Strategic planning and change management. Examples of Barcelona, Seville and Saragossa (Spain)

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> *"All men can see these tactics whereby I conquer, but what none can see is the strategy out of which victory is evolved."*
>
> Tzun Tzu.

Abstract. This work attempts to underline that motivating and managing change in the mentality of its environment, and being in tune with society's changing needs is the basis of successful strategic planning. Our aim is to highlight planning as a way of learning, that is, planning implies changing ways of thinking, not making plans. Strategic learning requires releasing the mind in order to slip flexibly into the continuous line and to achieve the creation of possible action courses from a fertile dialogue between thought and action. Using our insights from the two literatures, we propose a dynamic, integrative conceptual model of change based on organizational learning. This practice has been analysed in three Spanish cities where important events have taken place.

Contents:

1.   Introduction

Strategic thinking is useful for drawing up plans or programs designed for achieving future goals and using available resources. Developing a strategy enables the design of approaches that will help meet future challenges. The mission and objectives must be defined, the advantages and drawbacks of each line of action analysed, and each option assessed in terms of strategy (Prahalad, Hammel, 2000).

In order to follow a single guiding principle, it is important to stop and think that strategic management is ultimately a model of change. It is not a question of simply moving, but where we are moving. Here, strategic thinking plays a vital role. We must move rapidly and foresee the future in order to conquer it. Strategic planning is a series of steps and stages that we accomplish, using instruments and models to bring about, consolidate and standardize strategic thinking (Garrido Buj, 2006).

1.1.   Contextualization

In the sixties, certain changes started to occur that would be particularly significant for society and organizations, and change was considered as something inevitable. There was an explosion in the services sector, which accounted for 70% of the Gross National Product in developed countries and had a huge impact on the development of this sector. Economic globalization started to increase, bringing about significant socio-cultural changes. Production and services faced new challenges as customers became more demanding.

Many elements and circumstances changed rapidly at the beginning of the 21st century. Changes occurred in all walks of economic, political and social life that could not go unnoticed (Cunningham, 2011). These included:

The demand for a quality guarantee and a reduction in production costs to compete in new markets and/or remain in traditional ones.

A growing awareness of the need to motivate all employees and use their creativity to the full to reduce costs and add value to products.

Passive users became much more demanding customers with criteria.

Rapid development of new information and telecommunication technologies for automating processes.

An increasing number of innovative products in increasingly more competitive sectors, the genuine result of knowledge management.

New laws on ecological matters in all developed countries.

New global markets and new areas of low-cost production, particularly in Asia.

Integration of suppliers and customers in different business processes, and others.

Enormous growth and business consolidation, with acquisitions, mergers and megamergers.

These transformations have the following specific characteristics: speed, novelty, depth and scope, which together make the world a place full of uncertainty. All of these processes affect all organizations (Anderson, Anderson, 2010).

If we analyze quality during these periods, we see that quality control becomes a management philosophy. In particular, we endeavour to gain more insight into management as a premise for reaching a direction that will focus on the human component as the "central strength" of any enterprise, with the resulting economic benefits (Chiavenato, 2003). Some years ago companies operated in a defined environment with a certain level of stability. Nowadays, the environment is not so well-defined and is constantly changing. It is therefore necessary to learn how to manage a company immersed in uncertainty, where only instability is for certain (Drucker, 2003a, 2003b).

Abilities and capabilities have been developed to make decisions and assume risks, to lead work teams and analyse in detail and reflect upon processes in an integral way, and, in particular, to capture the essence of the environment, to transform

and conquer it. The need for change in businesses and organizations is not for reasons of survival, there are other ethical reasons that can be interpreted as strategic changes, even at higher levels such as the protection of the environment, good use of public money and corporate social responsibility (Clarke, Fuller, 2010).

It is well known that classical Greek philosophy proposed that only change is ever-present. As Heraclitus said, everything flows (Kirk et al., 2008). In his opinion, everything moves constantly and nothing lasts forever and therefore we cannot step twice into the same river as, when we step into the river for a second time, we are not the same and neither is the water. Ernesto Gore stated that the organizations most capable of taking on the future do not believe in themselves for what they are, but for their ability to stop being what they are. Their strength lies not in their structures but in their capacity to change them whenever necessary. Change is a reality and trying to ignore it is suicide.

Proactive organizations consider change when they assess their competencies on a daily basis, combining feedback and monitoring the environment, and in particular, the market. They try to foresee how they will act in the future, and develop a strategic vision that will put them in a better position to make the best of new opportunities (Saji, 2012). Never-ending dissatisfaction with what they do becomes the key premise of organizations that constantly innovate and perfect their results, they are analysing possibilities to improve, however insignificant they may seem, and are thus able to identify in advance innovative competitive advantages. On the other hand, reactive organizations try to change when their position is threatened and they lose competitiveness (González González, 2011).

1.2. Objectives and methodology

The main aim of this study is to offer some reflections on strategic planning in our cities and how the attitude and willingness of the organizations involved affect the implementation of these plans. It starts from the premise that the city is one of the most complex and dynamic spaces currently existing, and we therefore need to reflect upon how to act via strategic plans. Below we describe the example of three Spanish cities and how they have been affected by these plans. Urban renovation processes respond to a strategy of urban development that promotes a profound restructuring of the city, in order to reassess its possibilities in a global competitive context to attract investors and consumers, as well as opportunities for disadvantaged areas (TroitiñoVinuesa, 2003).

According to Leichenko and O'Brien (2008), a strategy is required to make these changes effective. Whilst these changes are occurring, people and groups need to develop a sense of belonging and ownership and take an active part in planning them so that they are not just based on passive agreement (Pérez, Massoni, 2009). Thus, regulations that no longer serve their purpose must be detected and specific alternatives regarding behaviour suggested (Lury, Wakeford, 2012).

Undertaking the road towards urban sustainability in a city cannot be restricted to a combination of good intentions and generic declarations, interspersed with measures, not all of which are always exemplary. From the creative perspective, if we follow the road already paved by initiatives such as Agenda Local 21, a certain contamination effect can be expected in urban policies. One cannot, therefore, defend a sustainable model of urban mobility and at the same time carry out actions against it without running the risk of failure (Bruff, Wood, 2000).

Strategic planning in the city must be changed because currently its functioning is based on networks and systems and these new dimensions must be taken into account. Strategic planning is a dynamic and participative process which must consider unexpected changes occurring in the environment. At the same time, it should ensure that all of the ideas and proposed initiatives are put forward in the framework of a common information base.

The methodology consists in showing that strategic plans are processes of reflection followed by all of the agents interested in a particular process (the city, a specific sector of it, a territory, etc...) by which they define their future plan, the bases on which it will be sustained and the specific strategies and projects to be carried out throughout the defined time-frame. The city is an ideal field for implementing this train of thought which, by definition, transcends the document itself and becomes a con-

tinuous process based on the cooperation of the Urban Authorities and Social Agents. This document does not seek to usurp any formative or legitimizing aspect of Urban Planning, it simply enriches it as a prior reflection or as an incentive for the correction of dysfunctions detected in its application.

The first step is to select examples we consider to be the most important. Although strategic planning is underway in a number of our major cities, it is not always at the same level of development or, more importantly, success, which is understood to be the creation of the city's own image with its own model of social and economic development. We applied two criteria to select cases:

a) The impact of major changes with the potential to strategically transform the city. Not all cities have managed to organize unique events which have at least enabled them to be visualized in an increasingly national and international urban framework.

b) The repercussions of the current economic crisis on existing plans which, given their severity and scope, change the development strategies of the city. In other words, we are only going to analyze cities where strategic plans have recently been approved. Cities with plans following a chronological order have not been able to internalize the effects of the change of cycle in the proposed strategic projects. Barcelona, Seville and Saragossa are amongst the major cities that comply with the starting conditions.

Hence, it is important to analyze personal and organizational change, indicating the paradigms and stages of change, models to implement change and also participation in the strategic change process. We will now analyse how strategic planning has been put into practise in three Spanish cities.

2. Organizational and personal change

The idea of planning as a process of organizational learning came into being in an article published by Lindblom in 1959: "The Science of Muddling Through". The author states that the creation of government policies is a process that each senior executive carries out in their own unit, which is not well-organized or controlled. It is more like a dis-

organized process in which decisions are made to solve problems as they occur, without a global view, or even trying to establish links between these decisions. They are reactions to continuous contingencies (Lindblom, 1993).

Later, Wrapp, in his article "Good Managers Don't Make Policy Decisions", states that a successful manager recognizes the uselessness of trying to promote a complete package of programmes within an organization. Successful managers do not act after producing a full-grown decision tree. Instead, they start with a twig, help it grow, and ease themselves out on the limbs only after checking to see how much weight they can stand (Wrapp, 1993).

Lindblom and Wrapp's ideas go against what appears to be the common idea about executives and strategists: that they act according to clear plans or strategies. They, on the other hand, suggest that executives act using disjointed incremental processes. After Lindblom and Wrapp, many conceptual and practical advances were made that enable us to reflect more deeply and in a more sustained way upon basic questions. In the last decade of the 20th century, change as a form of learning was analyzed by several authors in works such as "The Art and Practise of the Learning Organization" by P. Senge (1992), who developed the idea put forward by A. de Geus in his article published in 1988: Planning as Learning. Planning implies changing the way of thinking, not making plans.

Strategic learning is organizational learning to improve the strategic capacity of an organization and change the basic underlying assumptions of the mechanism that generates stable structures by setting standards and establishing the process of strategic design. This concept explains the long-term dynamic of strategic behaviour and organizations, which is essential for growth and survival. Organizations have different levels of knowledge and they learn at all of them. The distinctive feature of strategic learning is that it begins with a current set of basic assumptions and ends with a new set of assumptions. Thus, the strategic learning process is similar to an intra-organizational ecological process, with the integration of different levels of learning in organizations, and includes both the processes and distilling the creation of strategic knowledge (Eklund et al., 2012).

In a general sense, it is becoming increasingly necessary to fulfil the following new requirements in management: Willingness to accept change, flexibility, risk-taking, a vision of the future, constant innovation and creative team-work. Currently, it is almost impossible to successfully deal with complex tasks without a clear, open and transparent attitude to change, on both a personal and organizational level. For organizations to have a positive attitude towards change they need to consider the present and forget the past.

The main obstacle for changing management styles is undoubtedly development, organizational culture. This is the capacity of humans to adopt new belief systems, particularly in a future perspective, that is, believing in what can be achieved by the efforts of everyone. The transformation of these belief systems followed by the transformation of behaviour is one of the greatest challenges in achieving the desired objective (Ötken, Cenkci, 2012).

Change itself inspires fear and respect. But if we help and persuade our management team and employees to believe that they can take on change, they will see it as something much more feasible and simple. It is essential for everybody to believe in change (Vithessonti, Thoumrungraje, 2011).

Nowadays, instability and change are the fundamental characteristics of the environment, which determines transformations in organizations and therefore logical politics is not enough. It is necessary to act using strategic thinking (González González, Lázaro Torres, 2011; 2013). Currently, the new formula for success is described as: Efficacy, Effectiveness, Transformation, Innovation and Change.

Success can be interpreted as: "doing things in a better way", "doing the right thing" and "doing something new in a different way", in other words, achieving excellence and success. Change is extremely complex, as any variation in one detail of daily life causes problems or misunderstandings (Leichenko et al., 2010). It poses risks that must be faced courageously. However, can we resign ourselves to not changing? Despite enjoying a privileged position at the present time, we would undoubtedly perish. We need to understand that change is necessary not "for the sake of change", or because it is in vogue, but because new opportunities continuously offered by our environment must be taken advantage of (Thompson, Martin, 2011).

Over 70 per cent of organizations change when they find themselves in a critical situation, on the brink of collapse, and automatically follow those at the forefront. A dramatic number of organizations and companies fail in the early years of their take-off and implementation, and suffer subsequent financial disaster. Approximately one of five organizations changes when the opportunity arises, not as a result of an assessment of interrelationships between the organization and its environment. It is a somewhat reactive approach. Only 10 per cent of organizations change through conviction, because they know there is no alternative, putting themselves in a competitively advantageous position (Friend, Zehle, 2004).

For all of these reasons, we must renovate when we are ahead, not when we are in the depths of a profound insurmountable crisis for which there are no magic solutions. It is clear that change requires a stage of transition (Hulme, 2009). Transition is an internal process of adaptation to all that is new (González Úbeda, 2004). Without this stage of transition, change will not work, and this is the reason why some ideas are unsuccessful (Covey, 2005).

It is not only a question of diagnosing the current situation of the organization, strategies to overcome obstacles need to be devised (de Geus, 1997). Then, the strategic thought must be drawn up from a diagnosis as clearly as possible, taking into account the environment and existing barriers to produce a strategy that will enable us to have a vision of the desired future (Harrison and John, 2002). One of the most frequent errors when starting the process of strategic management is trying to achieve objectives first and then plan actions that are not based on true strategic thinking, thus giving way to formalism and following a "strategic plan" that was not the result of strategic thinking. (Harrison, John, 2002).

The line of strategic thinking has only recently started to be be applied to urban processes. Of military origin, it was incorporated into the world of business and cities. Currently, the processes that affect us are on a more global level and strategic thinking should therefore be the basis of any future plans or city planning. Our cities, subjected to strong competition with other cities or even amongst its own neighbourhoods, can find roads to

knowledge, projects and intervention through this documentary framework (Wannapa, Supol, 2012).

Strategic plans are processes of reflexion by the group of agents interested in a particular process (the city, a specific sector of the city, a territory, etc...) by which they define the future they wish to develop, the bases on which to maintain it and strategies and specific projects to carry out in the defined time-frame. The city is an ideal field to apply this line of thinking which, by definition, transcends the document and becomes a continuous process based on the cooperation of administrative bodies and the consensus of social agents.

The strategic planning process requires one to prepare for and anticipate reaching an ideal, coveted state, but one that is possible. However, there can be no profound long-lasting changes if paradigms, that is, patterns, mind-maps or models through which we perceive the world in which we live, are not transformed. There are two worlds, the real world and the world of our ideas, the subjective perception of that objective world. However, we do not always see the world as it really is, but as we are, through our subjective perception. We can change systems only when our convictions and mental maps have changed (Garrido Buj, 2006), as real attitudes and behaviours are a true reflection of these paradigms (Jasanoff, 2010). The mentioned aspects tend to create and foment an atmosphere of trust within the group. It should be taken into account that all people in an organization undergo a series of transformations that can be grouped together in stages when the different process of change are assumed (Kotler, 2003).

Without the capacity to change our paradigms, we will not be able to correct what is not working well (Mintzberg, Brian, 1997). Organizations and cities must move from one group of paradigms to others that better suit their current surroundings. The importance of strategic management is underlined in changes that have taken place in all scopes of life, on a financial, political and social level (Mintzberg, 2007). Efficient management leads us to assume new social values (Chiavenato, 2003).

The loss of creative capacity and innovative power in city planning is the consequence of progressive judicialization of planning. One of the keys to the success of strategic planning could be the absence of a legitimizing discourse of financial interests, an aspect inherent to conventional urban planning. Secondly, its participative nature, which allows very diverse points of view to be exchanged and the search for rational solutions based on consensual agreement. Thirdly, the scope of its content makes it possible to carry out studies, propose projects and develop programmes based on initiatives from restricted sectors which, in principle, have limited capacity to do so themselves; in this situation, we could mention projects related to Agenda 21, commercial regeneration processes, assistance programs...These actions should not only be carried out, but also supported by others, within strategic lines, so that they are enhanced and create more powerful synergies, and resources are used fairly (Lois González et al., 2013).

The multidimensional nature of the document and its actions is the consequence of the variety of interests pursued and wide social response underlying it.

3.   Strategic thinking as a way of generating flexible alternatives in Spanish cities. The process of strategic planning

A theoretical analysis of the progress of the strategic approach has been made. Now we will analyse three representative cases of the most recent strategic practice in major Spanish cities.

Barcelona, Seville and Saragossa are some of the cities that comply with the conditions set out in the methodology. The first item (major events) is covered by the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, and also the 2004 Forum of Cultures; Seville held the World Exhibition in 1992; and Saragossa held the World Exhibition in 2008, though its main theme was restricted to the management and use of water resources. In all these cases, which, according to Romero Renau (2010), would respond to a conception of urbanism-entertainment, expectation and opportunities were generated, in addition to new strategic perspectives, used in different ways by the cities involved. The experience accumulated after the indicated events will affect current urban strategies in one way or another.

The second item, the impact of economic change and its consequences, can also be evaluated in these three cities. All of them passed and adopted a new strategic plan in 2010, reflecting on the first consequences of an extremely serious crisis that affects the entire developed world and Spain in particular (Martínez and Pallardó, 2013). In this context, the scenario presented by cities in previous strategic plans has changed radically: credit has become scarce, public finance faces increasing difficulties, urban competitiveness is becoming more complicated and the image of Spanish cities is deteriorating rapidly abroad, as is the Spanish brand.

The repercussions of the crisis can be seen in two key markets in the Spanish economy: housing (Figures 1 and 2) and employment (Fig. 3). We decided to use the provinces where the metropolitan areas are situated as a reference because the information provided by official Spanish organisms on territorial units does not include data on metropolitan areas. Although the strategic plans are municipal, except for Barcelona, they are only relevant in municipal districts. On the one hand, their dyna-

mism clearly surpasses the limits of the main municipality, and on the other, their land requirements for all types of activities mean that their peripheral areas must be included in the design of development strategies. Due to its size, Saragossa is the least dependent on the municipalities in its peripheral areas.

Several studies deal with the role of housing as the engine of the Spanish economy during the boom in the last decade, and also its role in the current economic, social and political crisis (Campos Echevarría, 2008; García Montalvo, 2008; Naredo, 2009; Ortega, Peñalosa, 2012: 26-28; Romero, 2012; Romero, et al., 2012 have addressed this subject from different perspectives). We also found local references to the housing market, Coq Huelva (2012) illustrates the unbridled growth of housing stock in the metropolitan area of Seville in the first decade of this century; similarly, Pujadas Rubiés (2009) and Miralles-Guasch and Tulla Pujol (2012) are studying the expansion of metropolitan rings around Barcelona and how they are causing a marked growth in low density urban land.
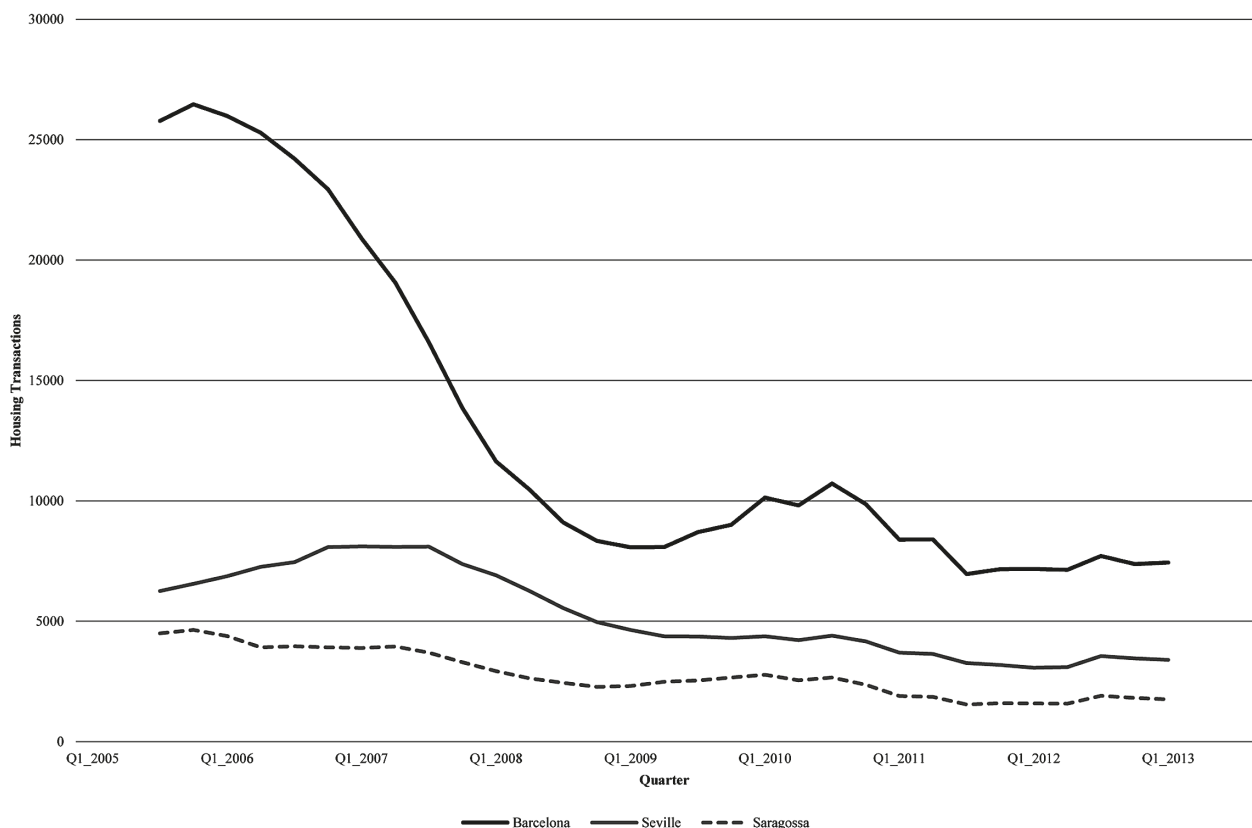

Fig. 1. Housing Transactions by Province, 2005-2013

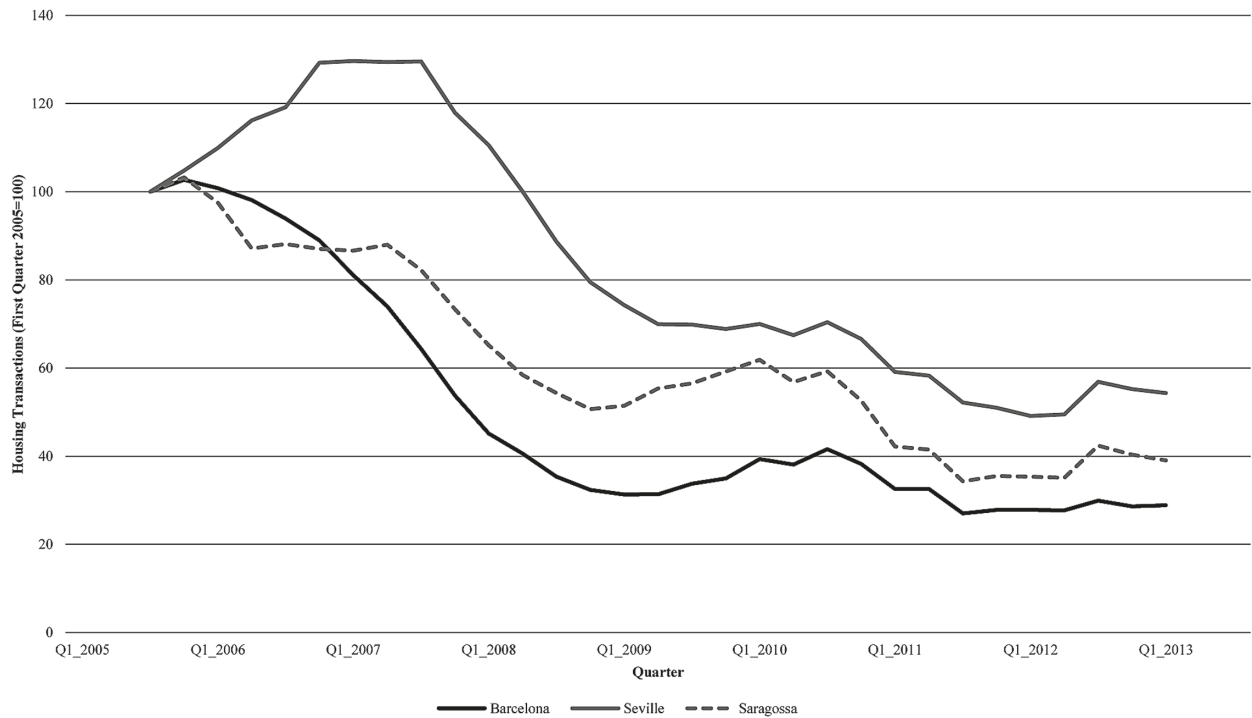*Source*: Ministry of Public Works. Compiled and drawn up by the authors

Fig. 2. Housing transactions by Province (2005 = 100)

Source: Ministry of Public Works. Compiled and drawn up by the authors

The decline in the housing market has been staggering, with dates varying depending on the example we take (2006 in the cases of Barcelona and Saragossa, 2008 in the case of Seville). Transactions calculated by the Ministry of Development have declined so much that in 2013 scarcely one third of the maximum number of sales were calculated for Barcelona, and 40 % in the case of Saragossa and Seville. This adjustment in the market is much more noticeable in the Catalonian capital where average figures exceeding 25,000 marketed properties have dropped to between 7,000 and 10,000 since 2009; in Seville, the change has been less marked in absolute figures, ranging from a maximum average of 8,000 properties to approximately 4,000; whereas in Saragossa, the variations are less noticeable given that the volumes of properties put on the market are by far the lowest of the three provinces. These figures can be considered the epigone of a period presided by the expansion of metropolitan areas headed by the studied cities (for the case of Barcelona and Seville, see Miralles-Guasch, Tulla Pujol, 2012; Coq Huelva, 2012).

Given that the sector related to construction and sale of residential property is labour-inten-sive, its effect on the labour market is not surprising (Fig. 3). In all cases, the rate of unemployment follows a time path symmetrical to the purchase and sale of properties, stable at relatively low levels until the end of 2008. From then on it sky-rockets following an upward curve but with variations in the slope as a result of the overlapping of two recessive stages in the crisis in Spain, separated by a modest stabilization in 2010. Without going into detail, it is necessary to indicate that these recessive stages are interdependent, and although they show some disparities, they cause a drop in employment and a correlative growth in unemployment (the first recession, which occurred approximately between 2008 and 2010, mainly affects the private sector residential construction and industry, whereas the second recessive stage, which began in 2011, also affects the public sector). Given the magnitudes reached (non-seasonal unemployment rates almost one third of the working population in Seville province, almost a quarter of the working population in Barcelona and one fifth in Saragossa), the social corpus of the cities proposing a review of their urban strategies are facing a dual problem: the impoverishment of large layers of its social fabric and

the absence of growth in the near future. The first challenge is the unemployment rate, which leaves a large part of the population without any income apart from benefits and pushes down the salaries of those who are employed. The second threat derives from the extent to which the housing sector grew, bringing about a severe increase in debt in families, businesses and the financial sector (Torres López, 2009; Calvo, Paúl 2012), later spreading to Public Administration which has had to resort to considerable spending cuts (Mateos, Penadés, 2013); all of this led to the persistent lack of financial resources for both public and private investment, introducing a strong element of uncertainty in the design and implementation of any strategic urban model.
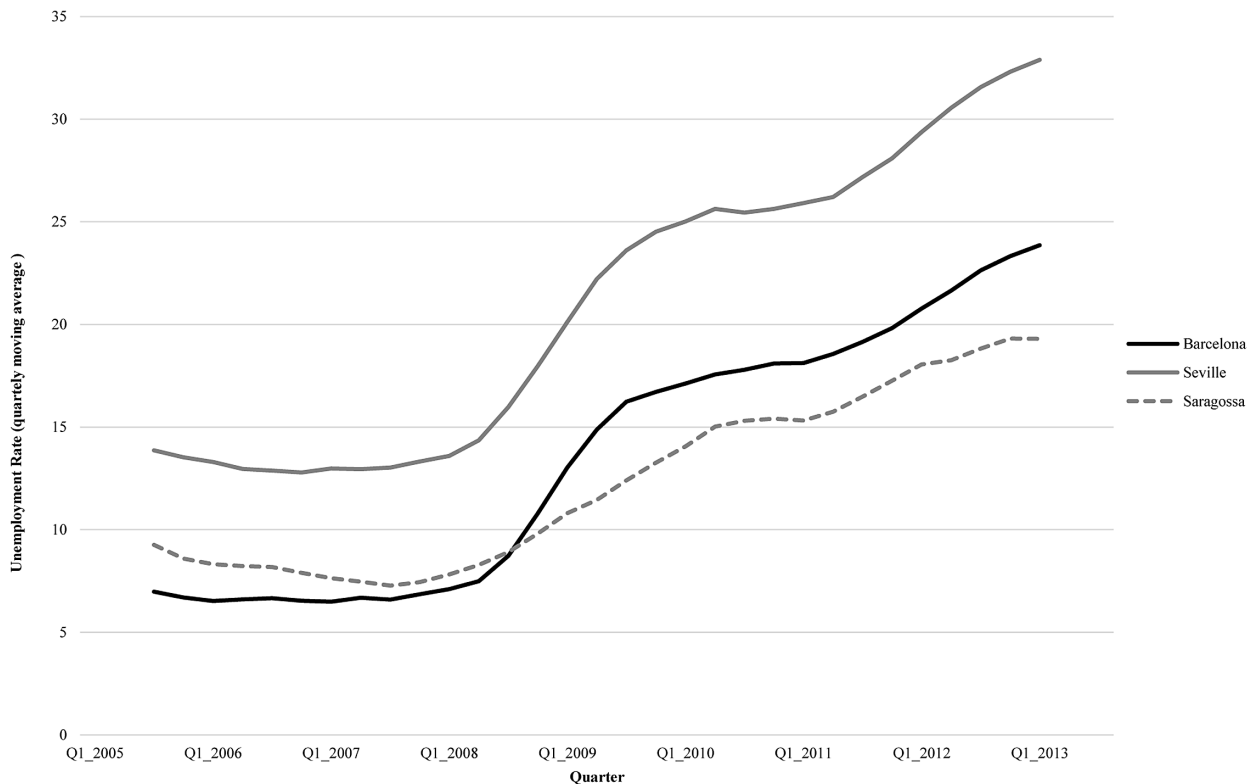

Fig. 3. Evolution of the rate of unemployment in Barcelona, Seville and Saragossa provinces

Source: Working Population Survey (National Institute of Statistics). Compiled and drawn up by the authors

3.1. Barcelona and the mark made by the homonymous model

Barcelona is a pioneer in implementing strategic planning, passing its first plan in 1990, just ahead of other major Spanish cities. This first document, which came immediately after granting the 1992 Olympic Games to Barcelona, and in the midst of incipient economic growth following our entry into the then European Economic Community, represented a significant milestone in what was later to be known as the Barcelona model. It also marked a change in the strategic directives that guided urban development, going from a decentralized model characterised by social support via neighbourhood associations, to another in which, in the light of the Olympic Games, major projects and greater involvement with private economic organizations were favoured. The result was a new way of managing the development of the city, presided over by cooperation between public administration and private capital (Casellas, 2006), with the risk that the power of decision concentrated in the hands of certain élites could render citizens' participation ineffective (Marshall, 2000).

The governance model applied using strategic planning resulted in a confluence between public

and private sectors. Public powers, mainly the local council, maintained the initiative of major projects conceived for the city, mostly financed by private agents who also benefit from them. All of these actions were included in the "Barcelona model": a paradigm of urban development that became popular mainly in Spanish and South American cities (Monclús, 2003), and which enabled the city of Barcelona to achieve its aspirations to become the capital city of the western Mediterranean region (Capel, 2005). Undoubtedly, the success of the model has benefitted from the equipment and infrastructures inherited from the Olympic Games, in clear contrast to the wasted installations in Isla de la Cartuja after the 1992 Expo in Seville (Romero, 2010), though the subsequent Forum of Cultures in 2004 was less fruitful in this sense. The latter event is of great interest from the perspective of urban strategy, more specifically as far as the instrumentalization of culture in urban development is concerned: it was used to regenerate an extremely rundown area of the city, but at the expense of being seen as a platform/forum for an event culturally plagued with contradictions about what it actually was and what it was intended to be (Romero, 2010; Sánchez Belando, 2012).

The main characteristics of this model were synthesized by A. Casellas (2006): participation of the private sector in financing urban projects, creation of independent bodies to manage the process of urban planning, consensus between Public Administrations, introduction of strategic planning, instrumentalization of major events and culture as a transformation strategy, and citizens' participation. At this point, and given the importance of this model for strategic planning (Marshall, 2000), we can, in accordance with those responsible for managing the Barcelona strategic metropolitan plan, divide its evolution into two stages: between 1990 and 2003, and from 2003 onwards. In the first stage, its scope is limited to the municipality of the Catalan capital, with three consecutive plans in a relatively short period of time for this type of planning (1990, 1994 and 1999). The second stage, from 2003, includes the metropolitan area, the first plan being drawn up in the same year, reviewed in 2006, and currently valid. This stage is based on one of the aspects indicated by Casellas, consensus amongst different levels of public administration: from 1990 to 2003. The City Council and the Generalitat (government of Catalonia) had different political allegiances, which made any planning other than strictly within municipal limits impossible; in the 2003 autonomous community elections, political allegiance between local and regional governments coincided, breaking the stalemate between intermunicipal cooperation and the strategic approach to include the metropolitan area.

In 2010, with the new Visión 2020 strategic plan, it was decided that the Barcelona model had come to an end, and that a change in strategic scope was necessary in a world they defined as volatile, highly competitive on a global level, dominated by the emergence of new competitors. A different rationale was suggested, to be precise, the concept of World City as constructed by S. Sassen (1991), which aspired to place Barcelona amongst the small number of leading cities of the world economy, attracting leading companies in the financial sector and specialized services, which according to Sassen, are the true engines of the global economy. In other words, a reaffirmation of an ambition to become the capital of the Mediterranean, from the perspective of the culture of Catalonia; a proposal strengthened when the city became the headquarters of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean in 2007, a remarkable milestone in the development of their own international relations strategy (city diplomacy). Capital status and leadership based on values intrinsic to the city and on competitiveness, supported by the necessary modernization of the economy in two spheres:

— to promote the cluster constitution and the development of new tractor projects worldwide (coherent with Sassen's line of thought), revitalization of traditional sectors and potentiation of agglomeration economies present in the metropolitan area;
— to support the creation of new businesses and the improvement of human capital. Also, to consolidate the area of Barcelona as World Class, an attractive influential European region supported by its own values (model of social integration and cohesion) that would attract innovating talent from all over the world.

In the report of the plan, references to the current social and economic situation are manifest. They express confidence that Barcelona will emerge

strengthened from the crisis, as occurred after other unfavourable circumstances in previous decades. In order to overcome the crisis, mechanisms to promote change are mentioned, all of them included in a proposal for a pact to overcome the crisis, including: a powerful university and education system; an agile, trustworthy administration system that will foment economic dynamism; the forging of a model of governance in which leadership will be shared between public, institutional and private sectors; future, present and new values that will provide the city and its citizens with character; and new ways to incorporate the city in international markets, by the knowledge of languages, attracting talent, and making optimum use of the international airport and the Barcelona brand.

Six challenges are thought to be the source of opportunities for the city, and through them the above objectives will be reached: sustainability and climate change, placing the city in the global framework (as the capital of the Mediterranean area with greater presence of the city in countries considered to be world leaders), acquiring the status of leader in tractor sectors of innovation and knowledge, updating and promotion of traditional sectors that are important for the city, attracting innovative talent, proposing a suitable social response to the crisis.

3.2. Seville, post-Expo 1992 failure and the severity of the crisis

Contrary to the case of Barcelona, the impact of the 1992 Expo was fairly low-key. Transport infrastructures built for the event undoubtedly had a considerable effect, thanks mainly to the first high speed train designed in Spain (Madrid-Seville), which reduced the distance to the capital city immensely; however, the continuity of the project in Isla de la Cartuja was affected by a number of setbacks. Most of the buildings on the Expo site were demolished and then replaced by projects that proved to be difficult to manage (see Romero, 2010), such as the Isla Mágica theme park or the Cartuja-93 technological park. We underline that, in strategic terms, the impact of the Expo was negligible because the image built of Seville was not a powerful one, and although its connection with the centre of the Spanish peninsula was strengthened, this did not happen

abroad as air communications were not promoted. Neither was the city consolidated as a destination for city tourism, and it relied heavily on the fact that it is the capital of Andalusia and the economic hub of the Guadalquivir valley and western part of Andalusia.

Seville has the least experience in strategic planning: its first plan was passed in 2001, and the second in 2011. The limited experience in this field has resulted in transformations associated with the 1992 Expo being practically non-existent, except for *the Cartuja-93 Technological Park*. The same cannot be said about the effects of the economic crisis in Andalusia, which have been particularly hard, as demonstrated by the unemployment figures (when the strategic plan was approved, according to the Working Population Survey for the second quarter of 2011, the unemployment rate in Andalusia was 29.71%, almost nine points above the national figure; in Aragón, where Saragossa is situated, and Catalonia, the autonomous region that Barcelona belongs to, the unemployment rate was 17.42% and 18.06%, respectively). The plan gave priority to strategic objectives that promoted projects based on a citizens' consensus, which insisted on productive investment that would generate greater competitiveness and quality employment, develop a new productive model based on innovation and renewable energy, implement measures to favour the most vulnerable sectors of the population (social cohesion), promote responsibility and civil commitment, and present a governance scheme in which the government was the catalyst of initiatives based on cooperation between the public and private sectors.

The spirit of strategic planning in Seville can be summed up in the acronym c.a.p.i.t.a.l, which derives from the distinctive values of the city: creative (innovation and development, artistic activity), attractive (culture and tourism), a feeling of belonging (love of the land and civic commitment), industry (industrial heritage and new manufacturing activities, specifically, renewable energy), technology (*The Cartuja-93 Technological Park*), aeronautic industry, university, open (harmony between culture and actions in favour of social inclusion), leader (regional administrative capital and main area in the Andalusian urban system, leadership defined as gentle and intelligent as opposed to severe hierarchic leadership in other cities). Based on these

attributes, the following objectives were proposed: modernization of industrial spaces, development of logistic areas, generation of spaces and funds dedicated to technological and productive innovation, strengthening the creation of stable quality employment, progress in territorial cohesion in the urban part of the city, improved infrastructures for sustained mobility and accessibility, a creative cultural city, educational city, development of cultural tourism, leisure and business, a socially responsible city, strengthened social cohesion, local and metropolitan governance (improving the organizational capacity and shared action in the city as a whole).

3.3. Saragossa and post-Expo 2008 challenges

In the case of Saragossa, strategic planning dates back to 1998, and unlike the other two cities, major events influencing the configuration and image of the city are much more recent. One example is the Universal Exhibition held in 2008, a great event based on the theme of water and its sustainable use. As a result, existing strategic planning had to make provisions for the after effects of this event which were plagued with difficulties such as readjusting infrastructures and installations built ad hoc to everyday life in an average-sized city, where they had to adjust to a level of use and requirements clearly below the standards for which they were designed. The organizers of Expo Saragossa were already aware of post-Expo difficulties (Gistau Gistau, 2007), and proposed that its legacy be reused on different levels: the built heritage located on the Expo site was designated to tertiary use; installations for actions undertaken in the city were synthesized on four levels (at urban level, creating a new central point and a new quality landscape architecture; at thematic level, managing the areas surrounding the river, making it a reference for the management; at infrastructure level, all artistic works close to waterways crossing the city).

To a certain extent, and despite the clearly critical vision of this event and the insignificant international impact that it had (Romero, 2010), the effect of the Expo has enabled the reformulation of the strategic role of Saragossa, traditionally limited to the situation brought about by its location in the centre of the north east corner of Spain (see Alon-so Logroño, Bellet, 2009; Escalona Orcao, Ramos, 2010; Val et al., 2011). In communications and, to be more specific, logistically, Saragossa has focused its attention on searching for a clearly different role. The *PLAZA* project fomented an intermodal logistics macroplatform, and the building of a railway terminals linked to nearby Mediterranean ports; it has tried to make the most of its equidistant location between the four financial centres in Spain (Barcelona, Bilbao, Madrid, Valencia), its proximity to the French border and its important road and rail infrastructure (confluence of dual carriageways and railroad with indicated destinations, and the completion of the high speed Madrid-Barcelona-French Border railway line). In this sense, the 2008 Universal Expo tried to give added value to the city, a new role as a forum and innovation centre in the use of a resource as scarce as water; a function that put the city on the international map.

The logical answer was the 2010 strategic plan, with a time frame of up to 2020, a continuation of a tradition in strategic planning that started with the first strategic plan in 1998, reviewed in 2006, and which continues with the current Plan. This planning effort started in 1994 with the creation of *Ebropolis*, a participative collaborative institution established with public and private agents, whose mission was to act as a vehicle for the pact, a broad agreement amongst the main urban and economic actors in the city to foment its development and strategic positioning.

The 2010 plan was a pressing need and was obliged to respond to the aspirations and opportunities that had arisen from the Expo 2008. Its positive implications were material (reusable infrastructure and installations, positioning of the city as a tourist and business destination) and, more than anything, non-material (brand image – Saragossa, the city of water, strengthening of the civil society and its capacity of self-organization, the emergence of a sense of belonging). The planners remembered to include a second component, not unique to the city, but which has evident repercussions on the current social and economic model, and, from the perspective of the city's situation, the possibilities of development open to the city with the Expo, threatened not only by the difficult reconversion of an event with an expiry date but also by the brutal impact of the 2008 crisis. In other words, this is planning

with a continuist nature compared with the culture of pacts existing in the city, which has to respond to strategic changes resulting from internal (the post-Expo context) and external factors (growing difficulties due to the crisis, made worse by the logical downturn in economic activity following major events).

If the guiding concept of the Barcelona planning was that of global city, in Saragossa it was "glocal", an acronym that synthesizes the slogan "think globally, act locally" (Walter, 2004). The promotors of the strategic plan conceived the city as a balanced space in surroundings based on values such as creativity, attractiveness and connectivity; ideas that focus on strategic lines of action: city of citizens, city of alliances, innovative city, city-territory and global city, sustainable city, and communicative city (Bruff, Wood, 2000). This scheme was presented as a third pact, and renewed traditional principles in the strategic planning of Saragossa (participation, consensus and cooperation between public and private sectors) to boost the city and its surroundings. The Plan establishes a series of starting points and defines Saragossa as a territory with varying geometry, of intermediate size, compact and polycentric; with almost one million inhabitants and whose social fabric is willing to participate actively in the strategic planning process. With these materials, and experience accumulated in previous plans, the mentioned lines of action, in which partial dimensions or objectives are identified, can be developed:

The city of citizens line of action called for the creation of a culture of entrepreneurship at all levels (business, social, cultural and environmental); secondly, a deepening of good governance, looking for new ways to manage public and private sectors, or giving priority to closeness to citizens, transparency and participation; the generation of connection areas and social creativity; and, finally, supporting social cohesion. Three lines of action are proposed: the market, with greater cooperation from all those involved in each value chain forming the productive fabric of the city (Leichenko and O'Brien 2008); horizontal, in search of the confluence of different groups of interest in favour of collaborative work; territorial, trying to cooperate with other territories to undertake future projects. The aim of the creative city was a move towards the cultural industry (cre-

ativity), the transfer of knowledge and innovation (university, research centres), the spreading of the culture of entrepreneurship amongst citizens, and also innovative entrepreneurship (Lury, Wakeford, 2012). The territory city and the global city ("glocal") referred to the need to achieve protagonism in the international sphere as a dynamic intermediate city, using its resources and achievements (from a regional perspective) for support; all of this, at an operational level, boosted with support for commercialization and internationalization strategies, and the introduction of local actors to the globalized world (Pérez, Massoni, 2009). The sustainable city, a sensitive line of action given the thematic focus of Expo 2008, was projected in five dimensions: the concentration of urban growth in the consolidated city; sustainable management of resources, where references to climate change were introduced; Saragossa city of water, focused on positioning the city on an economic level; promotion of sustainable mobility; potentiation of non-urbanised surroundings, mainly as far as land for agricultural use was concerned. Finally, the communicative city in two dimensions: communication, seeking to spread the identity and values of Saragossa amongst its citizens and beyond the city; means of communication, understanding as such the integration of information technology in local sociocultural structures.

4.   Final reflections

Strategic planning is a dynamic participative process. This process must consider unexpected changes that may occur in the environment. At the same time, it must ensure that information is given on all proposed ideas or initiatives. In the specific sphere of strategic planning one can act along other lines that will adapt better to the social and economic needs, nature or situation in which the strategy is being drawn up. In this sense, the 2007 European Territorial Agenda (Faludi, 2009), introduced other thematic priorities that concentrated on reinforcing polycentric development and innovation via networks of urban regions and cities, promoting clusters for competition and innovation, or strengthening ecological structures and cultural resources, amongst other proposals.

Many of the principles put forward still apply, however, currently several of the strategic territorial plans have not been completed within the time limit. For this reason and in view of the present social and economic situation, it seems to be the right time to propose lines of action and objectives that will put cities in the desired or imagined place, and 2020 seems to be the chosen time frame to achieve these goals. At the same time, in Europe, a series of indications, principles and ideas, all of which appear in the Europe Strategy 2020 (Gros, Roth,2012), propose a thematic approach based on three basic priorities that sustain the architecture of the strategic content: (a) intelligent growth: development of an economy based on knowledge and innovation; (b) sustainable growth: promotion of an economy that uses resources more efficiently and is more competitive; (c) integrating growth: promotion of an economy with a high level of employment and social and territorial cohesion.

The line of Strategic Thinking has only recently been applied to urbanistic processes. Of military origin, it was incorporated into the world of business and considering the processes that affect us, it should be taken into account in any initiatives with future prospects. Our cities, subjected to fierce competition from other cities or between neighbourhoods in the same city, have found a gateway towards knowledge, projects and intervention through this documental framework, as in the case of the cities that we have analysed.

In Spain, there are three cities with three common elements: recent major events on relatively recent dates that led to important transformations in image or installations and infrastructures; they have been seriously affected by the current crisis; they have all drawn up strategic plans on very recent dates (2010 in Barcelona and Saragossa, 2011 in Seville).

The impact of the events on urban development has not been the same in all cases with regard to material aspects and the image of the city; this is emphasised by the management of the heritage and the fact that these events occurred at similar times. Barcelona and Seville are two contrasting examples, the former proposed an urban policy which aimed, amongst other things, to make the most of the Olympic Games and the Forum of Cultures; Seville, on the other hand, has not made the best use

of what was left after the 1992 Expo. Saragossa is a case apart, the 2008 Expo was held fairly recently and it is still too soon to assess how the following period has been managed, especially taking the impact of the crisis into consideration.

As in the rest of Europe, the severity of the crisis is another aspect to be taken into account. In this case, one cannot make judgement on whether these events were lost opportunities or a chance to reinvent the city. The crisis is a challenge, but the models designed for the cities show signs of failure, not exhaustion. In other words, the crisis should foment the development of new strategic responses and a change in outdated lines of thinking.

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