

Entrepreneurs Networking in the Contemporary Mediterranean: Field Survey in a Catalan Coastal Town, Cambrils

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Abstract

This article discusses the role of entrepreneurs networking in the contemporary Mediterranean. The discussion focuses on small and medium-sized business, and presents empirical data from a field survey conducted in a Catalan coastal town, Cambrils. The town contains two historical nuclei: the Old Town and the Port. The origin of the former dates back to the 12th century, whereas the latter was a small fishing village until the international tourism transformed it into a thriving commercial district.

The field survey in the two areas revealed the existence of several types of entrepreneurs networking. These are analysed as a response of business owners to the globalizing economy, particularly when the current crisis is affecting severely the social and urban fabric in the Mediterranean.

The existence of two entrepreneurs association in Cambrils, the general merchants union (UBC) with a majority in the Port and the Old Town's entrepreneurs association (VilaCentre), can be interpreted as bursting of an underlying antipathy among neighbourhoods, a classic form of socio-spatial cracking in the Mediterranean. While the Old Town's business owners sell themselves as successors of the genuine traditional commerce, a growing importance of chained business was confirmed in the Port. Finally, some area based micro-associations are presented as a third way to resist and overcome the crisis.

The article concludes claiming the social and human value of commercial activities, critically important for those integrated in a historical urban setting. Also, a positive role is attributed to the entrepreneurs living in and outside the neighbourhood, who makes a decisive contribution to hand over the city as a commons to the next generation.

I. Introduction

As a contribution to the general theme of the present issue, “Crises and Networks in the Mediterranean World”, this article discusses the role of entrepreneurs networking in the contemporary Mediterranean. We understand entrepreneurs networking as a resource mobilized by business owners to ensure a greater presence in spaces of consumption, and then enhance their ability to resist and overcome a critical situation. From this viewpoint, attempts of entrepreneurs, often forced by an economic crisis, to undertake different types of networking will be highlighted, and then analysed with special attention to the common interests shared in each group. We will consider as well fragility of networks, which eventually arises in some concrete situations.

The discussion will focus on a case from the west Mediterranean coast, a Catalan town called Cambrils. As with many Mediterranean coastal towns, Cambrils contains two historical settlements, one on the coast and the other in the interior. This geographical setting defines another key aspect of the article in addressing the theme: networks not as a mere commercial structure, workable in any place, but as a collective resource born in a specific city, a collectivity which plays an important role in constructing public space in the Mediterranean. Combining these two approaches permits us to put together Japanese assets in urban geography and the traditional Mediterranean works in urbanism and architecture¹.

The core part of the research consists in an extensive field survey conducted in December 3rd-11th, 2013 and September 23rd-29th, 2014. Along the two periods, a total of 93 businesses were interviewed, for which we prepared a unified questionnaire to guide the conversation. This laborious task was possible thanks to the collaboration of Marc Llovet, graduate student in geography from the University of Barcelona. Documentary sources were also surveyed, for which Cambrils municipal government provided us a valuable support².

II. Cambrils: a town with two nuclei

Cambrils is a Catalan coastal town with some 34,000 inhabitants (as of 2013), located about 100Km west of Barcelona (Figure 1). The town has undergone a rapid expansion starting in the 1960s, with the arrival of international tourism and a great amount of seasonal residents. What was once a set of two small settlements, the Old Town and the Port, was absorbed by newly

1 An overview of recent trends in Japanese urban geography can be obtained from Kagawa et al. (2012). As for the Mediterranean works in urbanism and architecture, it is worth mentioning García García ed. (2008), which, centring upon the concept of city as public space, brings a rich synthesis of the debates.

2 The municipal government contracted a research for the Old Town's Neighbourhood Plan (Pla de Barris), including different types of social networks found in the area: CERES investigació sociològica i de mercats: *Realització d'un sociograma del nucli antic del municipi de Cambrils*, 62p. As for the Port, we found no previous research relating to the theme of this article.



Figure 1 Cambrils with its two nuclei

(Source) Elaboration based on aerial photography provided by the Institut Cartogràfic i Geològic de Catalunya (ICGC).

developed residential areas of lower densities (Tarés, 2005/2006; Martí Estrada, 2004). Cambrils presents today, at first glance, a radically different urban model to the widely diffused image of the Mediterranean compact city. We can see, however, the original structure of the two nuclei still present, in which some important elements of the urban morphology, such as particular street patterns, some water streams or an old road of Roman origin, have been working as a mediator of change from the past to the present (Takenaka, 2013).

The history of the Old Town dates back to the 12th century, when a settlement arose some 1.5Km from the coast. The village developed on the road connecting Barcelona and Valencia, and was for a long time the last stopping point before departure on the dangerous trip to Tortosa. The town's life is organized around the central square, the name of which was changed under the Franco regime from Plaça de la Constitució (Constitution Square) to Plaça d'Espanya (Spain Square). Just a few months ago, in May 2014, the municipal government approved another renaming of the square, which is now called Plaça de la Vila (Town's Square). Anyway, the square has been always the front stage of the most important popular events (Figure 2: left). The *Mare de Déu del Camí* Festival, celebrated every year in September in honour of the Mother of God of the Road, is a good example.



Figure 2 Portrait of the Old Town and the Port

Left: Procession in the Plaça d'Espanya (before 1936). Right: Torre del Port (ca. 1900).

(Source) Arxiu Municipal de Cambrils.

Meanwhile, the Port was a small fishing settlement with just a few residential blocks until 1960s. Then, the tourist boom had a large impact on the coast belt, transforming the Port into a thriving tourist-oriented commercial district. Photographic images from the old days give us witness of the radical change that took place in the maritime facade (Figure 2: right): At the beginning of the 20th century, the local people's life was on the sandy beach, where they worked, enjoyed life and kept their fishing boats. Nowadays, what we can see at the same place, around the *Torre del Port* (Port Tower), are innumerable tourist restaurants and shops. We should note, however, that an important part of the real estate still belongs to former fisherman families, as discussed later in this article.

Differences in historical origin and evolution are critical in understanding the strong sense of rivalry kept between the Old Town and the Port since decades ago. This somewhat tense relationship can naturally affect the entrepreneurs networking in Cambrils, an assumption on which we based our field survey.

It was relatively easy to determine the study area in the Old Town, because the Plaça d'Espanya is the centre of gravity, which can be clearly recognized in local people's daily paths. A total of 41 businesses were surveyed in this area (Figure 3). On the contrary, the Port constitutes today a much more extensive commercial district, so we set two small sub-areas to make the fieldwork practicable: the four sides of the Plaça del Pòsit (Fishing Cooperative Square) and around the Plaça de Catalunya (Catalonia Square). Between the two sub-areas, a total of 52 businesses were surveyed (Figure 4).

III. Entrepreneurs networking: two contrasting models

Our field survey revealed the existence of several types of entrepreneurs networking in

Cambrils. These can be analysed as a response of the entrepreneurs to the global economy, especially to the current crisis arising from 2008, which affected severely the social and urban fabric in the Mediterranean.

The most important network in Cambrils in number of entrepreneurs associated is the *Unió de Botiguers de Cambrils* (UBC, Cambrils Merchants Union), an association born with the ambitious aim of giving coverage to all the small and medium-sized businesses located in the town. The Union launched in 1999 a strategic commercial reactivation plan financed by Catalan Government, from the conviction that small-scale businesses could evolve together to a sort of open-air shopping centre. “Cambrils Obert” (Open Cambrils) is the brand chosen to promote the entrepreneurs’ union and confront the challenges imposed by the large-scale retailing and new forms of distribution³.

The actions carried out under the Cambrils Obert project are quite visible in the main streets, with its logo widely diffused and some seasonal campaigns. However, UBC members are not exactly the majority among the entrepreneurs interviewed in the two areas: 21 out of a total of 93 (Table 1). Actually, the strategic plan hardly fulfilled its purpose as an arrangement to fortify entrepreneurs’ union. When UBC began actions, many business owners of the Old Town felt marginalized because of their situation of minority, palpable in a coastal town like Cambrils, where the tourism industry has been gaining an overwhelming force.

Finally, the Old Town’s entrepreneurs decided to secede from UBC and created another association, called “VilaCentre” (Village Centre⁴). The founders were a group of business owners operating in the Old Town, especially in the central square. The secession can be considered as bursting of an underlying antipathy among neighbourhoods, a classic form of socio-spacial cracking in the Mediterranean. However, it also accounts for the existence of two different marketing strategies. Pursuit of a clear appeal to consumers’ perception

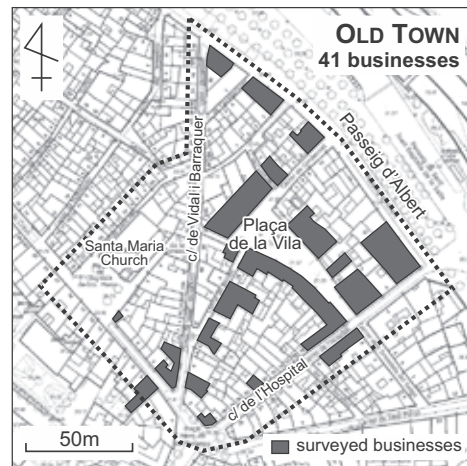


Figure 3 Study area in the Old Town

(Source) Elaboration based on cartographic data provided by the Institut Cartogràfic i Geològic de Catalunya (ICGC).

3 Based on the interview to Sílvia Coll Escribà, coordinator for the Cambrils Obert project, and also the technical document prepared for the plan by UBC and Cambrils municipal government (*Pla de dinamització del comerç integrat en el teixit urbà de Cambrils*, Cambrils, 1999). For details of the actions carried out under the project, see the UBC official web site (<http://www.ubcambrils.com>).

4 Their official name is “Associació de Comerciants i Empresaris VilaCentre” (VilaCentre Merchants and Entrepreneurs Association). The process of the secession was confirmed by key persons of three different parts: Judit Camprubí (head of the City Promotion Section, Cambrils municipal government), Sílvia Coll Escribà (see note 3) and Teresa Recasens (President of VilaCentre).

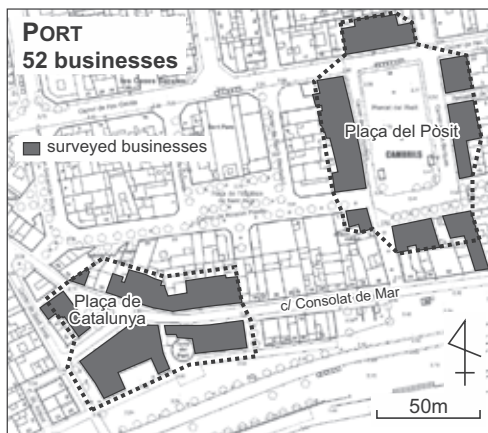


Figure 4 Study area in the Port

(Source) See Figure 3.

led VilaCentre to an alternative model of commerce, which should be rooted among local inhabitants and residents with second house in Cambrils, against the tourist-oriented Port.

The contrast between the two areas is evident: Out of the 52 businesses surveyed in the Port, 17 recognized UBC membership, whereas in the Old Town the presence of UBC is limited to just 4 businesses. In the latter, VilaCentre gained a clear predominance, with some 24 business owners associated among the 41 surveyed. This is especially the case of the shops located around the central square, now called Plaça de la Vila:

12 out of 17 confirmed their participation in VilaCentre, and the number could increase even more, if the data of some businesses, absent for now, were available. Many of the members manifest a strong sense of identity for the Old Town, and as business owners, make most of the historical and symbolical value embodied in the square.

Another aspect we should take into account in the Old Town is the entrepreneurs' role as part of the community. Around a half of them live just above the shop or in the same neighbourhood. Many of them are also members of the residents association called "El Portal", to which, surprisingly, even some non-resident business owners are affiliated.

The force of associationism in the Old Town is all the more remarkable, when it is compared to the situation of the Port. Although the major part of the UBC members have their business in the Port, they hardly share a common identity for the town, the meaning of which can even be reduced to economic usefulness as a commercial floor. The affiliation to UBC does not reach either a satisfactory level for the proper organization: only 17 among 52 recognized their membership.

On the other hand, some business owners emphasized their participation in sectoral associations, rather than area-oriented networking. Such is the case of the "Associació d'Empresaris d'Hosteleria de Cambrils" (Cambrils Hotels and Restaurants Association) or another one organized at Tarragona provincial level. Also, we should note that there is no residents association in the Port, with the only exception of some micro-associations we will be commenting later.

Anyway, the virtual absence of neighbourhood based networking does not mean that all the entrepreneurs live outside and run their business just exploiting the locational advantage of the Port. In fact, 19 out of the 52 entrepreneurs surveyed in the Port live in the vicinity, even above

the same shop⁵, and 13 of the 19 are owners of the commercial floor or the whole building. A fair number of entrepreneurs, owners and tenants as well, pointed out that the major part of the real estate existing in the Port belongs even today to local fisherman families. After the arrival of tourism boom in the second half of the 20th century, some of those families decided to rent the ground floor for commercial use, while others began their own business to complement or substitute their earnings from fishing. So, although the absence of associationism can probably be interpreted as a fracture or fragility of the local community, that is not exactly consequence of a colonization of the area by outsiders, but rather a sign of the great difficulty to find a common ground among the different interest groups involved.

IV. Expansion of chained business

In the Old Town, shops offer a great variety of goods and service, constituting together a commerce that responds to the local inhabitants' demands (Table 1). The customer profile is essentially local and national, including a large amount of people with a second house in Cambrils. The origin of these seasonal residents is mainly the interior Spain, like Zaragoza, Basque Country or Madrid, although the representation of French people is important as well. When a business owner mentions "foreign" customers, that usually means loyal customers with seasonal residence, except for a small and sporadic presence of tourists from abroad.

While the Old Town's business owners attempt to sell themselves as successors of the genuine traditional commerce, the impact of international tourism on commercial activities is evident in the Port in different manners: concentration of the supply in some determined types of products, such as restaurants and bars, accessories and ornaments, jewelry and watches, shoes and bags, etc., long business hour that is often over 12 hours, or a clear seasonal concentration in the summer period, which extends normally from the Easter holidays until late September. It is easy to perceive this seasonal effect, just visiting the town in winter: In December 2013, we found in the Port 13 of the 52 businesses closed. Actually, one of the main objectives pursued by the Cambrils Obert project was to get the activities more evenly distributed all year around. The project seems to have achieved its purpose to a great extent. What was once a tourist district with a half of the shops closed in winter presents today a rather different aspect.

An aspect we cannot ignore to understand how the international tourism affected entrepreneurs networking is the dynamics of chained business, which has been gaining ground particularly in the Port. Here two types of chains have to be distinguished: chain shops owned by a sole company, generally with a limited territorial implantation, and chain shops run by owners who lease a determined business model and brand of a firm. We can call the former type corporate owned chains and the latter franchised chains.

⁵ For two of these cases, we could not get information directly concerning the owner, as it is specified in the Table 1.

Table 1 Profile of the interviewed businesses

No.	Category of business	Residence of the owner	Property of the floor	Complementary business	Open 12h or more		Customer profile	Participation in associations
					Summer	Winter		
The Old Town								
(1)	jeweller							
(2)	bar				Yes	Yes		
3	bar	out of C.	No	some	No	Yes	local	VC
4	clothing	Cambrils	No	none	No	No	local	VC/UBC
(5)	clinic							
6	museum	vicinity	—	—	occasionally open		—	—
7	business supply	vicinity	Yes	none	No	No	national	VC/EP
8	corporate service	—	—	none	No	No	—	—
9	clothing	Cambrils	No	none	No	No	national	VC/EP
10	cosmetics	vicinity	No	none	No	No	inter.	VC
11	confectionery	vicinity	No	none	No	No	inter.	VC
12	fresh food	above	Yes	agriculture	No	No	inter.	VC/EP
13	household goods	above	Yes	none	No	No	national	VC/EP
14	flower	Cambrils	No	none	No	No	local	VC/EP
15	cafeteria	vicinity	No	none	No	No	inter.	VC/EP
16	clothing	Cambrils	No	none	No	No	inter.	VC
17	liquor	out of C.	No	none	No	No	national	VC
18	workshop	Above	Yes	education	No	No	national	VC/EP
(19)	food							
20	real estate	vicinity	Yes	none	No	No	inter.	VC/EP
21	beauty parlour	Cambrils	No	none	No	No	national	EP
22	personal service	vicinity	No	none	No	No	local	none
23	barber	Cambrils	No	none	No	No	national	VC/EP
24	clothing	vicinity	Yes	none	No	No	local	VC/EP
25	shoes	vicinity	No	education	No	No	local	EP
26	barber	out of C.	No	none	No	No	local	VC/EP
27	delicatessen	Cambrils	Yes	none	No	No	national	VC/UBC
28	bakery	Cambrils	Yes	none	No	No	national	VC/UBC/EP
29	restaurant	out of C.	Yes	none	No	No	inter.	VC/EP
(30)	corporate service							
31	fresh food	out of C.	Yes	none	No	No	inter.	VC/EP
(32)	tabacco				No	No		
33	confectionery	vicinity	No	none	No	No	inter.	VC/EP/FECAM
34	beauty parlour	vicinity	No	none	No	No	inter.	none
35	bookshop	Cambrils	No	none	No	No	local	VC
36	bar	Cambrils	Yes	some	Yes	—	local	none
(37)	beauty parlour							
(38)	bar							
39	bar	vicinity	No	none	Yes	Yes	local	none
40	bar	vicinity	No	none	Yes	Yes	national	none
41	sports equipment	vicinity	Yes	none	No	No	inter.	UBC/VC/EP

(Table 1 continuation)

No.	Category of business	Residence of the owner	Property of the floor	Complementary business	Open 12h or more		Customer profile	Participation in associations
					Summer	Winter		
The Port								
42	delicatessen	Cambrils	No	bar	No	No	national	PB
43	fashion accessories	Cambrils*	No	gardening	Yes	No	inter.	
44	fresh food	out of C.*	No	some	No	No	inter.	PB
45	fresh food	Cambrils	No	fishing	No	No	national	UBC
46	bank	out of C.*	Yes	No	No	No	inter.	other
(47)	fashion accessories					No		
48	restaurant	out of C.	No	No	Yes	Yes	inter.	
49	bank	Cambrils*	Yes	none	No	No	inter.	PB?
50	bank	out of C.*	Yes	none	No	No	inter.	none
51	restaurant	Cambrils*	No	franchise	Yes	No	inter.	none
52	clothing	Cambrils*	No	corp. chain	No	closed	inter.	none
53	bags	vicinity	Yes	none	No	No	inter.	UBC/PB
54	ornaments	Above	Yes	none	No	No	inter.	UBC/PB
55	jeweller	vicinity	No	watches	No	No	inter.	UBC/PB
(56)	clothing							
57	souvenirs	Cambrils	Yes	clothing	Yes?	No	inter.	—
58	bookshop	out of C.	No	none	Yes	No	inter.	UBC/PB
59	cosmetics	above	Yes	none	No	No	inter.	PB/other
60	clothing	Cambrils	No	same	—	—	inter.	none?
(61)	restaurant							
62	bar	out of C.	No	distribution	Yes	No	national	PB/AHC
63	restaurant	vecinity	Yes	none	No	No	inter.	AHC/FECAM/other
64	restaurant	out of C.*	No	none	No	No	national	—
65	fashion accessories	vicinity	Yes	none	No	closed	inter.	UBC
66	restaurant	vicinity	Yes	none	No	No	inter.	AHC/other
67	restaurant	vicinity*	No	none	No	limited	inter.	none
68	restaurant	Cambrils	No	restaurant	No	—	inter.	none
69	restaurant	vicinity	No	flower	No	closed	inter.	AHC
70	clothing	vicinity	Yes	none	No	—	inter.	others
(71)	bar					closed		
72	mobile telephone	out of C.*	—	none	No	No	inter.	—
73	clothing	Cambrils	No	none	No	closed	inter.	none
74	household goods	vicinity	Yes	none	No	No?	inter.	none
75	accessories/ornaments	Cambrils	Yes	corp. chain	No	No	inter.	UBC
76	shoes	Cambrils*	No	corp. chain	No	No	inter.	UBC
77	bags	vicinity	Yes	none	Yes	No	national	UBC
78	watches	vicinity	Yes	jeweller	No	closed	inter.	UBC/PB
79	cigarettes	out of C.*	—	—	No	No	—	—
80	clothing	above	Yes	none	No	No	inter.	UBC
81	sweets	vicinity	No	none	No	No	inter.	UBC
82	accessories/ornaments	Cambrils	Yes	corp. chain	No	No	inter.	UBC
83	sweets	out of C.	—	—	No	No	national	—
84	cafeteria	vicinity	Yes	bakerv	No	No	inter.	none

(Table 1 continuation)

85	clothing	out of C.	No	corp. chain	No	No	inter.	—
86	clothing	vicinity*	No	—	Yes	closed	inter.	none
87	shoes	vicinity	Yes	some	No	closed	inter.	UBC
88	restaurant	Cambrils	Yes	corp. chain	Yes	Yes	inter.	UBC
89	liquor	vicinity	—	none	No	No	inter.	UBC
90	clothing	Cambrils*	No	corp. chain	No?	No	inter.	—
91	fashion accessories	Cambrils	No	none	No	No	inter.	none
92	miscellaneous	out of C.	No	franchise	Yes	No	inter.	none
93	bags/accessories	Cambrils	No	none	Yes	No	inter.	UBC

Note:

- 1) In the field survey, the interview was not accepted by 12 businesses out of 93. In such cases, the business number to the left is indicated in parentheses and the data is absent, except for some public information.
- 2) Dash “—” means that we could not collect data on the corresponding question, either because the interviewee was unsure about the respect, or because he/she abstained from giving information.
- 3) In the residence field, the asterisk* indicates data referring to the shop’s responsible attendant. Such is the case of the shops where information of the owner was not available.
- 4) The term “bar” refers to the Spanish broader concept, including cafeteria, casual pubs or small halls with a counter offering some kinds of meal.
- 5) The following abbreviations are used in the table: [out of C] out of Cambrils; [corp. chain] corporate owned chain; [inter.] international; [UBC] Unió de Botiguers de Cambrils; [VC] VilaCentre; [EP] El Portal; [PB] El Pòsit Batega; [AHC] Associació d’Empresaris d’Hosteleria de Cambrils; [FECAM] Federació d’Empresaris de Cambrils.

Source: Based on the field survey.

Corporate owned chains are not absolutely novel in the Mediterranean and could probably be considered as part of the endogenous entrepreneurial culture. Among the 52 businesses surveyed, we found several examples of this first type of business chains. They are generally small companies selling simple goods, such as shoes, accessories, bikini, etc. Finding several shops with a same name, design and brands, scattered in a small area just a few blocks away one another is an interesting experience. Within the category of corporate owned chains, we can include as well companies with several shops, each selling different kinds of goods, or another case in which the owner runs two chains at the same time.

Although corporate owned chains can be considered just as casual elements in the urban landscape of the contemporary Mediterranean city, some of them have introduced in Cambrils a non typical commercial practice. Such is the case, for example, of a local company that, for some years, kept their shops open 365 days of the year, including Christmas.

Anyway, special attention should be paid to the appearance of shops belonging to franchised chains. In this case, the business owners depend on the brand value and facilities supplied by the firm for the whole country or beyond the border. In the study area, we found only two cases of franchised chain: one restaurant chain and another selling miscellaneous goods. These are not big international brands, but Spanish chains with a country-wide known name.

Although franchised shops naturally play their part in the local economy, particular features should also be taken into account: For franchised business, it does not make much sense to

be associated on a local scale, to be connected to the town, because the continuity of their business depends largely on the corporate networking. Such a simple fact appears especially controversial, when some of the most emblematic sites in the Port, such as the front line along the coast or just next to the Port Tower, become a showcase for franchise brands.

V. A third way: area based micro-associations

Efforts of the business owners to resist the crisis can lead to many kinds of strategies. Expanding chained business is one of them. The field survey in Cambrils, however, showed us a suggestive alternative: micro-associations emerging in small sub-areas in the Port. Although we noticed the existence of some different groups, the most active one at this moment seems to be an association called “El Pòsit Batega”. In reference to the Plaça del Pòsit (Fishing Cooperative Square), the name means something like “the Posit Square Beating”.

The participants of this micro-association have their business around the same square, where the Cooperative Hall used to be located, and they identify with the square as their own arena for daily use (Figure 5). The hall was property of the fishing cooperative, but the building housed essential services for the town’s life: a market, an ice factory, schools for boys and girls, a theatre, a cafeteria, etc⁶. The building was demolished in 2005 after suffering a severe damage. With the hall disappeared, the cooperative announced a redevelopment plan consisting in a high class hotel with shopping floor. In such a situation, many business owners began claiming the square as centre of the local life, as they have lived it for a long time, and this, despite that the landownership of the square belongs to the cooperative.

This claiming was what led those entrepreneurs to create the association. In the field survey, 9 shops and restaurants among a total of 23 located in the square confirmed their participation in El Pòsit Batega, although the membership seems to be still somewhat unstable. This type of networking based on the neighbourhood can be interpreted as a third way to survive the crisis, after classic entrepreneurial associations and business chaining. It remains to be seen whether this third way contributes to make entrepreneurs’ union a useful resource to gain competitiveness in the more and more globalizing market. However, if we recognize human and social value of the commercial activities in their integration in a specific urban fabric, with all its potential and limitations, the resurgence of entrepreneurs’ associative movements linked to the territory opens a way to recover that essential value, largely lost under functional business models.

6 Information given by Montserrat Flores, head of Cambrils Municipal Archive.



Figure 5 Plaça del Pòsit, past and present

(Source) Left: Arxiu Municipal de Cambrils (unknown date). Right: K. Takenaka (September 2014).

VI. Concluding remarks

The great majority of the shops surveyed in the Port ensure that their client profile is clearly international, a fact which can be easily confirmed, just walking along a couple of streets. However, if there is something they usually do not mention, it is in what they fail: catching young people who live in the same town. They are not frequent users of the town centre and prefer to go to commercial enclaves located in the suburbs, where the brands which they are familiar with are widely exposed. In this sense, the very low representation of international chained business can be working as a disadvantage for the two areas we studied. If a large penetration of international brands has not taken place so far in Cambrils, it is probably due to the stability of the landownership, divided in relatively small plots and controlled by fisherman families.

Anyway, a hypothetical uncontrolled intrusion of large chained business could be also a threatening factor for these same areas. We saw how some of the most emblematic streets of Catalan and Spanish cities are becoming showcases for global brands, with the consequent homogenization in urbanscape. Francesc Muñoz asserts in his work, *Urbanización: Paisajes comunes, lugares globales* (Urbanalization: common landscapes, global places), that the right to city, the right to time of the city, conceiving this not only as built environment but attending also to its qualities as place of inclusion and cultural dynamism, will be largely in the future a right to urban space that is sufficiently permeable to accommodate multiple and varied uses, in both collective and individual terms⁷. Certainly, from the viewpoint of socio-spatial dialectic in building the city, a permeable space use participated by different agents of civil society is an essential condition, so that the city retains not only a strong sense of identity, but also creativity in its ever evolving process.

⁷ Cited from Muñoz (2008: 214-215) and translated into English by the author of this article. Japanese translation, Muñoz (2013, 248).

Considering these questions reminds us a popular topic in Cambrils: the rivalry between *vileros* (the Old Town's people) and *mariners* (fishermen). If the *vileros* are custodians of the Old Town, the *mariners* are of the Port. And when we say "custodians", they are usually supposed to be residents of the neighbourhood, that is, permanent members and users of the respective urban space. We think, however, that another group should be added to the debate: entrepreneurs in retail and personal services. Although some of them live above the shop, the most common are people living in other areas, even outside the town, who come to the centre to run their business in a rented floor. Certainly, entrepreneurs are not necessarily the most loyal members of the neighbourhood, nor the shops are the most durable part of the urban morphology. Even so, they give economic use of the land, which is absolutely necessary to hand over the city as a commons to the next generation.

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