slogan "everyone's Games".

Relations between the different administrations and the IOC were extremely fluid (most of the decisions made were unanimous<sup>14</sup>), and a relationship of absolute cooperation was established between the City Council and Barcelona's Olympic Organising Committee (COOB).<sup>15</sup>

### III.2.2. *The creation of special organisations*

The City Council was the main actor in relation to the Olympic construction. The Central State Government contributed to the investment and the *Generalitat* approved the planning proposed by the Council, and to a lesser extent also contributed to the investment. Thus three-way agreements were conceived.

In **1982**, the *Olympic Office* was created. This small municipal structure was in charge of elaborating the first feasibility projects, the Preliminary Report of the Candidature and the preparation works for the promotion of the candidature.

In **1983** the *Governing Commission* was created, its membership encompassing all of the public administrations and the public sector. The Commission formed two different structures<sup>16</sup>:

- *Barcelona's Olympic Organising Committee* (COOB), replacing the original Olympic Office, with the objective of obtaining the Olympic nomination and organising the event.
- *A complex network of public and mixed businesses* were integrated in HOLSA (Barcelona Olympic Holding SA) in 1989. These had the specific objective of coordinating and carrying out the construction of the Olympic infrastructure. These entities were characterized by the professional capacity of their personnel, the autonomy and agility of their management (delegate advisers, directors or managers), their financial autonomy and their specific objectives and geographic areas of operation.

The municipal infrastructure policy was carried out by the following public companies:

<sup>14</sup> Botella M. y Moragas M. (2002:42)

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Jordi Parnal, former Vice Councillor of Barcelona (19/7/05)

<sup>16</sup> HOLSA (1992: 282-291)



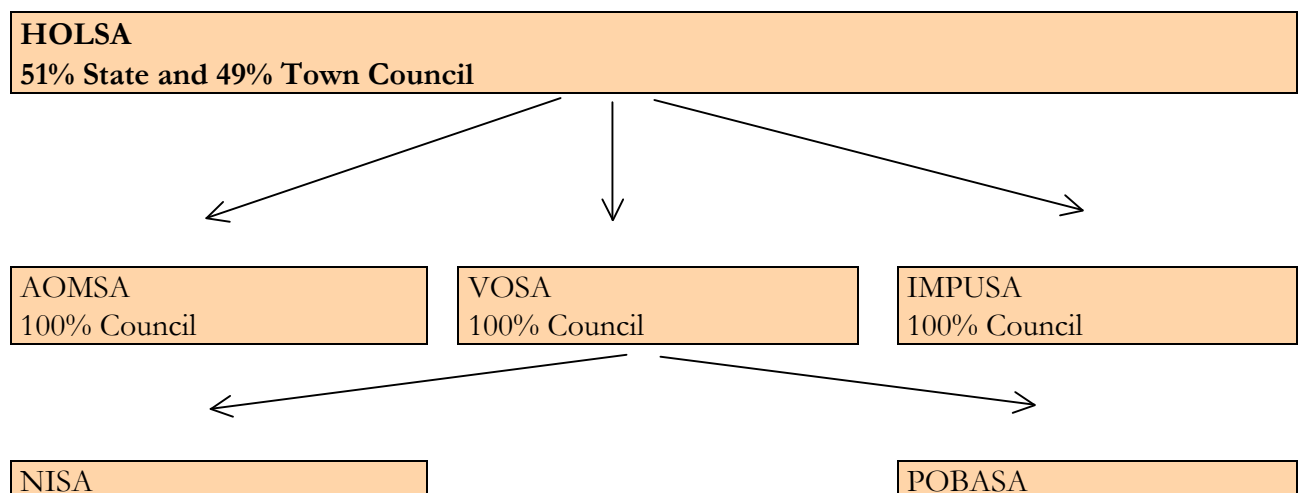
- **AOMSA** (*Anella Olímpica de Montjuïc SA*) was created in 1984 in order to develop the sport facilities at Montjuïc, build the Sot del Migdia recreational area and carry out the urbanization of the mountain.
- **VOSA** (*Vila Olímpica SA*) was created in 1986 to redesign the sea front and build the new residential neighbourhood.<sup>17</sup>
- **IMPUSA** (*Institut Municipal de Promoció Urbanística i el Jocs Olímpics de 1992*) was created in 1987. This company was different from the other two in that its remit covered the whole city and had diverse objectives, such as the procurement of land and moving of materials to be used in the construction of the roads, the management of the Olympic areas of Diagonal and Vall d'Hebron, and the development of various new zones in the city centre.

It was at first through these three companies, which were fully financed through public capital (at the municipal level), that the municipal policy of infrastructures for the Olympic Games was realised, but at a later date new companies of a mixed character (financed through public and private capital) with new and more specific objectives were formed:

- **NISA** (*Nova Icària SA*) was created in 1988 for the construction and commercialisation of the housing in the Olympic Village of Poblenou, and
- **POBASA** (*Port Olímpic de Barcelona SA*) was established for the commercialisation and management of the Olympic Port.

VOSA was an important shareholder in both companies and there was significant private sector participation in each (60% in NISA and 50% in POBASA).

Finally in 1989, **HOLSA** (Barcelona Olympic Holding SA) was created, with the participation of the State (51% of the shares) and the City Council (49% of the shares, and holder of 100% of the shares of the three companies AOMSA, VOSA, and IMPUSA). The objective of HOLSA was to obtain financing for the investments and to monitor and control the public construction works.



<sup>17</sup> Recovery of the sea front, building of a new residential neighbourhood, development of projects in the area of Poble Nou, procurement of land, elimination of the train lines, urbanisation and construction of the Olympic Village and Harbour and the coastal parks, the completion of the sewage network and the management of the facilities. It was also responsible for the construction of part of the coastal ring road, by appointment of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

### III.3. Were there forced evictions in preparation for the Barcelona Olympic Games?

The **definition** of a forced eviction, established by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights<sup>18</sup> is “the permanent or temporary removal against their will of individuals, families and/or communities from the homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection”.

The following international guidelines to be followed in the case of an eviction, have been established:

- Explore all feasible alternatives in consultation with the affected groups;
- Legal remedies or procedures should be provided to those who are affected by eviction orders;
- States parties shall also see to it that all the individuals concerned have a right to adequate compensation for any property, both personal and real, which is affected;
- In cases where eviction is considered justified, it should be carried out in strict compliance with the relevant provisions of international human rights law and in accordance with general principles of reasonableness and proportionality, and should only be in cases envisaged by the law;
- Evictions should not result in individuals being rendered homeless or vulnerable to the violation of other human rights;
- Where those affected are unable to provide for themselves, the State party must take all appropriate measures, to the maximum of its available resources, to ensure that adequate alternative housing, resettlement or access to productive land.

Therefore in view of these guidelines, the following questions may be posed in relation to the Barcelona Olympic Games:

- *Were adequate talks held with the groups affected by the Olympics?* There is no evidence of any participative or consultative process, either during the preparation of the candidature or during the research period previous to this. However, during the execution of the Olympic works there was some participation by the affected groups, who were keen to continue a dialogue via their residents' associations and commissions during the rehousing process (agreements were reached with the City Council through the holding of assemblies). Concerns were also expressed in relation to the construction of the new roads (some demands of the affected groups were accepted by the Council, such as the partial covering of the *Ronda de Dalt* and some changes to the *Ronda Litoral* (the coastal ringroad)).
- *Were feasible alternatives to forced evictions explored?* No alternatives were considered, but the forced evictions due to the Olympic works did not affect a large number of people (the greatest impact was on factories which were already obsolete). The evictions of shantytowns were part of a wider plan to eradicate inadequate housing.

<sup>18</sup> General Comment No. 7 on forced evictions (1997)

- *Were legal and procedural measures provided to those affected?* The eviction process was initiated with urban management legal proceedings (expropriation systems) and at the same time a negotiation process was carried out with the affected groups. Most of the evictions were mutually agreed, with the exception of some of the large factories, where the cases proceeded to court.
- *Was adequate compensation awarded to those evicted?* Different criteria were established in order to determine the amount of compensation to be awarded to the affected groups (e.g. the quality and size of the house, whether the person affected was a tenant or home owner, the composition of the home (family, couple, etc.), and the financial situation of the affected person). There was also the option of financial compensation available to the few who already had another home.
- *Was any alternative housing foreseen (rehousing)?* There was, although this was divided between a public promotion building of 322 homes and private flats in the secondary market.

From these observations, it can be concluded that **there were evictions, but that these were not forced, as the affected were rehoused (availability of adequate housing). Affected persons who already had their own adequate housing (second house, or living with relatives) were financially compensated.**

#### III.4. The management and conditions of the rehousing

The process of rehousing the affected groups had two main weaknesses: there was no active communication with the citizens at the beginning, and negotiations regarding the compensation were individual. The first demonstrates a belief that the experts are those best placed to determine the design of the city and can legitimately do so. The second resulted in interest fragmentation and the weakening of the position of the affected groups, which would have been stronger if negotiations occurred on a collective basis.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the affected groups had previously been living in old housing which was in poor condition, outside urban planning guidelines, and with no security of tenure. Through the rehousing process, these groups would have access to better housing, although they would often be required to move out of their neighbourhoods, and either give up the ownership of a home or pay a much higher rent.

The Olympic projects and facilities were located in non-residential areas of the city, but still affected more than 600 families in very different residential and financial situations.

Neither the City Council nor the municipal companies created to carry out the Olympic projects held talks with the affected citizens. The first news that these citizens received of the rehousing process was an official notification announcing that they should leave their homes. They were only consulted in relation to negotiation of compensation.

The process took place as follows:

Once the plans for the Olympic sites and infrastructures were drawn, the City Council began the process of urban execution, which was legally planned (expropriation procedure),

through delegating powers to the municipal companies created to execute the Olympic projects. At the same time, negotiations with the affected groups were commenced.

In order to begin the negotiations, the municipal companies carried out an illustrative financial assessment (published in the urban plans) and forecast a financial budget in order to negotiate the compensation. The Council managed the rehousing processes through:

- The public companies created for the preparation of the Olympic Games (AOMSA, VOSA e IMPUSA): these had responsibility for negotiating the financial compensation and rehousing the affected families.
- The public entities dedicated to the availability of housing already operating in the city at the time: the *Patronat Municipal de l'Habitatge* (PMH) (City Council Department of Housing) and the *Societat Urbanística Metropolitana de Rehabilitació i Gestió, SA* (REGESA)<sup>19</sup>.

The Council used the different existing structures without distinction, but always with the objective of managing the process as quickly as possible, with a view to celebrating the Olympic Games in 1992.

Despite the fact that legal expropriation procedures were initiated on occasion, in most cases a solution was reached through negotiation. Given the extended duration of the expropriation process, and the urgency of the impending Olympic Games, **expropriation procedures were only employed as a last resort**.

The affected people were aware that the Olympic projects would be executed, and this had been made evident both in the negotiations with them and in the negotiations between the different agents involved in the development of the projects.

There appear to have been two stages of negotiations with the residents:

- First stage: general (collective). In this first stage the Council explained in general terms the alternatives for rehousing.
- Second stage: Specified to individual cases. The different rehousing options were explored.

#### *III.4.1 First stage: Collective negotiation*

Through commissions composed of affected people and residents' associations, the general conditions for evaluating property and the expropriation process were established according to<sup>20</sup>:

- The use of the property; whether industrial, residential or other.
- The value of the land and characteristics of the house.
- The type of occupation; ownership, renting, or other<sup>21</sup>. Tenants with lower rents received a higher indemnity in order to make it possible for them to rent another property.

---

<sup>19</sup> Despite this flexibility, the PMH (and in some occasions REGESA) were responsible for rehousing residents and the IMPU focused more on the factories and large infrastructures. Whilst REGESA intervened in some of the previous negotiations with those affected, the PMH would intervene in the final phase when rehousing the affected residents.

<sup>20</sup> In the case of industrial property the legal title to the property, whether in ownership, a tenancy or lease for life.

The Council generally talked with “Commissions of affected people” whose objective was to co-ordinate the processes in order to facilitate the negotiations. They took on a primarily mediating role.

The information sessions, consisting of dialogue and negotiation (assemblies), generally took place in the main office of each different district. The Council informed and agreed with the neighbours the general criteria for the expropriations, the options for those who were owners or tenants, the management of the rehousing, and the distribution of costs, etc.

#### *III.4.2. Second stage: individual negotiation*

The Council negotiated the final amount of compensation with each family unit, agreed according to:

- the composition of the family (number of members, age, etc.) and
- the family’s financial situation.

#### *III.4.3. Housing alternatives*

Alternative housing was provided to the affected residents, with the aim of providing housing appropriate to the size and needs of the family. At this stage, the ethnicity of the affected residents was also taken into account, with the aim of improving the living conditions and integration of ethnic minorities.

At first different alternatives were available, however, once the available public housing was exhausted, the options were reduced to the secondary market:

- *State subsidized housing* in Barcelona. Within this option, the affected groups, whatever their previous situation, be that ownership, tenancy (generally with an indefinite contract regulated by the 1964 Law), unstable, or other typical situations,<sup>22</sup> could also choose from different alternatives:
  - Buy a state-subsidized house (at a price lower than market price). The difference between the financial compensation awarded for the expropriated house and the price of the residence where the resident would be rehoused, was compensated with a mortgage loan at an interest rate lower than the market rate.<sup>23</sup> The mortgage loans represented on average between 10% and 40% of the house price. In most cases, loans were obtained for amounts between 1 and 5 million pesetas (between 6,000 and 30,000 €).
  - Rent a state-subsidized house (at lower than market rent). Those who could not or did not want to buy a house opted for renting, with a rent that was publicly protected and so remained below market price.
  - Occupy a state-subsidized house with a lease for life. Many elderly people availed themselves of this option. When the occupant died, the PMH would recover the house.

Most people from the Olympic village area who opted for houses from the PMH were rehoused in the *Llevant Sud*, a set of buildings located in *les Corts Catalanes* numbers 944-954.

---

<sup>21</sup> In some cases the residents did not own the ownership legal title, of rent or of property surrendered.

<sup>22</sup> From the interviews carried out on 13th July 2005 with some of the residents of the Gran Vía who had been rehoused there by the Council. One woman lived in a precarious condition in a ground floor flat, which was the property of one of her uncles (to whom she paid 50 pesetas – less than 1€ - per month). She was considered as affected by the Olympic project and was compensated with a public house (in ownership).

<sup>23</sup> In those years the market interest rate was 15% while interest rates on loans for the purchase of public houses were 5%.

This group of tower blocks (comprising 322 houses in total) although not built with this objective, were used to rehouse the affected people from the *Parc de Mar* Area.

The people rehoused in *Llevant Sud* interviewed for this research said that they still missed their original neighbourhoods even after 15 years in their new homes. They were still waiting for improvements to the public spaces to be carried out; in particular improvements to the green areas below the buildings, which were still unattended and remained dirty and unused. These improvements had been promised by the Council at the time of the relocation. They also expressed unhappiness at difficulties experienced as a result of being housed in state-owned property (i.e. problematic neighbours housed through social services).

**The degradation and unsafe atmosphere of these buildings contrasts with the development of the neighbourhoods of the Vil·la Olímpica** (where the Olympic Village had been) at Poblenou; now a medium- to upper-class district where residents enjoy a high quality of life.

- ***Rehousing in the secondary market***, in different districts of Barcelona or in nearby towns. If this option were chosen, the new housing would always be in ownership.  
Buy a house at free market price. When the City Council could no longer offer state-subsidized housing, houses in the secondary market were sought through private agents specialising in the property market. When a suitable house was found and the price agreed, the local administration (or the relevant public company) would sign a deposit contract on behalf of the buyer (which would result in a payment being made as a sign of compromise in a private contract). The contract provided that title to the property was to be in the name of the rehoused person and not in the name of the public administration. This avoided the tax expenses of a double transmission of the property (from seller to administration to rehoused person). However, this option also meant moving to more affordable areas in the outskirts of the city.

Although it has not been possible to gain access to the expropriation documents<sup>24</sup>, from the interviews carried out it may be deduced that the final agreements only mention compensation, although in reality this meant the acquisition of a new home.

- ***Financial compensation.*** There were cases where the affected people chose to live with members of their family or in second homes that they owned. Since they already had alternative housing, they would refuse the option of rehousing, opting instead for financial compensation.

#### **III.4.4. *Ethnic minorities***

In the 1980s, foreign immigration was of little significance, but there were a number of ***families of Roma ethnicity***, mostly living in slums. In these cases the Council, when rehousing, tried not to locate these families in the same buildings in order to avoid the development of ghettos (which had been previously experienced in areas like the Mina). This was also an attempt to avoid the social rejection normally experienced by Roma families arriving at a building or neighbourhood. This strategy of dispersing the families to different buildings (through the option of buying flats in the secondary market) was carried out secretly and with caution; being called the “*Submarine Operation*” by some. Some detractors

---

<sup>24</sup> Denied access by the Council, as the information constitutes personal data that only the individual affected could consult.

accused the Council of concealing the process and not making the destiny of the rehoused Roma families public.

The main weakness of this strategy was its secrecy and lack of transparency. Despite the intention to favour integration and reduce rejection, the strategy presented integration as assimilation, upholding the prejudicial image of Roma families as being problematic, without exploring the reasons for their rejection and problems of coexistence.

### III.5. The construction of the Olympic Village (*Vil·la Olímpica*)

*Number of families affected:* 147.<sup>25</sup>

**Background.** In the case of Poblenou, the City Council established VOSA as the entity responsible for the expropriations. VOSA negotiated the evictions, compensation and rehousing, while the Council carried out the necessary administrative and authoritative actions.<sup>26</sup>

**The rehousing of home owners and tenants.**<sup>27</sup> Of the affected residents, approximately half were elderly widows, living alone. There were also numerous retired married couples and young families of low incomes. Most of the buildings (single family or multifamily) were individually owned. Although some were owners of the houses they occupied, most were tenants.

The negotiation with residents took place in the town hall of the *Sant Martí* district, with the mediation of the *Sant Martí* district councillor, Joaquim de Nadal, the representatives of VOSA and the Poblenou residents' association (acting as a channel of communication and representation for the affected citizens). The *Icaria Commission* was created to carry out the monitoring of the transformation process and rehousing of the Olympic Village area.

Some of the affected residents continued to resist their eviction with the hope of obtaining a larger sum of compensation, but there were no collective mobilisations or strong opposition. The removals were carried out and organised by the Council, thus exhibiting greater municipal control of the process and guaranteeing the removal of all the residents on the arranged dates.

Most of the affected people were rehoused in *Llevant Sud* de Gran Vía, owned by the PMH, and about 20 minutes from the centre of Poblenou. It was noted in the interviews that, while the affected residents thereby gained access to better housing under favourable financial conditions, the fact that the PMH subsequently used some of the properties to house families under the supervision of Social Services has led to a deterioration in neighbourly relations and the state of the buildings.

Mutual agreement was reached in 99% of the negotiations, leaving only 1% of cases where an “administrative act of occupation” was used.

---

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Rosa Fornas, lawyer hired by the Council to negotiate with the families affected by operations by VOSA and IMPUSA (13/7/05)

<sup>26</sup> Idem 22.

<sup>27</sup> Idem 22.

There are also **gender differences in relation to the reaction to relocation**. Men, who were used to spending more of their everyday life in public spaces, at work in factories and at meeting places such as the local bar, were more reluctant to move. On the other hand, while women may have missed their old home, they soon appreciated the advantages of a new house, in a better-connected neighbourhood with better amenities.

The administration attempted to carry out the negotiations with the affected groups with as much sensitivity as possible, aiming to facilitate their integration into their new homes in a personalised way. Examples include offering fridges and providing televisions..<sup>28</sup>

**Relocation of the factories<sup>29</sup>**. Through VOSA most of the unused industrial land was expropriated (**150 factories**). The factory owners organised themselves into the *Associació d'Indústries Afectades* (the Association of Affected Industries). Although most of the factories were inactive, some of the owners pretended that they were still operating in order to obtain a higher amount of compensation<sup>30</sup>. According to the experts and the residents' associations, it was the factory owners who benefited the most from the process.

To relocate the 50 working factories, an agreement was reached with INCASOL in which the factory owners would be sold industrial land through direct sale, without having to follow the normal procedure of a public auction. 95% of the negotiations were concluded by mutual agreement and the remaining 5% had to be subjected to an administrative act of occupation.

The greatest number of affected businesses was in the district of Poblenou. Significant economic and managerial efforts were made in the negotiations with small and medium sized companies that were still active in the area. Most had already planned to move outside the Olympic zone.<sup>31</sup> **No action was taken or aid given to prevent the loss of jobs.**

The relocation of the industries and workshops of Poblenou and their substitution with new office blocks and businesses continues to be a topical issue. *Plan 22@* was established to carry out the rejuvenations, with the aim of turning the old industrial neighbourhood into a technological area. In practice, **this transformation led to the failure of existing companies, and to speculation which benefited the largest international real estate agencies and multinationals**. A vast area of land was therefore allocated for the building of offices with an uncertain future and with no relationship to the neighbourhood.

### III.6. The eradication of shanty towns

In 1980, the PMH started to compile a *census of the city's shantytowns*. In January 1981 the census was completed, recording 1,102 shacks in Barcelona.

The living conditions were deplorable. Most were occupied by Roma families, as the following statistics show:

---

<sup>28</sup> One man who could not sleep if he did not hear the sound of trains was rehoused near the train station of Vilanova i la Geltrú, Interview with Jordi Parpal, ex vice-councillor of Barcelona (19/7/05)

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Rosa Fornas, lawyer hired by the Council to negotiate with the families affected by operations by VOSA and IMPUSA (13/7/05)

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Jordi Parpal, ex vice-councillor of Barcelona (19/7/05)

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Xavier Valls (ex president of PMH and of REGESA) (29/6/05)



	shacks	observations	residents	observations
"Montjuïc "	10	Council huts in good condition	61	100% Roma
"Francesc Alegre"	221	45 m2 and in a not too bad state	927	5% Roma
"Maria Lavèrnia"	28	Quite big and quite good state	96	
"Font de la Llet"	51	Wooden shacks	289	
"Santa Engràcia"	39	45 m2 and not bad state	208	50% Roma
"Enric Sanchis"	24	From old factories, in ruins	97	90% Roma
"Pont del Molinet"	10	Wooden huts	63	
"La Perona":	341	35 m2 in bad state	1842	90% Roma
"Transcamentiri"	172	45 m2 and in a not too bad state	524	
"Camp de la Bota"	107	35 m2 and in a not too bad state	511	95% Roma
others	99			
BARCELONA	1102		4618	

Source: (1990) *Barcelona: 10 anys d'habitatge públic*: Patronat Municipal de l'Habitatge. From a census on slums elaborated by PMH in 1981. The clearing of all areas was carried out by PMH, except for the area of "Transcamentiri", which was the responsibility the *Institut Municipal de Promoció Urbanística, SA* (IMPUSA)

In April **1981**, the Social Services department of the City Council and the PMH organised the "*First Catalan Workshops on Roma populations*"<sup>32</sup> to study the global issue of shantytowns, and especially the situation of "La Perona" (341 shacks where 1,842 people lived). It was concluded that to solve the problem it was not enough simply to carry out housing policies, and that it was necessary to analyse the socio-economic, cultural and familial situations of each person living in these areas and the possibility of their insertion into a new social setting.

In relation to housing these people, three types of solutions were foreseen:

- The construction of new housing built especially for this objective.
- Buying and adapting houses in the secondary market, located in different areas of the city.
- Other solutions, such as to answer to the demands of people who wanted to return to their place of origin or to a place of their choice, whenever they could prove that they would have a stable residence, or access to housing though financial aid.

During the 1980s, the program of eradication of shantytowns was carried out, and in 1990, two years before the celebration of the Olympic Games, the problem was considered to have been solved.

<sup>32</sup> PMH (1990:94-96)

	1981	1982	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
"Montjuïc"	10	9	9	9	9	9	7	0	0
"Francesc Alegre"	221	196	89	81	78	72	64	61	0
"Maria Lavèrnia"	28	26	7	7	7	9	9	8	0
"Font de la Llet"	51	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
"Santa Engràcia"	39								
"Enric Sanchis"	24	21	16	7	1	0	0	0	0
"Pont del Molinet"	10	10	8	6	6	6	3	0	0
"La Perona":	341	211	75	55	50	102	60	0	0
"Transcamentiri"	172	124	102	99	96	96	96	0	0
"Camp de la Bota"	107	96	73	64	57	59	42	0	0
Other	99	50	40	20	0	0	0	0	0
BARCELONA	1.102	743	419	348	304	353	281	69	0

Source: (1990) *Barcelona: 10 anys d'habitatge públic*: Patronat Municipal de l'Habitatge. From a census on slums elaborated by PMH in 1981. The clearing of all areas was carried out by PMH, except for the area of "Transcamentiri", which was the responsibility the *Institut Municipal de Promoció Urbanística, SA* (IMPUSA)

### III.6.1. District of Sant Martí (Olympic Village)

#### *La Perona* (PMH)

*Families affected: 102.*<sup>33</sup>

**Background:** This shantytown was established in 1947 and was called "La Perona" because the building of the shacks (which peaked at 400) coincided with the visit of Eva Peron, the First Lady of Argentina. In 1966, the area was expanded by the arrival of families from Somorrostro, a beachfront shantytown that was eradicated in the 1960s, consisting of Roma families who lived in shacks close to the train lines.

**The rehousing process:** The process was started before the launch of the Olympic bid and the area was not directly affected by any Olympic project, but it was agreed that the problem had to be solved before the Olympic Games.

In 1982, the negotiation and rehousing process started with the purchasing of houses in the secondary market (the option chosen by most people) and the construction of new dwellings to re-house the families in the Besòs-Maresme area. The residents of this area strongly opposed the construction works (initially impeding them) and the City Council decided to send police to stop the protests. After a few weeks of tension, the residents of Besòs-Maresme and the City Council engaged in a dialogue and reached an agreement, the main features of which were as follows<sup>34</sup>:

- Approval of a step-by-step plan to eradicate "La Perona"; and

<sup>33</sup> According to an interview with Xavier Valls (ex president of PMH and of REGESA) and Rosa Sancho (ex REGESA) (29/6/05)

<sup>34</sup> PMH (1990:100-102)

- Creation of a monitoring commission with representatives from the different municipal areas, residents' associations, the district and other interested parties.

In 1985, shacks were eradicated in the *Ronda de Sant Martí*, located between the bridges of Treball and Espronceda, and in 1989 the last remaining shacks were destroyed. Nowadays there is a rambla (boulevard) in place of these shantytowns.

The Sagrera had already been established as a New Central Area and the construction of a train station was planned. At present, works are underway to connect this train to the new high-speed train line station (*trenes de Alta Velocidad*).

### ***Camp de la Bota (PMH)***

*Affected Families:* 60<sup>35</sup>.

**Background:** Beach area that stretched from the Rambla de Poblenou to Besòs (since developed into the Diagonal Mar and Forum Areas), mostly occupied by families of Roma ethnicity.

**Rehousing process:** A main concern was preventing the concentration of Roma families in the new residences, but this policy was carried out as discreetly as possible in order to avoid the objection of the residents. The families were rehoused in houses purchased on the secondary market in the districts of Sants, Sant Martí and Sant Andreu (not according to territorial or political criteria, but according to property market prices). The last rehousing process was completed in 1989. A later report stated that in 80% of the cases there had been integration into the new residence. The Ronda Litoral (the coastal ring road) now lies where the shacks used to be.

### ***Transcementiri (IMPUSA y PMH)***

*Affected Families:* 100<sup>36</sup>.

**Preparation for the Olympic Games:** In the initial studies, this area was not expected to be affected, but for the construction of the *Rondas*, it became necessary to expropriate some modest family houses and their private patios, occupied by around 100 families, mostly of Roma origin<sup>37</sup>.

**The rehousing process** took place between 1988-1989. IMPUSA contacted young property market agents (APIs) who were given the task of finding houses in the secondary market all over the city, without advising the sellers of the identities of the actual buyers. When the APIs had agreed the price with a seller, IMPUSA provided the deposit for the agreed price and arranged hired workers from a private company to prepare the houses. 100 houses were bought in different areas of the city, and handed over to 100 evicted families.

---

<sup>35</sup> According to an interview with Xavier Valls (ex president of PMH and of REGESA) (29/6/05) and Rosa Sancho, and also according to the reports of the PMH.

<sup>36</sup> According to an interview with Rosa Fornas (13/7/05)

<sup>37</sup> Idem 35.

### III.6.2 District of Montjuïc (*Anella Olímpica*)

#### *Can Valero Petit (AOMSA y PMH)*

*Affected Families:* 20.

**Background.** The origins of the shantytown at Montjuïc mountain go back to the eighteenth century, when the area was occupied by workers in the quarries, but the area received its name from the bar Can Valero which was opened for the Universal Exhibition in 1929.

The shantytown grew with the immigration waves generated by the growth of the city, and in 1966 there were 12,000 shacks in the area, and more families living in the ruins of the 1929 Stadium.

The only contact that this area had with the rest of the city was at weekends when families visited Montjuïc cemetery and spend the day at various nearby picnic spots. When the quarries were turned into landfill sites in 1953, this practice came to an end, and the already poor living conditions in the area deteriorated further.

In 1968, the people living in the shantytown of Can Valero were given the option of moving into public housing. The extremely poor building quality of the public housing offered soon became clear, especially those in the areas of San Cosme in El Prat de Llobregat, which were demolished in the 1980s.

The shacks began to disappear at the beginning of the 1970s. In December 1971, protests by the residents of the area of Can Clos (opposing Councillor Porcioles and Deputies Juan Antonio Samaranch and Eduardo Tarragona) managed to bring an end to the dumping of waste at the site, but by that time the mountain was already full of refuse.

Basilio Rodríguez, a residents' leader and director of the Civic Centre of the area of Zona Franca at the time, explained that most of "those people went from being afraid of losing what little they had to fighting to claim all they lacked, starting with adequate housing".<sup>38</sup>

The fate of Can Valero was sealed in 1975 when the local residents' opposition to the municipal expropriation was rejected.

At that time there were 20 families remaining in Can Valero. These families made a living out of the picnic areas (Valero Grande and Valero Chico) and buildings owned by the landowners. This area was named Can Valero Pettit, and was close to the Olympic Stadium and what would become part of the Parc Del Migdia.

**Preparation for the Olympic Games:** In 1983, the Olympic Office prepared the *Plan Director* (Governing Plan) of the *Anella Olímpica* (Olympic Ring) of Montjuïc.

In 1984, geotechnical research was carried out and a large amount of refuse was detected in the subsoil where the new Serrahima stadium and other Olympic facilities were to be built. The plans therefore had to be redrawn in order to change the location of the facilities of the *Anella Olímpica*.

---

<sup>38</sup> Extracted from an article Published in *El Periódico* 17/2/1987 on the disappearance of the Can Valero.

The final location of the *Anella Olímpica* made it necessary to occupy the land where the village of Can Valero Petit was situated. Construction work on the *Anella Olímpica* began between 1985 and 1986.

***The rehousing process:*** Between 1984 and 1986, the City Council held negotiations with the families of Can Valero Petit, through AOMSA and the eviction lawyer for the Council of Barcelona, Judith Avinyó. In most cases, the parties agreed on an amount of compensation. There were additional problems related to rehousing, such as some cases where families had been defrauded into purchasing fake property deeds of no legal value, which they then sought to provide to the Council.

In 1987, when the last shacks were demolished, there were between five and seven families living around Can Calero, most of whom were renting. They were rehoused in the secondary market as homeowners in the nearby neighbourhood of Can Clos.

### III.7. The construction of the *Rondes* (Ring Roads)

One of the most significant effects of the Olympic Games was on the political commitment to access to, and movement within, the city through the improvement of road infrastructure.

The construction of the *Rondas* (ring roads) had a direct effect on a number of residential buildings. Compensation was negotiated in most cases. Following protests by the area's residents, the exact routes of the roads were negotiated. In some areas, as a consequence of neighbourhood's demonstrations the roads were given a protective surface to reduced bothers such as noise and pollution.

Nevertheless, the main consequence of the ring road's construction was the promotion of private transportation to the detriment of public transport, and the noise and pollution that it involves. Therefore, the new infrastructure helped to connect Barcelona to nearby towns, but not to end traffic and mobility problems.

#### III.7.1. Access to the Second Ring Road (*Ronda de Dalt*)

##### ***Bloque Fantasma (IMPUSA y PMH)***

***Affected families:*** 65.<sup>39</sup>

***Background:*** This unlicensed (self-built) building was in such a bad state that some of the floors collapsed. Although its expropriation was not required by the preliminary plans, the Council decided to expropriate it in light of the risk of further deterioration from the nearby construction of the *Rondas*. The Council took advantage of this situation by creating an additional (and unplanned) exit from the ring roads.

***The rehousing process:*** The building was demolished and, in order to rehouse the 65 affected families who had been living there, the Council employed the same system that had been used to re-house the people who had been living behind the cemetery in Montjuïc (i.e. procurement of houses in the secondary market). Exceptionally in this case, however, all of the houses were bought in the same neighbourhood as the building, Nou Barris. This

---

<sup>39</sup> Interview, 29/6/05, with Rosa Sancho.

occurred in response to demands from the evicted families. The process was slow, lasting roughly one and a half years.<sup>40</sup>

The residents' association agreed that the building needed to be demolished, but was unhappy with the way that the negotiations over compensation took place. The Council's refusal to negotiate with affected families on a collective basis resulted in families receiving compensation amounts which varied according to a family's negotiating power (the amounts awarded varied between 1 and 5 million pesetas).<sup>41</sup>

### ***Las casas del comandante (IMPUSA y REGESA)***

***Affected families:*** 18.

***Background:*** A urban inspection described an unlicensed (self-built) multi-family building in a precarious condition, occupied by approximately 10 families, located near the *Via Favència*. The building was affected by an access road to the *Ronda de Dalt* ring road. The families were rehoused in the secondary market.

The building's name reflects the fact that it was an unlicensed building constructed by a commander of the *Guarda Civil* (Civil Guard) who handed it over to a woman who collected the rents. It was in an extremely precarious condition and lacked basic services. Its residents did not have any legal title, whether as owners or tenants.

***The rehousing process:*** REGESA's archives record a total of 18 rehoused families. The process of negotiating and rehousing was short, lasting only one month. 15 families were provided with houses from the secondary market and from the PMH. The remaining families agreed upon awards of financial compensation.<sup>42</sup>

### ***III.7.2. Connections to the Rondas outside Barcelona***

#### ***La Pata norte en Santa Coloma de Gramanet (REGESA)***

***Affected families:*** 52.

***Background:*** The residents were mostly elderly people who owned their homes, which were mostly houses with gardens. For the previous 30 years, these houses had been in a deteriorated state, as the owners were only able to carry out minor repairs. The road in question had already been planned in the Plan Comarcal of 1953. For the purposes of the Olympic Games, it was envisaged that the road would join the Olympic Area of Montigalà (in Badalona) with the Olympic Areas of Barcelona city.

***The rehousing process:*** In 1989, REGESA managed the negotiation and rehousing of the affected families, who specified that they should be rehoused in the same municipal area of Santa Coloma de Gramanet.

---

<sup>40</sup> Interview, 13/7/05, with Rosa Fornas, lawyer for the City Council, who carried out the negotiations with the affected families.

<sup>41</sup> Según entrevista realizada el 5/7/05 a Albert Recio, de la Associació de Veïns de Nou Barris.

<sup>42</sup> According to interview 29/6/05 with Rosa Sancho (ex REGESA)

The company's archives indicate that there were a total of 37 affected houses and a total of 52 rehoused families. The whole process lasted approximately four months<sup>43</sup>.

### ***La Pata sur en L'Hospitalet de Llobregat (IMPUSA)***

*Affected families:* 60.<sup>44</sup>

**The rehousing process:** During the summer of 1981, various land was expropriated in the municipal area of L'Hospitalet de Llobregat. The land in question had been designated for Olympic facilities, but the *Generalitat* approved its reclassification for the construction of housing. The expropriated land included buildings that housed 60 families, as well as vacant lots. Some of the expropriations involved court processes.

### **III.8. The homeless**

In 1986, coinciding with the Olympic candidature, a Municipal Table of Police Coordination was set up to implement the *Preventative Police Presence Plan*<sup>45</sup>. In May 1992, two months before the celebration of the Olympic Games, the Council made public a *plan to "clean the streets of beggars, prostitutes, street sellers and swindlers" and of "annoying passers-by"*<sup>46</sup>. This plan had been requested by the COOB (Barcelona's Official Olympic Committee) in order to create a favourable impression of the city.

In 1986, the Social Services department of the City Council was reorganized to incorporate a Youth section, and from this moment, the Council started to pay particular attention to homelessness. Until then, the Council had shown no particular sympathy for the homeless and resources of municipal Social Services were mostly directed to those who came forward through the regulated channels.

With the support of the Vice Councillor, Eulàlia Vintró, the *Programa d'Atenció a la Marginaliació* (Attention to Marginalisation Program) was set in motion; a scheme already successful in other Spanish cities. The program consisted of personalised work carried out by social workers, covering the most degraded areas of the city, identifying the homeless. Depending on the individual circumstances of the homeless person, a specific plan of action was followed, varying between the more serious cases (deserving special attention), and the less serious (requiring integration programs). This program also arranged yearly renewable agreements with not-for-profit organisations such as Foundation *Arrels* and *Sant Joan de Déu* to work with groups of homeless people<sup>47</sup>.

In 1992, it was estimated that there were 800 homeless people living in Barcelona, and 16 homeless shelters.

---

<sup>43</sup> Idem 40

<sup>44</sup> Idem 41

<sup>45</sup> OSPDH (2002:35)

<sup>46</sup> Newspaper notes 30/05/92

<sup>47</sup> According to an interview, 20/7/05, with Judith Emparança, Poverty coordinator for the Social Services and Youth Department of the City Council of Barcelona, between 1986 and 1992 (approximate dates) and founder of the Program of Attention to marginalisation. She retired in 1992 and for some years afterwards, collaborated with Foundation *Arrels* (a non-profit organisation dedicated to the homeless).

As it was anticipated that the Olympic Games would attract homeless people from other cities, the plan created a permanent office to co-ordinate the activity of the municipal Social Services. The construction of a new shelter was planned, aid for victims of crime was strengthened, and 3,000 urban police were given the task of preventing street sellers and moving the prostitutes that worked in the centre of the city to “other less touristic locations”.

*Homeless people helped by the Barcelona Council*

---

	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>
by social insertion teams (street)	586	724	735	790
by social offices (service)	1531	1924	1644	1929
operation cold (winter)	266	383	251	309

Source: (1996) Personal Services Department of the Council of Barcelona



## IV. Participation, social movements, media and social activism

Talk of the success of the 1992 Olympic Games often includes reference to the “Barcelona Model”; and gives the impression that there was no criticism of, or reaction against, the Olympic projects. This impression should be clarified:

- *Citizen activism* did occur, although the activism did not oppose the Olympic project as a whole, but rather specific actions which in most cases concerned the location of roads that passed through different neighbourhoods.
- In order to understand this apparent lack of activism, the position of social movements in general and the residents’ associations in particular, needs to be taken into account. First, a great deal of trust had been placed in the democratically-elected City Council to carry out sound urban planning with social participation. This *trust* was strengthened by the fact that many of the former leaders of the residents’ associations, who had become local consultants, had requested *understanding and support* for the planned projects.

During the early years of the dictatorship, all political parties and associations not related to the *Movimiento*<sup>48</sup> were forbidden. In the neighbourhoods, there were only the *Asociaciones de Cabezas de Familia* (Heads of the Family Associations). In 1964, with the passage of the *Ley de Asociaciones* (Associations Act), Residents’ Associations started to appear. The residents’ associations were a platform for integrating the members of the workers movement and parties working in secrecy, such as the PSUC.

### IV.1. Associations

The *origin of the Residents’ associations* in Barcelona was linked to local interests, such as the review of the Plan Comarcal, the Ribera Plan, the Second Coastal Ring Road and the Nou Barris Partial Plan. The various residents’ associations can be distinguished according to the period in which they were established<sup>49</sup>:

- Pioneering Associations (1960-1969): dispersed, with little co-ordination.
- Political Associations (1970-1972): focused on urban defence.
- Consolidation Associations (1973-1977): consolidation of the urban movement, less political.
- Non-political Associations (1977-1980): resulting from territorial divisions.

At the same time, and linked to the residents’ movements, critical groups were formed within the university network. Among these were architecture and urbanism-related groups, such as *Oriol Bobigas*, and others in the fields of economics and law. Many were democratically-elected as members of the municipal government.

Further, journalists and intellectuals in various fields supported the movements challenging the municipal policies and played a decisive role in denouncing abuses and deficiencies.

---

<sup>48</sup> Popular name given to the organisation, institutions and ideology of the dictatorship.

<sup>49</sup> Martí, P *Les associacions de veïns en el moviment associatiu de Barcelona* en Roca, J (1997:332) (Residents’ associations in the associational movement of Barcelona)

In 1975, there were organised groups in most of the neighbourhoods. These groups became key political actors, having significant mobilisation power and the ability to articulate and manage social demands.

In the 1980s, the residents' associations began to be fractured (by collectives and topics) and their prominence in the media decreased<sup>50</sup>.

## IV.2. The Media

The committed and critical points of view developed by journalists such as J.M. Huertas and Fabre and Prades from *El Correo Catalán* and Figueruelo from *El Noticiero Universal* during the dictatorship, were kept alive during the preparatory years of the Olympic Games by some newspapers such as *El Periódico de Cataluña*, the *Diario de Barcelona* and the *Avui*.

The media transmitted the collective enthusiasm for the Olympic Games in the same way as civil society did, but the journalists (especially print journalists), continued to examine closely the ways in which neighbourhoods and the city in general were transformed, and highlighted the negative aspects of, and problems generated by, this transformation. Among such journalists were Maria Five, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, and JM Huertas; reporters of reference on these issues.

In order to accurately evaluate the importance the press, it is necessary to consider the role that the print media played at that time in informing the public and generating public opinion about the Olympic Games.

In summary, the *main issues* that appeared in the newspapers in relation to the Olympic Games and housing were:

- The transformation of the Poblenou neighbourhood, especially the area of the Olympic Village.
- The rehousing of the residents affected by the construction of the Olympic Village and residents of the area behind the cemetery in Montjuïc.
- The elimination of the remaining shantytowns (especially Montjuïc).
- The demands of the residents' associations and the state-subsidised housing entities.
- The residents' associations' demands to re-pave the ring roads as a way to reduce noise and pollution.
- The construction and sale of the Olympic Village housing.
- The attempt to eliminate homeless people and prostitutes from the city's streets.
- The debate on the "catalanisation" of the Olympic Games.
- Opinion polls and surveys.

## IV.3. Social activism in response to the Olympic projects

The residents' associations and civic entities, although at that time weakened and undergoing their own transformation, were active during the process of preparation for the Olympic Games.

---

<sup>50</sup> Idem 14 Roca, J (1997:335)

During that period, the residents' associations generally focused their activities on supporting residents of houses with *aluminosis*<sup>51</sup> and participating in the elaboration of the special interior reform plans (PERI), which designed the city's urban areas.

In relation to the Olympic construction works, the residents' associations actively participated in four areas:

- Negotiation of the expropriations and rehousing,
- The demand for public housing in the Olympic Village,
- The plans for the ring roads (*Ronda Litoral* and *Ronda de Dalí*),
- The demand for sporting facilities.

#### *IV.3.1. Negotiation of the expropriation and rehousing of the affected groups.*

The associations actively participated in the rehousing process by advising and representing the affected residents. When the planned construction of the Olympic Village was publicly announced, the Poblenou Residents' Association created the *Nova Icaria* Commission to monitor the construction works and evaluate the consequences for the neighbourhood as a whole. In 1987-1988, this Commission, together with the Poblenou Residents' Association and the cultural association, *Flor de Maig*, organised a number of activities under the title "*Poblenou, on vas?*" (*Poblenou, where are you going?*). These activities ranged from visits to the areas that would disappear, to debates about the future of the neighbourhood.<sup>52</sup>

#### *IV.3.2. Campaign against speculation and demand for public housing in the Olympic Village*

Barcelona's Residents' Associations Federation (FAVB), with the support of the trade unions *Comisiones Obreras* (CCOO) and *Confederación General de Trabajadores* (CGT) and other civic entities, launched a campaign in June 1990. Under the slogan "*Protestem*" ("*Let's protest*") they denounced the property speculation and demanded that the Council reserve 40% of the houses in the Olympic Village for citizens on low incomes. This 40% corresponded to the level of municipal participation in the *Nova Icaria* real estate.



<sup>51</sup> Aluminosis is a pathology that threatens the structure of the buildings.

<sup>52</sup> Arxiu Històric de Poblenou (1990:82)

The campaign was launched with a number of information sessions to encourage reflection on the subject, and debates (with the participation of the writer Vázquez Montalbán, the geography expert Mercè Tatjer and the president of the NGO *Justícia i Pau*, Joan Gomis). The campaign denounced the failure of the authorities to take action to address the serious housing problem in the city and demanded that housing be provided as a public service.<sup>53</sup>

On 28th June 1990, 400 people took part in a protest demanding that the Council allocate 40% of the new Olympic Village housing to state-subsidized housing, and that the *Generalitat* establish a plan for the construction of public housing specifically for the city of Barcelona. The protestors handed letters to both administrations which demonstrated the increased price of housing in Barcelona over the prior few years and accused the administration of abandoning social policy in relation to housing, by leaving the construction of housing to speculative construction companies.<sup>54</sup>

The campaigners estimated that 5,000 new state subsidized houses would be required in Barcelona during the subsequent four years and demanded action in relation to the estimated 100,000 permanently uninhabited secondary market houses in the City.

The mobilisation received significant coverage in the media and managed to put pressure on the Council. However, despite an initial agreement with the Council on a proposal to allocate a percentage of the Olympic Village housing to state-subsidised housing, pressure from private promoters (including their expressed willingness to privately finance the operation) put an end to the proposal. Apart from the construction of houses with prices fixed at slightly below the market price for 50 years, the subsidized housing was located in the other Olympic Villages.

#### *IV.3.3. Construction of the coastal ring road*

The residents of Poblenou learnt through the newspapers that the coastal ring road would be built. This project has always been criticised on the basis that, just when train lines were being removed from the seafront, a new barrier between the neighbourhood and the beach would be created.

The *Coordinadora de Entidades de Poblenou* (a regrouping of the various neighbourhood associations) requested immediate information from the Council. The Council refused. An assembly was organised for the 29th October 1987 in response to the refusal, under the slogan “*Volem ser consultats*” (“We want to be consulted”). The Council was warned that if it did not attend the assembly, there would be a street demonstration. Given the massive civic participation, the Council agreed to consider the residents’ concerns. They proposed that the coastal ring road be covered, and that bridges be built over it in order to facilitate access to the beaches. As requested by the residents, the ring roads were also built as dual rather than triple carriageways, which had been the preference of the government.

The citizens’ groups’ criticisms of the projects and proposed alternatives were filed with the Council. The only significant alterations to the original project came from the *Ministerio de Obras Publicas* (Ministry of Public Works) which amended the maximum height of the hotel buildings and the offices directly on the sea front and various technical aspects of the projects.

---

<sup>53</sup> Press release 9/6/90 in the newspaper *Avui*

<sup>54</sup> 29/6/90 in the newspaper *El País*

#### *IV.3.4. Construction of the Ronda de Dalt ring road*

Residents of the neighbourhood of *Nou Barris* held massive protests opposing the construction of the *Ronda de Dalt* (Dalt ring road). The residents rejected the concept of such a large highway cutting through the city, demanding instead that additional metro lines be installed.<sup>55</sup>

When it became clear that it would not be possible to prevent the construction of the ring road, the residents demanded that it be covered, and requested additional metro lines and sports facilities for the city (not only for purposes of the Olympic Games). Police intervention was required in some of the protests, and the Council eventually acceded to some of the residents' requests.

The negotiations took place in the district's headquarters, where the following matters were agreed:

- That the ring road would be partially covered at the point where it crossed the neighbourhood;
- That the possible effects of the construction of the Ronda would be reduced;
- That the width of the carriageways would be reduced so that it would be possible to place access roads above the ring road instead of alongside it;
- That the Parc Can Dragó would be built.

It should also be noted that the decision to cover the Sarrià section of the road was also thanks to the representations of the residents' organisation, although in this case, the residents themselves paid for the building works.

#### *IV.3.5. Sporting facilities in the district of Nou Barris in Can Dragó*

During many years, the popular neighbourhoods of Barcelona petitioned for spaces to practice sport in proper conditions, but these requests were for the most part disregarded. During several Sundays of Autumn 1973, in the Nou Barris district, residents of Trinitat Nova, Roquetes and Verdum successfully organised the "Popular Olympic games of Nou Barris". These sporting sites would however have to wait, like many others, for the Olympic nomination. From that point onwards, these demands became unavoidable: An Olympic city had to offer public installations where sport could be practiced.

The demands managed to ensure that the "Plan for sports facilities" that accompanied the preparation of the Games would apportion part of the lands of RENFE-Meridiana to the construction of the sporting installations of Can Dragó. This sports complex, which is mainly composed of athletic fields and a swimming pool, did not reach the dimensions that were originally requested, and a commercial and recreational complex has been recently installed on a private part of the land (headed by Heron City and El Corte Inglés, the leading Spanish department store).

---

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Albert Recio, *Associació de Veïns de Nou Barris* (Nou Barris residents' association), 05/07/05.



At the beginning of June 1984, a week of events was initiated demanding the provision of all sports facilities in Nou Barris which remained unbuilt. On June 13, 1984, a masked youth marched about the Roquetas underground station with an Olympic torch, made from an old lamp.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Huertas, JM and Andreu, M.(1996): *Barcelona en lluita. (El moviment urbà 1965-1996)*. Barcelona: FAVB.

## V. The impact of the Olympic Games on Access to Housing

The inherent elements of the right to *adequate housing* identified by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights<sup>57</sup> are as follows:

- Legal security of tenure
- Availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructures
- Affordability (affordable expenses)
- Physical accessibility
- Suitable location
- Cultural adaptability

The period between 1986 to 1993 witnessed economic growth and an expansion of the building sector (from 1986 to 1992<sup>58</sup> the building of new houses in Barcelona increased by approximately 101%).

The organisation and celebration of the Olympic Games had a negative impact basically on affordability:

- Strong increases in the prices of housing for rent and for sale (from 1986 to 1993 the cumulative increase was 139% for sale prices and nearly 145% in rentals).
- A drastic decrease in the availability of public housing (from 1986 to 1992<sup>59</sup> there was a cumulative decrease of 75.92%).
- Gradual decrease in the availability of private houses for rent (from 1981 to 1991 the cumulative decrease was 23.69%)

However, these three indicators were common to other big Spanish cities as a consequence of:

- The lack of maturity of the Spanish building sector: in expansion in 1988 and in crisis in 1991.
- The lack of state planning regarding public housing: during the period 1987-1992 no state housing plans were approved, and no stable instruments of public financing for social housing were established.
- The lack of state regulation in relation to public control on renting: during the period 1985-1994.

The preparation and celebration of the Olympic Games took place in the context of minimal state intervention in the area of housing. *The Olympic Games served to reinforce and exacerbate the consequences of the privatisation of a basic need such as housing.*

### *Trends in renting in Barcelona:*

---

---

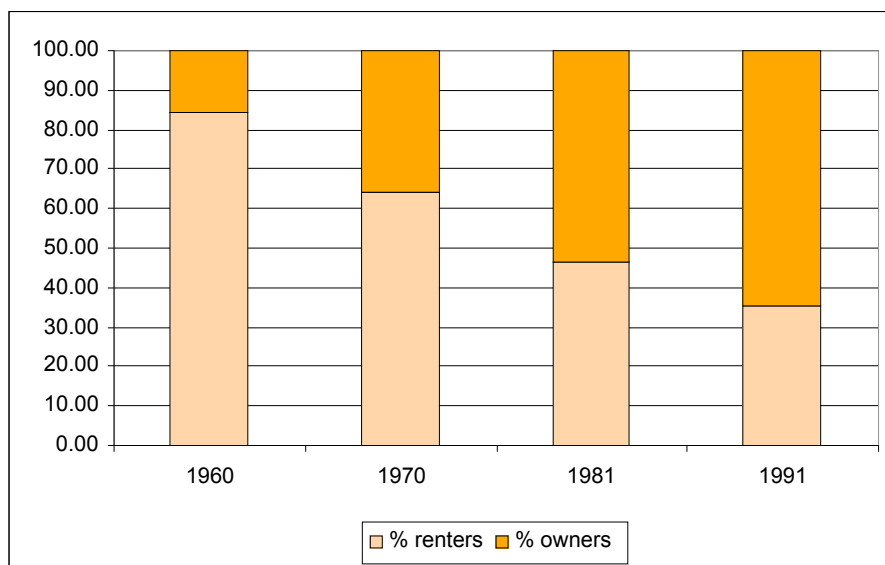
<sup>57</sup> United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment 4 on the Right to Housing (1991)

<sup>58</sup> The year 1993 is not included since this signals the beginning of the crisis, with a reduction of 34% in the number of houses built. If the whole period were included (1986-1993) the increase would have been 67%.

<sup>59</sup> The year 1993 is not included. The approval of the Housing Plan 1992-1995, which allowed the conversion of free market housing into public housing, would result in an apparently spectacular increase of 203.54% in the availability of public housing. If the whole period (1986-1993) were taken into account, the decrease would have been 26.92%.

	1960	1970	1981	1991
% tenants	84,40	64,30	46,40	35,60
% homeowners	15,60	35,70	53,60	64,40

Source: (2002) *Habitatge, un dret vulnerat* (housing, a vulnerable right). Women and civil rights Department of Barcelona City Council. From the *Patronat Municipal de l'Habitatge* database 1997.



	1960	1970	1981	1991
Rented accommodation	269.183	290.954	268.881	205.182
Reduction in rented accommodation 1960-1991	-23,78%			

Source: (2002) *Habitatge, un dret vulnerat*. Woman and civil rights Department of Barcelona Council. From *Patronat Municipal de l'Habitatge* database 1997.

In sum, from the late 1980s onwards, a significant portion of the population could not find affordable housing in the city. As a consequence, there was an increase in “latent” demand, a sacrifice of quality standards, and emigration from the city<sup>60</sup> (*residential migration within the metropolitan area facilitated by the ring roads*).

### V.1. The supply of housing

Between 1986 (the year of the Olympic candidature) and 1991 (one year prior to the celebration of the Olympic Games) *a significant amount of residential construction took place in Barcelona, although this increase was not constant*. In some years, the amount of housing for sale decreased, even though the building sector was in expansion. The supply of newly-constructed houses during the period in question experienced a *cumulative increase of 101.5%*. From 1993 onwards, the economic recession had a harsh effect on the building sector, which witnessed a reduction of 34% in the amount of housing for sale (thereby reducing the cumulative increase of 1986-1993 to 67.05%).

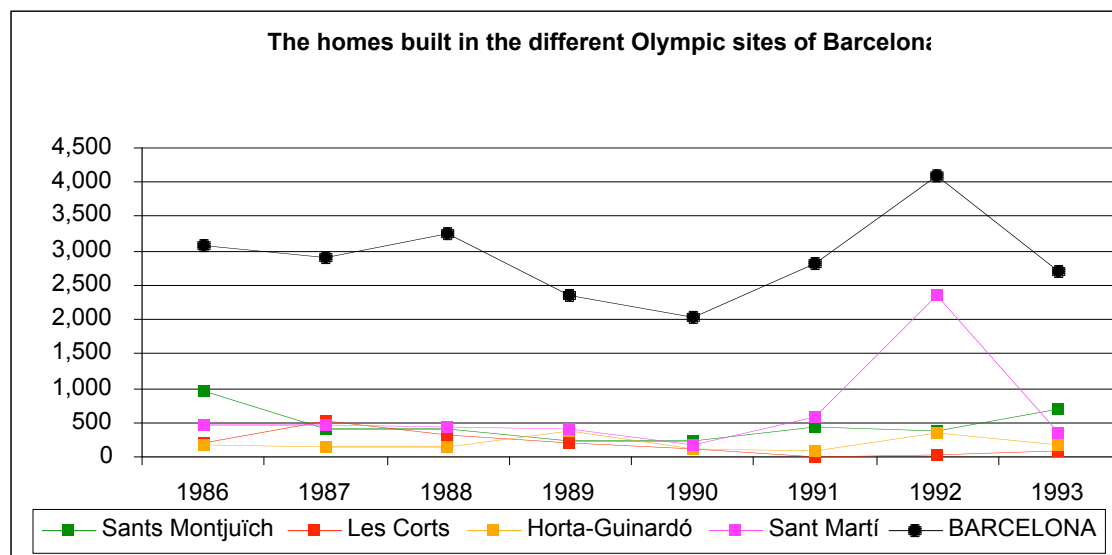
<sup>60</sup> Calvo, MJ, *El cost de l'accés a l'habitatge a Barcelona 1989-1995* a Roca, J (1997:311) (the cost of acces to housing in Barcelona).



These trends continued in 1992 and 1993 (the Olympic and post-Olympic years) in most areas of Barcelona, with the exception of the Sant Martí district. In 1992, 57.20% of the total houses built in Barcelona were built in this district.

The reason for the *spectacular increase in the number of new houses built in the Sant Martí district in 1992* was that this district was the site of the main Olympic Village (the Poblenou contained 1,841 houses and the Vila del Parc de Mar, 205 houses). As the following table reflects, the building boom in 1992 in Sant Martí had a clear impact on the total number of houses built in Barcelona as a whole.

The distribution of the new construction by districts during the period 1986-1993 demonstrates those neighbourhoods that are well established (Ciutat Vella, Sarrià Sant Gervasi, Les Corts Gracia, Horta-Guinardó, Nou Barris) and those which have been contributing to the growth of the city (Sants-Montjuïc, Sant Andreu and Sant Martí).



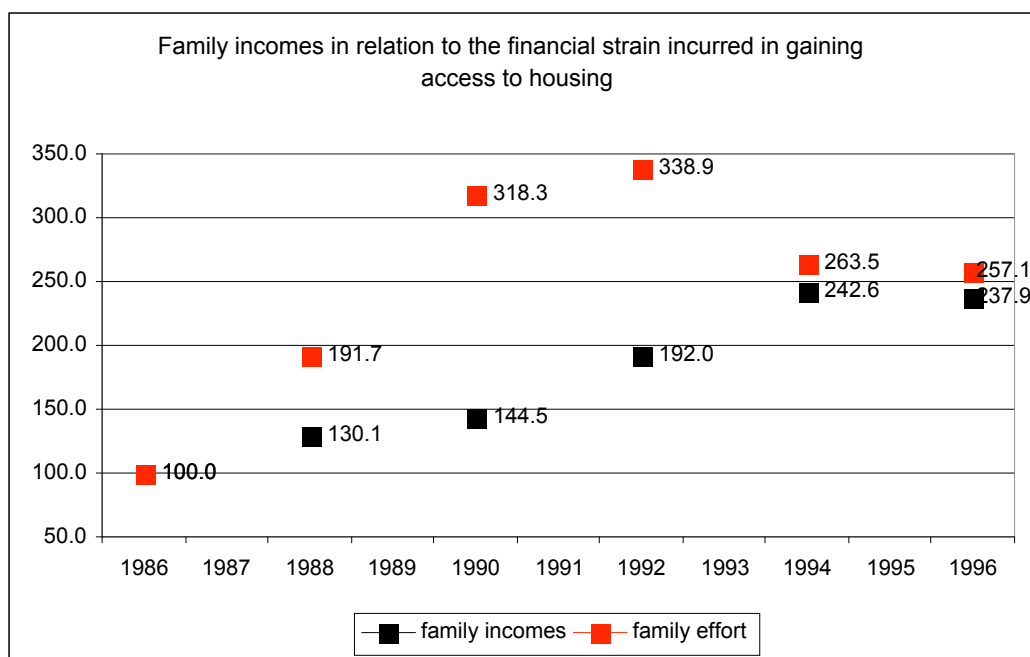
Source: *Direcció General de l'Habitatge*, elaboración propia.

## V.2. The prices of houses for sale and to rent

From 1986 to 1993, there was a *139% cumulative increase in house prices* in Barcelona. The most significant increases took place between 1986 and 1987 (34%), 1987 and 1988 (49%) and 1988 and 1989 (35%), when the building sector was in expansion. It was not until after the Olympic Games that increases in housing prices were more restrained (2% increase in 1993).

Between 1986 and 1993, there was also a *144.55% increase in rents*. The highest increases took place in 1988 (33%) and 1989 (33.17%), and in contrast with housing prices, the increase remained high in successive years until 1993, when rents started to decrease.

The evolution of housing prices and rents during the pre-Olympic Games years had a negative impact on access to housing for families resident in Barcelona.



Source: (2002) *Habitatge, un dret vulnerat*. Woman and civil rights Department of Barcelona Council. From *Patronat Municipal de l'Habitatge* database 1997.

Taking 1986 as year 0 (the year when the Olympic candidature was approved) and family income and economic effort in that year as 100, the statistics show that between 1989 and 1992 (the year of the celebration of the Olympic Games) the increase in financial strain on families gaining access to accommodation in Barcelona was far superior to the increase in their incomes (a differential of 61.6 points in 1988; 173.8 points in 1990; and 146.9 in 1992). Following the celebration of the Olympic Games, the financial strain decreased considerably (20.9 points in 1994 and 19.2 points in 1996).

### V.3. Public housing

Between 1986 (the year of the Olympic candidature) and 1991 (a year before the celebration of the Olympic Games), *the construction of public housing decreased radically*, with the number of public houses built in the *Ciutat Vella* district of Barcelona falling from 2,647 in 1986 to only 9 in 1991.

The decline in the construction of public housing in Barcelona before and after the Olympic Games cannot be disassociated from the evolution of the construction sector in the free market during the same period.

*From 1986 to 1991* the construction of homes for the private sector was in full *expansion* (partly due to the Olympic Games) and private promoters focused on constructing houses for the private market, being uninterested in producing public housing. Nor was the Government<sup>61</sup> interested in encouraging the private sector to build public housing. Given that one of the objectives of the Housing Plans was to stimulate the building sector when in crisis, during this period *there were no multiyear public housing plans* (VPO) and therefore, hardly any public housing was built.

<sup>61</sup>The authority with the competence to regulate the financing of public housing is the central State, although the Autonomous Communities can also complement and manage the state subsidies.

From 1992 to 1995, the private sector went into recession. Housing that had been started in the pre-Olympic period of expansion, in particular during 1988 and 1989, could not be sold. The government therefore approved the 1992-1995 Housing Plan.

The 1992-1995 Housing Plan created the VPT system<sup>62</sup> through which public housing was re-launched; not as a consequence of new homes being built, but by the conversion of the existing stock of housing as a result of the crisis, into VPT. This meant that, in the space of a few years, there was more public housing in Barcelona but, paradoxically, the price of VPT housing was higher than VPO housing, with less public regulation.

Finally, in relation to the districts, it should be noted that in 1986, following approval of the Olympic Bid, the promotion of public housing was drastically reduced. 1988<sup>63</sup> saw the reduction of the number of VPO housing built in all districts. This was the case until 1991, when the crisis in the building sector began and the 1992-1995 Housing Plan was approved.

It is also evident that in three of the Olympic areas (Sants Montjuïc, Horta-Guinardó and Sant Martí), the construction of new houses peaked in 1992, coinciding with the celebration of the Olympic Games.

#### V.4. The Olympic housing

During 1991, contracts were signed with private promoters to regulate the use of the houses in the Olympic Villages after the Olympic Games.<sup>64</sup>

##### *Villages to host the Olympic Family (1)*

Vila Olímpica del Poblenou	1841	Accommodation for athletes
Vila del Parc de Mar	205	Accommodation for judges and arbitrators
Vila de la Vall d'Hebrón	488	Accommodation for journalists
Vila de Montigalá	898	Accommodation for journalists
Vila de Cerdanyola	600	Accommodation for police

4032

(1) Vila Olímpica de La seu d'Urgell and Banyoles are not included

In total, with all the Olympic Villages (including the sub headquarters of Seu d'Urgell and Banyoles) approximately 4,500 houses were built.

##### *V.4.1. The Olympic Village in Poblenou (Vila Olímpica)*

<sup>62</sup> *Viviendas a Precio Tasado*, whereby the prices would be regulated and a maximum price ceiling established in order to ensure affordability.

<sup>63</sup> From 1986 to 1988 (two years being the approximate duration of a housing promotion; from design, to building to handing over of the houses).

<sup>64</sup> COOB (1993-III: 183-201).

Located in Barcelona (see map C), the development of this site required the construction of **1,841 houses** through agreements between the Council and VOSA (Vila Olympic, SA), NISA (Nova Icària, SA), OMSA (Olympic Moll, SA), Eurocity, SA, MAPFRE, Generalitat de Catalunya- Institut Català de la Salut, and the Archidiócesis de Barcelona. During the Olympic Games the *athletes*<sup>65</sup> resided here.

This site had a maximum capacity of **14,000 residents** and the maximum number of residents received at any one time was 13,994. During the games 14,406 people in total were housed in the village.

In February 1991, there were changes to the board of directors of NISA and the Council took advantage of this occurrence to claim that a portion of the houses constructed would be dedicated to groups with special needs. The councillor for social services and youth claimed that 10% of the village's houses (200 houses) would be allocated for young people.<sup>66</sup> According to the housing department of the City Council (*Patronat Municipal de l'Habitatge*) 25% of the houses would be designated for families with low incomes<sup>67</sup> and the Head of the Council of Barcelona claimed that some of the houses were sold at "cost price".<sup>68</sup>

The Federation of the neighbourhood Associations of Barcelona (FAVB) also took advantage of this occurrence to claim that 40% of the houses built in the Olympic Village (25 houses) should be destined for public housing. This percentage coincided with the participation share of the Council of Barcelona as a shareholder of NISA.<sup>69</sup>

As it turned out, the houses were promoted through a public-private partnership for sale to middle/upper class families *at free market price*, with prices ranging between 200.000 and 300.000 pesetas per m2.

To hasten the sale of the houses, NISA requested that the Spanish Government allow families who bought houses in the Olympic Village to benefit from *Ley 12/88* (Law number 12/88). The effect of this law was to provide tax benefits to businesses and self-employed professionals who purchased a house in an area where specific events (in the Universal Exhibition of Seville and the Olympic Games of Barcelona) had taken place, by deeming such persons to be collaborators in the events<sup>70</sup>.

The houses were initially intended to be marketed through a public tender, but by the end of 1990, it was decided that they be sold on the market,<sup>71</sup> which delayed their release. In May 1991, only 27% of the houses had been sold<sup>72</sup>.

#### **V.4.2. Parc de Mar**

---

<sup>65</sup> Other residences for athletes were built in La Seu d'Urgell (canoeing) and Banyoles (rowing), given the long distance between these sites and the city of Barcelona.

<sup>66</sup> Press release 17/2/91 in the paper *El Periódico*.

<sup>67</sup> Press release 28/2/91 in the paper *Avui*.

<sup>68</sup> Press release 8/3/91 in the paper *El País*.

<sup>69</sup> Press release 6/3/91 in the newspaper *Avui*, confirmed by Andrés Naya in an interview on 4/7/05. Shareholders in NISA: The City Council (40%), Banco Exterior de España (20%), Bami, SA (10%) and Vallehermoso SA (10%).

<sup>70</sup> Press release 18/10/91 in the newspaper *El País*

<sup>71</sup> 30/4/91 in the newspaper "Avui"

<sup>72</sup> 1/5/91 in the newspaper *El diari de Barcelona*

Village located in Barcelona (see map C). **205 houses** were built through an agreement between the Council and *Mediterrània de Promocions, S.A.* During the Olympic Games **judges and referees** resided here.

The maximum capacity of the village was **1,600 residents**, with 1,425 housed at any one time. During the Olympic Games 1,518 in total resided here.

An urban agreement was signed according to which **two-thirds** of the houses were directly commercialised by the private promoter **for sale at free market prices** and the remaining **one-third** was managed by the *Patronat Municipal de l'Habitatge* (housing department of the City Council), which diversified the houses as follows: one part was managed directly by the *Patronat Municipal de l'Habitatge for sale at a moderate price* to low income families on the basis of a draw (called the *llars* system), another part was agreed with the *Generalitat* to be used for the **public promotion of social renting** and another part was made available to housing co-operatives in order to enable them to award the houses to their **co-operative members at cost price**<sup>73</sup>.

#### V.4.3. Vall D'Hebron

Located in Barcelona (see map C) with **488 houses** built through the agreement between the Council and UTE Coisa-Conycon. During the Olympic Games **members of the media** resided here.

This site had a maximum capacity of **2,200 residents**. There was a maximum of 1,748 housed here at any one time and 1,912 in total during the Olympics.

The management system consisted of an exchange of municipal land in return for houses built by private promoters. **150 houses** were commercialised by the *Patronat Municipal de Sòl for sale at moderate prices* (less than 150,000 pesetas per m<sup>2</sup>) for families with limited resources<sup>74</sup> and **338 houses** were commercialised by the building company, UTE Coisa-Coycon **for sale at free market price** (between 145,000-200,000 pesetas per m<sup>2</sup>)<sup>75</sup>.

The houses at the Olympic Village at Poblenou had fewer facilities (e.g. they lacked air conditioning) than those at Vall d'Hebron, but were more expensive. In addition, the decision to release the Poblenou houses for sale was made much later, and this meant that the houses in Vall d'Hebron were sold much more quickly than those at Poblenou (by May 1991 40% of the houses at Vall d'Hebron had been sold<sup>76</sup>).

#### V.4.4. Montigalà

Located in the neighbouring town of Badalona (see map C). **842 multi-family houses and 56 single-family houses** were built through agreements between the Council and Montigalà, SA and Levitt Bosch-Aymerich, SA. During the Olympic Games **members of the media** stayed here. This village had a maximum capacity of **5,366 residents** and the maximum

---

<sup>73</sup> Valls (2001: 31)

<sup>74</sup> Appeared 25/4/91 in the newspaper *El Observador*

<sup>75</sup> Press release 30/4/91 in the newspaper *Avui*

<sup>76</sup> Press release 30/4/91 in the newspaper *Avui*

number of persons who resided here at any one time was 3,902. During the Olympic Games, a total of 4,462 people resided here.

The village residences were part of the first phase of construction of houses in the area of Montigalà-Batlòria, and were promoted through public-private agreements with private promoters that commercialised the houses *for sale at moderate prices* (between 100,000 and 125,000 pesetas per m<sup>2</sup>). The agreements were signed subject to the stipulation that the sale prices would be moderate.

The Council of Badalona subsequently carried out a second phase of construction, building 900 houses in the same area, through agreements with, respectively, union co-operatives CCOO (200 houses) and the Unió General de Treballadors (UGT) (206 houses), the public company REGESA (150 houses) and the IMPSOL (50 houses), with 100 houses being retained by the Council for direct public sale.<sup>77</sup>

#### *V.4.5. Vila de Cerdanyola*

*600 apartments* were built in the neighbouring town of Cerdanyola del Vallès (see map C) for promotion directly through the City Council's Housing department (*Patronat Municipal de l'Habitatge*). Members of the *police* were housed here during the Olympic Games.<sup>78</sup>

The apartments were subsequently handed over to the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona* (UAB) and currently house *university students at a moderate rent*.

---

<sup>77</sup> Press release 31/5/91 in the newspaper *Avui*

<sup>78</sup> Valls (2001: 30)

## VI. Conclusions

### VI.1. Prior considerations

The Olympic candidature coincided with the first years of democracy in Spain, following a long period of dictatorship. It was an important time of political and administrative restructuring and of Spanish integration into the international community, as demonstrated by Spain's signing in 1977 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the adoption of the Spanish Constitution in 1978.

This historic context enabled the preparations for the Olympic Games to include a process of urban transformation agreed among the different levels of administration and supported by the community. The characteristics of this process were the co-operation policy, public-private collaboration and the support and active involvement of the citizens.

The project of the Olympic candidature was part of a larger strategy of urban regeneration of the city of Barcelona, including the recovery of the sea front and the improvement of the infrastructures connecting the city to the surrounding metropolitan areas.

As a matter of fact, with the urban development begun as a result of the Olympic Games, Barcelona heightened significantly its profile as a touristic centre. This campaign nowadays means more than 6 millions of visitors per year.<sup>79</sup> Major negative consequences of this include the degradation of traditional neighbourhoods, the displacement of residents –gentrification–, and heightened inflation.

Despite the wide scope of this urban regeneration *no participative processes were anticipated in the Olympic candidature, and no specific protocols or commissions were set up in relation to forced evictions or the possible impact of the Olympic Games on access to housing.*

It must be remembered, nevertheless, that at the time of preparations for the Barcelona Olympic Games, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had not yet elaborated General Comment No. 4 on the right to adequate housing (1991) or General Comment No. 7 on forced evictions (1997). However, Article 47 of the Spanish Constitution purports to prevent speculation and ensure that the community shares in increased property values generated by the urban activities of public bodies.

### VI.2. Rehousing

According to the parameters established by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in *General Comment 7*, *evictions did take place, but these were not “forced” as the affected were rehoused (provided with adequate housing) and, in the cases where the affected residents already had access to adequate housing (e.g. a second house or accommodation with family members), they were compensated financially for the loss of their housing.*

---

<sup>79</sup> Figures of 2006, *La Veu del Carrer* n°.100, la FAVB, Barcelona, 2007.

The completion of the Olympic Games project resulted in the rehousing of 624 families in total, consisting of:

- 147 directly affected families (due to the construction of the Olympic Village in Poblenou); and
- 477 indirectly affected families (282 due to the elimination of shantytowns and 195 due to completion of ring roads).

According to the information obtained while carrying out the research for this report, 65% of the families living in the shantytowns were of Roma ethnicity.

A network of companies was established to hasten the processes of land acquisition and relocation of affected residents. These were public companies at first (i.e. the shareholders were public authorities), and subsequently also included private capital (mixed companies).

The main weaknesses of the process were:

- *Lack of real alternatives to the evictions* due to the strong belief and high level of trust (on the part of politicians, technicians, associations, and affected residents alike) in the benefits that the Olympics project would bring to the city.
- *Lack of mechanisms for participation* by residents in the elaboration of the urban plans. This suggests that citizens were regarded as passive subjects, who were expected to accept the urbanisation process established by technicians and politicians, and to contribute only to the extent of defining their own immediate interests.
- *The strategy of promoting individual (case by case) negotiation* of financial compensation arrangements resulted in a fragmentation of interests, and a weakening of the influence that the affected residents may have been able to exert as a collective group.
- *Alternative housing was offered, but not in the affected residents' same areas of residence.*

On the other hand, there were some positive aspects of the rehousing process:

- *In most cases, rehousing (or compensation) arrangements were arrived at by mutual agreement* and therefore it was not necessary to resort to the expropriation process or appeal to tribunals.
- *The compensation measures tended to be adapted to the different needs of the affected groups* and thus incorporated an element of choice regarding the nature of the ownership interest in the new residence.

### VI.3. Impact on the access to housing

The celebration of the Olympic Games had a negative impact in relation to the right to adequate housing in terms of its accessibility and affordability, as established by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in General Comment No. 4 on the right to adequate housing. Housing prices in the free market rose, there was a reduction in the availability of rental accommodation and there were no public housing policies directed at the groups which were most in need of assistance.

- Between 1986 and 1992<sup>80</sup> the number of new houses for sale in Barcelona increased by almost 101%. This increase in construction, far from increasing access to housing, had a

---

<sup>80</sup> The year 1993 is not included since this signals the beginning of the economic crisis, which caused a 34% reduction in the number of houses built. If the whole period were included (1986-1993) the increase would have been 67%.



negative impact on access that was reflected in the significant increase in the sale prices of houses.

- As a result of the new regulations on renting, *rental prices* also underwent a significant increase. Between 1986 and 1993 the cumulative increase was almost 145%. At the same time, the supply of rental houses gradually decreased. *Between 1981 and 1991, there was a cumulative decrease in available rental housing of 23.69%.*
- The availability of *public housing* was drastically reduced. Between 1986 and 1992,<sup>81</sup> there was a cumulative decrease of 75.92% in available public housing.

It should be noted, however, that these trends were not exclusive to the city of Barcelona and its surroundings, but were also apparent in other large Spanish cities. This suggests that they were also the result of the immaturity (and cyclical nature) of the construction sector, the lack of state planning for public housing and the lack of public regulation and control of housing rentals.

#### VI.4. Final considerations

Thirteen years after the Olympic Games, it is worth asking some questions about the post-Olympic development of the city. The Olympic Games represented the beginning of a new model for the city of Barcelona, with the commercialisation of housing, the expansion of its geographical limits and the massive development of road infrastructures.

The new roads contributed to the increase of employment-related and residential mobility, facilitating the expansion of the city and the emigration of the segments of the population to nearby towns as a result of the price increases in the city itself. The ring roads also mean the promotion of private transportation to the detriment of public transport. This choice has as a consequence an increase of pollution, noise and barriers inside the neighbourhoods.

The Olympic Games helped to promote the city as a tourist destination on an international level. However, as well as affecting the price of housing in Barcelona, the mass influx of tourists also significantly affected housing availability and the use of public spaces.

It would be interesting to carry out a similar investigation (of forced evictions and impact on the right to adequate housing) in relation to the *preparation and celebration of the 2004 Universal Forum of Cultures in Barcelona*.

As the first international event of its kind, the 2004 Universal Forum was not monitored by any international institution (unlike the Olympic Games, which was subject to IOC monitoring). The loss of confidence in municipal politics, the separation between municipal politics and the residents' associations (further reinforced by anti-globalisation networks), the strengthening of democratic structures, and the questioning of the urban model developed around the 2004 Universal Forum (including the system of public-private agreements used), could offer new and interesting insights into COHRE's project on "International events and forced evictions".

---

<sup>81</sup>The year 1993 is not included. Following the Housing Plan 1992-1995, which permitted the conversion of unoccupied property into public housing, there appears to have been a spectacular 203.54% increase in public housing. If the whole period were taken into account (1986-1993), there is a cumulative decrease of 26.92%.

