

Chapter 13

Barcelona 1992

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The trick in Barcelona was quality first, quantity after...

Pasqual Maragall¹

The profound urban transformation experienced by Barcelona over the last 20 years is linked, to a large extent, to the 1992 Olympic Games. The case of Barcelona has been the focus of international attention and has been specifically analysed from different perspectives by economists, geographers or town planners. On many occasions, its 'exemplary' nature has been referred to as the 'Barcelona model', which 'for urban transformation ... has been a reference for other cities since the mid-'80s – the outstanding example of a certain way of improving cities' (Marshall, 2004, p. 1). It must be said that this has been a common theme in most of the existing literature, particularly that originating locally and prepared by the leading figures of the Olympic experience (Barcelona City Council, 1983, 1987a, 1987b, 1996, 1999a, 1999b). To these viewpoints are added those of international critics, who have interpreted this unique experience as one of the most successful in the history of the Olympic Games (e.g. Chalkley and Essex, 1999). The 'Barcelona model', a much discussed and indiscriminately used expression, has been characterized in several ways, depending on the period and the aspect which is considered to be most representative of town planning in Barcelona (Monclús, 2003). For some, it would be a way of acting in accordance with the proliferation of specific interventions in public areas, which were undertaken from the beginning of the 1980s. For others, the most outstanding element would be the rebirth of the city with the implementation of a series of strategic urban projects linked to the 1992 Olympic Games.

The reclassification of public spaces and the new urban architecture of Barcelona have attracted the attention of many international critics. Different authors have highlighted the formal dimension of these transformations and the high quality of the public spaces (Buchanan, 1984, 1992; Rowe, 1991, 1997; Sokoloff, 1999; Gehl and Gemzoe, 2001, 2004). From a more strategic perspective, linked to the rebirth of cities and to the significance of events in a growing context of deindustrialization and 'spectacularization' of urban politics, the ability to

administer an extraordinary event such as the 1992 Olympic Games, of turning it into a 'lever' and a strategic instrument of urban renewal and recovery, has been highlighted (Borja, 1995; Marshall, 1996; Portas, 1998; Ward, 2002). In any case, the opinion appears to be widespread that the true success of the Barcelona Olympic Games was the transformation experienced by the city, through a series of actions that would normally have taken decades and which were introduced in just 6 years. In these perceptions, the enterprise of the political class, as well as the 'creative planning' of the experts and the spirit of citizen cooperation, is particularly noteworthy.

In this chapter, Barcelona's Olympic experience will be looked at from a perspective associated with the debate on the impact of major events. The first part refers to the background, origins and criteria that were the basis of the candidature from the 1970s; the second, the development of the Olympic programme and the associated urban actions during the 1980s; and the third, its subsequent impact in the urban sphere and the catalysing effects in other urban projects. The final section considers the benefits and limitations of the Olympic operation, as 14 years after the Games it is possible to have a historical perspective, although it is not easy to assess an urban strategy which still represents the foundations of present actions in the city.

From Reconstruction to Urban Marketing

An important question is that of continuity and change in urban strategies. According to some interpretations of the Olympic Games, the methods of 'progressive' intervention, of the first years of democratic recovery (in the first half of the 1980s), would have continued. Other more 'continuist' viewpoints regard the Olympic Games as a period in which many of the plans and projects designed in the 1960s and 1970s took shape. What is important to point out is that the profound modification of the urban structure of Barcelona associated with the Olympic Games is not just a result of the new proposals arising in the preparatory process of the Games.

The '92 programme' can be understood as a bid to re-launch the city in the context of economic and political crisis which Barcelona experienced from the mid-1970s until the mid-1980s; a context in which strategies adopted by other European cities, affected to a different degree by deindustrialization and economic globalization processes, were also placed. Some interpretations recognize two differentiated stages: prior to and following the Olympic nomination in 1986. In the first period (1979–1986), the 'progressive' nature of 'recovery' planning of a city with large urban deficits is stressed. In the second (1986–1992), 'strategic' urban planning would have been imposed with greater emphasis on determining factors of returns and less interest in urban improvement actions (Montaner, 1990; Montaner and Muxí, 2002).

Although to a certain degree these stages correspond to a change in the

economic and urban cycle affecting many European cities, in the case of Barcelona – as in many other Spanish cities – the recovery of democracy must also be taken into consideration, particularly following the municipal elections in 1979. In any case, the debate on these stages and the different versions of the so-called ‘Barcelona model’ is not merely a formal debate, but expresses different interpretations of its profound nature. Compared with those who associate the experience with changes induced by globalization and covering a longer period of history, some see a greater continuity between the different historical stages. For example, the anthropologist Manuel Delgado (2005) suggests that ‘the vision of Barcelona as a stage’, as characterized particularly by the Olympic Games, began with the first Universal Exhibition of 1888. To some extent, it seems clear that the Olympic Games initiative can also be recognized as part of a long tradition in the pragmatic use of major events: the Universal Exhibition of 1888 (García-Espuche *et al.*, 1991), the International Exhibition of 1929 and, possibly, the failed Exhibition project for 1982.

Without going back too far in time, it is possible to find some continuity with previous projects. The attempt to hold an International Exhibition in 1982 is particularly noteworthy (presented in 1973). To a certain extent, this would be the case of the Greater Barcelona Project which was defined in the ‘Barcelona 2000 Project’ led by Josep Porcioles, the mayor who determined the destiny of the city for more than 15 years during the Franco regime (from 1957 to 1973)² and who

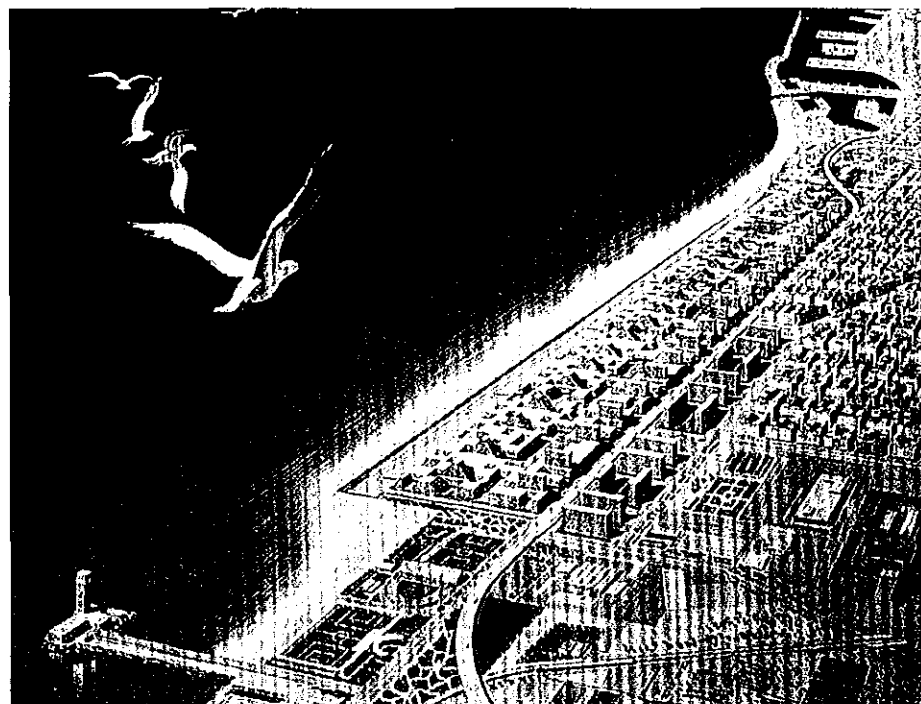


Figure 13.1. Plan de la Ribera 1964 (COAC).

launched a strategy aimed at obtaining state investment for Barcelona (Barcelona City Council, 1971). The proposal had been approved in 1970 by the Council of Ministers and was developed during the following three years with the support of Juan Antonio Samaranch (then a lawyer but later the influential president of the IOC). The intense criticism of the Expo 82 project, ‘Porcioles’ favourite municipal project in the final stage of his mandate’, condemned what was seen as its speculative nature, compared with the central argument and ‘leitmotiv’ put forward by its defenders: ‘that the Expo will be a driving force in the resolution of our urban development problems’ (Alibés *et al.*, 1975). Although the proposal for this International Exhibition never came to fruition – among other reasons, because of its origins in the period of political conflict at the end of the Franco regime – ‘it gave way to important urban transformation proposals and the design of important road networks’ (*Ibid.*). Therefore, it is not unreasonable to relate this strategy to the different attempts to promote key projects through international events, even going back to the Greater Barcelona discourse, formulated at the beginning of the twentieth century (Monclús, 2000) and redrafted at the beginning of the 1970s (Moreno and Vazquez-Montalbán, 1991).

Without considering the profound differences of this ‘pre-democratic’ project for an Exhibition in 1982 with that of hosting the Olympics of 1992, it is important to stress that in the 1970s diverse hypotheses of urban transformation were formulated that would later be key parts of the 1992 programme. This not only affected infrastructure improvements that would contribute to the modernization of the road network but also more aesthetic urban projects, such as those aimed at ‘opening the city to the sea’. Among the latter, the so-called ‘Riverside Plan’, devised in 1966 with the objective of revaluing the waterfront, stands out. It was frustrated due to powerful opposition from the citizens of Barcelona (although designed by Antonio Bonet Castellana, a prestigious modern architect with works in Barcelona and Argentina).³ The fact that it was decided 20 years later to locate the Olympic Village in this area is at the heart of the debate presented here: to what extent was it these plans rather than other, very different plans that became a reality in the democratic period during the 1980s (Moreno and Vazquez-Montalbán, 1991, p. 101)?

It must be remembered that Barcelona has experienced a profound crisis in its urban growth model since the 1970s. The failure of the Greater Barcelona idea is relative, although it is true that an agreement between different visions and interests was imposed. This agreement was translated into the new urban development plan for the city, the PGM (Pla General Metropolità – General Metropolitan Plan) of 1974–1976. The situation in Barcelona in the mid-1970s matched the explosive urban growth and ‘modernization’ experienced in Spain during the years of Franco’s dictatorship and ‘economic development policy’. The industrial city, which in 1930 had one million inhabitants, had become a metropolitan region of more than four million, in which extensive industrialization experienced a profound crisis. This was the period of ‘Grey Barcelona’ – the city of ‘development

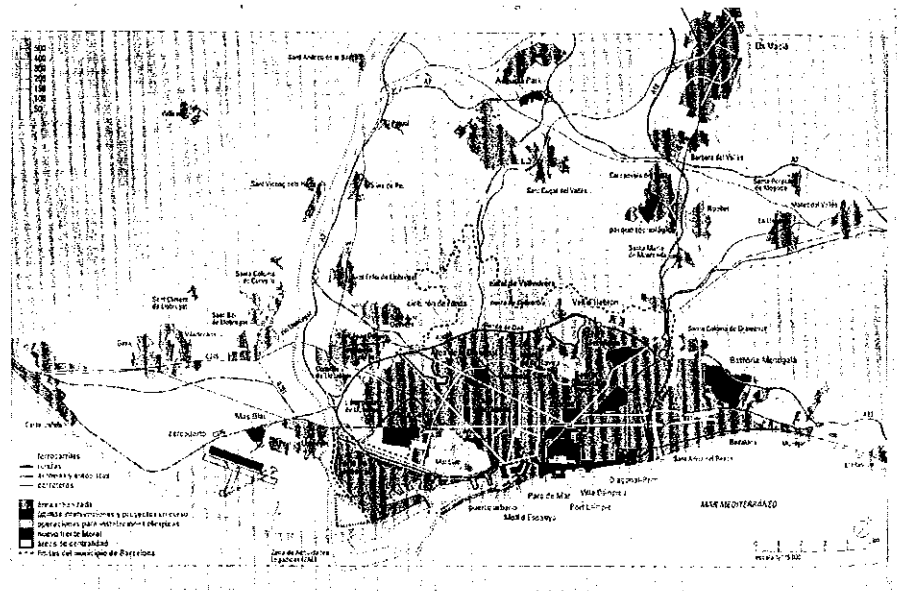


Figure 13.3. Barcelona urban growth and strategical projects (1980–1992) (M. Guàrdia et al., 1994).

Based on these principles, development in Barcelona focused on a series of schemes that sought to recover public spaces. These schemes, developed within areas in continuity with the existing neighbourhoods, involved more than 150 projects in parks, squares and amenities during the 1980s. However, it comes as no surprise that a ‘reconstruction’ model was promoted in these years of scarce resources, with modest interventions of a public nature with regard to open spaces and amenities (Barcelona City Council, 1983).

This entire experience led the School of Urban Design at Harvard University to award Barcelona the 1991 Prince of Wales Prize for architecture in recognition of the modernity and rationality which had guided the planning of the new spaces created during the first years of municipal democracy. Prior to this, in 1987, the city had achieved the Harvard Prize for its good design. In 1999, the Royal Institute of British Architects’ Gold Medal for Architecture was given to the politicians and professional architects of the City Council, for their ‘commitment to planning’, including ‘the combination of spectacular urban projects and of small-scale improvements to squares and streets’. In addition, the widely publicised report *Towards an Urban Renaissance* (DETR, 1999; see Hebbert, 2000), prepared by a group of experts and co-ordinated by Richard Rogers at the request of the then newly-elected Labour government, contained significant references to the case of Barcelona (see also chapter 9). In the report, attention is focused on two types of planning intervention: the capacity to regenerate or treat central spaces through small operations of urban reform; and the ‘strategic’ projects that characterize later intervention. Of particular significance is the fact that Pasqual Maragall, the former

mayor of Barcelona (between 1982 and 1997), was asked to provide the Foreword to that publication (Maragall, 1999a). The message was clear: ‘It is critical to understand that improving public spaces is relevant to solving social and economic problems’. However, Maragall stressed the leap to a more ambitious strategy in the mid-1980s, when the initial small-scale operations were followed by large-scale strategic urban planning projects: ‘The trick in Barcelona was quality first, quantity after’ (see the epigram at the start of this chapter).

From Quality to Quantity

In this context of economic crisis and ‘strategic urban development’, the candidature of Barcelona to host the Olympic Games was launched in 1981. The shift ‘from quality to quantity’ evolved at that time, with the Games as a pretext. It was a strategy to attract public and private investment (therefore, not so different to the Expo 82, although now in a democratic version), but also an instrument capable of generating consensus and action in a depressed economy. All this in a few years in which the transition to a service-based, rather than an industrial-based, economy was assumed to be inevitable.

In 1981, the Mayor of Barcelona, Narcís Serra, and the Deputy Mayors (Josep Miquel Abad, Josep Maria Cullerell and Pasqual Maragall), began to carry out a study of the possibility of holding the Olympic Games in the city. From the debate which took place on 30 June 1981 among the representatives of these parties, the first agreement was adopted unanimously by the new democratic council: namely, to present the Barcelona Olympic Candidature again.⁵ Work began on the ideas and dossiers for the first Candidature and by 1982, the ‘Cuyas Report’ or the Preliminary Project had already been drafted. Over the following four years, the ‘92 Programme’ was drawn up.

The choice of Barcelona in October 1986 emerged against intense competition. Eight years earlier, Los Angeles had been the sole candidate. For the 1988 Games, Seoul only had to compete with Nagoya. In contrast, there were six candidates for the 1992 Games, among them cities of importance such as Paris, Amsterdam and Brisbane. The Olympic nomination marked the difference between Barcelona and other Spanish and European cities, which were then also experiencing a change in their urban dynamics as a result of widespread economic recovery. However, when Barcelona obtained the nomination, the economic circumstances had already changed, with full integration in the European Economic Community (which reached completion in 1993) and a climate favourable for the rebirth of the city. The Olympic euphoria was soon unleashed with the exhibition of projects under way.⁶ By 1986, it was not difficult to realize that the urban development strategies that characterized the early 1980s were giving way to others with similar, but more ambitious, criteria. As Bohigas (1999) later explained ‘the new urban development programme corresponded to simple and rapidly applied premises’. Deep down, they were the same conditions that had been applied in the specific actions at the

beginning of the 1980s. With reference to the planning of the four Olympic areas, three fundamental criteria were used. First of all:

locate the four main Olympic areas within the municipality of Barcelona, in strategic points – the edges of the consolidated city and the first periphery – which will directly affect the problematic areas and at the same time accelerate the surrounding osmotic regeneration processes. Secondly, apply the same methods in this area as those which had been used in the specific actions of the neighbourhoods; in other words, the formula for urban projects. Thirdly, ensure that all the buildings and public spaces constructed have a clear use following the Games and represent fundamental pieces in the transformation of the city. (*Ibid.*)

The four Olympic areas were therefore designed and presented, with qualitative criteria similar to those of the previous small projects, but incorporating objectives corresponding to the new scale of the Olympic urban development interventions. One such objective was to contribute to continuous urban promotion and the creation of new centralities through these four areas.

In reality, two key areas were considered for the sporting facilities (with a third of less importance) and a strategic location for the Olympic Village. The main venue was planned in the Montjuïc Mountain. In 1929, a park with cultural and sporting facilities had been planned here. The second Olympic area was that of 'Valle de Hebrón', which was planned in a semi-developed area of the first periphery, surrounded by diverse amenities, a strategy in which the wish for urban

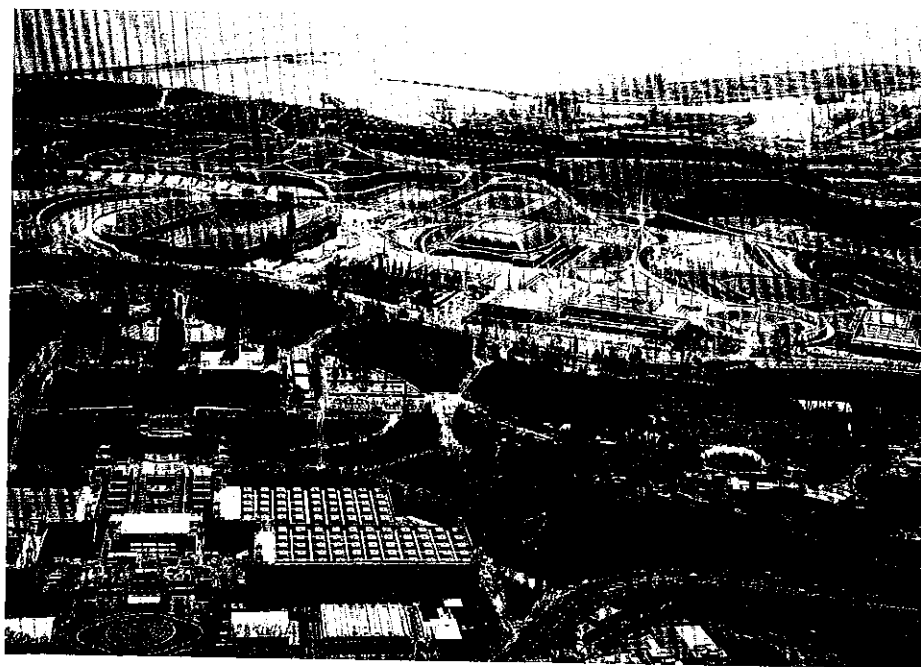


Figure 13.4. Olympic Ring (M. Guàrdia, 2002).

regeneration was clearly shown.⁷ In addition to these two venues, and in contrast to the aforementioned, another was reorganized around the most prestigious route of the city – the 'Diagonal' – with the objective of taking advantage of the existing installations. Finally, the Olympic Village was located on the waterfront, with the objective of its regeneration and the 'opening of the city to the sea'.

The Preliminary Project listed the venues for the competitions and described the Barcelona Olympic Games. In the first phase, the general criteria had to be developed and the process of transformation of the city to host the event specified. The Candidature Preliminary Project took six months to draft, and during that time a team of specialists outlined the matters that would have to be dealt with: the sporting and technological requirements, town planning, residences and financing. Experiences from previous Olympics and contacts with the organizers of the Los Angeles Games were a primary source of information and comparison. The conclusions of the Preliminary Project followed the line traced in *Primeres Aproximacions*. It was stressed that the figures for the budget were merely indicative, corresponding to detailed estimates based on data from previous Games. They were therefore a useful reference point for the administration when it came to estimating the financing for the infrastructure required to organize the Games. There was also an analysis of the cost to the city in comparison with that of previous host cities and the conclusion reached was that it was within its means. The Preliminary Project defined fundamental questions for the later development of the Candidature and the organization of Barcelona 1992: the demarcation of the four Olympic areas (Montjuïc, Diagonal, Vall d'Hebron and Parc de Mar); the participation of other cities as venues for sports competitions; the establishment of a mixed model of financing, which included contributions from public administrations and the support of private enterprise; and the programming of a cultural Olympiad lasting four years (COOB, 1992, p. 237).

The 'areas' were an attempt to concentrate a series of activities at sites which, in the tradition of the Olympic parks, would provide suitable conditions for holding the great festival of the Games. At the same time, the intention was to avoid packing all the sports facilities into a single place, which would have meant that they were useful for the sixteen days of the Olympic competition, but would have been of little social value afterwards. Another consideration was ease of access to all the venues, which were located at reasonable distances to avoid transport problems and other inconveniences for the Olympic Family and spectators. The competitions in 19 of the 24 planned sports would be held in the four chosen areas. The areas were all near junctions with main city thoroughfares and easily accessible by public transport. All four were in a circle with a radius of 5 kilometres and travelling time between them would not exceed twenty minutes, either by public or private transport. The Dossier stated that of the 37 competition venues required for the Games, 27 had already been built (of which five would need to be converted and seven adapted for the occasion), five were under construction and five more at the planning stage (COOB, 1992, p. 271).

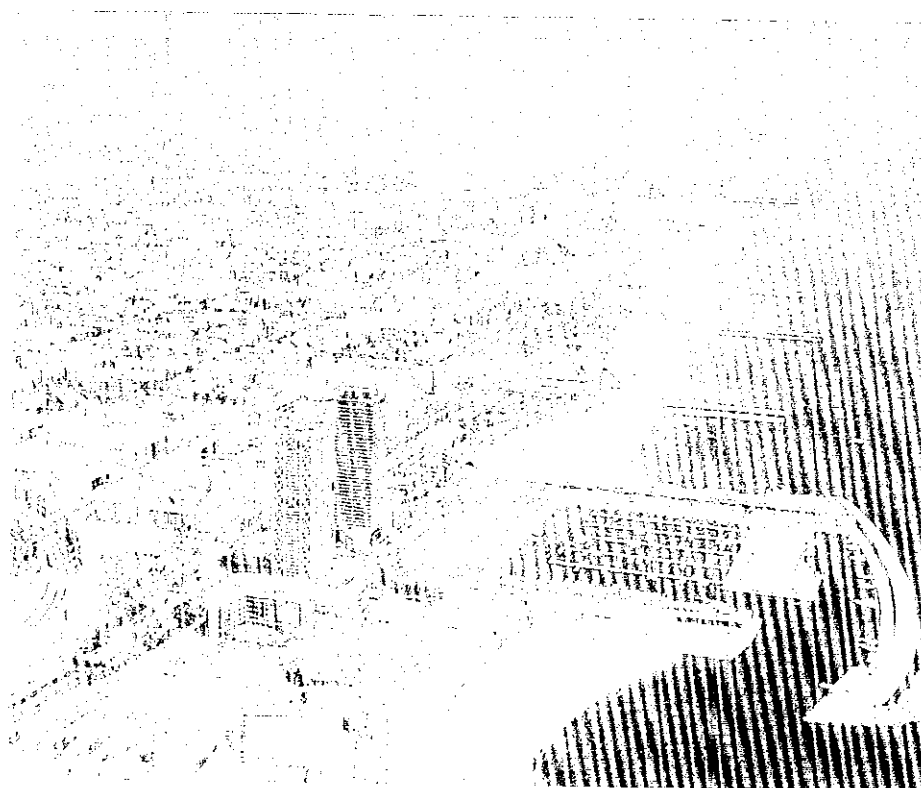


Figure 13.5. Olympic Village and Parc de Mar area (M. Guàrdia et al., 1994).

The most ambitious and innovative urban project associated with the Olympic Games was the regeneration of the 'seafont' or 'maritime façade' which, under the slogan of 'opening the city to the sea', was the prime sector for attracting investment (with housing for the Olympic Village through VOSA [Vila Olímpica Societat Anonima] as part of the Olympic I holding). The aim of the town planning initiatives in this area was to provoke a radical reshaping of the city's entire seafont; not just the Olympic Village sector but also 6 kilometres of coastline immediately to the north. It is important to point out that the decision to locate the Olympic Village on abandoned industrial land was part of a much wider operation, namely, the regeneration of the whole coastline or 'seafont' of Barcelona in line with other international experiences of *waterfronts*. In this way, continuity with previous initiatives can be better understood. In 1987, the redevelopment of the Bosch and Alsina wharf – popularly known as the Moll de la Fusta – and its connection to the area of the old city was the first step in the renovation of the central area of Barcelona's seafont and the beginning of an extensive redevelopment of the old port with the object of turning it into a recreational and sporting area. This process of renewing the city's seafont was complemented by improvements to the district of Barceloneta and the conversion of the old industrial and warehousing zone of Poblenou into a residential area.

Within the strategic plan for the location of the Olympic installations proposed in the Barcelona Candidature, two options were considered for the Olympic Village. In keeping with the aim of building all the facilities on the periphery, somewhere in the suburbs, Vallès would have been the safest and the cheapest bet. In the end, however, it was the opportunity for the city to benefit from the Olympic Village that effectively determined the decision. As McKay (2000, p. 5) noted:

The site chosen was a practically abandoned industrial triangle, between the curve in the railway line bordering the Parc de la Ciutadella and the diagonal of the Bogatell storm water channel, which meant that the city could finally be opened to the sea. The reward was that, after the Games, Barcelona would have 4.5 kilometres of beaches with an urban front open to the Mediterranean.

The Parc de Mar, the proposed location for the Olympic Village, was undergoing a process of deindustrialization; the beaches were in an extremely degraded state and railway lines separated the district from the sea. The redevelopment of the area changed all this. An alteration in the route of the railway was already envisaged in a project to reorganize the Barcelona railway system, with two new stations planned on the outskirts of the city. The design for the residential area was to follow the pattern of streets in the Eixample, something which would also allow the Diagonal to be extended as far as the sea and would integrate the new area of the Olympic Village into the fabric of the city. Finally, the development of the Poblenou seafont and the construction of the coastal ring road entailed the redesign of the system of main drains. A plan was drawn up in 1988 which covered the municipality of Barcelona and its entire hydrographic area and provided for a 100 kilometre extension of the sewer network.

The Parc de Mar was the district of Barcelona that underwent the greatest change as a result of hosting the Games. The Olympic nomination made it possible to recover more than 100 hectares of industrial land for residential areas and public facilities through a large-scale redevelopment project. The Parc de Mar area contained the Olympic Village, with 2,400 housing units for more than 15,000 people, both athletes and officials, and the Parc de Mar Village, for referees and judges. Competitions for four of the sports in the Barcelona 92 programme were held there: yachting (based in the Olympic harbour), badminton (in the Pavelló de la Mar Bella), table tennis (in the Polisportiu Estació del Nord, 2 kilometres from the Olympic Village, in the Eixample district) and some events of the Basque pelota competition (in the Frontó Colom, in the lower part of the Rambla). The Olympic Village, as noted, was built in an area which shortly before had been occupied by declining industries, separated from the rest of the city and from the sea by two railway lines. This, in turn, restricted access to beaches affected by pollution, caused by an industrial sewer outflow as well as a less polluted ground water drain. The Special Town Plan,⁸ approved in June 1986, provided the instrument that

made it possible to turn the Olympic Village into a new district, integrated into an urban fabric graced with public spaces and endowed with sports facilities.

The complex operation of transforming the whole of this large area of the city and integrating it into the urban structure implied the execution of a large number of projects, which can be summarized as follows:

- ◆ Regeneration of the coast-line and the restructuring of the sewage network.
- ◆ Restructuring the railway network, with the elimination of the two lines that crossed the area.
- ◆ Construction of the semi-covered stretch of the Ronda del Litoral which passes through the area, so that parks could be laid out over it and the streets of the Eixample district could be extended to reach the sea.
- ◆ Widening the Passeig Marítim to 30 metres.
- ◆ Building a new marina, the Olympic Harbour.
- ◆ Construction of hotel, commercial and leisure facilities between the Ronda del Litoral and the Passeig Marítim.
- ◆ Continuation of the morphology of the Eixample district, with the creation of 'super-blocks'. These super-blocks include commercial spaces, a sports hall and cultural, religious and health care centres.
- ◆ Provision of a network of green spaces throughout the area, with the Parc de Mar Area covering 130 hectares, of which 45 are occupied by the Olympic Village.

The town planning operation made it possible to recover 5.2 kilometres of the coast-line for the use of the people of Barcelona and of all the inhabitants of the metropolitan area.⁹

The Olympic Village represented the flagship of the new urban development in Barcelona and the culmination of the previous discourse on the reconstruction of the city. In its architectural and urban development configuration, the influence of some historical models of modern urban development can be observed (especially that of south Amsterdam). The 'reconstruction' discourse turned out to be particularly appropriate for an updated version of the traditional morphologies of the Ensanche (Solá-Morales, 1992).

The jump in scale involved in the strategic or major urban projects linked to the Olympics was in keeping with the extension of the new strategies based on the so-called 'new areas of centrality', although the principles of the 'new strategic planning' were as simple as in the first phase of 'pragmatic planning and public spaces'. These projects were now developed and formalized as part of the new category of 'strategic urban projects' (Barcelona City Council, 1987b; Busquets, 1992) and included the so-called 'areas of new centrality', the interventions in the

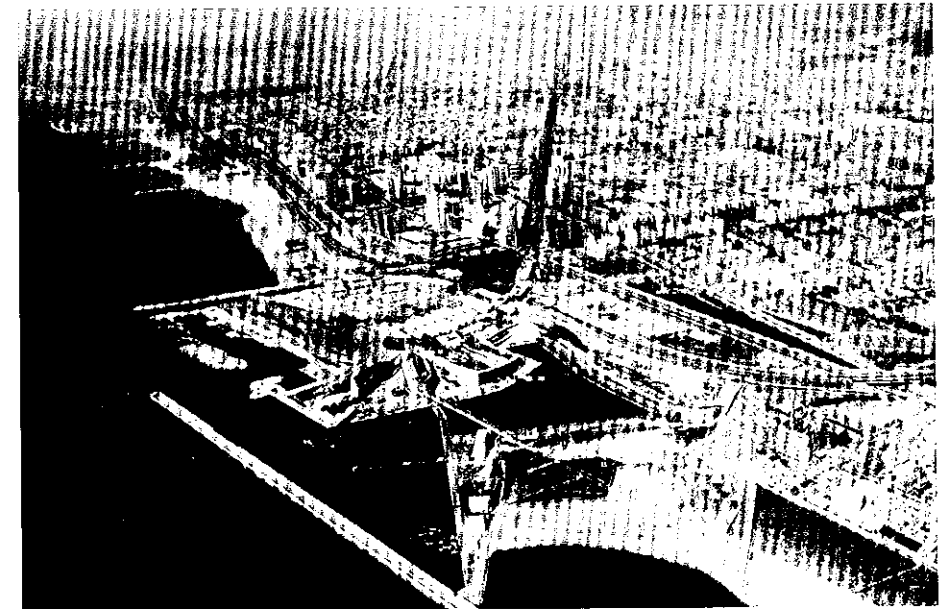


Figure 13.6. Forum of Cultures 2004 (Barcelona City Council).

city road system and other projects centred on major infrastructure, highlighting the implementation of the ring roads and road accesses.¹⁰ The four Olympic areas were promoted by the public sector. The rest relied on private initiative, were under the management of the public sector, or were funded according to mixed formulae, determined by the rate of private investment.

Catalyst for Strategic Urban Projects

Analysing the nature of the urban development strategy at the time of the Olympic nomination needs to consider international progress in 'city entrepreneurialism', which was being developed in association with the proliferation of strategic urban projects in the United States and later in diverse European cities. This urban planning transformation which Peter Hall identified in the 1970s also occurred in Barcelona, although some years later. As Hall (1988, p. 355) observed: 'Planning turned from regulating urban growth to encouraging it by any and every possible means. Cities, the new message rang loud and clear, were machines for wealth creation; the first and chief aim of planning must be to oil the machinery'.

In the first volume of the Official Report, published just prior to the start of the Games, Josep Miquel Abad made the significant point that the 16 days of competition would merely be 'the climax of a process which has taken years and that many of our objectives – the reactivation of the city and the country, the town planning works, the boost to the economy – will have already been more than accomplished before the magic date' (COOB, 1992, p. 1). However, as was seen later, the development of the Olympic Games took place at a time when

clear priority was given to the economic promotion strategy. In this way, the main sources of urban policy in Barcelona centred on the attempt to become a more competitive and dynamic city, using the Olympic Games as the agent for the strategic projects.

The level of continuity between the Olympic initiative and the projects developed at the beginning of the 1970s is questionable. However, it is not difficult to see how new more strategic approaches were imposed compared with the visions of conventional urban development, based on zoning and control of urban growth. Although the Expo 82 initiative could now be registered in these visions, it was in the mid-1980s when Barcelona definitively absorbed the message of 'leverage' – the reorientation of urban policy towards 'entrepreneurial urban development' based on the use of public capital to stimulate private capital investment.

After the 1980s, the leaders of Barcelona understood the need to adapt the city to the pressures and opportunities arising from economic globalization, a process from which the city could not opt out. From here came the implementation of strategic plans designed as part of a new urban impulse for the economic re-launch of the city. The experience of the North American strategic plans, particularly San Francisco in 1984, contributed to the preparation of the 'Barcelona 2000 Economic and Social Plan', a document produced from the consensus between the different urban agents (including institutions, companies and trade unions). This took place in 1987, when the 'strategic' decisions were under way for the important urban projects associated with 1992 (Barcelona City Council, 1999a). The strategic plans approved in the 1990s were less characterized as 'antidotes' against a situation of crisis and urban stagnation, than tools to ensure urban growth beyond the Olympic event (Santacana, 2000). Barcelona was less original with regard to the aims and objectives of the Games: place promotion and urban regeneration. The Barcelona 2000 Plan identified three goals: improving communications; improving the quality of life with reference to the environment, training, research, social opportunities for housing and cultural infrastructure; and supporting industry and advanced services to business with particular reference to telecommunications and technological innovation. It was a long-term strategy for modernization, aimed at regenerating the city's economy and more generally its central urban fabric. In relation to the city's strategic modernization process, there was continuity in the developments connected with the Olympics (Roche, 2000, p. 144).

With the Olympic programme already developed, the picture presented in the post Olympic situation raised the need to agree on a new set of actions which would enable the continuation and extension of the initial strategy of 'extracting investment from the central government'. The promotional objectives were becoming increasingly more explicit, *city marketing*. It was no longer just a case of guaranteeing state public funds (as with the Expo 82 or in the first versions of the Olympic programme, when this was justified to finance the infrastructural work that the city had pending since the 1960s). Rather, it was a case of using them

appropriately, together with advanced business management formulae, with a view to increasing the city's prestige and image at an international level and hence attracting private investment for the 'new Barcelona' (Borja and Castells, 1997; McNeill, 1999).

Analysing the effect of the Olympic Games, the fact that the majority of operations had been considered an adaptation of previous projects to the specific needs of the event has already been mentioned. Therefore, the improvement of the road network was connected to the need to link the different Olympic areas appropriately, but it served as an unquestionable driving force to a project which had already been planned much earlier. The construction of the new ring roads (planned since the beginning of the twentieth century) produced a decisive impact on urban structure. Similarly, the burying and remodelling of railway lines and the modernization of the sanitation network can be considered as important infrastructure projects arising from investment associated with the Olympics. Likewise, new sports facilities and large-scale telecommunications works were the main actions carried out courtesy of the Games.

In this respect, a key aspect which is not easily quantifiable is the relative importance of projects which were not directly linked to the Olympic areas. Indeed, the most important investments were generated in parallel and outside these areas, with investments strictly related to the event representing a mere 15 per cent of the total cost of 'approved' investment (Clusa, 1999, p. 93). This is probably the most relevant aspect of the Barcelona experience and helps to explain the scope of other schemes linked, to a greater or lesser degree, to new infrastructure, such as ring roads and the remodelling of the railways. It is not easy to measure the economic impact of the Games, as their planning and preparation coincided with Spain joining the European Community (1986). However, between 1986 and 1991 employment rose by 20 per cent in the municipality, 45 per cent in metropolitan Barcelona, and 30 per cent in the rest of the metropolitan region. The economic impact was most notable: between 1986 and 1992 'Barcelona would go from depression to economic boom'. Finally, the impact of other operations linked even more indirectly to the Olympic project has to be taken into consideration, including the remodelling of the port, the airport, the 'Diagonal Mar', the high-speed train and the Sagrera area (Barcelona Regional, 1999). In this process, public and private investment associated with the Olympic Games was a determining factor – almost \$10 billion – which contrasts with the costs of \$1.3 billion strictly associated with the event (Brunet, 1995).

No less decisive were other repercussions in the sense of new ways of running the city, which became increasingly business-like and less controlled by the traditional city council departments. New methods of intervention and management of urban planning were introduced, as with the creation of Olympic Holding (1987–1993, managed by Josep Acebillo, transformed in 1994 into the Agencia Metropolitana Barcelona Regional, SA). This was a 'joint venture' between the local administration and the central government that would not have

been possible without exceptional circumstances such as those arising from the Olympic Games. It is well known that cooperation between institutions is usually more difficult than between companies.¹¹

Perhaps above all else, it seems evident that the most important effects were related to the so-called 'map effect' – the desire 'to stamp Barcelona's image on the map'. The wish had been repeatedly expressed 'to stamp Barcelona's image on the map'. It is not an exaggeration to suggest a direct relationship between the Olympic Games and the notable increase in tourism: from 4.1 million tourists in 1991 to 6.3 million in 1995. The adoption of 'cultural urban development' strategies, with the construction of museums and cultural facilities, must also be noted in this respect. In fact, the centrality of the cultural strategies was reinforced a few years after the Olympic Games, with the decision to organize a new international event, the Forum of the Cultures 2004. This event, unique in the field of large-scale urban celebrations, adopted the 'dialogue between cultures' as an excuse for intense urban renewal in a problematic and strategic area of the city. Once again, Barcelona placed its trust in the use of international celebrations as the engine of important urban development transformations – a formula used repeatedly in Barcelona, as in many other cities (Monclús, 2006).

Epilogue

'When the Olympic flame has been quenched, everyone, and particularly the generations to come, will be left with a city transformed, with a new urban weft and a new loom'. In the Foreword to the Official Report (COOB, 1992), Mayor Maragall summarized the main achievements of the Olympic programme, prior to the celebration of the Games, with references to the extraordinary urban transformation of the city. However, following the enormous success of the Games, the city's ability to organize the Games also contributed to improving the image of the city, another fundamental objective although somewhat less explicit. Linked to this new urban image, the use of the 'leverage opportunities' also shows the success of the Olympic bid, as mentioned in relation to the economic impact of the Games and its multiplier effect on the tourist industry.

As with other major events, assessment of the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games must be undertaken in accordance with the level of compliance with the main objectives, both officially stated and those which were not so explicit, but also in accordance with the eventual costs and social and cultural benefits. This is where the limits of the 'Barcelona model' are shown. Among the most important criticisms are the references to the excessive, almost obsessive, concern to improve the image of the city, with the resulting trivialization process of urban methods and a certain loss of its historic identity. Rem Koolhaas (1995) pointed out that a unique city like Barcelona could become a 'generic city', by oversimplifying its identity,¹² sentiments echoed by other noteworthy critics (Tello, 1993; Delgado, 2005; Capel, 2005).

This concern contrasts with the necessity of interventions in areas as essential as public transport and housing. As far as the former is concerned, it seems that the main advances have been in private rather than public transport, with repercussions for the new road networks in the restructuring of the metropolitan area of Barcelona. Admittedly, however, it is also true that the responsibility for the suburban and metropolitan dispersion processes cannot be attributed solely to the Olympic projects rather than other factors (Monclús, 1998). As far as the weakness in housing policy is concerned, the urban land revaluation and the property boom that coincided with the 'Olympic years' made the consequences more serious and negative. In addition to the rise in housing prices, the excessive importance given to hotels and offices and the 'over-development' of real estate markets have been criticized. Here, the strong dependence on short cycles of the economy shows one of the limits of this type of event, with the high revaluation of central areas resulting in the displacement of public sector housing and the young towards the metropolitan periphery.

Nevertheless, the Barcelona Olympic Games were extraordinarily successful in catalysing plans and projects and stimulating the urban economy. There was decisive and consensual public intervention and the event was used to improve extensive areas of the city. The project for 'Greater Barcelona' – thought about for decades but developed in the 1980s – became a reality in the 1990s. The city is now an international point of reference for architects and international investors alike and the Olympic Games were the instrument used for private-led developments. There is a 'before' and 'after' effect of the Olympic Games, although for some, the change produced in the 1990s would have involved greater importance of private capital in urban development, far from the initial 'Barcelona model' (Montaner and Muxí, 2002; Bohigas, 1999). Although it may seem contradictory, Barcelona may have become a victim of its own success. As in other cities, the success of the strategic urban development in the city may have been the root of problems arising from the revaluation of certain urban areas. The quickening of decentralizing tendencies and the exponential increase in metropolitan mobility correlates with considerable costs in energy, land and commuting times, in other words, the quality of urban life.

Perhaps it could be concluded that the 'new urban development' of Barcelona, following the Games, has decisively opted for quantity, taking the quality of the interventions for granted – although this conclusion may not be so clear, if one includes other parameters associated with urban development quality: for example, housing characteristics (price and quality), reasonable mobility, and environmental aspects. The Olympic Games, however, have a limited responsibility for these trends, if they are considered, first, as a logical conclusion to a process initiated far earlier than the celebration of the event and, secondly, as a Barcelona version of 'international global urban development', which here had greater support and was more 'domesticated' than in other cities affected by the phenomenon of globalization.

Notes

1. Maragall (1999b, p. 5).
2. Josep Porcioles was appointed Mayor of Barcelona by the Franco regime in 1957, a post he did not leave until 1973.
3. The 'Riverside Plan' – which had the poetic sub-title 'Barcelona. A city which can no longer live with its back to the sea' – was a project promoted by a group of important companies with land and factories in this sector. In 1968, the City Council approved the project, made up of a strip separated from the old 'Poble Nou' by a ring road. Local resistance paralysed the project in 1973.
4. Oriol Bohigas was born in 1925. He became an architect at the Barcelona School of Architecture (Escola Técnica Superior d'Arquitectura de Barcelona – ESTAB) in 1951, Town Planner in Madrid in 1961, Professor at the ETSAB in 1966, and its Director from 1977 to 1980. In 1980 he was appointed Planning Director at the Barcelona City Council, a position he held until 1984 when he became Personal Advisor to the Mayor.
5. The City Council, democratically elected for the first time in 40 years, had councillors from five parties: PSC, PSUC, CiU, UCD and ERC (COOB, 1992, I, p. 219).
6. Exhibition held in October 1988 in the Edifici de les Aigües under the title *Barcelona, the City and 92*. It was a comprehensive account of the town planning projects in progress which were related directly or indirectly to the organization of the Games. The exhibition was an unprecedented success and received over 350,000 visitors (COOB, 1992, II, p. 347).
7. The objective of the action was to structure an urban space located in an under-privileged area. In the Vall d'Hebron Area, the Candidature Dossier could point to an Olympic venue completed well before the city was nominated to host the 1992 Games: the velodrome, which had been inaugurated for the World Cycling Championship in 1984. The area, which occupies 160 hectares, has other facilities, such as the L'ars Anna Gironella de Mundet, the Club Esportiu Hispano-Francès and the Unió Esportiva d'Horta (COOB, 1992, II, p. 247).
8. Drawn up by the team of architects: Josep Martorell, Oriol Bohigas, David MacKay and Albert Puigdomènech.
9. In contrast, what happened in Barcelona's Old Harbour (Port Vell) was the generalized renovation of port and industrial facilities into something approaching a thematic park. This was done by the Port Authority, outside of the control of the City Council. Indeed, the remodelling of the Port Vell reflects these influences: the conversion of former port facilities for recreational, leisure and tourism uses in the 'Rouse style' (after the developer of Baltimore and Boston). It is now a part of a new city image. Some similarities can be found with the 'Baltimore model' (Ward, 2006).
10. From the twelve new 'poles' or 'areas of centrality' four were for the Olympics, four for the waterfront, and four other places. There were two main objectives: 'decentralizing central land uses' (tertiary uses: offices); and regenerating the seafront. If we look at the seafront, we can understand that those objectives were complementary. These areas benefited from special planning conditions in order to attract the new types of directional and tertiary uses corresponding to the services and facilities sectors, in spaces with obsolete uses but with good accessibility (Barcelona City Council, 1987b; Esteban, 1999).
11. This formula allowed 40 per cent of public investment from the central administration, 32 per cent from the regional government and 18 per cent from Barcelona City Council to be managed (Brunet, 1995, p. 103).
12. 'Sometimes an old, singular city, like Barcelona, by oversimplifying its identity, turns generic. It becomes transparent, like a logo' (Koolhaas, 1995).

Chapter 14

Sydney 2000

Beatriz García

This chapter studies Sydney's experience as an Olympic city from the perspective of cultural policy and planning. In previous work I have argued that culture and the arts play a critical role in defining the Games' symbolic dimensions and are determining factors in the sustainability of event legacies (see García, 2002b, 2003, 2004; Moragas 1992). In this context, interpreting Sydney's cultural discourse is fundamental to understanding how the city was experienced during the Olympic fortnight and the kinds of images that it projected to the rest of the world in its lead-up and aftermath.

Sydney's cultural discourse offers a good example of the internal contradictions that underpin many examples of city-based events that try to be everything for everyone: locally meaningful, nationally engaging and globally impacting. The problem of such a multi-layered approach is that it tends to lead to overly simplistic and tokenistic cultural representations, an issue best reflected in the often confused narratives of Olympic Opening and Closing Ceremonies (see Tomlinson, 1996). Despite claims to the contrary (Cashman, 2006), Sydney 2000 was no exception as its ceremonies failed to depart from established narratives about Australia dominated by a white and Western sense of aesthetics where indigenous and multicultural cultures are an exotic addition rather than a core component (García and Miah, 2000). However, Sydney promised a comprehensive programme of cultural activity over four years and presented an unprecedented programme of street activity during the Olympic fortnight, which provided additional opportunities to explore and demonstrate the worth of its cultural discourse.

This chapter offers a detailed analysis of how Sydney's cultural discourse came about and influenced its profile as an Olympic city. It builds on the current debate about event-led cultural regeneration in urban environments (Chalkley and Essex, 1999; Burbank *et al.*, 2002; Monclús 2004; Richards and Wilson, 2004; Gold and Gold, 2005) to provide critical scrutiny of existing definitions and guidelines for cultural engagement within the Olympic Movement. Its key argument is that the positioning of the Olympic Games as a city-based, nationally-framed and globally embracing cultural event presents important challenges for those that make cultural policy, yet has rarely resulted in sustainable cultural legacies. Sydney had