

SECTION FIVE CONCLUSION

KEY CONTENT:

1. ANSWERS TO KEY QUESTIONS

- 1.1 How do La Mina and Diagonal Mar differ socially, environmentally and economically?
- 1.2 Why do the differences exist?
- 1.3 How can geographical models explain such differences?

2. ARE DIAGONAL MAR AND LA MINA SUCCESSFUL IN RESPECT OF MANAGEMENT SCHEMES AND FUTURE OF THE ZONE

- 2.1 La Mina
- 2.2 Diagonal Mar

3. Conclusion

4. Evaluation

5. Appendix

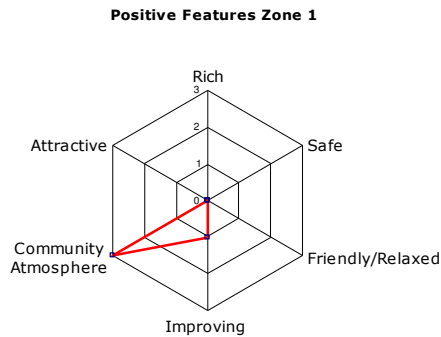
1. Answers to Key Questions

1.1 How do La Mina and Diagonal Mar differ socially, environmentally, and economically?

La Mina

Social:

- The area is marked by a rare community atmosphere, as depicted here



- Community atmosphere supported by local shops, entertainment centres and local radio
- people always appear in groups, as shown in this photo:

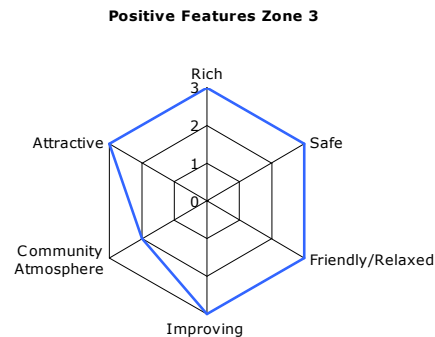


- Roma community rejects outsiders. Visitors generally feel unwelcome.
- known for violence, as exemplified by the article attached in the appendix, referring to a recent murder in La Mina

Diagonal Mar

Social:

- the only thing the area lacks is community atmosphere:



- social inclusion of a different kind: gated community, with gates like the one below:



- people appear in couples (63% of my people count), suggesting a less acquaintance-based society
- presents Barcelona as a post-industrial city, characterized by counter-urbanization

Environmental:

- people show very little environmental awareness, indicated by the amount of litter on the ground and a poor survey score of 27 in New Mina, 47 in Old Mina

Environmental:

- uniquely designed
- many argue that the artistic design of overshadowed the real use of the park

Economic:

- has a locally based morning market like that in **Photo 5.2** below

Economic:

- highly gentrified, but unsuccessful shopping centre, shown in **Photo 5.3** below



- market sells everyday products at wholesale price
- international chain stores and restaurants

1.2 Why do the differences exist?

The differences exist because the backgrounds of the zones are different. La Mina sprang up rapidly to re-house shanty-town dwellers. Thus, the quality of life is probably never been the as good as that from a 'natural' development. Also, La Mina suffers from stigma. This is a possible cause of marginality and social exclusion – La Mina has been neglected, regarded even as “a mini-state”. Furthermore, because the education level in the area is low (18% illiterate, source: www.barrimina.org), La Mina is economically backward. This resulted in a spiral of decline in the area as shown in **Diagram 5.2**:

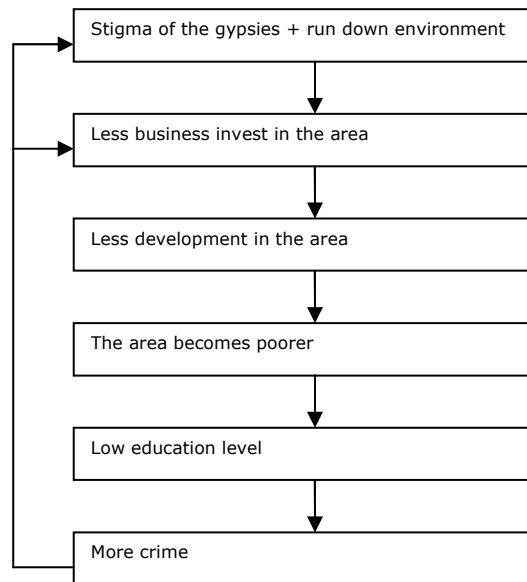


Diagram 5.2

As a result of this spiral of decline, La Mina has become poorer and poorer, until it became today's “district without law”.

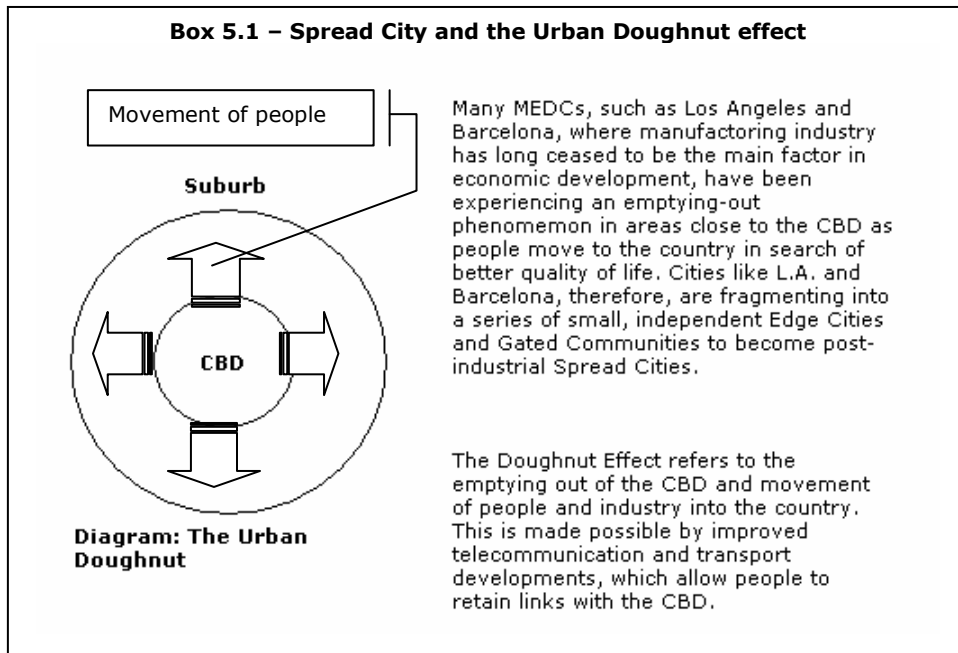
Diagonal Mar is very different to La Mina. First of all, it is designed specifically for the professional-class, and therefore a high quality of life is the major appeal. The Diagonal Mar complex combines residence, leisure, offices and retail together into one large gated community. It has Europe's largest underground car park (3,400m²), and is located next to a retail centre of 87,000m². For the construction of Diagonal Mar Park alone, 1500 workers were employed. The scale of the operation alone should ensure an outstanding quality of life in Diagonal Mar.

1.3 How can geographical models explain such differences?

The situation in Diagonal Mar and La Mina represents two distinct phases in urban development. This is shown in the following table:

Diagonal Mar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is evidence of a Spread City (box 5.1), where people's live, work and leisure is far away from each other and often require car travel - is a part of the Urban Doughnut (see box 5.1) effect, where residents as well as industry are pouring out from the city seeking better quality of life - was once part of Barcelona's industrial belt on the coast, now a wealthy gated community - Barcelona follows Mann's Model, Diagonal Mar is a peripheral semi-commuting zone of high quality housing
La Mina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - originally an industrial housing estate (like the post-war council houses in UK) - to certain extent a Ghetto (it has been called a "mini-state of the Gypsies") - a zone of degeneration, a suburb community with inner-city problems

As shown, Diagonal Mar can be associated counter-urbanization within a post-industrial MEDC, while La Mina, reflects the planning disaster of non-mixed housing for a group of people with similar ethnic origin and social standing. The zone was meant to be a temporary housing solution, but has since then survived for 50 years. Diagonal Mar has been given priority attention since its creation, while La Mina has been forgotten. In many ways, this negligence is the key to the local problem.



2. Have the management schemes improved the quality of life?

2-1 La Mina

La Mina has been given priority status in the Urban II plan, financed by the European Regional Development Fund for the economic and social regeneration of degraded urban areas; it is also

involved in the “Workalo” program, a project supported by European Commission Directorate General, aimed at improving employment rate.

Yet, despite all actions and investments carried out, no effective changes has been achieved regarding the social situation of the area. Only the environmental quality and residential quality has received minor improvement. Faced with such problems, the URBAN II CIP has set strategic aims to be completed in the next few years. This is described in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1 – summary of the development plan of La Mina

Current situation in La Mina	Data Evidence	Plan of transformation
Degradation of urban surroundings	Residential Decay result: 39 in Old Mina, 36 in New Mina (full score 41)	Turn the district into “a place of residence”, not a temporary shelter
Degradation of environmental surroundings	Environmental Survey Result: 26 in New Mina, 47 in Old Mina (full score 61)	
Lack of education	Secondary Data: 17% received university degree	Improve the education level of the active population through constructing new schools
Lack of regular source of income	29.1% of local population has long term employment	Consolidate the already-existing economic activity as a potential source of employment
Local people showing uncivil behavior	Perception Survey result -14 in New Mina, -6 in Old Mina	Introduce the correct civic behavior and educate the people
Stigma	Perception Survey result	Connect, in urban and social sense, the district with the rest of Barcelona and improve the perception of the residents

The plan to transform La Mina (illustrated in **map 5.1**) follows the Barcelona Model of the “Change the area, change the people” approach, as Mayor of the district Jesus Maria Canga says of the regeneration plan:

“(The project) assumes the entry of new people into the district which will not allow it to be a social ghetto. ... The creation of new open spaces within La Mina will create focal points for positive social interactions between people from neighbouring streets and thereby promote social and community growth.”

All of the aims in the Urban II plan amount to improving the quality of life. Already the name La Mina is being changed to “*La Gran Manzana*” – hoping to reduce the stigma attach to the original name. However, the New Mina, as revealed in my Perception Survey (score: -14), remains unattractive because the regeneration schemes are still too recent. Urban areas do not improve drastically overnight. It is possible that only after several more years, when the momentum of the regeneration has built up, will the area show some noticeable change.



2.2 Diagonal Mar

Ever since its creation, critics have condemned the Diagonal Mar complex as a failure: the shopping centre is not attracting enough visitors to satisfy its threshold, and critical opinion of the park has been "lifeless". Visitors have commented that in Diagonal Mar was designed by lawyers:

"The residential blocks are set in empty plazas which gives you the impression that you are only meant to drive up to them," and everything contributes to the 'look but don't touch' attitude. It has even been voted by the PPS as *"the worst park in the world."*

But many also believe that the accusation is not justified. Maria Jose Ania, a member of the PPS community, says:

"I think it's unfair to include "Parc Diagonal Mar" in the Hall of Shame [of the PPS]. If there is a problem with this park is that it's brand new and too recent - so is the neighborhood around!"

Indeed, the district is only due to be completed by the end of this year. Two out of five blocks are still being furnished. As it is with the URBAN II plan, the district needs sufficient time to grow, before clear progress is seen.

3. Conclusion

In answer to the question "how and why does quality of life differ between La Mina and Diagonal Mar", Diagonal Mar in my study proves to be very much superior, socially as well as environmentally. In my study I have established that this is possibly due to the socio-historical difference between the areas, this is explained in **Box 5.2** and **5.3**. At its simplest, Diagonal Mar is for the rich, La Mina the poor. Diagonal Mar has been the focus of attention, while La Mina had been forgotten. The district of La Mina is almost a warning: when the poor are cast aside, it becomes poorer and more dangerous.

Fortunately La Mina has been noticed. Already the zone shows signs of change – such as the construction of exterior lifts, new schools and police stations. One can therefore hope that in time, La Mina will be finally integrated into Barcelona society.

**Box 5.2
Diagonal Mar**

Diagonal Mar is a semi-gated community, since the area is not completely shut off. Although the area seems lacking in leisure amenities, the gates and walls still promote a sense of social status. Like all gated communities, it is characterized by walls and fences and guards. The flow of pedestrians, bicycles and automobiles are controlled; gates close at 9 p.m.

Modern Gated communities are “a market response to the perceived failure of government to ensure maintenance of property values and personal security”. (*Gated Community*, en.wikipedia.com) Diagonal Mar, interestingly, is the reverse. It follows the “Barcelona Model” – social regeneration through gentrification. The Barcelona Council hoped to stimulate the regeneration of La Mina by constructing Diagonal Mar. This, then, puts Diagonal Mar into a contradictory position. The basis of a gated community is predominantly “driven by the fear of crime and fear of differences” (*Low, 2003*). Scholars have argued that such fortification leads to a relocation of crime outside the gates within adjacent non-gated communities (*Helsley & Strange, 1999*). In the case of Diagonal Mar, the adjacent community is La Mina.

La Mina, however, is in ways a Gypsy Community with psychological gating. This means that two socially aloof areas are placed side to side, with unplanned results.

**Box 5.3
La Mina**

The Gypsies, or Gitanos in Spanish, are a Roma people inhabiting in Portugal, Spain and Southern France. They are an ethnic group with highly controversial origin. Spanish Gitanos are probably most well known for their Flamenco music.

In La Mina, it has been estimated that 35% (www.geographyfieldwork.com) of local population are of Roma origin – the legacy of mass migration from Andalucía during the 50s. Because of their nomadic life style, there has been since then a great deal of mutual distrust between La Mina Gitanos and local Spanish. This is reflected in the stigma of the Gitanos - La Mina dwellers are heavily, and perhaps unfairly, stigmatized. Views as such: “*La Mina is the badlands, the outlaw territory every great city spawns out of its need for vice and tales to frighten children... Ask a Barcelonese to name a Gypsy barrio and La Mina is the first name that comes to mind ...*” are not uncommon. In fact, the term “gypsy” itself is derived from “gyp”, meaning “to cheat”. Outward prejudice, combined with the traditional value placed on the “extended family”, results in protectionism and social inclusion – one that is possibly heightened by the presence of the rich and gated community of Diagonal Mar next to it. La Mina is a hostile place for outsiders, as illustrated when I entered a local bar and was charged aggressively 3 Euros for a can of coke, when the average Barcelona price is 50 cents.

4. Evaluation of Study

Throughout my investigation I experienced a range of problems. I will now discuss the possible ways to improve my investigation, making it more accurate.

Problems	Improvements
Perception – stigma of La Mina may have caused bias as I walked in expecting to see social degradation	I can bring people who have never heard of La Mina to the area, they can then give a more justified view.
Comparison – compared to La Mina, Diagonal Mar may appear better than it actually is; and similarly, compared with Diagonal Mar La mina may appear worse than it actually is	Again I can bring people who have heard of neither area to the zones, but this time each person will only visit one area. There will be no element of comparison.
Diagonal Mar has not been given enough time to grow, while the plan to transform LA Mina has recently been carried out.	If I was to do a formal report, I will revisit the area after two or three years to see if there is further change.

There are several ways to improve my study:

- To reduce bias and acquire more data: divide representative quadrats into smaller quadrats and prepare a survey for each small quadrats individually; overall result will be the average
- To reduce bias from perception: interview local people and ask for their opinion of their neighborhood community
- Data collection will be carried out in a time span of a day, not just a few hours; this solve problem absence of people during work hours

Finally, and most important of all, my conclusion was a tentative one. As an investigation on the quality of life, the data I have collected was in sufficient, *not* in terms of quantity, but because it is hard to find empirical evidence for something so subjective. Were I to make sure my investigation was totally representative of the two areas, I should prepare survey forms not for myself, but the local people, since they know best the quality of life of the area the live in.

Appendix

Newspaper article, See Page 5

Below is an article referring to an event that took place in La Mina recently, when Fernando S.M. and Juan Antoniu S.H. robbed and murdered jeweller J.L.R.G, 53 years old, and his wife and children.

La Mina is notorious for bloody events as such.

***traco.- Los dos atracadores de Castelldefels (Barcelona) son del barrio de La Mina y tienen numerosos antecedentes
CASTELLDEFELS (BARCELONA), 29 Nov (EUROPA PRESS)***

Los dos detenidos esta mañana por el asesinato de tres personas en el curso de un atraco en la joyería Royo de Castelldefels (Barcelona), son vecinos del barrio de La Mina, de Sant Adrià del Besòs (Barcelona) y tienen numerosos antecedentes por robo, uno de ellos incluso tiene uno por homicidio, según explicaron a Europa Press fuentes cercanas a la investigación.

Los detenidos son Fernando S.M., de 47 años, y Juan Antonio S.H., de 20.

El primero de ellos tiene nueve antecedentes por robo y uno por homicidio. El segundo, uno por robo. En el momento de la detención les fue confiscado un machete y un revólver de fogueo.

Los hechos sucedieron sobre las 11 horas en la joyería Royo, un pequeño y modesto establecimiento situado en la calle Antonio Machado, en concreto, en los bajos del Mercado de Castelldefels, un lugar conocido por los vecinos, que se mostraron consternados por la muerte de la familia, a la que consideraron "ejemplar".

A la mencionada hora, los atracadores entraron en el establecimiento y en el curso del atraco, del que se desconoce si hubo o no forcejeo, apuñalaron hasta la muerte a las tres personas que había dentro, el propietario, J.L.R.G., de 53 años, su mujer R.M.A.G., de 51, y el hijo de ambos Carlos R.A., de 24 años.

El cuerpo de la mujer fue hallado a las puertas de la joyería, mientras que los del padre y su hijo estaban dentro. Tras cometer el crimen, los atracadores intentaron huir a pie del lugar, pero fueron interceptados por agentes de la Policía Local, y fueron detenidos.

La joyería está situada en el barrio de Vista Alegre de la localidad, junto a un estanco, cuya propietaria esta mañana no daba crédito a lo ocurrido. Algunos de los vecinos y de los que se encontraban en el Mercado aseguraron haber oído tres tiros, que podrían proceder del revólver de fogueo que les fue confiscado.

El Cuerpo Nacional de Policía (CNP) se ha hecho cargo de la investigación.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

www.geographyfieldwork.com

www.barrimina.org

www.bcn.es

www.wikipedia.com

www.pps.org: *project for public spaces, 2005*

Google Earth

www.BarcelonaExperience.com

La Mina Gypsy Culture Centre

Putting up the Gates, by Edward J. Blakely and Mary Gail Snyder

Various Newspapers including: La Vanguardia; 20 Minutos;