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TO URBAN DESIGN

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DESIGNING FOR DIFFERENCE IN BARCELONA'S *EL RAVAL*

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Introduction

Plaça de Pedro in the heart of Barcelona's *el Raval* neighborhood contains a *pastisseria* (pastry shop), *xarcuteria* (deli), *Halal carnisseria* (butcher), tailor, print shop, phone store, and a café, nearly all owned or run by Middle Eastern or South Asian immigrants who live in nearby flats. Heading north up a single block of *Carrer d'Enasme de Janer* brings one past *Fundácio Comparte*, a non-profit working on Latin American issues; the Centre de'Estudis Africans, a resource for African immigrants; a Filipino barber; an Indian *perruqueria* (hair salon); the Shani Hindu temple; a money transfer store popular with Ecuadorian residents sending remittances; and the Minhaj Mosque and Islamic Center. A December 2017 Google search of the neighborhood reveals four Christian churches, four mosques, three Hindu temples, and a Sikh *gurdwara*.

El Raval is a quintessential "arrival neighborhood" in Barcelona, a dense jumble of streets and buildings to which immigrants have flocked for centuries (Degen 2017). In the late 1800s, this marginal working-class neighborhood in the *Ciutat Vella* (Old City) was pejoratively coined *Barri Xino* (Chinatown) and has long been known for prostitution, drugs, and crime. Since the 1980s, however, *el Raval* has gentrified considerably, partly as a result of efforts by the *Ajuntament* (Municipality) to attract newcomers and tourists to the neighborhood, partly through major investments in cultural facilities and the demolition of well-known hotspots for drug dealing and prostitution (Degen 2003). Tourists now know the neighborhood as a bohemian destination replete with organic groceries and craft beer bars (Arbaci & Tapada-Berteli 2012).

In spite of these gentrifying socioeconomic changes in *el Raval*, the percentage of its foreign-born residents has grown explosively since the early 1990s and has remained constant since the early 2000s (see Table 9.1). Over 125 nationalities live within the neighborhood's 0.42 square miles, an area just slightly larger than New York City's Greenwich Village (Ajuntament de Barcelona Department d'Estadística 2017).

El Raval's persistence as an arrival neighborhood makes one wonder why it remains such a welcoming place for immigrants in the face of such upscale change. Portes and Rumbaut (2014) use the term "contexts of reception" for the combination of opportunities and challenges that shape an immigrant's acceptance and integration into a host community. For decades, scholars have debated the factors that make contexts of reception more or less likely to result in successful immigrant integration, but nearly all of these studies have ignored the role of the built environment in shaping the immigrant experience.

Table 9.1 Foreign-born population (%) by year in *el Raval* and Barcelona

	El Raval	*Barcelona*
1991	4.8%	1.4%
1996	9.1%	1.9%
2000	23.1%	4.9%
2004	42.8%	13.0%
2008	48.0%	17.3%
2012	49.2%	17.5%
2016	48.5%	16.6%

Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona Department d'Estadística (2017)

In this chapter, I explore the role that urban design and planning can play in the economic, sociocultural, and civic integration of immigrants. This question is particularly pressing given our increasingly multicultural future and the contemporary refugee crisis reshaping cities around the globe. First, I outline several different forms of immigrant integration and describe how contexts of reception help us conceptualize the immigrant experience. Next, I present three common urban design concepts – spatial concentration, public space, and accessibility – and describe how these might shape such contexts. I then turn to *el Raval* to examine how these concepts play out in a thriving arrival neighborhood and conclude that place matters for immigrant integration.

Throughout this chapter, I rely on a combination of observational research, including personal field notes taken from September 2015 to June 2016 and several interviews with long-time residents of *el Raval*; data from the *Department d'Estadística* of the *Ajuntament* (Municipality) *de Barcelona*; and a review of newspapers, professional reports, and academic sources, many of which contain original quotes and firsthand accounts of neighborhood dynamics in *el Raval*. Importantly, I see this single "revelatory" case study not as a source of explanation but as a site of exploration (Yin 2009). Taken together with contemporary scholarship on immigrant integration, my observations help me develop a conceptual framework for understanding how the built environment can shape contexts of reception.

Living with/in difference

Given the intense socio-economic, cultural, racial, ethnic, and attitudinal diversification of the population, researchers and policymakers are increasingly seeking the most appropriate ways of living together (Tasan-Kok et al. 2013). Long-standing debates often center on whether assimilationist or multiculturalist approaches are the most appropriate methods of cohabitation.

Assimilationists support a "melting pot" approach that narrows the differences between immigrants and receiving populations and asks immigrants to adopt the social, political, and cultural customs of the host country (Bloemraad et al. 2008). They believe that absorption into host communities can reduce exclusion from resources, capabilities, and other rights that can lead to health and quality-of-life inequities (Popay et al. 2008). Assimilation critics, however, claim that newcomers should not have to abandon their deeply held cultural foundations, identities, practices, and heritage in order to conform to dominant, mainstream societal norms (Young 1990).

Multiculturalists support a "mosaic" approach, wherein immigrants retain their cultural customs and ethnic heritage but contribute to the societal whole, like individual tiles that together form a mosaic (Bloemraad 2006). Proponents believe that multiculturalism can build deeper

social ties; strengthen racial, social, and political identity; increase community satisfaction; and reduce distrust of diverse others (Bader 2016; Schmid et al. 2014). But critics assert that multiculturalism facilitates segregation, discourages loyalty to the host country, and hinders the development of shared cultural norms such as language and family structure (Bissoondath 1994).

Yet as Bloemraad (2006) argues, these coarse characterizations can obscure more than illuminate realities of the immigrant experience. In her work comparing immigration policy in the "melting pot" United States and "mosaic" Canada, she finds that immigrants and native-born residents in both countries agree on immigration policy more than they differ. In the United States in particular, beliefs on assimilation have come a long way since their early-20th-century roots and now explicitly encourage and celebrate the maintenance of diverse cultural and social beliefs of immigrants and non-immigrants (Zolberg & Long 1999). Such reformulations tend to "undermine an oft-posited dichotomy" regarding these positions (Bloemraad et al. 2008, 163).

For these reasons, I use the more general term "integration" to establish a middle ground between assimilation and multiculturalism. My use of the term implies that both group differentiation *and* racial and cultural integration are deeply valued. Successful immigrant integration, I infer, can enrich daily life; infuse communities with creativity, innovation, and prosperity; support diverse sources of knowledge and experience; and prepare immigrants and receiving communities for an increasingly globalized future (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2015).

Modes of immigrant integration

A recent report by a panel of immigration policy experts suggests several interrelated forms of immigrant integration, which I collapse into just three: economic, sociocultural, and civic (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2015).

Economic integration receives the bulk of attention in immigration scholarship. Studies focusing on personal and structural mechanisms for integration find that individual characteristics such as education level, work experience, language proficiency, and age can influence integration just as much as the character of the host labor market or citizenship policies of the receiving government (Portes & Rumbaut 2014). Mechanisms for measuring immigrant economic integration include: proximity to reliable sources of capital (Portes & Zhou 1992), access to diverse labor markets (Wilson & Portes 1980), and clustering in enclaves that provide opportunities mobilized through ethnic social networks (Valenzuela-Garcia et al. 2017).

Sociocultural integration is shaped by a number of mechanisms: norms and customs including language acquisition, religious inclusion, similarities between home and host cultures, and familial traditions. A common measure of sociocultural integration is the extent to which immigrant attitudes and opinions on social issues or political ideologies approximate those held by native-born populations (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2015). Language is another factor influencing sociocultural integration, although cultural values and identifications can be just as critical in shaping contexts of reception (Castillo & Caver 2009; Schwartz et al. 2014). Primary mechanisms for sociocultural integration include: access to social centers such as schools, churches, and recreation centers; participation in cultural institutions such as markets, cultural fairs, or parades; and regular interaction with other immigrants and long-term residents.

Civic integration is a highly localized social process that involves regular engagement of immigrants in debates, groups, practices, and decision-making of the receiving society (Bloemraad 2006). It foregrounds informal modes of engagement and differs from political integration, which relies on formal mechanisms such as voting behavior, acquisition of formal citizenship, or running for elected office. Primary mechanisms for measuring civic integration include:

engagement with local community groups and organizations; participation in political mobiliza-tion efforts; and immersion in interpersonal networks of family, friends, and neighbors (Bloem-raad 2006).

In sum, mechanisms of immigrant integration center on social interaction, access to economic opportunity, and civic and political engagement. In this chapter, I argue that all of these have a clear spatial component and are laudable goals for any urban project, not just for arrival neighbor-hoods. Although a welcoming institutional environment, easy acquisition of legal citizenship, and access to a strong low-skilled labor market clearly contribute to positive contexts of reception, I suggest they fail to tell the complete story for arrival neighborhoods like *el Raval*.

The built environment and contexts of reception

This chapter starts with the premise that buildings, streets, public spaces, and neighborhood loca-tion can contribute to, or detract from, immigrant integration or isolation, as "social relations are inevitably correlated with spatial relations" (Park 1952). Thus, I ask not whether the built environment can *create* positive contexts of reception for immigrants, but whether immigrant integration "thrives better, or can be sustained longer, under certain physical conditions that planners [and designers] may have some control over" (Talen 2006, 242).

Attempts to sequester newcomers in segregated immigrant enclaves can breed isolation, increase inequality, and even radicalize extremists who feel cut off from mainstream society, as some believe to be the case in the Parisian *banlieues* (see Saunders 2010). If poorly conceived built environments can reduce the chances of positive integration, can well-designed environments do the opposite? Put another way, how might urban designers cultivate social interaction, access to opportunity, and civic and political engagement in arrival neighborhoods? In what follows, I return to *el Raval* to show how we might achieve these goals through placemaking endeavors that emphasize three concepts central to urban design theory and practice: spatial concentration, public space, and accessibility.

Spatial concentration

El Raval is one of the densest neighborhoods in Europe. At 174 residents/acre, the neighborhood is nearly three times denser than greater Barcelona (64 residents/acre), 17 times denser than Los Angeles, and almost as dense as Dhaka, Bangladesh, the world's densest city (180 residents/acre) (Ajuntament de Barcelona Department d'Estadística 2017; United Nations Human Settlement Program [UN-Habitat] 2017). One of the neighborhood's *seccions censales*, akin to a US Census tract, has a density of 541 residents/acre, and several more are in the 500+ range (Figure 9.1). Part of this is due to the size of residences: the share of small flats (below 656 sq. ft.) in the neighbor-hood is 56.4%, compared to a 30.7% citywide average, and several tracts contain more than 70% of these small flats (Ajuntament de Barcelona Department d'Estadística 2017).

El Raval residents hail from 125 different countries; 21.4% of foreign-born residents come from Pakistan, 17.4% from the Philippines, and 11.3% from Bangladesh (Ajuntament de Barcelona Department d'Estadística 2017). Subirats and Rius (2006) maintain that few, if any, ethnically clus-tered residential zones exist in Barcelona. But a walk through the neighborhood reveals several dis-tinct nodes of immigrant *commercial* activity. As of 2015, for example, there were 244 Pakistani-run businesses in the neighborhood, with many immigrant-run shops clustered tightly along corridors, such as the 15 Pakistani-operated mobile phone shops along *Carrer de Sant Pau* alone (Güell 2016). Pakistani entrepreneurs also run Internet cafés, supermarkets, groceries, restaurants, hairdressing salons, butcher shops, travel agencies, tailor shops, and jewelry stores (Molina et al. 2015).
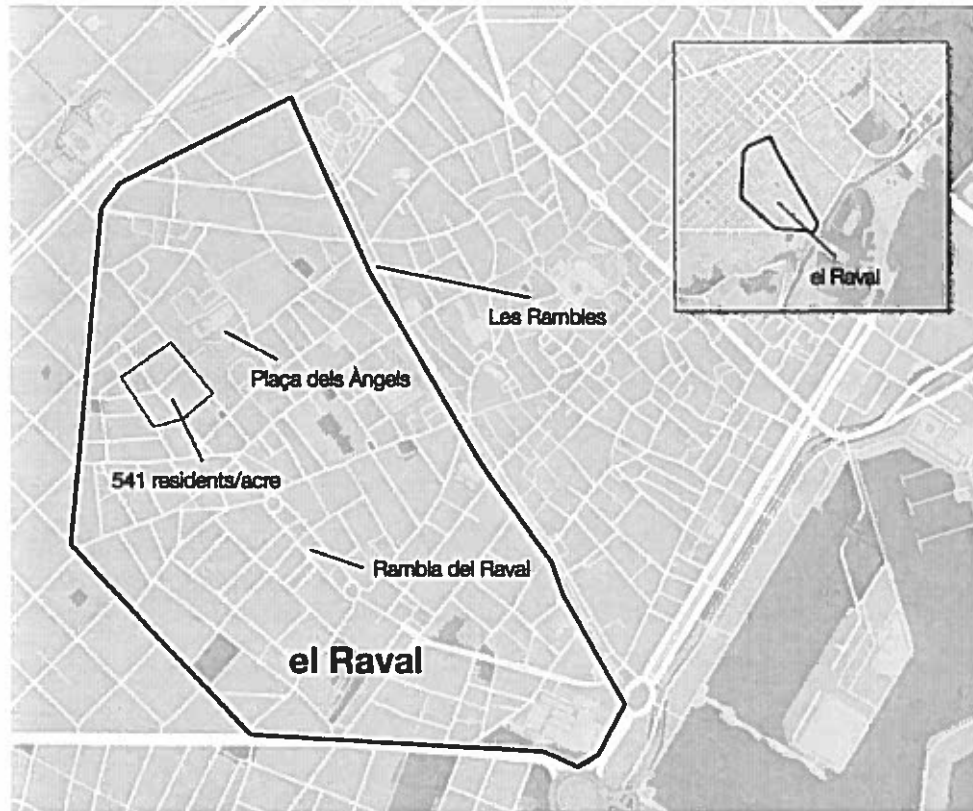
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Figure 9.1 Map of *el Raval*.

Source: Author and Google

Co-ethnic business concentration is a distinctive feature of ethnic enclaves, giving marginal communities advantages they might not otherwise enjoy when integrating directly into traditional, mainstream economies (Molina et al. 2015; Portes & Manning 1986). Indeed, a recent study of Pakistani employees in *el Raval* revealed that clustering of these businesses has created high levels of social capital among shop workers and business owners as manifested in the sharing of a co-ethnic workforce, reliance on trusted production and supply chain contacts, and use of shared recruitment and training resources. Another study showed that life satisfaction among Pakistani women living in *el Raval* partly stems from the dense concentration of immigrant-serving shops and the ability to live with neighbors that share their language and cultural background (Ortiz et al. 2004; Valenzuela-Garcia et al. 2017).

Commercial enclaves thus represent important "pull factors" that attract immigrants to arrival neighborhoods due to efficiencies in staffing by local community members; vertical and horizontal integration in supply and production chains; information circulation within ethnic networks; access to credit, loans, and financial resources; and deep networks of social capital via engagement with community associations, businesses, places of worship, and other centers of socialization (Güell 2016; Molina et al. 2015; Portes and Rumbaut 2014). Put another way, commercial concentration can help cultivate positive contexts of reception for immigrant economic integration.

El Raval also contains an intense concentration of cultural and community organizations. Subirats and Rius (2006) show that from 1992 to 2002, the number of cultural and arts-related businesses increased from 229 to 571, while the neighborhood houses three nursery schools, five primary schools, two secondary schools, four libraries, nearly a dozen health centers serving primarily underprivileged children and elderly residents, and dozens of other active social services and neighborhood-serving organizations. The nonprofit *Fundació Tot Raval* is a prominent voice on social issues in the neighborhood and claims to bring together more than 60 community groups, many of them geared towards immigrants such as the Islamic Cultural Council of Catalunya (Fundació Tot Raval 2017).

These observations in *el Raval* tend to mirror those in other arrival neighborhoods. Price et al. (2011) show that a mixed-use concentration of commercial and residential spaces in such neighborhoods increases socialization opportunities, and high population densities tend to encourage exchanges among neighbors due to physical propinquity. Immigrant communities' reliance on dense and diverse institutional networks can also "constitute an important resource for mobilizing and sustaining place and civic engagement," a critical mechanism for immigrant civic integration (Price et al. 2011, 199; see also Mohan & Mohan 2002). In his study of a Dutch arrival neighborhood, Saunders (2010, 240) maintains that "neighborhoods that work best as urban neighborhoods and arrival cities – two- to five-story structures with direct access to the road and small businesses below – tend to be very high density."

Thus, urban designers and planners of multicultural neighborhoods can support the potential for socialization opportunities across racial and ethnic lines by requiring higher minimum residential densities, lower maximum street widths, and mixed-use ground-floor retail, all well-known examples of design standards that encourage social mixing.

Public space

Much of life in *el Raval* is lived outdoors, due to the mild Mediterranean climate, the high number of small apartments with no outdoor space, and, as one long-time resident claimed, a deeply community-oriented culture. Public spaces are busy at all hours, and buskers, touts, and late-night beer sellers are regular appearances in the neighborhood's crowded streets, alleys, and plazas.

The neighborhood's largest and most significant public spaces include the *Boqueria* market, as much a tourist attraction now as a fresh food market; the *Rambla del Raval*, a large linear pedestrian space that resulted from the demolition of five blocks of residences in the late 1990s; and various large public spaces around the *Casa de Caritat* cultural complex that includes the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) and its *Plaça dels Àngels* forecourt, which attracts skateboarders from all over the world. These last two spaces were proposed by the *Ajuntament* as strategies to "increase light and air" in the dense neighborhood, but many believe the real intent was to increase tourism and reduce the perception of disorder in what had been a "no go" neighborhood for so many years (Degen 2017). Former Head of Planning Oriol Bohigas developed a philosophy of targeted interventions in the neighborhood called *esponjamiento* (literally "hollowing out"), which involved demolishing dense, decaying parts of the urban fabric and rebuilding them in order to "bestow dignity on the area and its residents" (Arbaci & Tapada-Berteli 2012, 293). Invoking a metaphor of colonialism, Degen (2003, 873) argues that these public space interventions were meant to populate *el Raval* with outsiders and "civilize the existing population with their new practices and values." Indeed, the immigrant population grew from 23.1% to 42.8% between 2000 and 2004, and these popular public spaces are now successful tourist destinations

partly responsible for attracting 18.8 million visitors to the neighborhood each year (Rius Ulldemolins 2014).

Iconic spaces such as these ideally serve a *bridging* function, bringing together socially heterogeneous groups to exchange information and ideas and build consensus among them (Putnam 2000). For example, the *Rambla del Raval* was built to function as a meeting point for neighborhood residents and to host the many cultural festivals put on by community organizations and associations (Horta 2010). The plaza is ringed by several *Halal* butchers and a half dozen kebab shops, many serving late-night tourists heading home after a night at one of dozens of neighborhood bars and clubs.

In contrast, the *Plaça dels Àngels* at MACBA (Figure 9.2) plays a bridging role. According to Degen (2017):

> In the morning dog-walkers let their pets defecate on the square. Groups of homeless [people] set up their belongings for the day and start to play cards, chess or even on their Playstation. I see how the private security guard of the museum greets them. The homeless [people] respond and they have a brief chat. Later, at around midday and early evening the square is buzzing. Young Filipino children are cycling around, some training with cross bikes; groups of skateboarders take over the ramps of the museum – their rattling rhythms mixing with the chattering voices from young tourists and locals that gather with sandwiches and beers.

Figure 9.2 Plaça dels Àngels.
Source: Author

Immigrant civic integration stems partly from interactions between families, friends, and strangers, and the stage for such activities is public space. As Sennett (2009, n.p.) notes:

> Gathering together strangers enables certain kinds of activities which cannot happen, or do not happen as well, in the intimate private realm. . . . In public, people can discuss and debate with people who may not share the same assumptions or the same interests. This promise of turning a fresh personal page among strangers has lured many migrants to cities.

Many of the neighborhood's smaller, local-serving spaces tend to function as *bonding* spaces, where people from socially homogeneous groups band together to share common concerns, claims, and interests (Putnam 2000). These simple spaces often lack ornamentation and are adapted by different groups for different purposes. *Plaça del Pedro* and its surrounding streets, where this chapter began, is the site of several bustling immigrant-run produce markets. Tourists, expats, and their children are the primary users of nearby *Plaça de Vicens Martorell*, which contains a popular children's playground and is located on the far eastern edge of the neighborhood abutting *Les Rambles*. In the northern reaches of the neighborhood, the *Plaça de Castella* is full day and night with large groups of students from the *Universitat de Barcelona*. And at the foot of the notorious red light district sits *Plaça de Salvador Seguí*, a space filled with parents watching their children on the playground, filmgoers catching a show at the new *Filmoteca*, and prostitutes and drug dealers still plying their trade in full view of the police who park their cars in the *plaça*.

Tertiary spaces include some of the everyday spaces of interaction, such as streets and street corners, sidewalks (Loukaitou-Sideris & Ehrenfeucht 2011), and other "sites of banal transgression" such as supermarkets, community gardens, recreation centers, libraries, and childcare centers (Amin 2002). One of the most vibrant of such spaces is *Carrer de Joaquín Costa*, a multi-ethnic haberdashery of butcheries, hipster bars, thrift stores, spice shops, produce markets, and hair salons serving the broader neighborhood and city (Figure 9.3).

Figure 9.3 Carrer de Joaquín Costa.

Source: oh-barcelona.com via flickr.com/CC by 2.0

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In addition to interaction, a critical component of immigrant civic integration is civic engagement, or "the involvement in communal activities that have some purpose or benefit beyond a single individual or family's self-interest" (Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad 2008, 16). In *el Raval*, civic events nearly always take place in outdoor public space, especially in the *Plaça dels Àngels*, the *Plaça de Joan Coromines*, or the *Rambla del Raval*, each of which hosts popular multicultural festivals, performances, parades, and concerts throughout the year (Ortiz et al. 2004; Fundació Tot Raval 2017).

It is worth noting that much of *el Raval*'s political mobilization not only takes place *in* public space but is a result of conflict *over* public space. Redevelopment projects in the 1990s and 2000s together resulted in the displacement of around 10,000 long-time residents, and dozens of scholarly articles, books, reports, and popular editorials chronicle the plight of the neighborhood and the deployment of cultural regeneration strategies to "clean it up" by opening it to outsiders (Fernández 2014). These projects have resulted in deep conflicts over the meaning, design, function, and identity of the neighborhood (Subirats & Rius 2006). In this way, public space has fostered the very political mobilization that it now hosts.

Designers seeking to support multicultural neighborhoods can take several lessons from the public spaces of *el Raval*. First, they can advocate for the development of primary, secondary, and tertiary spaces serving different kinds of populations, rather than focus only on the production of large, iconic public spaces. Infrequent contact across diverse groups is unlikely to increase respect and empathy across racial or class differences. Indeed, Amin (2002, 967) argues that there are dangers in reifying co-presence and that the power of visibility and encounter between strangers has been overstated: "the depressing reality is that in contemporary life, urban public spaces are often territorialized by particular groups . . . or they are spaces of transit with very little contact between strangers." Sandercock (2003), Fincher and Iveson (2008), and Valentine (2008) agree that designers and planners should focus their energies not only on large public spaces but also on schools, libraries, supermarkets, sports clubs, community gardens, and other everyday spaces that can serve for social contact and encounter, and sociocultural exchanges.

However, designers must recognize that there is a natural inclination, especially among immigrant groups, towards social group differentiation, something that Young (1990, 47) sees as "both an inevitable and a desirable aspect of modern social processes." Anguelovski (2014) shows that small, homogeneous bonding spaces can help strengthen the formation of racial, socioeconomic, and political identities and help protect against discrimination, persecution, and retribution in the broader public realm. These important spaces can become home to what Nancy Fraser (1990, 67) calls *subaltern counterpublics*, or places where "members of subordinated social groups [like immigrants] invent and circulate counter discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs." In *el Raval*, designers can recognize the importance of providing stages for both bridging and bonding to occur, from the iconic spaces of spectacle and protest to the local card clubs and produce stands.

Urban design professionals can achieve these goals not by over-regulating design standards and requirements, but by providing greater flexibility in how spaces are designed and managed. Creating simpler, more adaptable, more flexible, and "looser" spaces that can be appropriated by different groups for alternative uses can make them more sustainable, inclusive, and "open-minded" (Franck & Stevens 2006; Walzer 1986).

Accessibility

Residents of arrival neighborhoods must be connected in real and perceived ways to mainstream society in order to access economic opportunities and foster civic and political engagement. Accessibility can be thought of in both geographic and economic terms. The location of *el Raval*

near the city's port made it Barcelona's original arrival neighborhood and the first port of entry for immigrants (Degen 2017, 145). The neighborhood is also adjacent to *Les Rambles* and the *Barri Gotic*, so tourists stay in and traverse the district regularly, although mostly along its main corridors. This strategic location, Valenzuela-Garcia et al. (2017) argue, allows immigrant entrepreneurs to market their products to a broader clientele rather than only to their own ethnic community.

Proximity to a strong tourist- and service-based economy is critical for an arrival neighborhood like *el Raval*. Compare this to the situation in many immigrant neighborhoods located on the outskirts of European or American cities, many along poorly serviced transit routes. Saunders (2010, 290) quotes a resident of one such place that "only after a few weeks in Slotervaart [Amsterdam], I knew there was something seriously wrong. It had become a dumping ground for migrants, cut off from everything." Many recent immigrants are increasingly settling in disconnected and outlying suburban contexts in Europe and the United States, some by choice, but others due to "back to the city" movements that bring middle- and upper-class gentrifiers back to the center, while pricing out lower-income, immigrant residents. In this context, urban designers and planners must work hard to address the long-standing challenge of spatial mismatch and better connect displaced residents to socioeconomic opportunity.

Economically, *el Raval* also provides key accessibility advantages for recent immigrants and refugees from the Global South – who have historically represented around three of every four immigrants to the neighborhood – due to lower rents there than in comparable areas of the city, although these too have risen in recent years (Ajuntament de Barcelona Department d'Estadistica 2017; Subirats 2006). Median rent in 2016 was €664 ($800), or around 24% lower than the €874 ($1050) average just across *Les Rambles* in the *Barri Gotic* (Ajuntament de Barcelona Department d'Estadistica 2017). This brings up a key challenge for arrival neighborhoods: they must not become too successful lest they risk gentrification and ultimately displacement of long-time residents.

As such, designers can promote what Curran and Hamilton (2012, 2018) have coined "just green enough" interventions, or initiatives that are small scale, neighborhood-driven, and accompanied by anti-gentrification protections, as opposed to grand civic projects that geographically concentrate resources, use "conventional urban design formulae," and can spur gentrification (Wolch et al. 2014, 241). Indeed, some of the most thriving arrival neighborhoods have high poverty rates, because if residents "are able to leave within a generation for more prosperous middle-class homeowner districts, the neighborhood will be constantly refilled with new migrants from poor rural regions" (Saunders 2010, 315). In the process, urban designers should promote urban infill projects that foster the connectivity and density that *el Raval* offers and encourage the clustering of residential and commercial uses in existing immigrant-rich pockets while seeking to blur neighborhood edges and boundaries to encourage integration across ethnic lines (Ellin 2006; Young 2000).

Conclusion

This chapter explored the role that urban designers and planners can play in shaping immigrant integration in arrival neighborhoods. I used the case of Barcelona's *el Raval* and found that spatial concentration, public space, and accessibility – three concepts familiar to urban designers – can promote positive contexts of reception for immigrants, especially as they foster social interaction, access to opportunity, and civic and political engagement.

I provide a number of recommendations for urban designers seeking to foster immigrant integration in arrival neighborhoods. These include supporting higher residential and commercial

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densities, a mix of uses, and a pedestrian-oriented public realm. I argue that immigrant integration in *el Raval* relies heavily on the availability of a mix of public spaces that serve different populations, with some appropriated by recent immigrants and others by long-time residents or tourists. This confluence of bridging and bonding spaces affirms the value of frequent, respectful, and unmediated engagement with "the Other" but also celebrates natural affinities towards group-based differentiation and clustering and the maintenance of cultural heritage and practices (Young 2000). Urban designers can also learn from the many simple spaces around *el Raval* that are flexible and adaptable enough to be adopted by different groups at different times for different purposes. Urban design professionals should focus their energy not only on large iconic projects but also on the micro-spaces of everyday encounter and the smaller-scale, scattered, "just green enough" interventions that are less likely to induce gentrification and displacement of immigrant populations. Urban designers can also support immigrant integration by concentrating retail and residential uses in ethnic clusters but blurring boundaries and promoting more porous and permeable edges. Resource and population concentration is perhaps even more vital in the less-dense contexts where so many newcomers to Global North cities are now settling due to the suburbanization of immigration (Lung-Amam 2017).

This chapter is not about how well *el Raval* works as an arrival neighborhood. Some features I discuss might work well for immigrants but create resentment by long-time residents who feel they have lost control of their old neighborhood (Ortiz et al. 2004). In addition, the neighborhood is still struggling with issues of displacement, gentrification, discrimination, and persistent poverty. So, while in recent years, *el Raval* "certainly got a facelift and new city and community infrastructures, the problems that the population were suffering: health, education, and employment were not attended to . . . [and] life expectancy is five years less than in the rest of the city" (Degen 2017, 150). Instead, my intent in this chapter is to develop a framework for thinking through the relationship between the built environment and immigrant integration.

Exploratory work like this inevitably presents many challenges. With the exception of several semi-structured interviews, I had to rely primarily on nonsystematic observations. Such observations do not allow for direct transfer of prescriptions to other contexts. Nevertheless, the historical trajectory, political-economic forces and imperatives, and property development regimes shaping *el Raval* are not dissimilar to those facing arrival neighborhoods in global cities such as Los Angeles, Paris, or Berlin. In addition, my focus on the neighborhood scale is based on the notion that although it is "the most meaningful scale at which individuals participate, belong, and believe (or not) in cities, nations, and globally . . . there is little empirical information with respect to contemporary immigrant dynamics" (Price et al. 2011). Nonetheless, one might argue that we live in "spaces of flows," and just because people live or work in a certain neighborhood does not mean their lives are bound up within that space or that they derive satisfaction, opportunity, or meaning from neighborhood experiences alone (Castells 1989). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, immigrants are much more than this singular label ascribes. A more intersectional account of immigrant life is outside the scope of this chapter but is imperative to move beyond one-dimensional accounts of the human experience. If we believe that place matters in shaping arrival neighborhoods, then urban designers and planners must recognize the critical role they play in the lives of immigrants.

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Further reading

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Saunders, D. (2010). *Arrival City: How the Largest Migration in History Is Reshaping Our World.* New York: Pantheon Books. A fascinating tour of dozens of arrival cities and neighborhoods told through the eyes of the people who live, work, and play there.

Subirats, J. and Rius, J. (2006). *From the Xino to the Raval: Culture and Social Transformation in Central Barcelona.* Barcelona: Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona. One of the most extensive English-language reports to provide empirical insights into the recent changes occurring in *el Raval.*

Valentine, G. (2008). "Living with Difference: Reflections on Geographies of Encounter." *Progress in Human Geography, 32:* 323–337. A literature review that provides valuable empirical evidence on the potentialities and pitfalls of encounter in public space.