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## **“Symbolic accessibility”**

### **Symbolic public space and culture on the outskirts of Barcelona. The case of Bon Pastor (Barcelona) <sup>6</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

**The article discusses the ongoing experience in Barcelona's Bon Pastor district. An experience of citizen participation that aims to capture in the public space the civic memory of the neighbourhood. A co-**

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<sup>6</sup> ***This work continues, revises and updates a previous article published by Remesar, Antoni, & Vergel, Javier. (2020). Bon Pastor, a Neighbourhood with a Future. Let's Make its Remembrance. Claiming the Symbolic Accessibility. European Journal of Creative Practices in Cities and Landscapes, 3(2), 99–119. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2612-0496/11089>***

**management experience between the neighbours, the University, the District of Sant Andreu and the MUHBA (Museum of History of the City) with the creation of a space-museum focused on popular housing.**

**Once the policies of the Barcelona City Council for improving the accessibility of people to their residence, public space and public transport are described, they are analysed the new emerging rights that suggest we cannot exclusively consider "People's autonomy" from the individual dimension. Citizens, through existing participatory channels or new channels that can be opened, they have the right to actively participate in the proposals and projects for the built environment linked to their daily life, from a co-production and co-design perspective i.e. in "bottom-up" processes.**

**For this reason, the article calls for an extension of the concepts of accessibility to the symbolic dimensions of the public space that contributes to a better design for people. Certainly, understanding that this claim is only possible at a time when the social structure is or is on track to overcome the problems of physical accessibility.**

**The article concludes that this expansion of the concept and the tools necessary to do so can contribute effectively against the processes of social exclusion.**

**Keywords: *accessibility; social exclusion; civic participation; public space; Bon Pastor.***

## Context

**Bon Pastor emerges as a popular and working-class neighbourhood in the early 1920s, following the placement of large industries like La Maquinista, Sanchís and Sala in the territory. At this time, part of the industrial settlements were in lands within the bounds of Barcelona, while the former Bon Pastor's small neighbourhoods (La Mina, 1923; Estadella and Las Carolinas, 1926) were within the Santa Coloma<sup>7</sup> bounds.**

**In 1929, due to the pressing housing problem, the Barcelona's Municipal Authority for Housing, develops a low-cost houses estate -as well as the nearby Baró de Viver estate- with more than 700 small single-family houses, the largest of the four implemented in Barcelona. Early the 1940s, Barcelona annexed this territory, and following the Provincial Plan (1945) and, later, the County Plan (1953), the territory becomes an area for industrial – two big industrial estates start to grow up- and residential developments - several block housing projects will be executed-, growing in population, mostly emigrant from other parts of Spain. However, this growth is based on processes of spatial segregation (bad communications, isolation ...) and economic and social segregation (poverty, lack of facilities, stigmatization ....).**

**In 1968, the Regional Plan, through a *Partial Plan for remodelling the housing group*, proposes the replacement of the 1929 single-family**

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***7 Santa Coloma de Gramenet is a neighbouring municipality to Barcelona, on the left bank of the Besòs river, which marks the boundary between the two cities. However, until the mid-20th century, part of the agricultural land on the right bank of the river belonged to Santa Coloma. In the 1940s, Barcelona annexed these territories and, consequently, all the territory represented by Bon Pastor, and the neighbouring borough of Baró de Viver, effectively came under the control of the city of Barcelona.***

homes by isolated blocks. It starts a long process of give and take between different local governments and the neighbours, that will end in 2003, after a popular referendum, with a redeveloping plan, replacing the small houses by blocks to rehouse residents. A process split into five stages and currently under development now in its phase IV. A neighbourhood agenda for comprehensive intervention in the area complemented the redevelopment plan. This agenda was called "*Bon Pastor, a neighbourhood with future*<sup>8</sup>". This strategic document made it possible to implement a series of actions to enable physical, social, and economic improvements in this neighbourhood, actions that go well beyond the replacement of affordable housing in Bon Pastor. The principal aims of the proposal were:

- To promote the Bon Pastor as an open, plural and inclusive neighbourhood, linked to the district and city global project.
- To preserve its marked community personality, socially active and cohesive, and committed to educational quality.
- To preserve the intercultural and solidary neighbourhood, which maintains a balance between urban growth and productive activity and defends its commitment to the quality of its natural environment.

The Plan for the Future chose the model of sustainable and balanced development for Bon Pastor.

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<sup>8</sup> "*Bon Pastor, a neighbourhood with future*" is a document emerging from a participatory process organized by the Neighbours Association. The document sets out guidelines for residential transformation of the neighbourhood. It assumes demolishing the old houses and replacing them with new block buildings. The document also includes the guidelines for the process of change, as well as the economic conditions for its realization. As mentioned, they approved the document in a neighbourhood referendum. Subsequently, the Association of Neighbours and the Housing Board of Barcelona signed an agreement setting out the conditions. The transformation process has not been exempt from social conflict, as a small part of the residents did not agree with the conditions, with a period of response and resistance to the process. (Col. *Repensar el Bon Pastor*, s.f.; Portelli, Stefano 2015).

**Barcelona`s Olympics (1992) projects had an urban impact in the area, being that a section of the city`s beltway, designed in trench, runs parallel to the Besòs River and invades part of the neighbourhood lands. The only benefit that the neighbourhood got from the Olympics public works were the coverage of a part of the beltway with a large reinforced concrete slab, where there are sports facilities, a new pedestrian bridge to cross the Besòs river and a big solar power plant on top of a huge pergola built as roof of a civic square.**

**Just in the turn of the century, three projects of metropolitan dimension put more pressure on the territory. The first, was the environmental recovery of the Besòs River (1999) which, over time, became one of the best river parks in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona. The second one, was the " *Sagrera's Plan*", an ambitious project linked to the HST arrival to Barcelona – with forecast of a 2,250M€ investment – , involving the construction of a new central station; the coverage of the old railway yards with a new park (3,7 Km long), several housing developments and the creation of a logistics area, the so-called "Railway Triangle" where, today, Amazon (2022) has set up a logistics centre. In any case, the "*Sagrera's corridor*" project is still in development. The third project was the urban redevelopment of the industrial district of Sant Andreu. One of the main undertakings was the construction of a large shopping centre, La Maquinista<sup>9</sup>, which, in addition, incorporated the construction of nearly 829 homes<sup>10</sup> (Vergel 2022). They finished a first phase of the**

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**9 At the time, the Maquinista shopping centre was the largest shopping centre near Catalonia.**

**10 A first phase of the plan was finish in 2000, but in 2014 the City Council of Barcelona processed a Modification of the General Plan (MPG) to increase "La Maquinista" shopping area in 36,000 square metres and, in turn, building 588 new homes, a green area and a school.**

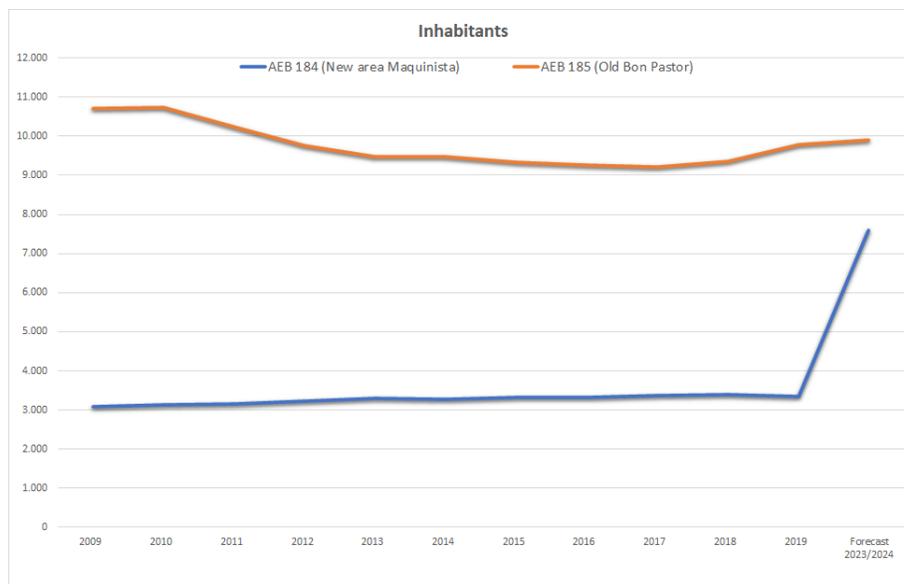
plan in the first 2000's, but in 2014 the City Council of Barcelona processed a Modification of the General Plan (MPG) to increase 36,000 square metres in "La Maquinista" shopping area and, in turn, building 588 new homes, a green area and a school. Finally, between 2021 and this year (2022), Barcelona City Council and the company Conren-Tramway have put a new urban operation up for public discussion: the transformation of the former Mercedes Benz site into a mixed industry 4.0 and housing operation (Henrich y Remesar 2020). In addition, we should take it into account that the "La Maquinista" and "Mercedes" new homes are integrated into the administrative division of the Bon Pastor neighbourhood. This means an increase of approximately 8% of residents in 2000, but it can reach 22-25% when completing both plans.

Morphologically, the neighbourhood is divided into two very clear areas: to the north the new buildings of the urban operation "La Maquinista" - the new buildings of "La Maquinista II" and "Mercedes".; to the south, Bon Pastor, the old neighbourhood. La Maquinista residential complex, shows a radical change in the way buildings are designed, by opting for a "gated communities" design that is alien to Barcelona's building system: its building typology, its public space and the social condition of its inhabitants, introduces a break with the old neighbourhood. The neighbourhood struggle has ensured that this building system will not be used in the new and future development of La Mercedes.

But the differences are not just morphological and related to a model of Urban Design. There are also sociodemographic and economical differences between the residents in each part of the Bon Pastor's

**Neighbourhood (Vergel, 2022). New residents - residents from the year 2000 onwards and those who will come in the next years- are different- socially, economically and culturally- from the former residents which come from popular strata. This phenomenon of a new population with different characteristics landing in the territory has triggered a return to neighbourhood identity reaffirmation in some sectors of the territory's population. In the same way, other sectors warn of the dangers of gentrification, or in other cases, of the deepening of segregation.**

**Be that as it may, in any of these cases, claims about the need to build cities from the citizenry arise once again. What this article proposes, in terms of accessibility to the symbolic, emerges within this field of discussion, which, definitely is the field of the right of the city.**



**Image 1.- Inhabitants in the two areas of the neighbourhood (Maquinista area and area of the old Bon Pastor). Own elaboration based on data from the Barcelona City Council.**

## **Accessibility: the city of 15 minutes and superblocks**

Meanwhile, within the framework of the different policies of the Barcelona City Council, Bon Pastor presents notable improvements in facilities (Community Centre, Library, Old people Centre, new market, sports facilities). Since 2009, the City Council and the Generalitat co-finance the installation of elevators in homes, through the Housing Consortium's Lift Scheme. People's accessibility to Public Space (crossings, ramps, paving, lighting) has been improved in the framework that considers Bon Pastor as a sustainable neighbourhood. The district where the neighbourhood is located has specified an Integral Plan (Disctricte de Sant Andreu 2009) to remove architectural barriers<sup>11</sup> (Access to the Community Centre and the Health Centre; adequacy of pedestrian crossings with guidance elements for blind people, extension of sidewalks; standardization of single platforms on the streets including elements for blind people's guidance). As in the rest of the districts, a local signage system designed for pedestrians, has been developed providing the necessary information to help people to move around<sup>12</sup>.

Accessibility to the whole of the territory of Barcelona is more or less guaranteed by the extension of bus lines, the installation of a metro stop in the neighbourhood (2010). Improvements in transport accessibility include: Braille signage of the switches and the sound information system for visually impaired people, kneeling mechanisms

*11 The Integral Neighbourhood Plan, approved for funding by the Neighbourhood Law in 2009, sets clear priorities for investment in personal accessibility, public transport (metro in 2010, new bus lines), housing (Phases II to IV of the Re-housing Plan 2000) and public space (paving, lighting, and so forth). While an important part of the material achievements resulted from the financing of the Spanish Plan for the Stimulation of the Economy and Employment under the State Fund for Local Investment (2009), known as the Zapatero Plan*

*12 As a criticism of the system, we point out that it does not provide information to blind people*

in the buses, retractable ramp on the central door, upgrade request pushers and child pusher warning--which cancels doors automatically –, and the guiding system Navilens<sup>13</sup> for visually impaired people. In any case, following some of Ascher's ideas (Ascher, François 2001) we believe that universal accessibility must be understood, too, from the point of view of the access to “goods” and “services” available in the city and its metropolitan area.

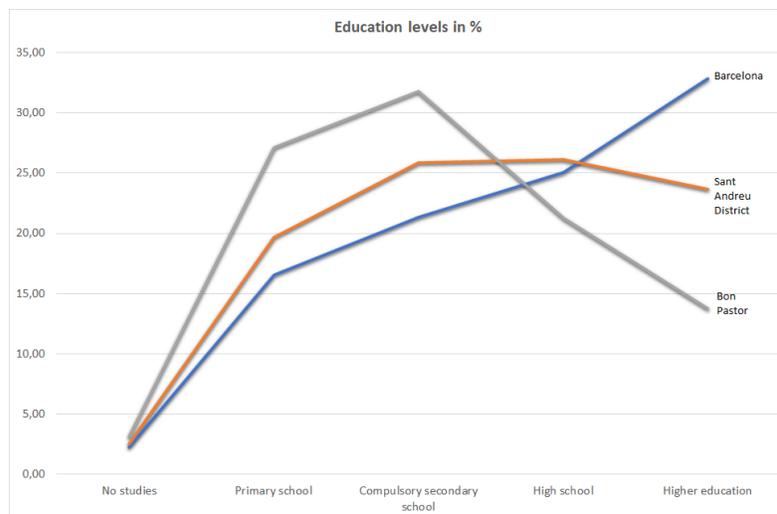
The public decentralization policies developed in Barcelona since 1979 (Borja, Jordi 1988; Borja, Jordi (ed) 1995), have defined a highly decentralized city that aims to ensure a local universal access to goods related to health, leisure, sport, culture and basic education, goods and services to a large extent free of charge. Similarly, the 1980s policies for new central areas (Barnada, Jaume (Coord) 1987) allowed an easy access to a large portion of services related to local administration, trade and retail (Guàrdia, M; Oyon, J.L. 2010), and much of financial services to have a significant local accessibility. The combination of accessibility and mobility policies of the Barcelona City Council can be considered a forerunner of the 15-minute city (Moreno et al. 2021), especially with the subsequent development of the so-called "superblocks" (Rueda, Salvador et al. 2020).

Despite all these goals, decentralization plans and accessibility policies developed since the late 70s, the City is still a segregated medium. In fact, according to a study by the Urban Vulnerability

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**13 NAVILENS is a type of VISUAL TAGS, a new type of fully innovative and revolutionary visual markers that through the use of artificial vision allow, among other things, the visually impaired to be able to move independently in environments unknown to them, simply using their mobile. Any cell phone.**

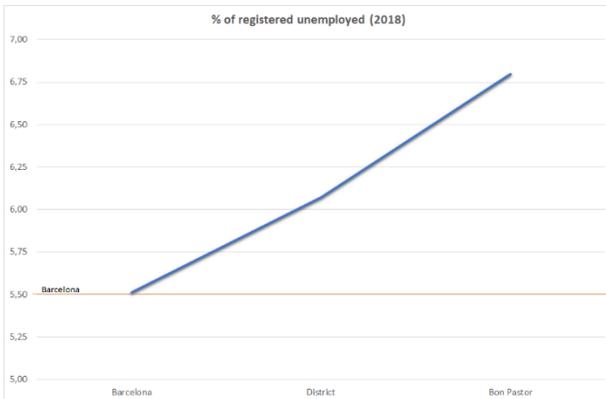
Observatory<sup>14</sup> (2011), Bon Pastor was one of the 27 neighbourhoods of Barcelona with some degree of urban vulnerability and one of the 7 with a medium degree of vulnerability (since the rest remain in a low degree). For this reason, between 2009 to nowadays, in the neighbourhood has been deployed a series of Integral Plans to reduce these vulnerabilities<sup>15</sup>. The effect of these plans on the urban built environment is relevant, and the improvement is evident either in residential or public space terms. However, according to the data, it doesn't seem that the employment and training policies developed by the City Council have had remarkable success in providing accessibility to employment and, better still, to quality jobs (Remesar Aguilar, Nemo 2016; Remesar Aguilar, Nemo A. y Borja, Manolo 2014).



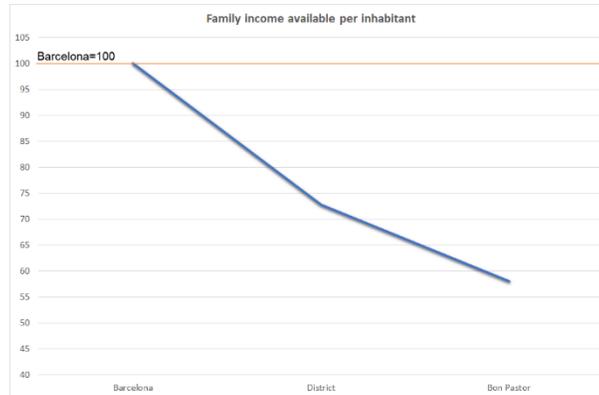
**Image 2. Neighbourhoods such as Bon Pastor show that there is a noteworthy decrease in study levels when the stages of compulsory education are exceeded. Vocational and university education policies do not have the mechanisms (free of charge, scholarships, etc.) to ensure universal access to all levels of education. Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona.**

**14 The Urban Vulnerability Observatory is a project of the Spanish Ministry of Development that is responsible for studying the situation of the neighbourhoods of the whole of the Spanish State from a multi-variable approach.**<https://www.mitma.gob.es/arquitectura-vivienda-y-suelo/urbanismo-y-politica-de-suelo/observatorio-de-la-vulnerabilidad-urbana>

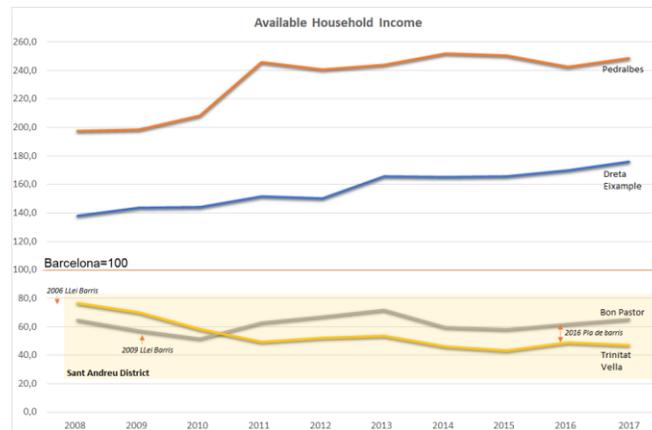
**15 The two most important examples of that have been: the 2009's Comprehensive Intervention Project, related to the 2004's Neighbourhood improvement Law; and the 2016's Neighbourhood Plan of Barcelona's City Council (Pla de Barris 2019).**



**Image 3. % of registered unemployment. Barcelona and its metropolitan area are an eminent area of services (tertiary, quaternary and quinary), both those with high added value, and those that are based on "garbage" jobs. Access to education ensures better employability and, therefore, a reduction in the unemployment rate. (Barcelona, Sant Andreu's District, Bon Pastor) Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona**



**Image 4. Family income per inhabitant. The level of training relates on the one hand to the risk of unemployment and on the other to the type of work and remuneration to achieve, it is logical that we find that the level of income in this neighbourhood, almost 50 points below the 100 index for the whole city. (Barcelona, Sant Andreu's District, Bon Pastor) Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona**



**Image 5. It presents the evolution of the disposable income in 4 neighbourhoods of Barcelona. Two in the affluent districts of the city. Two others in the District of Sant Andreu: Trinitat Vella and Bon Pastor. These two neighbourhoods hosted processes of the Neighbourhood Law and the Neighbourhood Plan. This indicator presents us with two very different scenarios. While the operations of the Law and Plan seem to impact the increase in disposable income in Bon Pastor, everything shows that its impact on Trinitat has been less. The Image also shows that since the 2008 crisis, inequalities between the different areas of Barcelona have increased dramatically. Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona.**

## **Accessibility as civic remembrance**

**Often, vulnerable neighbourhoods such as Bon Pastor, with a strong territorial attachment among its inhabitants, are able to develop self-managed cultural and solidarity networks among neighbours. Although the Bon Pastor community network has gone through moments of certain fragility, it has always had strong organisations concerned about the future of the area: in the 1980s, the Neighbourhood Association promoted the creation of the "Sports Association", which has managed the Bon Pastor Municipal Sports Centre since 1983; later, in the years 2000-2001, they proposed the creation of the "Time Bank", currently one of the oldest active Time Banks in Spain; lately, in the second decade of the 2000s, this Association promoted the creation of the "Food Bank", becoming one of the most relevant solidarity organisations in the neighbourhood. These, together with numerous other initiatives, are just a few, but enlightening, examples of this kind of collective dynamics. These types of "social infrastructures" (Klinenberg 2018) are of great importance to favour the development of symbolic accessibility mechanisms and the effective exercise of the right to the city through participation.**

**Topics about participation, and democratic governance got a renewed actuality during the first decade of the new XXI century. As mentioned above, during this years, as a part of the project "*Bon Pastor a neighbourhood with future*"<sup>16</sup> (Plan de Futuro del Bon Pastor 2000),**

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**16 "*Bon Pastor a neighbourhood with a future*" is a multidimensional intervention programme. Since 1998, they defined the affordable housing redevelopment plan in parallel to the Plan for the Future. However, the Plan for the Future already included, among its planned actions, "to develop te the Special Affordable Housing Redevelopment Plan" (Translated from Plan de Futuro del Bon Pastor 2000). But**

the City Council, through the Municipal Authority for Housing, begins the construction of the new buildings that replace the old houses of the 1929 estate. As mentioned, this programme takes place in 5 phases and, today, the keys to the homes of the 4th phase have just been handed over to their owners and tenants (2022). The first buildings were delivered to the neighbours in 2006, starting the staggered rehouse of residents in the old *"affordable houses"*. Were the times of the Universal Forum of Cultures in Barcelona 2004 and Monterrey 2007, that launched the Universal declaration of Emerging Human Rights<sup>17</sup>, a proposal to adapt classic Human Rights to the 21st century.

This new "Declaration" focus on some aspects that introduce new dimensions to the concept of accessibility. The statements are based on the principles of "social inclusion" and the "principle of horizontality", among others. The Article 5. *Recognises the right to pluralistic democracy*, and in its part 3: *The right to the recognition and protection of the common cultural identity*. Article 7. *Recognises The right to participatory democracy*. This article unfolds in several aspects interesting for our purpose

- Paragraph 1. The right to the city<sup>18</sup>

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*here, it is important to keep in mind that these are two interconnected but separate plans.*

*17 "All human beings - free, equal and endowed with dignity - are entitled to more rights than just those that are recognised, protected and guaranteed. The Declaration of Emerging Human Rights arises from the global civil society at the beginning of the 21st century with the aim of contributing to the design of a new horizon of rights that will orientate the social and cultural movements of communities and peoples, and that will at the same time be inscribed in contemporary societies, institutions, public policies and the agendas of leaders in order to promote and favour a new relationship between the global civil society and the authorities".(Institut de Drets Humans de Catalunya 2009)everyday*

*18 "All human beings and every community have the right to participate actively in public affairs and to enjoy a democratic administration at all levels of government".*

- Paragraph 5. The right to participation,<sup>19</sup>
- Paragraph 7. The right to public spaces, monumentality and attractive town-planning<sup>20</sup>,
- Paragraph 9. The right to the conversion of the marginal city into the city of citizenship<sup>21</sup>,

In other words, these new emerging rights suggest that we cannot exclusively consider "People's autonomy" from the individual dimension, but the concept must be extended to some collective dimensions. Citizens, through existing participatory channels or new channels that can be opened, they have the right to actively participate in the proposals and projects for the built environment linked to their everyday life, from a co-production and co-design<sup>22</sup> perspective (Remesar, Antoni 2019; 2020) i.e. in "bottom-up" processes (Bovaird, Tony 2010; Bovaird y Loeffler 2012), once the demands for the most basic in living conditions (housing, health, transport) have been overcome, the claim of a decent built environment and a public space for all and by all emerges as an imperative, while claiming a role for pro-active citizenship<sup>23</sup>.

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**19** *"which entails the right of all individuals and communities to participate, through effective channels, in the adoption and control of public decisions on the matters that concern them, and to challenge before the courts the decisions with respect to which they allege a right or a direct or indirect interest as grounds for their legitimation".*

**20** *"which entails the right to an urban setting articulated by a system of public spaces and endowed with elements of monumentality that lend them visibility and identity incorporating a aesthetic dimension and a harmonious and sustainable urbanism"*

**21** *"which entails the right of all individuals to inhabit quality urban areas, with a character of centrality"*

**22** *Claiming co-production and co-design is not something new. It is implicit in Arnstein's historic article (Arnstein 1969), the Gibson's participatory proposals in the 1970s (Gibson 1979), in the work by Sanoff (Sanoff 2000) or in the Latin American approach to the construction of the popular city (Takano y Tokeshi 2007)*

**23** *There is a widespread tendency to exclusively identify "vulnerability" with "social exclusion". It is true that vulnerability is a condition of social exclusion. In a democratic society, however, there are other ways of social exclusion. Specifically, setting aside or preventing citizens from actively participating in decision-making*

Moreover, citizens have the right to reflect on their collective past (where we come from), not only to "write" history, but to capture this civic memory in public space as an instrument of "self-recognition" as a collective body, enhancing their collective identity and facilitating the appropriation of public space and its elements.

It is no coincidence that in Barcelona, in parallel with the district's municipal archives - intended to preserve administrative memory -, have proliferated what we can call "civic archives", focused on preserving the social and civic history and remembrance of the neighbourhoods and their inhabitants. The existence of these "civic archives" is not at odds with the official ones. On the contrary, it would be timely and relevant to "link" both archive types. A challenge for municipal policy on "historical memory". And it is in this way the "access" to the different readings about the past would be guaranteed.

### **The civic remembrance project**

In this context, the Bon Pastor's Neighbours Association started a double working process in order to preserve their social and historical remembrance. On the one hand, the Association began to work with the Museum of History of the City (MUHBA) on a project for a physical exhibition space devoted to popular housing. This space-museum

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*that affect their living environment, since as Subirats (Subirats, Joan 2006) points out social exclusion is the impossibility, or intense difficulty, of reproducing and accessing mechanisms that allow the population to develop on a personal level, we can understand that active participation in the design of the local public space , in the manifestation of identity memory in this public space, can be tools to combat social exclusion, when they also generate clear processes of social innovation(MacCallum, et alS 2009; Pradel, Marc; García Cabeza, Marisol 2018) that should place the emphasis on citizenship and the modes of participation and action to achieve these results*

would be located in a block of the old houses that would be preserved for this purpose.



**Figure 6a.** View of the group of small houses destined for the MUHBA museum and the Bon Pastor civic archive.



**Figure 6b.** Remodelling work on the old houses to convert them into a museum space (MUHBA) and headquarters of the Bon Pastor-Baró de Viver remembrance archive. The museum is expected to open in February 2023.

On the other hand, the Association with the cooperation with CR POLIS developed the participatory project “*Building Bon Pastor’s Remembrance*” The project was based on a previous project carried out in the neighbouring Baró de Viver borough: the “Remembrance

Wall” an experience, which resulted from a citizen participation process in the neighbouring district of Baró de Viver (2005-2011).



*Image 7. Baro de Viver's Wall of Remembrance (2011). Taking advantage of the construction of an acoustic wall, we developed a participatory process so that the neighbours could capture their "memory" of the neighbourhood. The mural occupies an area of 125 m linear x 4 m high and comprises the photographs provided by the neighbours in the participation process.*

Ending 2013, the Bon Pastor Neighbourhood Association contacted the POLIS Research Center<sup>24</sup>, with the aim of developing a project similar to that in Baro de Viver. The project on “Civic Remembrance” of Bon Pastor started early 2014 with some resistance from the district administration – at that time in the hands of the right-wing nationalists (CIU). In 2015, CR POLIS, the district of Sant Andreu and the Neighbourhood Association signed a cooperation agreement for the development of a participatory project on the implementation in the public space of the Historical- Social Memory of the neighbourhood. We started a long participatory process based on creative workshops and neighbourhood forums, that concluded in early 2018 with the public presentation of a "strategy" for the development of neighbours proposals. Participants in the creative participatory workshops concreted a work program and chose 12 neighbourhood sites that could realize the dimensions that the neighbours wanted to preserve: the neighbourhood’s industrial past

<sup>24</sup> Detailed information about our research centre can be found at: <http://www.ub.edu/escult/index.html> and <https://polisresearchcentre.org/>

and present, the social movements and social struggles and the most relevant aspects of the urbanization processes of the neighbourhood (Angosto, Salvador 2019). The key idea was: we not only “want that,” but too “we want that like this.” The series of participatory workshops reached the conclusion that the translation of the “Remembrance” project into the public space could not reproduce the linear scheme based on images that we used in Baró de Viver. So, we opted to work on the idea of a “Remembrance Spatial System”. We analysed the different points of the Remembrance Space System regarding the three dimensions above mentioned, deciding that the system would make it possible to mark certain points in the territory with noteworthy social value. Starting from this premise, the “Ideas Lab<sup>25</sup>” of the M.A. in Urban Design, developed some proposals focused on the deployment of “spatial marks” on the ground, trying to avoid the multiplication of vertical signs in public space (Vergel, Javier 2017).

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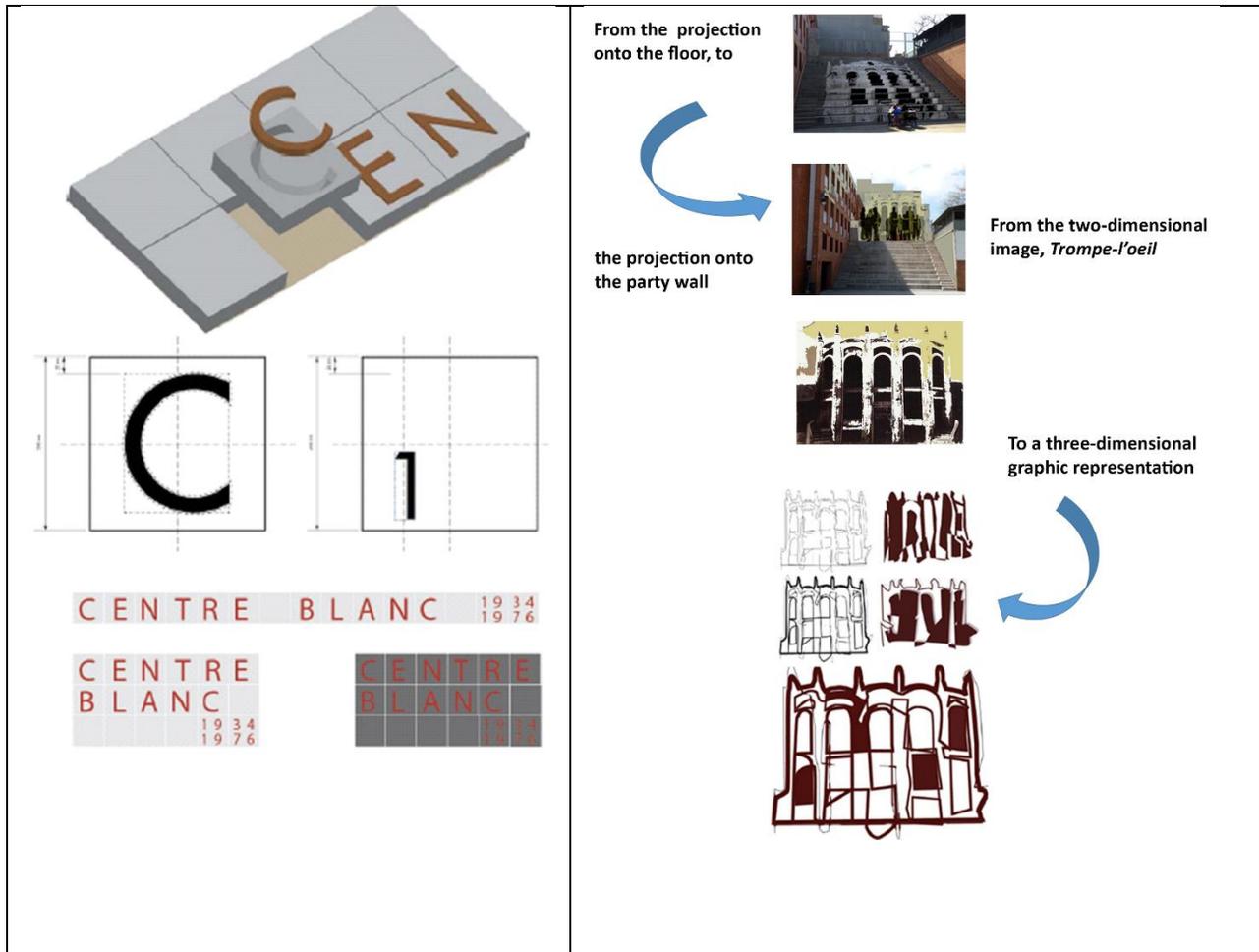
*25 The structure of the POLIS Research Centre is articulated both in research, with the development of competitive projects and contracts, and in education. In the latter field, the researchers of the CR POLIS are part of the staff of the PhD programme “Public Space and Urban Regeneration” (1999-2017) and of the Master’s in Urban Design. This structure makes it easier for postgraduate students to carry out placements in the format of “research project placements”. In this way, students develop project aspects linked to the research projects. They have contact with grassroots movements, while they can freely develop their own projects, generating a stock of ideas to be used in research. We call this type of academic activity related to research “Ideas Lab” - or if you prefer “Thinktank”*



**Image 8.- Plant of the neighbourhood that summarizes the participatory process, with the 13 points of interest for the civic remembrance project. Based on Google Maps**

Each of the points are marked with an intervention on the pavement, using the most widespread paving system in Barcelona (Esparza Lozano 2017) since the beginning of the 20th century: the so-called “panots:” pieces of 20 x 20 x 5 cm of hydraulic concrete with different forms. Several of the points also involve an intervention of public art to highlight its civic importance.

These indications on the ground should have the complement in the local signalling system. In addition, they can incorporate elements such as “QR,” or similar, to make it possible to provide augmented reality data via mobile phone. In some places of special significance for the neighbourhood, it is planned to incorporate: public art works; visual improvement of the landscape and a proposal for a colour plan (especially on the party walls); even, welcome marks to the neighbourhood, as it can happen in the embankment of the Besos river.



**Image 9.- Preliminary ideas made in the Master's in Urban Design (Laboratory of Ideas) regarding the use of panot as the main element to signal the points of the Space Remembrance System.**

**Image 10.- The Community Centre of the neighbourhood is located in the place that for many years was the site of the so-called "White Centre", a reference for social movements. Monument preliminary study by Monica Bellido (M.A. in Urban Design)**

A particularly significant point is the location of the "museum space," in the rows of houses that will be kept, within the framework of the museography project of the MUHBA (Museum of History of Barcelona). The urbanization of the environment at the site has created a square surrounded by greenery. In the square will be a monument to the nine victims of the bombing of Italian aircrafts in 1937. A monument combining water and light – a subtle monument remembering those who died under fascist bombs. The monument is still under study.

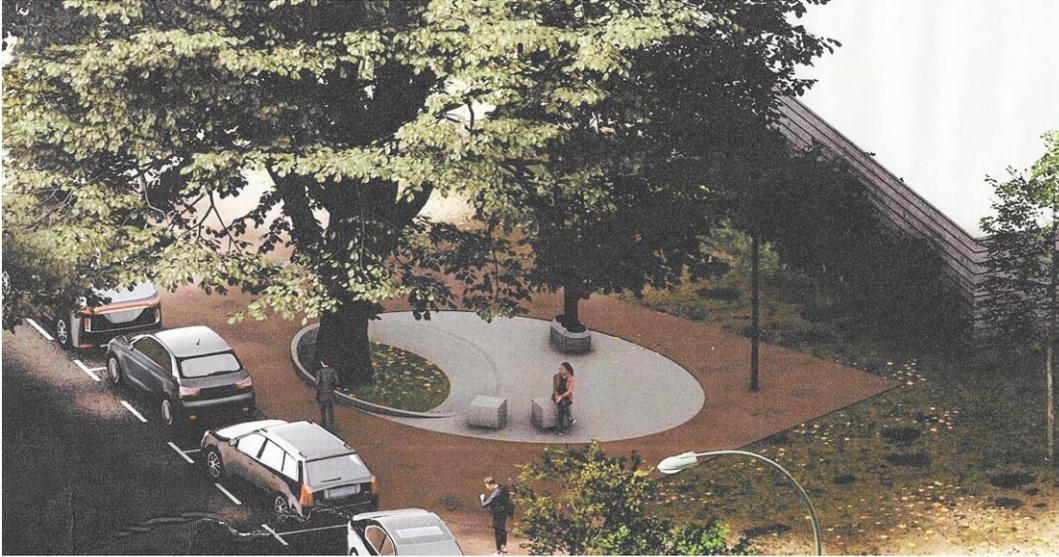
Before the 2019 municipal elections, under pressure from the neighbours, the district, taking advantage of the remodelling of one of the squares of the neighbourhood, "granted", in a gesture of "placation"<sup>26</sup>, the construction of one of the points of the system. It is the dedicated to the old cultural and recreational association "La Pinya" that in the 1980s and early 1990s organized the activities that today develop the Community Centre and the Library of bon Pastor. As we see in the image (11) , the point of "La Pinya" is not complete. The QR, Beacon or Visual Tag is missing, necessary to connect the physical part of the system with the Augmented Reality part. The absence of this element is due to technical and jurisdictional limitations that make it necessary to adapt the particularities of the project to the circumstances at any given time.<sup>27</sup>



**Image 11.- Point 12 of the system. La Pinya. (pointing to the site of the former La Pinya cultural centre) Unveiled March 2019**

<sup>26</sup> "Placation, is simply a higher level tokenism because the ground rules allow have-nots to advise, but retain for the powerholders the continued right to decide".(Arnstein 1969, 217)

<sup>27</sup> Recently, Barcelona City Council has decided not to incorporate QRs or Beacons in public space materials. According to what we have been told, this is a security measure in relation to the possible hacking of municipal computing systems.



**Image 12. Rendering of the "Small Landscape" (IMPUQV) for the mulberry tree in Bon Pastor.**



**Image 13. Rendering of the ongoing intervention on the party walls and boundary wall in a square in Bon Pastor " (IMPUQV).**

Two other projects are in progress (Remesar et al. 2022). The first is the spatial development of the site of a centuries-old mulberry tree, which is much appreciated by the residents. The second comprises the intervention of a large party wall and a wall of some properties that have been affected urbanistically since the 1953 county plan, both in Felix Rodriguez de la Fuente square. In the case of the party walls, the proposal comprises an intervention of thermal insulation (Chavez, Tatiana 2021) of the walls and a treatment with ceramic curtains that guarantee the landscape continuity of the public space. In the wall's case, an intervention will introduce plaques with images reflecting the history of this part of the territory and a space called "Memoria Viva" (Living Memory) for a work programme with the schools where the children can creatively express aspects of the neighbourhood, previously worked on in the classrooms.

These two projects are managed by the City Council's IMPUQV (Institute for Urban Landscape and Quality of Life). The intervention in the mulberry tree is part of the "Small Landscapes" program, while the intervention in the party walls is part of the party walls program that the IMPUQV has been developing since the 1980s. It should be noted that both projects receive funding from Barcelona Tourism (from the income from the tourist tax) as well as from the "advertising banners" program that the IMPUQV manages in the remodelling and improvement works of buildings in the central area of Barcelona.



**Image 14. Ray-Ban collaborates with the remodelling of the party walls in Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente square in Bon Pastor**



**Image 15. This company collaborates in the recovery of the "Small Landscape" of the mulberry tree in the Bon Pastor neighbourhood**

The development of the public space project linked to the fourth phase of the process of "replacing" the old houses with new buildings has made it possible to implement, through participatory processes, two new symbolic elements in the public space. The "spiral" of the Bon Pastor - an artistic intervention on the pavement- is a spatial mark that generates the centrality of the space and recalls the old houses with the use of part of the mosaics taken from the renovation of the museum space. Near the spiral, a red brick star - also on the ground - recalls the organisational and organisational activity of the Neighbourhood Association. The star, pointing north, reproduces the first logo of the Association (1970s). In the centre, a plaque explains the creation of this important neighbourhood organisation.



***Image 16. Two images of the "Espiral del Bon Pastor", designed by J. Henrich, with IMU (Instituto Municipal de Urbanismo). 2022.***



**Figure 17.- The first logo of the Neighbourhood Association. It was made by IMU in 2022. In the participatory process and given the similarity of the logo to a compass rose, it was decided to mark the North with the intention that it would be used by schools to explain how a compass works. In the centre, the memory is in the form of a plaque. The text is "Within the framework of Franco's Law of Associations, the Heads of Families Ass. (1968) was set up, the which, for a few years, was the driving force behind neighbourhood demands and the conquest of citizens' rights. After several attempts to legalise it since 1973, on 3 April 1976, the constituent assembly of the Bon Pastor Neighbourhood Association was held, which for several years shared its headquarters with the Heads of Family Association in the "Centro Blanco", until the agreement to merge the two entities. This space reproduces the seal that, until the constitution of the Neighbourhood Association, was associated with the neighbourhood's demands for its improvement."**

As mentioned above, another aspect of the strategic plan is the creation of a neighbourhood archive<sup>28</sup>. This archive would be installed in the space-museum and would become, as well, a documentation centre about the neighbourhood and popular housing in Barcelona. The space-museum would also facilitate the organization of exhibitions based on the documentation and studies carried out by the Archive. The first of these exhibitions has been designed and exhibited in several schools, in the market, in the library, in the sports centre, etc.



**Image 18a, Community Centre, 2020**



**Image 18b. Professional Institute "Rubió I Tudurí", 2020**



**Image 18c. School Institute the "Til-ler", 2021**



**Image 18d. Bon Pastor Market, 2021**

**28 Vilabesos, Bon Pastor and Baró de Viver Study Centre/Archive, is the name of this archive that has begun its course since the COVID 19 pandemic has made it possible to normalise meetings and continuous work sessions.**



**Image 18e. Library, 2021-2022**



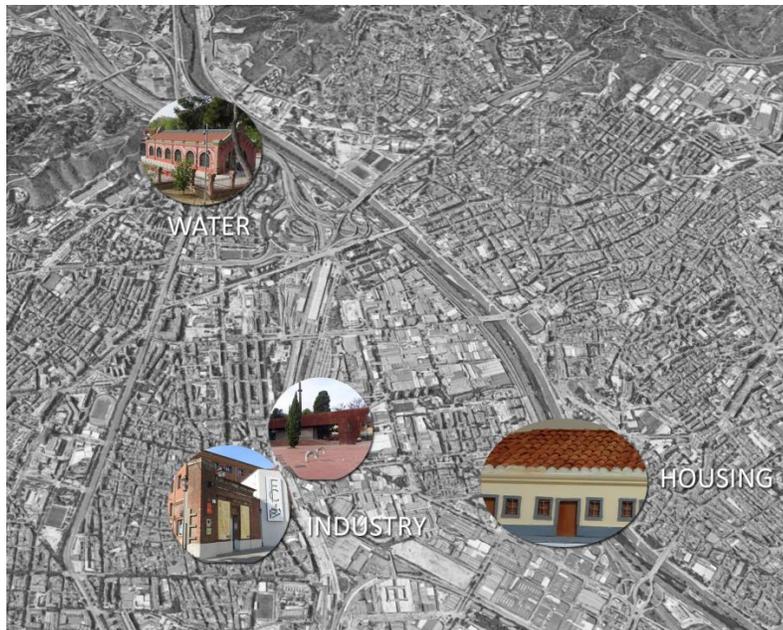
**Image 18f. Municipal Sports Center, 2022**



**Image 18g. "Va de Besòs" Civic Festival, 2022**

**The travelling exhibition "Bon Pastor, A Changing Territory", the first activity of the Study Centre/Archive, in its different locations.**

## **The Muhba's urban policy. Integrating peripheries**



**Image 19.- Decentralized museography plan of the MUHBA for the North of Barcelona. The thematic axes: Water, Industry, Popular housing**

Previously. we talked about the confluence of the two projects developed by the neighbours, that of "Fem la Memòria del Bon Pastor" and the space- museum of cheap houses as museum space of the MUHBA program.

For a few years now, the Museum of History of the City has initiated a policy of "decentralization" of its exhibition spaces, using, for this, the conversion of old industrial enclosures out of use. The central idea of this policy is to territorially balance the museum spaces of the city, excessively concentrated in the Central (Ciutat Vella) and Western areas of the city. Water<sup>29</sup>, Industry<sup>30</sup>, Working and Popular Housing<sup>31</sup> are the axes on which the new exhibition spaces of MUHBA are based.

*"A part of the "museum" space will be devoted to reproducing the physical environment (furniture, household goods ...). Another to a permanent exhibition about popular and working-class housing in Barcelona. In addition, a conference room. Neighbours, like actors of the facility, demand to manage an archive on the popular and working-class housing. This archive would produce the web content to virtually increase the information of the sites product of*

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**29** The Northern Zone has historically been linked to the provision of a good as necessary as water. Since the time of the Romans an important part of the provision of water to the city came from the aquifers of the Besòs River. In the Middle Ages the waters of this river watered the fertile fields of the North and East of Barcelona thanks to the construction of the Comtal ditch. A ditch that would eventually be used to provide driving force to the first manufacturing and industrial facilities.

**30** This area has also been the large area in which industrialization took its body in Barcelona from the nineteenth century until well into the twentieth century. Even today, Bon Pastor's neighbourhood cannot be understood without the existence of the last large industrial estates located within the city limits.

**31** Since the beginning of the twentieth century this area has been a good example of the transition from the rural to the urban (Lefebvre, Henri 1970) . Initially, buildings were related to the deployment of the various Economic House Laws, including the two large estates of Bon Pastor and Baró de Viver in 1929. Subsequently, new residential estates, with block building typology, have shaped the landscape since the 1950s. Buildings for workers and popular classes under the different laws developed during the Franco`s regime and Early Democracy in Spain

***the participatory process. The archive, should manage the contents of an information system in the metro station hall consisting of large screens emitting different types of contents and that is intended to negotiate with TMB, the municipal public transport company of Barcelona". (Angosto, Salvador 2019)***

**The archive within the museum space will be the practical link between the two neighbourhood remembrance projects: historic and civic remembrance.**

## **Conclusions**

**In a situation in which the problem of physical and economic accessibility to housing, public space or public transport is relatively well solved thanks to public policies that support a certain Welfare State; when the demands regarding urban services (health, housing, education) are satisfied within the current limited framework of the Welfare State, the residents of a territory begin to concern themselves with other dimensions of accessibility.**

**Eminently symbolic dimensions related to the right to the city of the neighbours, trying to understand and express "where they come from and where they are going", to write and capture their history and memory, to organise, manage and disseminate the documents that support this journey to civic memory, a journey that will also be intergenerational. They also claim access to the design of the space where their daily lives unfold, access not only as "actors, but as "agents", in the production of this space through various modes of "co-production" and "co-design", expressing a clear opposition to being considered mere "users" of the space, of the goods and services of the city.**

**Co-design and co-production imply articulating new forms of citizen participation, forms that transcend the levels of consultation incorporated in the different citizen participation regulations, to enter into the "creative" dimensions for both public and common spaces, as well as into the organisational forms that allow for a satisfactory level of self-management of these dimensions by the citizen. All this in a challenging context involving various actors and agents, both public and private. The local administration must adopt a new attitude in order to transmit this "accessibility to the symbolic" as part of the range of actions against social exclusion. This new situation requires an attitude of attachment to the field on the part of the local administration and a capacity to circumvent the processes that Arnheim called "tokenism". The case of Bon Pastor, an experience, albeit a timid one of co-management and co-design, is still in progress but marks a path of social innovation aimed at enabling citizens to exercise their "right to the city".**

**In any case, we must test whether the local administration is prepared to internalise new modes of urban governance, in which the "bottom-up" criterion will be a reality and not just a slogan in electoral narratives.**

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## **Acknowledgement**

***This article is part of the Project "Public space, creative participation, civic remembrance" of the National Research Program (Spain): Project code: HAR2017-88672-R***

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