



Planning and Democracy. The Basic Ideas of the New City Planning During Spain's Political Transition to Democracy in the 1980s. The Case of Madrid, Barcelona and Valladolid

José Luis SAINZ GUERRA, Prof.

Universidad de Valladolid, Spain
jlsainzg@ana.uva.es,

Felix Jové SANDOVAL, Prof.

Universidad de Valladolid, Spain
fjove@arq.uva.es

In the first few years of the democracy in Spain, in the 1980s, city planning was one of the most difficult aspects to manage, due to the new constitutional order, the complexity of the urban problems and the difficulty of breaking with old habits. One of the most problematic aspects of the old regime was the speculative city planning and in particular the destruction of the historic city centers and the demolition of many buildings with a great cultural value in many Spanish cities. The first democratic city councils believed that a U-turn was needed with respect to such practices, creating a totally new city planning. Using citizens' political protests concerning the destruction of the historic quarters as a basis, a new general city planning was built up from the foundations of the dictatorship's legislation, the "Ley del Suelo" of 1975.

The strategies of the new plan were: a) to stop of the destruction of the historic quarters by means of protection through listing buildings or other instruments; b) to encourage new growth areas on the edge of the city; c) to promote public participation in the creation of urban policies.

It is necessary to point out the two different approaches of Madrid and Barcelona. The former focused on a new "Plan General de Ordenación Urbana", to fulfill the new criteria. The latter considered that the plan was neither the problem nor the solution. The answer lay in the plan's execution and management. Therefore, the old general plan was conserved, but was transformed through new civil works. Other smaller cities followed one of these two paths.

The case of Valladolid was clearly influenced by Madrid, for two reasons: firstly, the author of the general plan was a devotee of the Madrid approach; secondly, special circumstances had influenced the city's previous history. The destruction of the historic quarter in the previous decade gave rise to a decisive change in direction. The reform of the city centre was drastically reduced in favour of new areas of growth with new infrastructures.

The deep economic crisis in Spain in the 1980s channelled the new ideas and determined the way they were applied in the three cities.

KEY WORDS: Planning, democracy, planning law, public participation.