

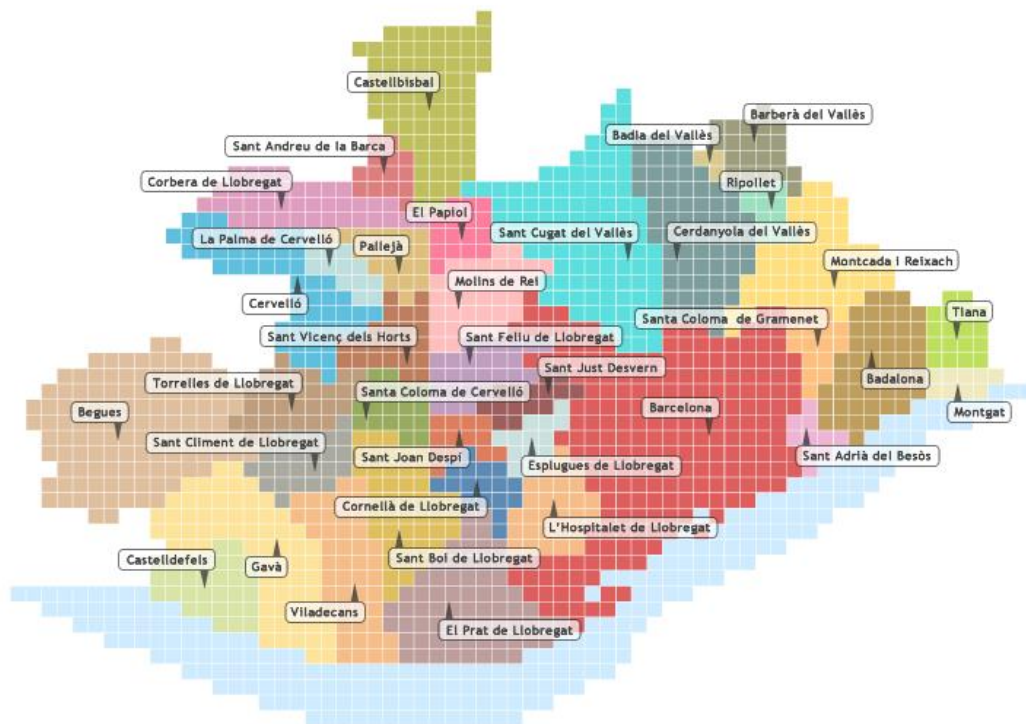
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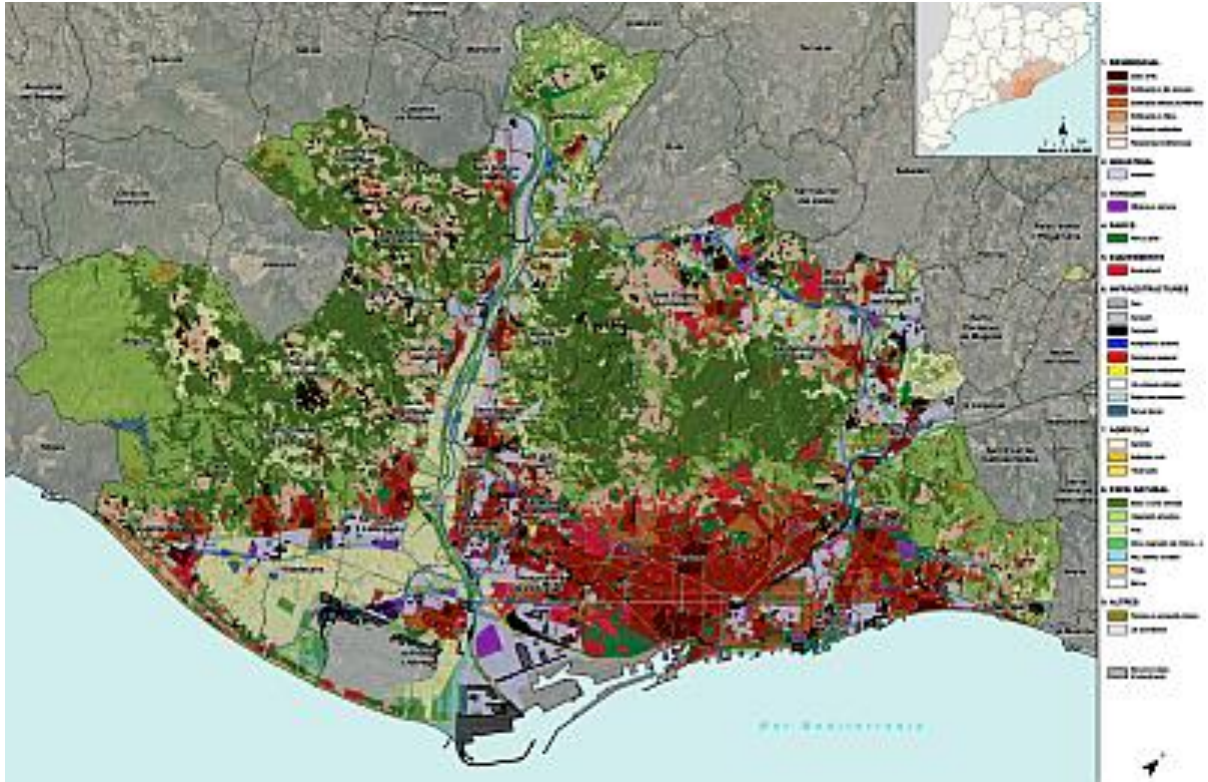
Experiences of metropolitan governance in the Barcelona urban area: a history of conflict and consensus

1. The context of the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona

The Metropolitan Area of Barcelona (AMB) is the public administration of the metropolitan territory of Barcelona, covering an area of 636 km². It is made up of 36 municipalities, home to more than 3.2 million people.

The metropolitan area is a territorial, social, demographic, economic and cultural fact that has been taking shape over the last century, as a result of the growth and connection of urban systems in the Barcelona environment. It is the most important metropolitan agglomeration of the western Mediterranean, where half of Catalonia's GDP is generated.





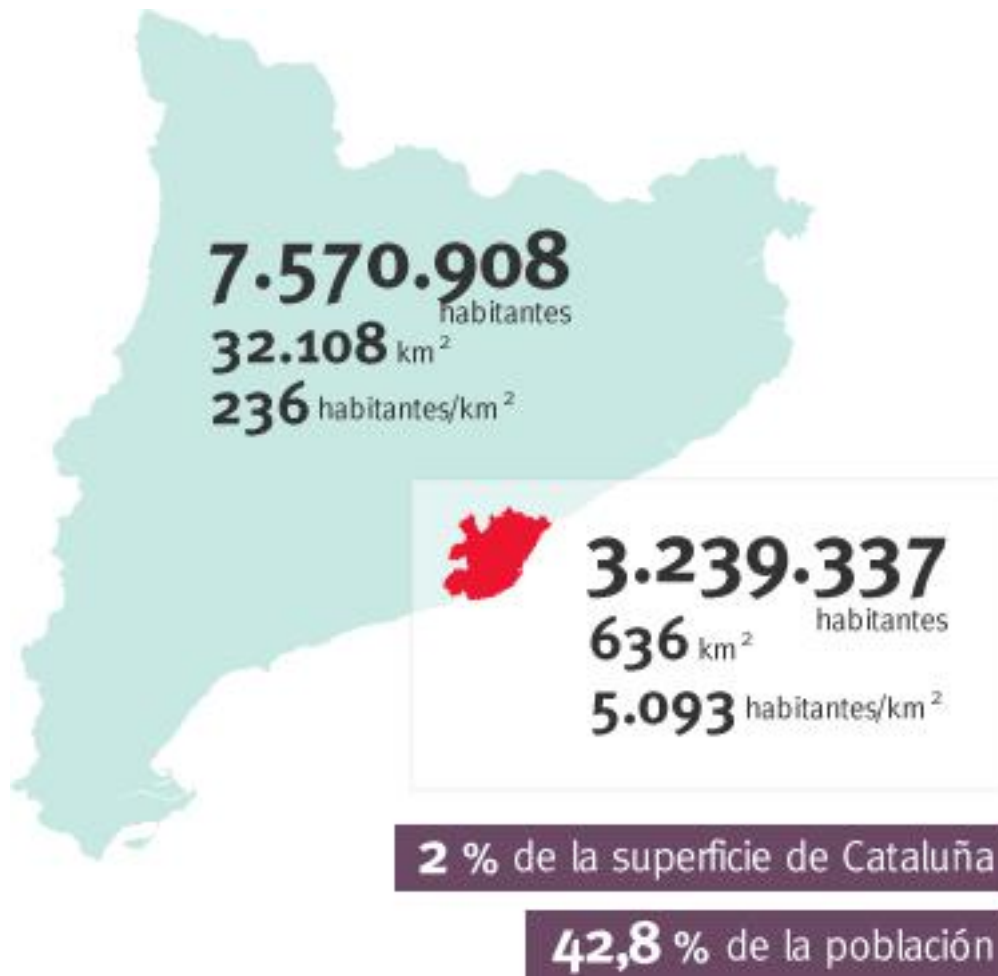
The image above is a vision of the physical environment and land occupation in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona.

It is nestled between the Mediterranean Sea and the natural park of the Sierra de Collserola, which constitutes the authentic lungs of the con-urban area.

In the lower part of the image, colored in gray, we see the port and the airport, which are the entrances and communication gates of Barcelona.



The Metropolitan Area of Barcelona is one of the largest metropolitan regions in Europe and ranks eighth in terms of population.



This image shows the surface and population data of the Barcelona Area with respect to Catalonia

2. Background and opportunities in the configuration of the metropolitan governance of Barcelona

- 2.1. The institutionalization of the metropolitan government of Barcelona has always gone hand in hand with the needs of the planning of the joint territory and the requirements for the equal provision of public services to citizens. Territory planning and service provision.
- 2.2. On the other hand, the forms of governance have evolved in line with the centralization / decentralization processes of national / regional governments for every historical moment.
- 2.3. Finally, the fundamental element in the governance strategies has been the citizen / popular involvement / pressure in the recognition of the metropolitan event, expressed in the positions of the groups and political parties at all times.

3. Phases and models of metropolitan governance configuration in the Barcelona area

3.1. Before 1974: A strongly centralized regime prior to the 1978 Constitution

- Characterized by a homogeneous structure of municipalities, without specialties or differentiations (except for certain special laws of large municipalities such as Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia and Bilbao).
- The national government is the one that sets the political priorities in the administration of the cities and appoints the administrators (mayors of the municipalities).
- Municipal powers refer to basic services but territorial and economic planning are competences of state government.
- The financing of local services is focused on participation in the collection of state taxes, without relevant own taxes.

3.2. In 1974, (one year before the death of General Franco), the State approved a Decree

- Law in which a new model of local territorial entity of a supra-municipal character was established for the first time in Spain. It was called the *Metropolitan Municipal Entity of Barcelona*
- Its creation is essentially due to the need to administer and manage the development and implementation of the new General Urban Plan of the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona, which already had a history of multi-municipal planning in previous decades.

- The essential competence in the development and administration of urban planning and management is transferred to the new metropolitan local Entity, at a time of strong demographic, economic and social pressure.
- The new Metropolitan Entity also hosts the competencies in the management of three basic public services: transport, including buses and the underground railway; the supply and distribution of drinking water; and the treatment of urban solid waste, initially through large deposits, later through incineration and currently through selection and recycling.
- Governance focuses on a Metropolitan Council composed of representatives of metropolitan municipalities, which, since 1979, have been democratically elected. Consequently, it is an essentially local body with a democratic and representative composition. The election of its members is always indirect, through the councilors of the metropolitan municipalities, which elect the metropolitan councilors and the person who occupies the metropolitan presidency.
- The financing of the 1974 Metropolitan Entity of Barcelona focuses on participations in State revenues, State transfers and to a lesser extent transfers from municipalities.
- Socially, municipalities and citizens perceive the metropolitan entity as an essentially technical and service management administration. A certain sense of belonging and integration of citizenship is created, through the great metropolitan projects generated by two sporting events: the 1982 Soccer World Cup, which opened in Barcelona; and especially the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games. These events allowed the metropolitan administration to demonstrate the need for joint management of the city (land expropriations, large communication and accommodation infrastructure projects, housing needs ...).
- At the same time, the new democratic regime of 1978 put forward the need for new social policies on housing, transport, environment...The important migratory processes of the 50s and 60s of the last century have been disorganized, causing segregated occupations of space and a lack of cohesion. Actions from the 80's focused on social housing policies (through the creation of an autonomous public body for land and housing), for the improvement and conservation of public space (urban parks, coastal areas and large natural areas), and of public facilities, which causes a greater balance of the quality of life in the peripheral area and consequently a greater social cohesion.

3.3. In 1987, a new model was adopted, by Law of the autonomous community of Catalonia. The metropolitan municipal entity of Barcelona of 1974 is extinguished and two new metropolitan supra-municipal entities with sector competencies are created: the Metropolitan Entity of Transportation and the Metropolitan Entity of Environmental Services (water cycle and waste management).

- This change of model is explained by the emergence of the Regional Administration from 1979. The need to fit the new regional competences between those of the State and those of the Municipalities implies the progressive distrust of a local metropolitan entity that represents half of the population of the region and most of its GDP. This

conflict is resolved with a law of the Parliament of Catalonia that adopts the new recentralizing model with respect to the Catalan Autonomous Administration.

- It involves a weakening of metropolitan governance; efforts are divided and the capacity to influence supra-municipal decisions is lost. They basically become entities of administrative management of services.
- The base of the government is still represented by the democratically elected municipalities. The representatives make up the Metropolitan Council that becomes the assembly in which the essential decisions reside.
- Metropolitan competences lose urban planning and equipment and housing services, which are absorbed by the municipalities (for the most part) and by the regional Autonomous Administration (for the most part).
- Given this dispersion of competences, metropolitan municipalities create a voluntary commonwealth in which they delegate local urban planning and housing, public space, equipment and infrastructure competencies (except transport, water cycle and waste treatment).

3.4. In 2010, this process culminates with the Law of the Parliament of Catalonia 31/2010, in which the two sectorial metropolitan entities are extinguished and a new territorial institution is created, with integral and municipal-based competencies, called the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona (AMB).

- It is clear that this new model change is based on a change in the political composition of the Catalan parliament, and especially on a strong social claim in favor of a new technical and politically strong metropolitan institution, capable of expressing with a single voice the immediate and local interests of the neighbors.
- The new model is based on the forced integration (by law) of the municipalities in the metropolitan structure, to which powers previously assigned in the municipalities and also in the Regional Administration are assigned.

- Governance is structured in:

- Assembly or Metropolitan Council, with representatives of all municipalities that must necessarily be elected positions. Metropolitan mayors are automatically members of the Council.
- A Delegated Board of the Council for ordinary Administration, composed of members of the metropolitan political groups that form the majority government.
- The president of the Metropolitan Council is elected by the members of the Council themselves through specially reinforced quorums, where Barcelona's position as a central city requires support from other municipalities. The presidency has important powers of its own and is not a mere president of a collegiate body.
- The administration is governed by an executive director to implement the decisions of the Council and the Presidency.

4. Metropolitan competences:

A) TERRITORY

- Urban planning
 - Urban planning: Master Plan / Comprehensive urban plan / sectorial plans
 - Territorial studies
- Public space
 - Projects and works
 - Parks
 - Beaches
 - River spaces
- Metropolitan infrastructures
 - Projects
 - Urban Integration

B) HOUSING

- Management and organization
 - Competencies
 - Normative
 - Plans and programs
- Metropolitan Housing Observatory (O-HB)
- IMPSOL - Public Business Entity
 - Real estate promotions and offer
- Metropolitan Housing Consortium
 - Help
 - Rehabilitation
- Housing Metropolis Barcelona
Joint rental housing promotion company

C) ENVIRONMENT - SUSTAINABILITY

- Sustainability
- Waste
- Water
- Laboratory
- Management and organization

D) MOBILITY

- Means of public transport
 - Bus
 - Underground railway (Metro)
- Forms of service management

- Public capital companies
- Concessions to third parties (public / private)
- Rates
- Social and environmental pricing
- Sustainable mobility
- Mobility Council
- Metropolitan Mobility Plan

E) ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Social policies
- Economic Development Agency
- Strategic studies
- Participation tables

5. Conclusions

5.1. The model of governance and distribution of competencies in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona corresponds, throughout its history, to the degree of decentralization and democratic governance in place at all times.

5.2 The greater decentralization and autonomy of the metropolitan area corresponds to the greater confidence in the management capacity of local governments, as well as to a greater social pressure for enhanced self-government.

5.3 The opportunities to propose a model of greater autonomy are presented when the entire metropolitan population adheres and participates in an exciting joint project. Around this project, wills and efforts come together, as well as sufficient financial contributions.

5.4 The role of the central city is essential for cohesion as well as social and economic balance policies. Normally, the periphery hosts disadvantaged situations and only through the political and economic generosity of the central city can investments be rebalanced to achieve a homogeneous quality of life.

5.5. Political consensus in large projects and internal strategic alliances (parties with representation) and external (with the central government and with the municipalities) are essential to achieve effective governance and citizen involvement. The metropolitan area should be understood as a balanced and polycentric entity, which is independent from the dominant vision of the central city.

5.6. Sufficient funding is crucial to design and implement social cohesion policies. Participations from the income of the State, the Region and the Municipalities are

necessary but often insufficient. In order to guarantee independence and autonomy, it is necessary for the AMB viability to have its own tax system.

5.7. The legislation of metropolitan areas ought to determine with precision the limits of each actor's competences. It is important to guarantee the participation of metropolitan areas in the decisions of the state and regional governments affecting their interests.