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Disconnected innovations : new urbanity in large-scale development projects: Zuidas Amsterdam, Ørestad Copenhagen and Forum Barcelona

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Publication date
2008

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Majoor, S. J. H. (2008). *Disconnected innovations : new urbanity in large-scale development projects: Zuidas Amsterdam, Ørestad Copenhagen and Forum Barcelona*. [Thesis, fully internal, Universiteit van Amsterdam]. Uitgeverij Eburon.

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'The area could be likened to an attic. Every house has one and nobody would deny the usefulness of a place to stuff junk. Even so, none of us would dream of showing it to our dinner guests. Similar infrastructures exist in all cities. The difference in the case of Barcelona is that it is all crammed together in one area and, worse still, along a high-profile 2 km stretch of coastline.' (Acebillo 2004, p.45)

CHAPTER 5

BARCELONA FORUM

5.1 Introduction

It is no surprise that the transformation of an almost 'forgotten' industrial area into a vibrant place of new urbanity and high quality public space is far from an easy challenge. That is exactly what is at stake in Barcelona's Forum project. This project is part of a much bigger ensemble of urban regeneration activities in a city with probably one of Europe's most studied, discussed and famous strategies of urban interventions in the previous three decades (see for example the extensive works of Marshall 1996, 2000, 2004 and Monclús 2003 on planning; McNeill 1999, 2003 on left-wing oriented politics and Busquets 2005 on urban design, to name just a few). Barcelona's strategies of urban transformation have certainly been interpreted as a *good practice* by many visiting foreign politicians. The city's recent urban transformation took place against a very interesting political, social and cultural backdrop after the transition to democracy at the end of the 1970s. Barcelona gained worldwide attention and recognition for the way it used the (building program of the) Olympic Games of 1992 to physically upgrade different parts of the city and create a favourable image for itself worldwide. In the last few decades, the city has developed into a magnet for international tourists.

After the Olympics, the city government set out a whole series of strategic projects in the eastern sector of the city. The goal was to improve Barcelona's position in the advanced service economy which was a structural weakness of the city's economy. Forum, a project that combines the development of infrastructure, real estate and public space with a cultural event in the spring and summer of 2004, was used to create additional momentum for this new phase of urban transformation. A very challenging location was chosen, namely a still-used industrialized section of the Mediterranean coast, alongside run-down neighbourhoods.

In this respect, Forum is probably the most visual, symbolic and prominent marker of the newest phase of the city's development. For us, Forum is the case *through* which we try to understand Barcelona's current transformation. We study whether the conditions are being created for the development of new urbanity, as this is what its protagonists are aiming to achieve. After the highly-praised urban developments of the Olym-

pic period we can investigate whether Barcelona is again setting international standards for urban transformation or whether its capacity faltered in a new context at the beginning of the 21st century. Interestingly enough, the Forum project was initiated during a period in which doubts about and criticisms of Barcelona's almost continuous transformation were being voiced more clearly than ever before.

From an institutional perspective we investigate how the Forum project is connected to the different societal domains of the metropolitan action space. We investigate the governance innovations that have taken place and analyse the project's initial results. We ask to what extent the ambition to create a place of new urbanity has evolved in a validated social norm. Our information is based on in-depth fieldwork on this project in the spring of 2005, via a documentary analysis and a set of fourteen interviews with representatives of different stakeholders, and people that have been reflecting on urban developments in Barcelona.¹

The chapter is structured as follows. Before describing the initiation of the Forum project in section 5.3, we briefly outline the context of Barcelona's urban development in the last decades in section 5.2. The unique way in which development in Barcelona took place in recent decades is important for a proper understanding of the Forum project. An analysis of the strategic and operational aspects of the project is provided in sections 5.4 and 5.5, after which we examine to what extent social norms on new urbanity have been realized in section 5.6. Section 5.7 contains our general conclusions.

5.2 Urban development in Barcelona

Urban development in Barcelona in the last few decades has been extensively covered, assessed and critically debated. In June 1999, Barcelona received the Royal Gold Medal from Her Majesty the Queen of England based on a recommendation by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). For the first time the award was bestowed on an entire city rather than an architect. The literature refers to a 'Barcelona model' of urban development, which is a successful co-ordination of economic, political and

¹ Research for the empirical part of this chapter took place primarily during May and June 2005, having been prepared during a short quick scan in August 2004 that included a visit to the Universal Forum of Cultures event. During that two month period in 2005, planning and policy documents related to the Forum project were reviewed and 14 interviews were conducted. The full list of interviews, including the institutional affiliation of the respondents can be found in the appendix at the end of the book. All the interviews were conducted face-to-face in the Barcelona area. Most were in English, in some cases Catalan was the language. In this case an interpreter was used. Each interview was between 45 and 90 minutes long and was semi-structured, taped and subsequently transcribed. Although written questions were prepared for each interview, the sessions were conducted in a somewhat informal way as the issues presented themselves rather than by following a rigid script. For the selection of the interviewees a combination was sought of (1) practitioners currently involved in the transformation of the Forum project, from both a public and a private side and (2) academics and civic activists who could help understand the bigger picture and sharpen the critical analysis. During our written analysis we use the information from these interviews. They are references to a concern, issue, thought or question that came up in that particular interview. The idea is for this to underpin, strengthen or illustrate our own line of reasoning. In each case we include the name of the interviewee in brackets.

Previously we published about our Barcelona fieldwork in: Majoor 2006b and Majoor 2008.

civic interests, as being an underlying factor for its success (Marshall 2000, 2004; Garcia-Ramon and Albet 2000; Newman and Thornley 2005). However, at the same time, other scholars and urban activists have highlighted the negative impacts of Barcelona's development, especially for disadvantaged groups (Balibrea 2004; Borja 2004).

In this section we analyse Barcelona's urban development in the last few decades by identifying several, partly overlapping, timeframes. We begin by outlining urban development in the last period of the Franco regime and the period of early democracy (till 1979). Then we analyse the interesting period in the Eighties when, boosted by Barcelona's successful bid for the 1992 Olympics, a lot of transformation projects were initiated. In the post-Olympic era Barcelona was confronted by new spatial, economic and social challenges. The Forum 2004 project, which was initiated at the end of the Nineties, has to be understood against this backdrop. From section 5.3 on our focus is specifically on the project itself.

5.2.1 Franco period and period of early democracy (till 1979)

Barcelona has a long industrial past. In 1832, Spain's first steam powered industry was established in Barcelona and in 1848 its first railway line was built (Nello 2004). Favourable climate and energy conditions – cheap hydroelectric from the Pyrenees – helped make Barcelona one of Europe's main centres for the textile industry during the 19th century. Although there were numerous social conflicts in the city known for its left-wing anarchistic political leanings (Vázquez Montalbán 1992; McNeill 1999), its expansion at the end of the 19th century was spatially quite orderly, following Ildefons Cerdà's famous 1853 plan for the Eixample ('extension'). Halfway through the 20th century this plan was the official spatial scheme for Barcelona's expansion. Two large international events, namely the 1888 and 1929 World Exhibitions, were strategically used to develop new city districts and amenities. The heritage of the 1888 Expo was the *Parc de la Ciutadella*, while the 1929 fair was used to realize a new centre of economic and cultural facilities at the *Plaça d'Espanya* and the adjacent slopes of the *Montjuïc* mountain.

The defeat of the Second Spanish Republic, and with that Barcelona, in Spain's Civil War (1936-1939) was the start of a period of dictatorship under Francisco Franco in which the cultural identity of Catalonia – which had always included a strong inherent nationalist element – was suppressed. In many respects, the period under dictatorship of Franco was a politically, socially and culturally traumatic period in Barcelona's history. During the years in which Josep Maria de Porcioles was mayor (1957-1973), the city experienced rapid urban growth caused especially by large numbers of immigrants and relatively favourable economic development. The population of the Barcelona province almost doubled from 2.2 million in 1950 to 3.9 million in 1970.² The city's spatial development was rather chaotic and unplanned, following the logic of short-term speculation gains of powerful real estate developers with excellent connections to the Mayor's office (McNeill 1999; Busquets 2005). The dual result was an enormous densification of the city in the form of high-rise developments and an urban sprawl into the region.

It was in the middle of these processes that a new generation of planners, architects and

² Instituto Nacional de Estadística (www.ine.es).

urban activists grew up. At the end of the Sixties, important urban social movements were formed which were critical of the city's rapid urbanization and densification and which highlighted the shortage of public facilities and the neglect of urban space in the new and old urban peripheries (Calavita and Ferrer 2004, p.52). Their importance in the last years of Franco's regime and in the transition towards democracy is frequently referred to (Calavita and Ferrer 2004; Borja 2004). They created the basis, both intellectually and politically, on which progressive planners and architects started reshaping the city in the following decades.

In the period after Franco's death in 1975, the legal context for planning in Spain was reformulated. There was a strong political will to increase autonomy, especially in the parts of the country like Catalonia that had a historic sense of being different (M. García 2003). A total of 17 autonomous regional governments were established that became the backbone of the Spanish semi-federal government system. Some of these regional governments, like the *Generalitat de Catalunya* were given more independence than others. Within these regions, centralised planning systems were set up in which the municipalities became responsible for planning policy and development control in their areas. Municipalities drew up master plans, called *Pla d'Ordenacio Urbanisitica Municipal* which are legally binding documents containing detailed zoning and land use requirements for the whole area under their jurisdiction (Luzón and Vila 2007). These local plans had to comply with higher levels plans, in the case of Barcelona this is the General Metropolitan Plan, and they were subject to final approval by the regional government. Within the local context, general plans could be supplemented by special plans to deal with particular topics and to provide additional information about allowable development. Many of the large-scale developments in Barcelona in the last few decades have taken place via this legal route.

The changing juridical, political and cultural conditions for planning formed the basis for a more public and culturally responsible interventionist style of urban planning from the late Seventies on (Marshall 2004). The city's development – that had been safely in the hands of the private sector for many decades, partly became the responsibility of public and civic authorities once again. Barcelona also faced huge challenges in the decades that followed. Industry had long been a pillar of its economy, but processes of deindustrialization were starting to have a profound economic, social and spatial impact on the city. During the centralist Franco regime there was a lack of investment in different kinds of public infrastructures and the road, rail and sewage systems were outdated. The waterfront was inaccessible because of huge infrastructures. The Llobregat and Besòs rivers were heavily polluted. The Old Town was overcrowded and urban development sprawled into every corner of the Barcelona region leading to a huge pressure on the infrastructures.

The General Metropolitan Plan of Barcelona, which covered Barcelona and 26 surrounding municipalities, was finally approved in 1976. The innovative aspect of the plan was that it reduced possible building densities in many parts of the city and that it reclaimed land for public use by designating parcels for parks, plazas, schools and other public facilities (Calavita and Ferrer 2004). This plan became the basis for the rapid progress made by a new generation of architects and urbanists at the start of the Eighties, supported by a progressive city council, with the aim being to start a series of local urban interventions.

One of the most interesting and probably least tangible aspects of the change towards democracy was the blossoming of Catalan identity and pride. A new generation of professionals and politicians came into power and became involved in the city's spatial development. To them, shaping the city was also a possibility to express their pride in their (previously suppressed) Catalan identity. In this sense, urban development started to acquire a particularly strong cultural and patriotic dimension in Barcelona. However, it might be that this spirit, and the accompanying rhetoric, also masked some of the city's more fundamental problems (McNeill 1999). This is a point we will discuss in more detail when we analyse the Forum project.

5.2.2 Urban development in the 1980 and the Olympic projects: from inner city reconstruction to strategic spatial projects

Most of Barcelona's critical acclaim for urban transformation came because of policies and projects in this era in which the city tried to capitalize on the opportunity that the 1992 Olympics provided for concerted action on a couple of large-scale urban interventions. However, it is important to recognize that the city's transformation started on a small scale and was rooted in the neighbourhoods.

Most of the planning efforts in the early 1980s took place in a city which was facing economic difficulties. The structural causal factor was the stark decline in its traditional economic base, namely industry. Between the late 1960s and 1985, the city lost 42% of its manufacturing jobs and 69% of its construction jobs (McNeill 1999, p.91). The city council's financial situation was not promising either. Nevertheless, the plans were numerous and very ambitious. With Oriol Bohigas as the City's new planning director (1980-1984), an action program was set up to meet the demands of the neighbourhoods more effectively. Almost two hundred parks, plazas, schools and other public facilities were created. An interesting aspect is Bohigas' conscious philosophy of small-scale interventions. "My idea was that there was a chance in Barcelona of developing a realist vision of planning; a vision more interested in the volumetric construction of the city than its street lay-out. That is, an architect's vision rather than that of a planner..." (cited in: McNeill 1999, p.139-140). His approach was based on accepting the city as a place of enriching conflicts to be resolved in coexistence of other conflicts with different origins (Bohigas 2004). During that period, most interventions were not only small-scale but also low-budget. A particularly noteworthy aspect was Barcelona's policy of creating 'hard squares', that is maintenance-friendly cheaply-constructed new urban spaces that generated 'room to breathe' in the densely built-up neighbourhoods, and also stimulated private owners to upgrade their nearby properties (Benach 2004; Busquets 2005).

Monclús (2003) rightly points to the fact that this shift in focus and content of interventions was not unique to Barcelona. Throughout Europe and North America the appreciation for the traditional city, with its traditional collective components such as streets, squares, small parks and closed street blocks increased during the same period. This integration of urban planning and architecture was a response to the abstraction of modernist all-encompassing planning that had dominated in previous decades (Monclús 2003, p.403). The interest in smaller-scale urban regeneration and reconstruction projects coincided with a growing interest and appreciation for (exclusive) living in downtown areas and this created a more solid basis for these interventions to be financed by means of private housing developments.

The uniqueness of Barcelona's development in the Eighties therefore did not have so much to do with the content as with a specific cultural and political dimension. The focus on relatively small-scale projects in the neighbourhoods was reinforced and facilitated by a process of decentralization of government into neighbourhood districts and the very active role played by citizens' movements. Culturally, the Catalan identity – suppressed during Franco's centralist regime – was blossoming. Traditional (Catalan) festivals and celebrations were reintroduced and these took place in the new squares and other public spaces. The newly established community centres became important for (re-)teaching the Catalan language. In hindsight, this period in the first half of the Eighties is often referred to as one characterised by a remarkable civic consensus between the needs of the city and the agenda of the city council (Marshall 1996, 2000, 2004; Borja and Castells 1997; M. García 2003).

After Narcís Serra (1979-1982), Pasqual Maragall of the *Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya* was elected mayor in 1982. During his 15 year tenure, Maragall (who was nicknamed 'El Príncep', the Prince) developed into one of Europe's most prominent interventionist-oriented big city mayors whose key aim was to harmonise public, private and civic agendas (McNeill 2001).

At the end of 1986, Barcelona's bid for the organisation of the Olympic summer games of 1992 was accepted and this became a major strategic device for the city's development in the years that followed. The famous lines of confirmation were read by International Olympic Committee president Antonio Samaranch, coincidentally or not, an important project developer in Barcelona. As far as Maragall was concerned, the 'Olympic project' was an opportunity for the city to increase the scale of its interventions, away from the neighbourhood level and towards city-wide strategic projects (Maragall 2004). The municipality successfully utilized it to harmonise political priority (and money) from the levels of government (Generalitat and national government) that were traditionally least receptive to investing in Barcelona due to various political and ideological reasons. It provided Barcelona with the opportunity to solve some of its long-term needs that had already been conceived in the 1976 General Plan. A package of very visible interventions in the city started to dominate the policy agenda, namely the opening up of the city towards the sea, the completion and improved integration of the system of ring roads, the restoration of prominent buildings and squares in the old town, the addition of a large outdoor art schemes and the regeneration of the Montjuïc mountain as a park and cultural and sports centre for the city. In addition to this, less noticeable but equally important investments were proposed in different 'invisible' infrastructures, namely the improvement of communication facilities and the improvement of the sewage system and thereby the water quality in the Mediterranean. Clear economic projects were also initiated, namely the expansion of the trade fair, the harbour and the airport to enhance business facilities in the city. The first plans were drawn up to link Barcelona with the emerging Pan European high-speed train network. At that time, Oriol Bohigas was replaced by Josep Acebillo as the new chief planner. Acebillo became known as a more 'strategic' spatial planner. He was less of a neighbourhood-oriented planner like Bohigas and more of a manager who was capable of negotiating with other levels of government and private interests (McNeill 1999).

Figure 5.1: The transformed Port Vell



Around two-thirds of the total spending for these projects was publicly-funded (Raventós 2000). A joint venture public body, *Holdig Olímpic S.A* (HOLSA), comprising the city council and the central government, was set up to coordinate the most important public investments relating to the Olympic project. The four main sites for the Games corresponded with a policy formulated during the Eighties by Barcelona's architect Joan Busquets to develop ten areas of *new centrality* outside the traditional economic core of the *Eixample* area (Ajuntament de Barcelona 1991). In these areas '...it was considered opportune to favour a certain concentration of service sector uses and public facilities, in order to create new reference points in the geography of the central areas of the city' (Esteban 2004, p.124). The strategic positions of these areas, close to existing or future infrastructure and mostly in places where space became available because of industrial restructuring, made these ideal sites for strategic spatial and economic projects during the decades that followed. The Forum project is located in one of them.

One of the most visible urban components in the Olympic area was the *Vila Olímpica* (Olympic Village), the accommodation for the Olympic athletes. Its chosen location was close to the Mediterranean Sea in the old industrial neighbourhood of Poblenou. Its development served multiple goals. Not only was it a strategic project within the framework of the transformation of the area from industrial to post-industrial uses (in this case predominately housing) – a concept that would be put forward later for a

much larger territory in the 22@ plan – it also was an opportunity to improve the connection of the city to the Mediterranean Sea, which was one of the strategic goals of the whole Olympic project. For a long period in Barcelona's history the seafront was a busy harbour area with warehouses and heavy industries which was largely inaccessible to the public. Opportunities for change emerged during the Eighties when harbour uses started to be relocated to newer large-scale areas more to the south in the Llobregat delta. It therefore became possible to fulfil a long-term wish of Barcelona's planners, namely to reunite the city with the sea (Meyer 1999). The Olympic harbour was realised in front of the Olympic Village. However, this was only one of the projects along the Mediterranean coast. At the same time, work started on the *Port Vell* (Old Harbour, see Figure 5.1, p.165) which was to be transformed into a leisure and retail centre. Adjacent to it, the old charming working class neighbourhood of La Barceloneta was physically upgraded and a new boulevard and beaches were realised.

Two other aspects played an important role in reconnecting the city with the sea. Some infrastructure barriers were dealt with, either by altering their routes or by removal (old railroad) or by partly covering them (*Ronda Litoral*). In addition, the water quality of the Mediterranean was consistently improved due to the enhanced regulation of the sewer outflows. This made swimming in the sea possible, and was the finishing touch to Barcelona's new usage of its coastline.

Similarly to the previous round of local reconstruction projects, the content of Barcelona's Olympic project – especially the reuse of the waterfront – was not unique. Numerous other cities around the world have revitalized their waterfronts in recent decades to include public uses once port uses had been relocated to other areas (Frieden and Sagalyn 1989; Meyer 1999). A particularly significant factor as far as Barcelona was concerned seems to have been the huge public demand for change and the impressive symbolic effects. After the work had been finished, Barcelona started profiling itself as a *city with a beach*. This amenity fits in perfectly with the Mediterranean climate and Catalan culture. Barcelona's new beaches and waterfronts are a success story, for both locals and visitors.

Another interesting aspect is the social and non-spatial dimension of the whole Olympic project. On the one hand it created a very strong positive impression of the city for the millions of spectators and television viewers around the world. This was an impression that would help to get Barcelona's tourist industry off the ground and establish its position as one of the most visited cities in Europe during the Nineties. On the other hand, it also generated a significant feeling of local patriotism and civic pride among the Barcelonese themselves. To them it was an opportunity to present themselves as inhabitants of a proud Catalan capital. It was, in this sense, the definitive end to the dark years under Franco. A lot of people participated in the event as volunteers and this helped to make this huge international event part of the lives of Barcelonese people. The apparent overlap between public, private and civic agendas caused students of Barcelona's urban development to refer to a 'Barcelona model' or 'Barcelona experience' of urban development. 'The 1992 Olympic Games prompted an exceptional planning process in which neighbourhood associations together with planning professionals pressured the local government to improve the historic centre and the peripheral neighbourhoods. The result – the so-called Barcelona model based upon social cohesion – achieved urban restructuring with a degree of redistributive justice; specifically

public space was improved and housing was upgraded' (M. García and Claver 2003, p.116).

According to Garcia-Ramon and Albet (2000, p.1332) the Barcelona model is based on the following points:

1. The basic role of public spaces in the newly transformed areas as a means of creating an identity and of fostering social and cultural integration;
2. Public leadership and initiative (by the Barcelona City Council) as regards the design and management of urban transformation projects;
3. Compliance with the pre-established Town Planning Regulations in order to maintain coherence, credibility, and legitimacy;
4. Integration of partial interventions within an overall project for the whole of the city, even in the case of projects linked to exceptional events such as the Olympic Games;
5. Concern for the connection and continuity of the newly built areas with pre-existing neighbourhoods in order to avoid excessive zoning or functional specialisation;
6. Urban renovation and rehabilitation of the Old Town aimed at avoiding gentrification and maintaining social coherence in the affected neighbourhoods;
7. Upgrading of peripheral areas based on various strategies, for example by means of a public sculpture programme linked to the restoration of squares, arcades, open spaces and gardens, and through the introduction of cultural values and symbols in the landscape;
8. The inclusion of a large section of the citizenry in the project of urban transformation as exemplified by the number and enthusiasm of the volunteers;
9. The dynamic role of the network of surrounding medium-sized cities which helped to balance polarities within the metropolitan area of Barcelona;
10. The positioning of Barcelona within the world context of large cities, thanks to promotional strategies of urban marketing.

The explosion in investments in the city at the end of the Eighties and the beginning of the Nineties, coincided with a period of strong economic growth. Just like other parts of Spain, Barcelona benefited from its integration into the European Community which resulted in major investments from the EU's Structural Funds for run-down regions and the prospect of a single European market in 1992 (Luzón and Vila 2007). Yet, the decline of the industrial sector in Barcelona continued in the Olympic period with a further loss of 81,090 jobs between 1986 and 1995. However, in the same period, 154,294 new jobs were created, mainly in the service sector (M. García 2003). In 1991, the city boasted an unemployment rate of 9.4%, six points less than in Spain as a whole and almost exactly the same as the European Community average (McNeill 1999, p.91). Average incomes increased sharply in the city and in Catalonia as a whole in the last decades to € 25,215, easily topping Spain's average of € 21,175 (2005 numbers, source: Eurostat).

It is too straightforward, however, to simply label the Olympic period as an all-encompassing success, as many critical observers have already noticed (Marshall 1996, 2000, 2004; McNeill 1999; M. García 2003; M. García and Claver 2003; Borja 2004; Balibrea 2004). The main points of criticism are related mostly to the new constellations of power in which city development and the setting of the strategic agenda

for this development were being carried out as well as to the sometimes unbalanced results.

The first problematic consequences of Barcelona's choice for a policy and practice of pro-business competitive city development was its failing to fulfil some of the basic demands of 'ordinary' citizens. Probably the most important aspect in this regard – and an ongoing problem during the Nineties – was the strong increase in housing prices and the lack of affordable apartments in the city centre. It forced people to move out of the city to the cheaper ring of municipalities around Barcelona and raised concerns about social polarization in the city, although proof of this has never been reflected in the income statistics (Nello 2004). Nevertheless, one of the major flaws of the Olympic project was that it was unable to provide affordable housing. The original intention was for the Olympic Village to become available after the Games for a large-scale public housing program. However, financial difficulties resulted in the whole area becoming privately owned. Besides these tangible concerns, underlying dissatisfaction was growing with regard to the whole direction city development was taking towards attracting more and more tourists and private investments. This coincided with a more general concern about the closed style of deal-making and project execution in the city between the city council and large private investors. Projects were increasingly organized in the form of public-private partnerships and ad-hoc development companies with limited direct democratic control. This tension became more evident in the period after the Olympics when Barcelona continued to position itself as a competitive city in the Mediterranean area and became more dependant on private investments to realize its ambitious programs.

5.2.3 Conclusion on urban development in Barcelona 1979-1992

We have briefly introduced urban development in Barcelona and some of the most important political aspects of it during a crucial period in its recent development. In conclusion, Barcelona's agenda of urban transformation changed during the Eighties from small-scale neighbourhood-related public investments to a portfolio of larger strategic investments in which the private sector also had an important stake. The Olympic project resulted in an unprecedented urban transformation for Barcelona. Different long-awaited strategic projects could be realised because the deadline of the Games itself helped mobilize significant flows of public and private investment. It is important to underline the specific political and financial/economic context in which urban development in Barcelona has taken place in recent decades. To begin with, the massive need to transform its economic base from an industrial to a post-industrial one, together with a relatively weak financial position of the city council, made the city heavily dependant on investments from other layers of government (Catalonia, Spain, EU) and private parties. Mayor Maragall oversaw this process of leverage which entailed trying to negotiate public good for the city with private actors (McNeill 1999; 2001). His use of the Olympic project to prioritise all kinds of public and private investments for the benefit of the city is still a textbook example for ambitious mayors around the globe. The Olympic Project is an example as well of the new working consensus between the municipality and the private development sector. The fact that the city has had very stable leadership, with a city council dominated by a pragmatic socialist party, has been conducive to the setting out of long-term strategic programs and to functioning as a relatively trustworthy partner in public-private development projects.

Contrary to the small scale interventions in the neighbourhoods at the beginning of the Eighties, the ‘Olympic project’ was Barcelona’s trump card as regards initiating improvements to its competitive position vis-à-vis other metropolitan regions. The major infrastructural works, including advancements in telecommunications, created the physical conditions for the development of a more service-oriented economy. Barcelona’s increased attractiveness for tourists became a major new component of the local economic structure (M. García and Claver 2003). Nevertheless, the transition to a post-industrial base for its economy was by no means easy. Compared to the economic development of Catalonia and Spain, the city was successful – and it was certainly helped by Spain’s membership of the EU in 1986. However, its international position in economic networks was still underdeveloped. Fighting this omission became an important policy goal in the post-Olympic period as we will see in the next section. This had to happen however under the burden of large debts the city accumulated in the Olympic period, making it more dependant in the post-Olympic period on private capital to finance its expensive ambitions.

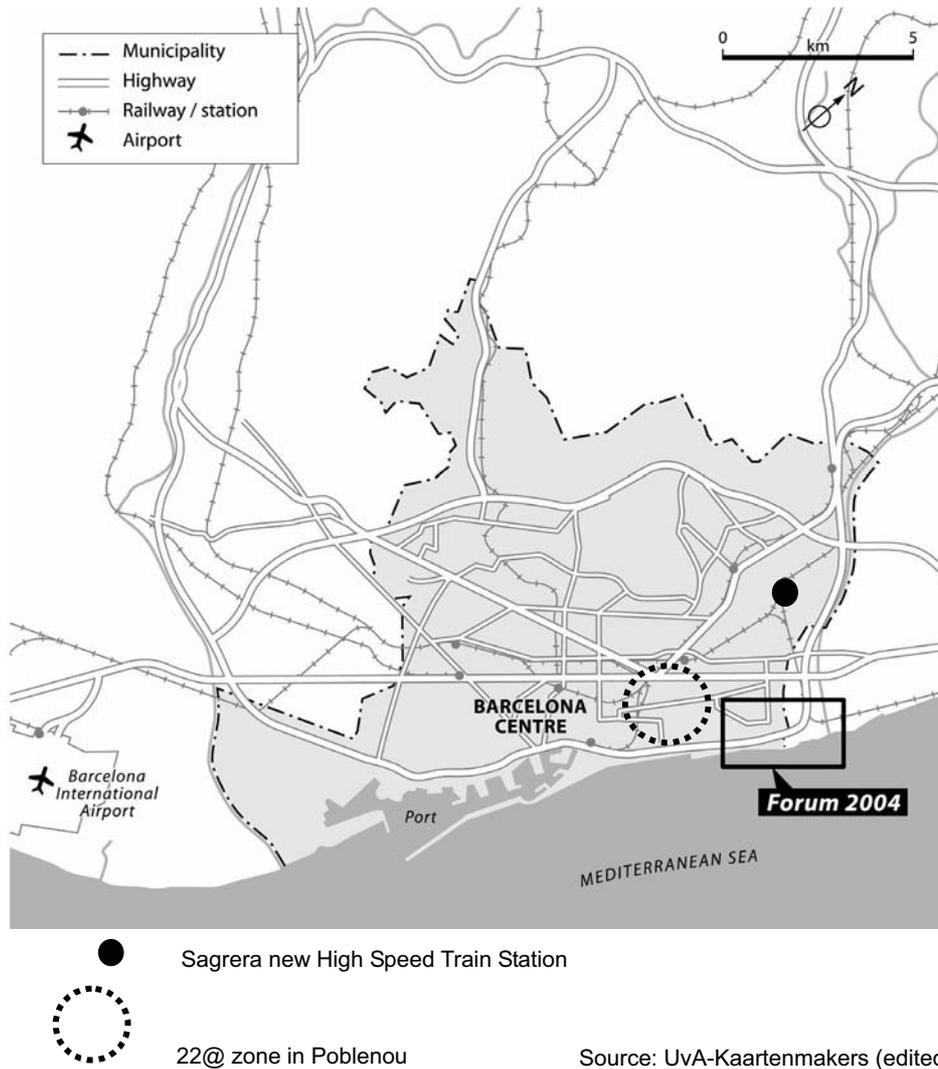
From a political perspective, all the developments in Barcelona in these last few decades have to be understood against the backdrop of the Franco period. The suppression of the Catalan identity and its expressions in this period created a strong counter-reaction in the early days of democracy. It was also the period when a new generation of professionals was raised and educated and these played a decisive role in supporting the politicians with their plans for transformation: ‘A very wide semi-technical, semi-political elite supported these politicians through the 1980s and 1990s, part of the same generation and with broadly the same values – progressive, egalitarian, gradualist, as interested in economic and social as cultural dimensions of the city’s renewal, a mainly middle class grouping, products of the university expansion since the 1960s. (...) [T]hey provided in particular the cadre of expertise in the planning sections of the council’ (Marshall 2004, p.17-18).

The city blossomed after the Franco dictatorship. Most urban interventions were visible, tangible and well-received. Barcelona positioned itself as an attractive Mediterranean metropolis for tourism. The quality of the buildings, the squares, the attention for architecture and urban design in general, the public art, the whole program to open the city up to the sea, the careful restoration of parts of the Old City, the emphasis on culture in its many forms are impressive (Benach 2004; Borja, Muxí, Ribas, Subirats, Barnada and Busquets 2004). However, there were also criticisms on the style of policy making, and the new market-oriented direction of development of the city. Nevertheless, the interesting urban development of the Eighties and the Olympic project raised expectations for Barcelona’s new period of transformation. The Olympics globalized the focus of attention on Barcelona’s urban strategies and projects. The question was whether the city would be capable of building on the success of the previous period while taking care of its flaws in a situation of changing economic and social conditions for urban development.

5.3 Initiating the Forum project

Debates about spatial planning in post-Olympic Barcelona were structured by a series of strategic plans (1991, 1995 and 1999) that were vehicles for consensus making and

Figure 5.2: Map of Barcelona



agenda setting between public and private actors. These documents – and the processes that led to them – aimed to achieve consensus on a comprehensive vision for the future of the city, and an integration of spatial and economic policies (Santacana 2000). ‘The Strategic Plan is not a legally binding instrument, but a “political and social contract” whose execution is the responsibility of those who are competent and qualified to assume it. At the same time, it offers a means of applying public pressure to secure the fulfilment of its objectives’ (Borja 2004, p.103). In the years after the Olympics, Barcelona suffered from a period of economic stagnation. Due to the immense public investments made for the games, the city’s financial situation was not that positive ei-

ther.³ It became clear that Barcelona had to search for methods to finance the city's future plans with much larger private contributions. It was therefore no surprise that the series of strategic plans specifically focused on economic aspects. They emphasized the importance of improving the city's competitive position. 'The first plan aimed at consolidating Barcelona as a European metropolis; the second aimed at strengthening business companies in international markets; and the third aims at linking the city 'through its specific characteristics and identity' to the new globalising reality' (M. García 2003, p.350). The proposals included the improvement of facilities for the service sector, like the expansion of the trade fair area and important infrastructures (airport, harbour, rail and road). Various large-scale interventions were planned and started during the Nineties, mostly with a greater private contribution than before. The most important development was the extension of the port in the Llobregat Delta to include a large logistics area related to the port and the expansion of Barcelona's *El Prat International Airport* with a third runway, 'airport city' related activities and a complete integration into the region's rail network. This would facilitate growth to around 40 million passengers a year in 2016 (24.5 million in 2004). In the old industrial area of Poble Nou (Catalan for 'new town'), a large long-term redevelopment scheme, 22@ was introduced whose aim was to transform the area into a mixed place for housing, high-tech industries and the creative sector (Gdaniec 2000; Clos 2004). In this part of the city some large infrastructure works were planned for the future, such as the reconstruction of the Glories area, the High Speed Train tunnel under the city centre and the new high speed train terminal and area development at Sagrera (see: Figure 5.2, previous page). This new round of strategic economic oriented projects could be interpreted as the ideological and programmatic maturity of the New Central areas policy we referred to earlier, as introduced in the Eighties (Ajuntament de Barcelona 1991). It was based partly on the locations already set out in this document. However it also increased the geographical scale and level of ambition considerably (Esteban 2004). Interestingly enough, most projects were located in areas which were experiencing economic and social difficulties on the east side of the city. The interest in large-scale restructuring of old industrial districts and the development of new business or mixed-use places, in a period in which the city council faced severe financial difficulties, gave an impetus to new forms of public-private partnerships (Raventós 2000; M. García 2003; Barcelona Regional 2004). This new round of ambitious projects with a clear goal of economic development is the context in which the Forum project was initiated. At almost the end of his reign as mayor of Barcelona (1982-1997), Pasqual Maragall entertained visitors at the rebuilt Expo 1929 Mies von der Rohe Germany pavilion during which he proposed the organization of a major international event in 2004. That year was not chosen coincidentally since it would mark the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Expo of 1929. This reference was more than symbolic. Just like the 1929 Expo gave Barcelona a new series of public spaces around the Plaça d'Espanya and the slopes of the Montjuïc mountain, the 2004 event expected to function as a catalyst for urban development in another timeframe and area. At the time, the exact form of the event was not clear. However, later that year the General

³ The 1985 bid estimated the costs for the Olympic Games to be around 2.73 billion US\$. The eventual costs were close to US\$ 7 billion, mainly due to the expanded scope of work and budget overruns in specific projects (Rowe 2006, p.87).

Conference of UNESCO – the UN’s Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation – decided to become one of the main partners in its organization, thereby raising the international and cultural credibility of the proposal. The project was approved by Barcelona’s City Council in the spring of 1997.

A very challenging site was chosen as the location for the event. At the mouth of the heavily polluted Besòs river, situated partly in the neighbouring municipality of Sant Adrià de Besòs (with approximately 35,000 inhabitants), an industrial area that was locally known as the ‘Chernobyl on the river Besòs’ was earmarked for total transformation. While the Olympic project converted a long stretch of coastline into attractive beaches, almost one-third of the seashore was still a (run-down) industrial area during the Nineties. In the words of the intellectual ‘father’ of the project, Josep Acebillo, head of Barcelona Regional, the Forum had two principal aims, namely (1) to revamp an urban area which was seriously blighted and which still occupied a strategic coastal location and housed key city infrastructures (a power station, an incinerator and a sewage plant), and (2) to counteract the impact of industrial relocation in the area (Acebillo 2004). The proposal was to keep the existing infrastructures in place, to upgrade and improve them and to create a new urban environment around them.

The idea of transforming the Forum area was not new. Actually, a somewhat similar area (Diagonal-Prim) was referred to in the New Centrality policy mentioned above as a long-term development area (Ajuntament de Barcelona 1991). However, during the mid Nineties strong political and economic momentum was being built up for the transformation of this part of Barcelona. The most strategic initiative was the long-term development project 22@, which was initiated by the city council with a view to transforming the former industrial Poblenou area into a mixed-use place with an emphasis on clean and high-tech industries and on commercial activities (Gdaniec 2000; Clos 2004). This ambition would be supplemented with a series of other strategic projects like Glories, for large-scale new commercial and retail developments, and Sagrera-Sant Andrea where the High Speed Train was to stop in the future. An important urban design aspect was to extend the long Avinguda Diagonal that, at the time, was smothered somewhere in Poblenou, towards the Mediterranean Sea, as a new defining axis of development. The Forum is located exactly at the spot at which this axis reaches the Mediterranean Sea.

Planning for the area actually started when the city’s planning agency, Barcelona Regional, completed a study in the mid-Nineties on the most important facilities in what would later be called the Forum area, namely the power plant, incinerator and wastewater treatment.⁴ Their proposal was to keep these ‘annoying’ facilities in the area and improve and upgrade them so they could be integrated into a new public space (Acebillo 2004). Two other concrete plans were being developed close to the Forum area. The extreme differences between them show the interesting surroundings of Forum. On the one hand, a project was initiated for the architectural, urban and civic rehabilitation

⁴ Barcelona Regional is a non-profit, public, technical consultancy which is legally able to engage in supra-municipal projects. It undertakes commissions funded by individual municipalities as well as studies of a broader geographical nature. It is chaired by the mayor of Barcelona but other partners are also incorporated into the institution’s structure, including representatives from central government agencies, the airport authority, the port authority, the authority for food and markets and the rail authority, as well as from other more local public agencies (Rowe 2006, p.173).

of the La Mina and La Catalana neighbourhoods to the north and northeast of Forum. The project for La Mina – an area in which residents of a former shanty town were re-located in the Seventies – received support from the EU-funded URBAN programme.⁵ La Catalana is an isolated area of substandard housing initially built for the workers of the nearby Catalana de Gas i Electricitat factory. These areas showed an accumulation of social and economic problems, and for many Barcelonese they were no-go areas at that time. On the other hand however, a large American developer, Hines Properties, submitted a proposal to the city government to develop a large piece of former industrialized land to create a new mix-use area with luxury residential towers, offices and an up-market shopping mall. This area at the west side of Forum was named Diagonal Mar and had been targeted for development since the Nineties but earlier initiatives had failed.

The result was that, in the second half of the Nineties, an interesting ensemble of different – partly related – projects in this ‘forgotten’ part of Barcelona started to develop. In the original proposals for the Forum there was special emphasis on the catalyst function of the Forum 2004 event for the transformation of these ongoing projects. It was expected that Forum itself would mobilise large sums of (public) money from different sources for some large infrastructure works and public space improvements that were necessary to urbanise the area. It would also pave the way for the regeneration of a much wider area of industrial and housing restructuring with interesting ‘content’ as a spectacular tourist destination.

For our study on the Forum project, it is important to demarcate the study area. The Forum event area and its direct environs, Diagonal Mar and Lull-Taulat, are our main object of research when we study its transformation into an area of new urbanity. However, since the project is symbolically linked to a much wider area of transformation in the eastern zone of Barcelona we make reference to this context as well, where necessary. This is how we define the Forum event area and its direct environs (see: Figure 5.3, next page): To the south and east there are clear boundaries in the form of the Mediterranean Sea and the river Besòs. To the west our area of direct analysis runs till the western fringe of the Diagonal Mar project and the new marine zoo. North to the Forum event area we include the Lull-Taulat zone. These areas most clearly reflect Barcelona’s emphasis on establishing an urban project with the aim being to realize new urbanity in this part of the city. In our analysis, this core ensemble of projects is referred to as ‘Forum’. However, we make distinctions into sub-areas whenever necessary. This is especially relevant for the Diagonal Mar area, since it was developed a little bit earlier and on the basis of a quite different institutional regime.

A wider ring of projects to which the Forum area is related thus includes the disadvantaged housing neighbourhoods of La Mina and La Catalana, to the north of the Forum. To the east there is a project for the improvement of the water quality in the river Besòs and the redevelopment of the river bedding into parkland. There are other projects in

⁵ The URBAN Community Initiative Programme of the European Union contributed EUR 12.3 million towards the regeneration of La Mina during the period 2000-2006. A further EUR 12.3 million in investment from the public sector created a total budget of EUR 24.6 million. The priorities were the promotion of new technologies, the improvement of the business environment, the inclusion of disadvantaged groups into the labour market and the improvement of the urban environment. See: www.barrimina.org.

the east of Barcelona which are more strategically linked with Forum. This zone includes the former industrial area of Poblenou, which is being extensively redeveloped given that it lost most of its original use in the last part of the twentieth century.

The following sections are more analytical as we analyse the Forum project in three different, but related, ways. First, in section 5.4, we investigate the context level. We study how the Forum project was connected to the metropolitan action space by examining the symbolic-cognitive and organizational framing and its development throughout the course of the project. In section 5.5 we examine the operational level by studying the practices of interaction that have been developed throughout the course of the project. Finally, in section 5.6, we analyse what the major activated codes of conduct (social norms) were in these practices and how they developed, taking account of the ambition for the development of new urbanity in the Forum project.

Figure 5.3: Map of the Forum project: the event area (bold) and the surrounding projects (italics). The main research area is demarcated by the thicker line



5.4 Connectivity to the metropolitan action space

The two research questions we posed in chapter two regarding the connectivity to the metropolitan action space were:

- *To what extent has the ambition to realize new urbanity been reflected in the way Forum is strategically framed? (the symbolic-cognitive dimension of framing)*
- *What dynamic in time is observable in Forum in the connectivity in the four distinguished domains of governance action? (the organizational dimension of framing)*

We explained before that our hypothesis is that it is necessary for a project, whose ambition is new urbanity, to be broadly organizationally positioned in all four domains. Only then will there be any certainty that at the project's operational level, the maximum of energy (ideas, initiatives, investments, support) from society will be accommodated in these efforts and turned into a sustainable and mixed flow of investments in the area. We expected that in projects that were first limitedly embedded in certain domains of action, a pressure will develop during their development for the active agents within it to seek connections to other domains to repair this situation.

Assessing the symbolic-cognitive dimension of framing, we can conclude that Forum was initially framed in three ways: (1) as a physical regeneration project to create a new central place and waterfront as a spin off for a larger ensemble of spatial/economic projects on the east side of Barcelona, (2) as an international and local cultural event to strengthen Barcelona's (international) cultural position and mobilise societal awareness, political priority and money for a large urban intervention, and (3) as a project of environmental excellence.

In the context of the four domains of the metropolitan action space we have distinguished, our preliminary conclusion is that, in an organizational sense, the Forum project was initially connected quite comprehensively. With the concept of a local and international cultural event, the aim of the initiators was also to connect to neighbourhood groups and the broader cultural domain in Barcelona. The tight schedule for the operations – all major infrastructures had to be finished before the start of the event in the spring of 2004 – and the international orientation of the event linked the initiative in different ways to the interregional and international government domain. Within the local Barcelona context, the municipality was able to get the region on board for public investments as well. The success of the link with the private sector is quite difficult to assess. There is no doubt that the Forum Cultural event was heavily sponsored by private companies. However, as regards the urban development side of the project, the importance of private sector interest is less clear at the moment. In any case, it is important to make a distinction between the Forum event area, which consisted mainly of public investments in buildings and infrastructures, and the direct ring of projects around it. The projects in this ring, namely Diagonal Mar and Lull-Taulat, have a clear private orientation. At the time of the study (at the beginning of 2005) only Diagonal Mar had been finished. Only very sketchy proposals existed for the other area at the time of our fieldwork and this made it difficult to appreciate its connection to actual private demands.

5.4.1 The symbolic-cognitive dimension of framing Forum

1. Forum framed as a physical regeneration project to create a new central place and waterfront as a spin off for a larger ensemble of spatial/economic projects on the east side of Barcelona

After the Olympic Project, the Forum project was the symbolic marker of another phase – and program – of transition in the Barcelona area. While the investments in the Olympic era were mostly quite local and geographically contained in the areas of new centrality, the new generation of investments had a different scale and ambition. A series of long-term plans and projects for the whole eastern part of Barcelona in the Poblenou / Besòs area was based on the political priorities for the city at the end of the Nineties, as we discussed briefly in the previous section. More so than in the previous round of urban interventions, these investments were intended to improve Barcelona's economic position, especially in the higher end service economy. Other major characteristics are their international orientation, their greater emphasis on private investment capital than had been the case in the previous round, and their cultural dimension (Walliser 2004). The following is a short introduction to two of the most relevant projects beside the Forum that underpin this strategy:

22@ / City of Knowledge.

The objective of the 22@ project is to transform 200 hectares of old industrial land into an innovative economic district (Luzón and Vila 2007). These innovative, or 'knowledge-dense activities', like high-tech, design, editorial production, culture and audio-visual production are expected to co-exist well with housing and other facilities, making this area an urban production district. The proposal includes:

- the transformation of 1,159,626 m² of industrial land, with the potential for approximately 3,100,000 m² of new roof area, excluding facilities;
- the official recognition of the 4,614 residences currently on industrial land;
- approximately 2,700,000 m² of floor space for new economic activities;
- approximately 4,000 new residences, under rent protection;
- an increase in green zones of approximately 75,000m²;
- the creation of approximately 145,000 m² of land for new facilities;
- the addition of approximately 60,000 jobs. (Clos 2004, p.200)

This is a very long-term strategic project. The new private municipal company, *22 Arroba BCN S.A.* was set up to manage the urban and economic transformation of the area. In June 2004, the refurbishment of over half of the industrial area of Poblenou was started, mostly via plans promoted by the private sector (Luzón and Vila 2007, p.99).

Sagrera / St. Andreu.

This area is planned to be developed in the near future. It is adjacent to the 22@ area and will be the first Barcelona stop on the new HST connection via Figueres to France via a new tunnel under the Pyrenees. This service is expected to open in 2012, reducing the train travel time between Paris and Barcelona to 5 hours 35 minutes (currently more than 9 hours). A tunnel will connect this station to the existing downtown Sants station that handles the new high-speed train connection to Madrid (which is to open in 2008 and which will reduce travel time to the capital to 3 hours). The Sagrera/St. Andreu area is to be developed using a mixed program, but with an emphasis on new

housing. The proposal involves the development of 62,531 m² of offices, 9,087 m² of other commercial space, 539,423 m² of housing and 48,497 m² of hotels (Ajuntament de Barcelona and Barcelona Regional S.A. 1999).

What Forum as an urban development project adds to these ongoing long-term urban development plans are some strategic components which are especially intended to attract visitors. Those are a new large convention centre, four new luxury hotels, a proposed university campus, an exclusive residential area (Diagonal Mar), a harbour and marine zoo, a large shopping centre plus a connection to the Mediterranean Sea and a new waterfront. Various investments are being made in infrastructures to improve the area's links to the city. A new subway station especially for the area is part of the plan. However, a more spectacular feature is the re-introduction of the tram system in Barcelona (see: Figure 5.4). Via the Avinguda Diagonal, a new tram line connects the east side of the Parc de la Ciutadella with the Glories Area, Diagonal Mar, Forum and Sant Adrià de Besòs. There are plans to expand this tram system in the future.

Initially, the Forum project was also framed to have a distinct social dimension as well. The two adjacent neighbourhoods of La Catalana and La Mina, are known to be among the poorest areas in Spain. In cooperation with the regional government and with EU financial support, the Barcelona and Sant Adrià city councils were already making plans for the physical and social regeneration of these areas before the Forum project started. However, the Forum project ensured that they received additional political attention (Acebillo 2004). Both areas are quite isolated from the city. Some of the pro-

Figure 5.4: Barcelona's new tram network connects to the Forum area



posed physical interventions of the Forum project aim to improve this situation via a direct access route from the ring road to the area, the new tram connection, the opening of new local connecting roads and a new physical connection between the Forum area and La Mina due to the new university campus and adjacent housing developments in the Llull-Taulat area. There were also clear expectations regarding the social and economic value that the Forum project could have for these neighbourhoods, as we will see in the next section.

2. Forum framed as a local and international cultural event to strengthen Barcelona's international economic and cultural position and mobilise societal awareness, political priority and money for the urban intervention

On 12 November 1997, the General Conference of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) expressed its unanimous support for the initiative to organise a large internationally-oriented cultural event in Barcelona in the summer of 2004. It was eventually decided that the three main themes of this Universal Forum of Culture would be 'sustainable development', 'conditions for peace' and 'dialogue of cultures'. The event was 'created' by the Barcelona city council after it found out that it had no chance of making a successful bid, in the near future, for existing large-scale public events like the Olympics or the World Expo. It was a clear attempt to use this form of framing to repeat the success factors of the Olympic era, namely to generate civic enthusiasm for large development projects with a clear deadline, to foster international attention and to secure regional and national subsidies and priorities for investments in Barcelona. The investment part of the framing was quite successful. Due to the Forum event, financial support was acquired from the regional and state governments, as were European subsidies (more details are provided in the next section). The support from UNESCO was more symbolic. Due to the strict operational deadlines, a very efficient process of master planning, building design and construction was necessary to realize most of the infrastructures and main buildings in the Forum area within 1,000 days (Tersol 2004). It was hoped by the initiators that the cultural event would also be instrumental in creating connections with social and civic groups.⁶

⁶ At an early stage of the preparations, the decision was made to concentrate most of the cultural activities in the Forum area itself. This was a major change compared to the Olympic project which involved events being held at different sites. It was one of the reasons why Forum was later criticized as being largely invisible to most Barcelonense. After a long preparatory period, the main event was held for 141 days on the themes of 'sustainable development', achieving a balance of development with natural resources; 'conditions for peace', meaning social and political justice through communication and concerns for human rights and 'cultural diversity', meaning valuing commonality among people while not losing sight of differences (Rowe 2006, p.136). The Convention Centre was used for two large exhibitions, namely 'Cities, Corners' (on urban development) and 'Voices' (on the value of the diversity of languages in the world). Two other major exhibitions were 'The warriors of Xi'an' (Chinese funerary art) and 'Inhabiting the world' (about sustainable development). The Forum building hosted a large exhibition on urban development in Barcelona and was also used for the Forum dialogues during which prominent politicians and intellectuals expressed their views on the Forum's themes. Part of the Esplanade was used for a market attended by a variety of international organisations. The two amphitheatres were regularly used for outdoor shows including a lot of acrobatics. Around the harbour – which was used for different spectacles as well – there was a concentration of restaurants. The entrance fee was 23 euro a day, which included access to all exhibitions. Multi-days passes with discounts were also available. In total the event was visited by around 3 million people, 7.5% of whom came from abroad (UNESCO 2005). The official website of the Forum is: www.barcelona2004.org. The next 'Universal Forum of Cultures' was 2007 in Monterrey, Mexico: www.monterreyforum2007.org.

A lot of groups were invited to participate in the preparation of the event. The initial plan for the Forum event was to generate a dialogue on its main themes rather than hosting spectacular shows and festivals (B. García 2004). However, this intention has not been developed very successfully, as we will discuss below. The Forum event was basically to be located in the outdoor area between the environmental installations and alongside the new waterfront. The convention centre, new Forum Building and some other buildings were to be used for exhibitions. Most facilities for the event were temporal.

3. Forum framed as a project of environmental excellence

Already in the mid-Nineties, Barcelona Regional, the metropolitan planning agency created in 1994, was working on a study of the environmental infrastructures in the area. It was obvious that they posed a huge difficulty if this area was ever to be urbanized (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2004). The three main installations, namely the power plant, the sewage treatment plant and the incinerator all used outdated technologies and created a lot of atmospheric and water pollution.⁷ However, it was going to be very difficult and extremely costly to move them to other parts of the city. The location of the sewage treatment plant – the largest in the Barcelona area – was, for example, determined by the city's sewage system. The eventual concept involved modernizing the existing infrastructures with new technologies to meet EU standards and to transform the area around them into a high-quality public space (Acebillo 2004). In this way, the project tried to take advantage of its most difficult condition. Framing the project as one of environmental excellence was not only necessary to urbanize the area, it was also an opportunity to appeal to civic environmental groups.⁸

The sewage treatment plant was essential. Due to old-fashioned techniques, nasty odours dominated the area for most of the time. In the last years, the wastewater treatment plant has been upgraded with a secondary (biological) treatment. Its capacity was doubled to nearly 800,000m³ per day. The plant is equipped with an advanced secondary treatment unit and a modern system to ensure that it remains watertight and does not produce unpleasant odours (Folch 2004, p.58). However, there was also a pure planning issue to deal with. The sewage treatment plant was located on the exact spot at which the extended Diagonal Avenue would meet the Mediterranean. The solution proposed by Barcelona Regional was to partly cover the plant with a huge square that would become the Forum's main public area. However, in order to create an accessible waterfront the coastline had to be altered in front of the wastewater treatment plant and the incinerator. This delayed the project for a while since the necessary permission for

⁷ The wastewater treatment plant treated approximately 400,000m³ of wastewater daily, in a very rudimentary form. Partially-treated water was discharged into the sea through an underwater outlet channel, where it joined water transported by a collector system from the Prim area and water from the Besòs river itself that, until recently, had not been treated at all. The waste incinerator treated approximately 250,000 metric tons of domestic waste annually, generating 60,000 tons of ash and huge quantities of CO² and other gasses in the process. The two thermoelectric plants, with a total capacity of 1,717 MW, initially operated exclusively on fuel oil which resulted in a very high level of atmospheric pollution (Folch 2004).

⁸ This strategy was only partly successful. The project was also criticized by NGOs like Greenpeace, especially because of the changes in the sea environment. Another issue that blurred the environmental picture somewhat was that some of the important private sponsors of the Forum 2004 event had a bad environmental reputation (Luzón and Vila 2007).

this action was not forthcoming from the national government. Two other aspects that underline the environmental framing of the project are the different measures taken to regenerate the maritime biotope in front of the area and the large solar power installation. As an eye-catching symbolic aspect, this large 1.3 MW installation was placed in a prominent part of the Forum area. It produces approximately 1.6 GWh per annum, enough to supply electricity to 1,000 dwellings.

Outside the project area we have studied, the rehabilitation of the river Besòs was also an important aspect of the plans. The riverbed was dominated for decades by huge electricity pylons leading to the power plant. The plan was to upgrade the power station and make it more environmentally-friendly and efficient, and to bury the power lines that were attached to huge electricity pylons in the middle of the river. The riversides were to be redesigned as a public park.

5.4.2 The organizational dimension of framing Forum

How did the organizational dimension of framing develop in the short history of the Forum project? How was the project connected to the different domains of the metropolitan action space we distinguished?

Generally speaking, the connectivity with the inner regional governmental domain and the interregional and international government domain was very strong. The project was started by the municipality of Barcelona in cooperation with neighbouring municipality of Sant Adrià de Besòs. Due mainly to the rapidly approaching deadline of the Forum 2004 event, several existing projects started to receive more attention and support from the regional government, the national government and the European Union and were complemented with some new projects. This resulted in very quick progress being made in the Forum area. The projects intended to regenerate the disadvantaged neighbourhoods of La Mina and La Catalana have been less successful to date. It seems that both need a much lengthier commitment to solve a combination of physical, social and economic problems.

The development of framing in the private sector is quite hard to assess, since Forum is mostly a public investment and only symbolically and strategically linked to the much wider range of more private-oriented investment projects. The new convention centre, operated by GL Events, is attracting a large number of conferences and this is having a positive effect on the nearby hotels. Together with the conference centre and hotels, Diagonal Mar is the only purely private part of the inner circle of Forum projects that has been completed. An examination of occupancy rates and sales prices reveals that the residential parts are performing quite well in financial terms. According to the developer, the large shopping mall and the much smaller office development have been financially less successful (interview with Juan Vives, Hines Properties Spain). The wider ring of projects around Forum have had some initial success although their long-term nature makes it hard to draw any definitive conclusions as yet. The 22@ project looks somewhat overambitious as regards realizing a complete economic innovation aimed at knowledge-added production, with a program limited to quite local physical interventions (Rowe 2006).

The most significant development of the last few years was the problematic connection to the social civic and cultural domain. Although the Forum project was initially well-connected to the four domains we distinguished, during its (relatively short) devel-

opment, the connection with this particular domain was mostly lost. In a way this reflects a development that has been noticed before by others, namely the perceived coherence between the goals of the political elite of Barcelona and the majority of the civic groups, about both the general direction of the city's development and the concrete projects as examples of it – the major pillar of the so-called Barcelona model – is strongly diminishing in the last period (Balibrea 2004). We will examine this aspect in a little more detail below, since the initial strong connection to the social, civic and cultural domain was precisely one of the distinguishing factors of the Forum project compared to other international cases, as we have seen in Chapter two. To a large extent, Forum – as a very visible and ideological project – developed into one of the icons of Barcelona's current round of urban development and became a centrepiece in the critical debates around it. We can identify two main reasons for the more problematic connectivity to this domain: (1) growing dissatisfaction of social, civic and cultural groups with the general direction Barcelona's urban development is taking, (2) specific reasons related to the Forum development and cultural event.

As regards 1: growing dissatisfaction with the general direction of Barcelona's urban development

A fundamental issue underlying this is the growing criticism of the general direction planning is taking, especially its drift towards business-friendly planning and large public-private partnerships responsible for large 'flagship' developments in the city, without much influence from citizens. This is taking place in a situation dominated by the fact that most people are having considerable difficulty finding affordable housing, problems with immigration and the persistence of important inequalities between groups of people in the city (Balibrea 2004). The differences between these 'global' strategic policies of the city and the more locally felt needs by citizens have caused different concrete conflicts, between residents and project developers, especially in the 22@ project. It seems to be the case that the 'hegemonic' consensus that typified the Olympic area has made way for a situation in which the wishes of public, private and civic groups are no longer very effectively coordinated (M. García and Claver 2003). Urban development in Barcelona – as in many other cities in the world – has become an (ideological) battle with only fragments of consensus. The seemingly hegemonic consensus on Barcelona's urban development in the beginning of the Eighties was based on a sudden alignment of agendas of public, private and civic groups, something that was jeopardized in later periods according to one critical observer: '...[at that time] All of them, for different reasons, were in need of more public space and improvements of the quality of urban life. But the huge spatial redefinitions that were to be implemented in the city ended up negating the original planning principles. The small-scale, detailed, respectful urban project intended to bring direct benefit to the most depressed neighbourhoods and their inhabitants had very little in common with the huge structural transformations required to implement processes such as Vila Olímpica, Poblenou, Diagonal Mar or Sant Andreu/Sagrera...' (Balibrea 2004, p.213).

The city council's continuous and successful efforts to attract more tourism to Barcelona, in which the Forum 2004 event also played an important role, have recently been the subject of criticism. The transformed Barcelona developed during the Nineties into a tourist icon offering accessible culture (Gaudí, Picasso, Old Town), together with appealing beaches, an excellent climate and numerous tourist facilities. Following the

1992 Olympic Games, the number of overnight stays in Barcelona increased from 4.3 million in 1992 to 8.6 million in 2002. In the same period, the number of congresses and convention events rose by 340% from 310 to 1,364 events. The number of trade fairs doubled from 31 to 64. Tourism activities now account for 15% of Barcelona's GDP (Acebillo 2004). An enormous increase in the number of hotels has been achieved. Although the tourist industry has developed as an important economic pillar of Barcelona's economy, concern is being expressed at the overrunning of areas – especially the Old Town – by tourists and the accompanying negative social, cultural and economic side-effects (M. García and Claver 2003). One of the most serious issues is the pressure on the housing market, given that a lot of apartments in the tourist areas are rented out to visitors on a weekly basis. Housing prices have greatly increased, as they have done throughout the country. The minimal social housing stock (about 15% of the total stock in the city) means a large proportion of the population is dependant on market fluctuations, or a move far outside the city.

As regards 2: dissatisfaction with the Forum development and cultural event

Two main points of criticism from social and civic groups emerged regarding the Forum area development and the *Universal Forum of Cultures* international cultural event. Firstly, there was the lack of involvement of civic groups and individuals in the different phases of plan making and plan development. In the decision-making on both the Forum and the Diagonal Mar urban transformations this was very limited. Especially in the case of Diagonal Mar, instead of organizing a more fundamental debate about the contents of the plans, the transformation was presented as a public relations event, as an opportunity to 'sell' the project, according to the critics. Forum was also promoted in a way that was not very appealing to a lot of people: "The project was especially advertised and developed as something really big... But Barcelonese people don't really like this, it is not something they are proud of. The municipality was not very good at promoting and explaining the project to the citizens. They used the same leitmotif: Opening Barcelona to the sea. But that was also the slogan for the Olympics!" (interview with Maria Buhigas, Barcelona Regional). "In the publicity on the Forum I think the city government made a big mistake in highlighting the event. However, the event was only a trick to acquire funding! The project has much more long-term strategic goals, but they were very poorly explained" (interview with Francesc Munoz, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona).

Another aspect is that the initiation and development of the Forum project and event has been a typical neo-corporatist affair dominated by a small political elite and executed by powerful professionals (interviews with Maria Buhigas, Barcelona Regional; Oriol Clos, Ajuntament de Barcelona; Antoni Ollé, Consorci del Besòs). An important consequence of the contested goals and the closed circuits of decision-making was that the transformation was not only poorly understood and supported by social groups, but that there was fierce protest against it. The whole transformation was seen as a typical example of a direction of urban development and a mode of governance away from the harmonisation of the needs of the 'ordinary Barcelonese' and the direction the city council was steering the development: "... the criticism of these kinds of governance based on strong private interest is that the original Barcelona model is dying away. What is worrying people is not so much that this specific project is not bringing much money to the neighbourhoods, but that this project represents a trend or an emerging

model that is not a citizens model. It is a very privately-oriented model of development, oriented more towards creating a growth machine...” (interview with Marisol García, Universitat de Barcelona).

Secondly, the results of the cultural event itself were disappointing in the way it involved people in the discussions on the themes before and during the event and also in the number of visitors and general enthusiasm it created. Although one of the main objectives was to create a participatory event, eventually this objective was largely unfulfilled.

The influential federation of neighbourhood organizations, the *Federació d'Associacions de Veïns i Veïnes de Barcelona* (FAVB), became a strong opponent of the urban transformation process and the event: ‘...the organization has lost an opportunity to generate a participative debate built from different institutions: schools, university, neighbourhood cultural and sports association as well as all the big web of associations that exists in Barcelona’ (Fernandez and Andreu 2004, p.4). Opponents formed the *Assemblea de Resistències al Forum 2004* and created a very visible protest against the event, including a seaborne invasion of the area and a website that copied the lay-out of the original site, but obviously with a clearly different content.

There were a number of key reasons for rejecting the Forum. These ranged from expected speculation caused by the project (Clarós 2004) to the strong business involvement in the organisation, particularly from businesses that in their daily practices did not obey the Forum’s values. According to the FAVB, the underlying problem was the themes of the Universal Forum of Cultures and the lack of credibility of its mission statement (interview with Eva Fernandez, FAVB). According to the critics the themes of diversity, peace and sustainability seemed too broad and lacked content and a clear purpose. They reflected generic and vague notions that would have anybody’s support, namely the environment, peace and cultural diversity and did not link up directly with the needs or concerns of many of the inhabitants of Barcelona (interview Eva Fernandez, FAVB). The credibility of the event became even more at risk due to the fact that, although there were

Figure 5.5: One of the shows of the Forum event



themes on sustainable development and peace, some of the major private sponsors had a stake in very polluting processes or the war industry. The latter became extremely pressing when the Spanish national government supported the Iraq invasion. This was a decision the Forum could not object to – even though ‘conditions for peace’ was one of its three core themes – due to political pressure on the organization from the national ruling *Partido Popular* that supported the Iraq war. These polemic debates had a negative influence on the project’s success. After all, as left wing action groups asked, how can you organise an event about peace when your country is at war? How can you talk about cultural diversity when the organising government is implementing very restrictive laws on migration?

Organising a cultural event in such a politicised environment proved to be almost impossible. “If you try to develop a cultural project, there are ideological aspects that should be addressed immediately. For example: who to invite or not to invite? Everything [in Forum] was very controversial, and what was the result? (...) [It was] more a political and socio-cultural definition of culture. However, this solution did not resolve the very troublesome ideological issues. The result was that the ideological and critical discussions that were the necessary end result of this final plan were eliminated. However, if you organise conferences about these topics and ignore the criticism you are left with something that is not at all very interesting” (interview with Arturo Rodríguez, Universitat de Barcelona). Generally, the event itself resulted in disappointments, especially with regard to the missed opportunities to organise a real participatory process and to allow the event be a vehicle for strategic discussions on the themes and the future development of Barcelona (Fernandez and Andreu 2004). The fact that during the event the whole area was only accessible for a high ticket price made the integration with the poor surrounding neighbourhoods of La Mina and La Catalana almost an illusion.

5.4.3 Conclusion on Forum connectivity: well-connected, but a broken link with society

By way of a summary we can state that the transformation of the Forum area and its direct ring of projects has – in a very short period of time – not only changed the physical appearance of a part of Barcelona but that they also had an important ideological component. Together with the large 22@ scheme and other investments in the Poblenou area, Forum tries to create new urbanity in a deteriorated part of the city. The first steps were made to integrate these areas into the city and to change the mental geography of Barcelona that has always focused more on the west than on the east of the city. Both the Forum and Diagonal Mar areas have spectacularly changed within a very short period of time. Brownfield areas have been made accessible, cleaned and ‘urbanized’. The triple symbolic-cognitive framing of Forum as (1) an urban development project, (2) a cultural event and (3) a project of environmental excellence also reflected an important strategic organizational philosophy. The initial organizational framing of Forum linked up with all the dimensions we distinguished in the metropolitan action space. This was necessary to coordinate action between different levels of government, mobilise public and private investments and create civic enthusiasm. However, as we have noticed, this framing – based on the success of the Olympic transformation – was only partly successful over the course of time as regards maintaining this connectivity (see Table 5.1, Table 5.2 and Figure 5.6 on the next pages for an overview). The successful aspect of the strategic framing was the alignment of preferences of a wider va-

riety of public domain actors to the projects in the area. This helped to create a remarkably swift transformation and surely improved the environmental dimension of the project. By adding some crucial infrastructures, like the convention centre and a possible research university, the project incorporated some strategic ingredients into the city's ambition to improve its competitive economic position. By making the last stretch of Barcelona's waterfront accessible as well, and by creating a place for future large-scale events within the premises of the city, the appeal on tourists could be further enhanced.

Table 5.1: Summary of the symbolic-cognitive framing of Forum and its development till 2005

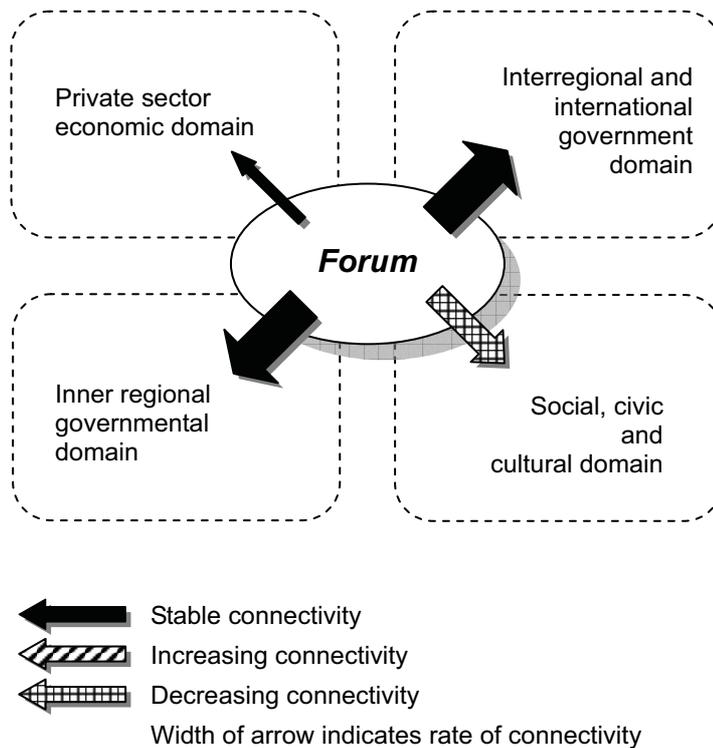
<i>Symbolic-cognitive framing</i>	<i>Initial situation (end of 1990s)</i>	<i>Development (till 2005)</i>
Forum as an urban project	Variety of loosely related projects. Ambition to urbanize area to contribute to city's economic development.	Large-scale transformations, many still in progress. Physical dimension of projects is front running economic and social impacts.
Forum as a cultural event	Concept of a new international cultural event, precise content still unclear, able to interest local and international visitors.	Event hosted in 2004, less successful than expected and with no lasting result for the area.
Forum as a project of environmental excellence	Decision taken to leave environmental facilities in area and upgrade them.	Successful execution of ambition. Strong improvement of environmental qualities.

Table 5.2: Summary of the organizational framing of Forum and its development till 2005

<i>Organizational framing</i>	<i>Initial situation (end 1990s)</i>	<i>Development (till 2005)</i>
Private economic sector	Limited direct private interest in the area. Only Hines Properties gets involved in project-developing in Diagonal Mar.	Successful use of the conference centre. Strong demand for housing in Diagonal Mar project. Interest for office spaces in area lukewarm. No new economic centre yet.
Interregional / international government	Strong partners in development: national and EU subsidies, UNESCO endorsement for event.	Stable partnership, though political controversy on cultural event.
Inner regional government	Strong involvement. Project initiated by the municipality, region gets on board.	Stable partnership. Huge public investments.
Social, civic and cultural	Social groups become connected to the project and see it as an opportunity to enhance regeneration of La Mina and La Catalana.	Lack of connection. Disappointed with Forum 2004 event and general direction of Barcelona's urban development. Silent support has changed to strong opposition.

The development of large areas like Forum, and the whole reconstruction of the Besòs river delta, is again an increase in scale from the small neighbourhood projects in the beginning of the Eighties, the integrated area development from the Olympic period, towards a patchwork of projects in a huge development area on the east side of Barcelona. The natural connection between very tangible needs of citizens with very concrete small-scale urban interventions has been replaced by much larger development schemes, a further commercialization and thematization of spaces and an ideological goal that is less tangible, namely economic competitiveness and the position of Barcelona vis-à-vis other metropolitan regions in the area: “Today the scale is different and you need to bear that in mind if you want to understand projects like Glories and Forum.... We need to be evolving... If our model or experience does not evolve, we risk failure. Today we don’t need only more public spaces in the city... And this evolution in a new scale is important” (interview with Oriol Clos, Ajuntament de Barcelona). It seems questionable however that the population and the civic groups have adapted to this new scale and that they completely sympathise with the strategic direction the city is taking to position itself via a project like Forum.

Figure 5.6: Graphical representation of the organizational connectivity of Forum in the metropolitan action space, situation 2005



5.5 Operational domain

We now turn to the operational domain in which we study the action situation created in the Forum project to plan and decide on the program of spatial functions in the area. We do this by studying the rules that structure action situations, and investigate how these rules have developed over the course of time. We pay specific attention to rules that are influencing the ambition of the project to create a new urban space.

For the analysis of our empirical case study we specifically examine two aggregated sets of rules that help us understand the project's action arena (see Chapter 2):

1. Rules that affect who participates, the position of the participants and their modes of interaction;
2. Rules that affect the scope and strategy of the participants (actor constellations).

Ostrom defines rules as ‘...linguistic entities that refer to prescriptions commonly known and used by a set of participants to order repetitive, interdependent relationships. Prescriptions refer to which actions are *required*, *prohibited*, or *permitted*’ (Ostrom 1986, p.5). These two sets of rules help us to reconstruct the situational frame and its development of the most important actors in the Forum project.

5.5.1 Rules that affect the participants and modes of interaction

The most interesting aspect of the operation domain of the Forum project is the distinction between (1) the organizational domain responsible for the cultural event, and (2) the organizational domain responsible for the urban transformation. This distinction coincides with the way the project is symbolically-cognitively framed, as we have seen in the previous section. Both domains have different strategic and material interfaces. The Forum event area uses exactly the same space and in both domains the Barcelona city council plays an important governing role. In an operational sense these two domains coincided quite independently. Nevertheless, the shared use of space and the hard deadline to finish most of the operations before the start of the cultural event made both domains very dependant on each other, both materially and symbolically. Without the necessary urban transformation, the Forum event could never have been held in that area. Without the Forum event, it would probably have been impossible to mobilise priorities and public funds for such a costly and rapid transformation that is expected to contribute to the city's longer term strategic needs.

1. Organising the event

The organisation of the cultural event itself officially started when, on 18 May 1999, the Spanish government, the Generalitat de Catalunya and the City Council – with the sponsorship of UNESCO – created an organisation called Forum Consortium. This consortium was made responsible for preparing, administering and organizing the event (Forum Barcelona 2004).

The organisational model used for the Forum was based on the model of the 1992 Olympic Games. A major difference compared with the organisation of the Olympics was, however, that, in this new case, UNESCO was scarcely bothered about the organization and content of the Forum event while, in the former case, the International Olympic Committee had a commanding overview of the operations related to the sports event itself. The lack of an overarching set of guidelines for the event and an

international organisation to supervise the local one made the whole concept extremely volatile as regards political controversies between the organizing administrations, which all came from different parts of the political spectrum. The organizers were three political rivals, namely the municipality, dominated by the socialists *Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya* (PSC), the regional government, ruled by the conservative *Convergència i Unió* (CiU), and the central government, ruled until 2004 by the *Partido Popular*, a right wing party that, generally speaking, disliked regional nationalism and the politically left. According to Walliser (2004) there were tensions and arguments between these three parties and a so-called 'committee of wise men' which was supposed to supply content. These tensions led to several changes in the political leadership of the Forum event during the preparatory stages.

There three official administrating bodies in the Forum project were:

- The Permanent Commission: formed by three representatives from each administration;
- The Executive Commission / Executive Board: formed by seven representatives from each administration;
- The General Assembly / General Assembly of Shareholders: formed by 20 representatives from each administration (Forum Barcelona 2004).

During the spring and summer of 2004, the Forum event covered a 50 hectare area. It also used the convention centre and Forum building for exhibitions, lectures and debates (see footnote 6, p.178). Although the event aimed to be an open and participatory one, it seems that the administration was completely politicised and not open to the involvement of other parts of the society. The Forum was financed by these three levels of government and a range of private companies and had a budget of 318 million euro. The strong business orientation of the event added to the controversy during the run-up to the Forum and during the event itself which we discussed in section 5.4.2. Generally speaking we can conclude that the rules that affected the participants and modes of interaction for the organization of the Forum event were mainly rules of political rationality (including party-politics) and private involvement. This had a negative effect on the original intention of a participatory international cultural event with the emphasis on debate and connections to the civil society.

2. Organising the urban transformation

The *Consorci del Besòs* was formed in 1998 for the coordination of all urban developments in the area, except the regeneration of La Mina which is coordinated by an independent consortium. The president of the Consorci del Besòs is the mayor of Barcelona, the vice-president is the mayor of Sant Adrià de Besòs. This consortium also consists of various council members from 'both sides'. This consortium is the platform for political consensus on the project between the two municipalities. It is allowed to approve spatial plans that cover both municipalities and this avoids the procedure of approving them in two separate councils.

Two other organisational bodies play an important role in the Forum transformation:

- (1) *Barcelona Regional*, the city's own private planning consultancy agency (see footnote 4, p.172). It is responsible for making the master plan and supervising the architectural competitions for the Forum area and to prepare the special procedure that was needed to modify the Barcelona General Metropolitan Plan;

(2) *Infraestructures del Llevant*, a special private agency based on municipal ownership set up to execute all the infrastructure works in the area. It was established in the summer of 2000 as Infraestructures 2004 S.A., and later renamed Infraestructures del Llevant de Barcelona S.A.. Infraestructures del Llevant is a typical ad-hoc flexible organisation set up to manage the transformation. Given that it only had a small number of staff, it hired expertise from different engineering companies to do most of the work. It is not a construction firm itself but instead acts as the public representative during the construction phase (Infraestructures del Llevant 2004).

The participants in the operational domain on Diagonal Mar were completely different to those in the rest of the Forum area. Instead of being dominated by public bodies this domain was purely private oriented. In the Barcelona context it was quite a unique situation in which eventually an American private developer – Hines Properties – was able to develop the whole area, without much influence from local government.

If we review the operational domain of the Forum and Diagonal Mar projects, we see a quite closed and introvert situation. On the one hand, this mirrors the very technical aspects of the urban transformation in the Forum area, especially concerning the environmental facilities. This took place in an area where there were no inhabitants or other groups directly influenced by the development and the pressure to finish most of the infrastructural work before the deadline of the start of the cultural event was severe. On the other hand, as pointed out before, it also reflects a specific planning culture in Barcelona, namely a culture which is dominated by architects and urban designers in a closed collaboration with a relatively stable political elite. The distinction between the operational domain responsible for the urban transition and the event could be inter-

Figure 5.7: Overview of the Forum area during the Forum of Cultures event. The harbour area has been privatized after the event



preted as the most relevant general rule that affects and organizes participants and modes of interaction in Forum. The problematic issue of participation in the cultural event reflects its dual nature. As a mechanism for aligning preferences and investment money from the three different layers of government, it was necessary for it to become extremely politicized and – in a way – introverted. The political nature of this organization clearly hampered one of the original intents, namely to involve neighbourhood groups and organize a more participatory debate on its contents.

Table 5.3: Chronology of Forum and Diagonal Mar development (1990-2004)

1990	Spanish real estate developer KEPRO starts acquiring plots in the former Macosa factory area. This eventually became the Diagonal Mar project. Plan to develop a new office district.
1992	Modification of the PGM (General Metropolitan Plan) regarding the marine front of Poblenou.
1993	Barcelona Regional is created.
1996	Barcelona Regional presents 'Metropolitan Infrastructures and General Systems' and proposes keeping facilities in the Diagonal-Besòs area and integrating them to create a high-quality public space around them.
1996	Hines Properties buys the site that KEPRO owned and presents a first Master plan for Diagonal Mar. Mayor Maragall proposes organizing a large-scale event in 2004. He chooses this year because it marks the celebration of the 75th anniversary of Universal Expo of 1929.
1997	Final master plan for Diagonal Mar approved by the City council: change to a mixed-use development. Barcelona City Council approves the general outline of the Universal Forum of Cultures proposal. Forum receives UNESCO's support.
1998	Consorti del Besòs is created by the municipalities of Barcelona and Sant Adrià to promote, coordinate and oversee planning and development of the projects in the area.
1999	Last stretch of Avinguda Diagonal is completed.
2000	New modification of PGM. The Consorci La Mina is created, with the participation of Barcelona Council, Sant Adrià Council, Diputació de Barcelona and Generalitat.
2001	First part of Diagonal Mar is opened. The building of Forum area starts. City council invites the <i>Federació d'Associacions de Veïns i Veïnes de Barcelona</i> (FAVB) to participate in the Forum cultural event.
2002	Diagonal Mar public park is opened. 17 collectives present their cases for participating in the Forum. Some associations, including FAVB, decide not to participate.
2003	First residential developments in Diagonal Mar completed. Important national and international experts and academics decide not to participate in the Forum (Noam Chomsky, Naomi Klein). Important members of the anti-globalization movement do the same (Manu Chao). After the demonstrations against the Iraq war, Barcelona Mayor Joan Clos makes the compromise of speaking about the Iraq war in the Forum. This eventually never happened. Different collectives and associations create the Resistance to Forum assembly.
2004	The new tram connection on the Avinguda Diagonal is opened. On 8 May, King Juan Carlos I officially inaugurates the Forum Barcelona and the next day the Forum was opened to the general public. In total approximately 3 million people visited the event over a period of 141 days. Monterrey (Mexico) announces the celebration of Forum 2007.

5.5.2 Rules that affect the scope and strategy of the participants (actor constellations)

As regards the question of which rules affect the scope and strategy of the participants, it is important to note that, in this section, we focus only on the urban transformation of the Forum area, and no longer on the Forum cultural event. Section 5.4.2 already includes a brief analysis of the problems relating to this event and the disappointments it created as regards the link to the social, civic and cultural subdomain of the metropolitan action space.

As we explained in the previous section, the Forum project corresponded with the general aims of the city government to create a new central place within the Barcelona metropolitan area and to support the goal of economic transition towards a higher end service and knowledge economy. From a strategic-political point of view it was a device to mobilize sources of money from other governments for (infrastructure) investments in the city that could supplement this initial goal. These two strategic rules largely structured the scope and strategy of the Barcelona and Sant Adrià municipally and the public companies that worked under their control. The participants in the private parts of the Forum project which, at the time of our empirical study, mainly concerned the Diagonal Mar project, operated under a clearly private set of rules regarding scope and strategy.

In the view of the Barcelona city government, the organization of a large public event was actually necessary in order to obtain enough public funding for the transformation. Within the institutional-financial setting of Spain in which local authorities have weak spending power, contributions from the powerful and resourceful regional government is often a necessity for large public works. In the case of Forum the project was eventually very successful in mobilizing these funds, especially the European funds distributed via the Autonomous Government and the State (see: Table 5.4, next page). However, the city government itself still made the biggest public contribution although it also utilized European funding for local projects for 32.9% of its spending.

In particular, the symbolic-cognitive framing of the project as one of environmental excellence, which required huge investments for the upgrading of the installations, turned out to be very strategic. “First there was no financial support for the project [outside Barcelona]. But because of the Forum, the Barcelona city council was able to get support from the Spanish state. The State decided to allocate EU money Spain had received for environmental projects to this upgrading project. Without the hard deadline of the cultural event, Barcelona would probably have spent years requesting money for this operation” (interview with Miquel Sodupe, Barcelona Regional).

Even the Generalitat de Catalonia, which is normally rather reluctant to invest in the capital of its region since it is officially intended to reinforce the polycentric metropolitan structure of Catalonia, contributed 232.20 million euro to the project. This is even more remarkable if one takes account of the fact that, at the time these commitments were made, both the Generalitat and the State were dominated by conservative parties, while the Barcelona city council was predominately social-democrat. The event apparently facilitated a bridging of political difference as well. The support from UNESCO had an important symbolic value since its affiliation with the cultural event made the ‘global’ nature of it more realistic, at least on paper.

Local government and supplemented local EU funds financed the program of public spaces, the improvement of the wastewater treatment plant, roads and squares and the coastal reclamation work. Private sector investments in the Forum area were made in

Table 5.4: Total investment in the Forum and Diagonal Mar area 2001-2004, in millions of euro¹

	<i>Private sector</i>	<i>Public sector</i>			<i>Total</i>
		Barcelona city council, and related EU funds	State and related EU funds	Autonomous Government (Catalonia)	
Forum	594.20	784.90 ²	138.60 ³	232.20 ⁴	1,749.90
Diagonal Mar	489.00	-	-	-	489.00
%	48.4	35.1	6.2	10.4	2,238.90

¹ The data in this table is taken from two sources and this revealed several inconsistencies in even the official figures. We took Tersol (2004, p.59-60) as our main source and used a newer source of the Ajuntament de Barcelona (2006, p.155-159) for a further refinement, especially of the origin of the different categories of public spending.

² Of Barcelona's public investments, 32.9% came from European funding for local projects.

³ In fact, all state investments were from European funds.

⁴ Of these €56 million were from European funds.

hotels, offices, housing and in the upgrading of the environmental installations. The public investments by the central government and linked national EU funds were targeted on public transport improvements and the modernization of the sewage plant. The regional government contributed to the modernization of the sewage treatment plant and invested in public transport improvements. The fact that the national government contributed to the project does not mean that this cooperation went very smoothly. At an early stage of the project, the Ministry of the Environment objected temporarily to the proposed alterations of the coastline.

The figures clearly show that local government is taking a major share of the investments in the area, especially in the first stages. The direct financial returns are unclear. It is hoped that the development of the hotels and some offices will enable about 10% of the whole amount to be recovered. Some of the remaining amount is expected to be paid back from secondary sources like additional visitor taxes and spending (interview with Miquel Sodupe, Barcelona Regional). The strategy was to first complete most of the public works on infrastructures and public spaces, and then move on to a situation with more private investments in strategic buildings: first the Forum building and the Convention centre, and in a later stage the university campus, housing and more hotels. It is clear, however, that the Forum project as a whole was never envisaged as being a profitable project in narrow financial terms.

The urbanization strategy of the project's initiators was influenced by different rules. First of all, the framing as a project of environmental excellence made it impossible to remove the environmental facilities and there was not much opportunity for land reclamation either. Plans had to be made therefore to 'work around' these facilities. The other rule that influenced the scope and strategy of the actors involved in the urban transformation was the event's deadline, namely the spring of 2004, and its demand for wide open spaces. In between the environmental facilities a new public space had to be created with access to the sea and it had to accommodate the Forum exhibition building and the conference centre. Table 5.5 (next page) shows the proposed building program for the period 2001-2008 and makes a distinction between the Forum area and the Di-

agonal Mar area. In the latter case a mixed program has been realized in the period 1999-2004.

In the case of the Diagonal Mar area, the rules that affected the scope and strategy of the participants were totally different. Here the public sector was not represented and the area had been developed completely by Hines that was able to develop an ‘American’ concept of a high quality mixed-use area. It was Hines that came up with the concept. Normally the municipality has a certain control over private developments, but here a different situations was created. This reflected the weak position of Barcelona in an area were it was initially hard to find private developers: “[City hall was] ...very happy that finally one party took the risk to develop this site and they did not influence the plans too much... I think they gave us *carte blanche*” (interview with Juan Vives, Hines Spain).

Table 5.5: Program of urban investments in the Forum and Diagonal Mar area 2001-2008, in square meters

Area	Surface (ha.)	Housing	Hotels	Offices	Other com. functions	Total program
Forum	222	82,000	86,000	109,645 ³	35,994	313,639
Diagonal Mar	23.5	169,978	58,000	57,000	87,000	371,978
Total	245.5	251,978 ¹	144,000 ²	166,645	122,994	685,617

¹ In the neighbouring areas of La Mina and La Catalana another 2,477 housing units are to be built as part of the revitalization plans of these areas (not included in these numbers).

² In Forum and Diagonal Mar, 2,315 hotel beds are to be realized, mostly in the higher segments. Just outside the project area and alongside the coast another 641 hotel beds have already been realized in the last few years (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2006, p.109).

³ A large number of the offices in the Forum area are buildings for the University campus in the Lull-Taulat zone.

Source: Tersol (2004, p.59); Hines 2005

In conclusion, it is apparent that there is a strong difference between the rules that affect the scope and strategy of the participants in the Diagonal Mar compared to the Forum area. In Diagonal Mar the private developer was given a lot of freedom as regards the development program. In the case of Forum, the framing as a project of environmental excellence and as a host area for the Forum 2004 event affected the operational scope and strategy of the participating actors, while a much less tangible economic goal was the more strategic frame of reference.

5.5.3 Conclusion on the Forum's operational domain

Table 5.6 (next page) shows a schematic conclusion of the development of the situational frame of the most important actors in the operational domain of the Forum and Diagonal Mar development. Two quite stable rules affected the situational frame of the public sector actors involved in the Forum area transformation: (1) a strong organizational division between the operational domains responsible for the organization of the cultural event on the one hand and the urban transformation on the other and (2) an emphasis on initial large public investments in infrastructure, ecology and key economic buildings (financed by funds largely mobilized due to the cultural event) to stimulate private investments in a later stage, also outside the Forum area.

The rapidly approaching deadline for the event hastened the operational domain so that

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it was almost impossible to stop or alter during its course. As we mentioned before, there were various objections to the direction of urbanization in the area in the way the Forum was set out, and especially to the method of decision-making. However, an overview of the Forum's operational domain shows us a rather introvert goal-oriented constellation of public actors, that are unable to open up for debate or change or alter its course. The almost completely closed decision-making and visioning for the Diagonal Mar project adds to this conclusion.

Table 5.6: Overview of the development of the situational frame of the most important actors operating in the Forum project

	<i>Initial situational frame</i>	<i>Development (till 2005)</i>
Consorti del Besòs (City of Barcelona and Sant Adrià de Besòs)	'Urbanize' the Diagonal – Besòs area, with specific attention for the environmental facilities. Pure public investment in infrastructure and some crucial buildings.	Continues with the last part of the development, especially the zone around the Forum event area.
Infrastructures del Llevant	Execute the urban project within time and budget.	Same.
Forum Consortium	Organize an internationally oriented cultural event on cultural diversity, sustainable development and conditions for peace that connects to the people of Barcelona as well.	Interpretation of themes and organisation of event highly politicised. Event criticised, fewer visitors than expected. Activities stopped after the event finished in fall of 2004.
Private investors	In Diagonal Mar: Hines Properties wants to develop a high class mixed neighbourhood. Rest of Forum areas: not yet identified.	In Diagonal Mar: large freedom of Hines to develop a mixed-used rather introvert project of luxury housing and shopping. Interest in private investors for other parcels still unclear.

In the next section on social norms we specifically examine those action situations as we ascertain whether the ambition to create a project of new urbanity is normatively performed in action (a concrete building project). We study the extent to which the ambition of new urbanity can be considered to have evolved into a 'social norm', and to what extent this has been developing throughout the history of the project. Self-evidently there is a strong relationship between the rules that structure the operational domain (and their evolution) and the social norms that are performed in concrete situations of choice. Nevertheless, it makes sense to analyse them separately and in turn since the rules directly affect the *structure* of a situation, while social norms are more closely linked to the production of behaviour in a particular situation (see our explanation in Chapter two).

5.6 Social norms on new urbanity in Forum

In this section we specifically focus on the ambition to create new urbanity in the Forum project. If we examine the area in more detail, the need to make a distinction between different subareas becomes clear, namely the Forum event area, the first ring of projects that have not yet been completed, and finally, the Diagonal Mar area that was completely developed at the time of the research. However, when making general remarks, we simply use the term 'Forum' for all three areas.

We will now answer the following two research questions posed in chapter two:

- *As regards the initial ambition for new urbanity: To what extent is this ambition normatively reflected upon and validated in the operational domain of Forum?*
- *Are processes of change in dominant social norms perceivable as regards this issue being hinted at in the literature? Is there a change in group composition, an increase in power of actors holding the norm for new urbanity, a charismatic norm entrepreneur, or a change in the positive externalities for new urbanity as perceived by the participants?*

Although frames and rules structure the action situation at an operational level, they do not result in a satisfactory answer to the question of why actors are following (addressing) certain rules (and not others) in behaviour. In section 2.5 we explained that social norms specify our analytic toolkit in this regard. Social norms are social rules of conduct. They represent a form of consensus in a social system that a particular form of behaviour is an appropriate form of behaviour in a certain situation.

In this section we shortly reiterate the original ambitions for new urbanity in (the different parts of) Forum. Then we analyse to what extent this ambition has been normatively reflected upon and validated in the choices of the relevant actors. The introverted operational domain of the Forum project makes this analysis quite straightforward. For most of the Forum area there is actually just one relevant actor, namely the Barcelona municipality, which is responsible for all the public spaces, infrastructures and public buildings. Most of the parts that can be privately developed have not yet being realized or designed. The purely private subproject of Diagonal Mar had a very straightforward private operational domain with one powerful private developer. We conclude that these introvert operational domains have resulted in a quite peculiar interpretation of the general goal of new urbanity for the Forum area.

5.6.1 New urbanity in the Forum event area

Improvements in transportation links to the area are one of the keys which support the new urbanity Forum is aiming for. First and foremost, part of the whole redevelopment strategy is the extension of the Avinguda Diagonal towards the sea. Barcelona's grandiose 12 kilometre boulevard, the crown on Ildefons Cerdà's plan for the Example has finally been completed. Until recently, the Diagonal ended somewhat anonymously in an industrial area. The completion of the boulevard means the Forum area acquired a visual and physical connection with the rest of the city. The reintroduction of the tram to the Diagonal provided the area with a new form of public transport, a network that will be further extended in the future. A new station has been built on the existing metro line in the area. One of the most important infrastructure investments in the area

itself was the burying of the Ronda Litoral in a tunnel at the place where the Diagonal reaches the Forum area to improve the visual and physical connection and integration of the Forum area with the rest of the city. The complicated location of the wastewater treatment plant hampered the possibilities of making a direct visual connection between the Diagonal and the sea. However, the new urbanity is not only supported by infrastructures on a metropolitan scale but (potentially) also by new investments at a higher level such as, most importantly, the new High Speed Train station at Sagrera, which is located relatively close to the project area.

To date, the ambition for new urbanity in the approximately 50 hectares Forum event area has not been reflected in actual buildings. Its (public) open spaces are more important. The most intriguing element is the *Esplanade*, an enormous urban space of 150,000m² (advertised as the second biggest square in the world). Since it has been built partly over the existing wastewater treatment plant it has – seen from the city – an elevation of 12.5 metres before it eventually descends to meet the beach area. The Esplanade itself is an almost empty place. It was designed to host a variety of outdoor events, like concerts and trade fairs. In 2004, it was the epicentre of the outdoor activities of the Forum event.

One of the landmark constructions in the area is a construction which includes photovoltaic panels. In front of the wastewater treatment plant, the coastline has been extended to create space for a bathing area, built as an urban (stone) beach with a little artificial island in front of it which can only be reached by swimming to it. In between the bathing area and the esplanade are two outdoor auditoriums with capacities of 8,500 and 3,500 people which can be used to host a variety of events. An important element of the plan is the harbour which has a capacity of approximately 800 boats and additional maritime facilities. A new park with a beach has been created slightly further

Figure 5.8: The new convention centre in the Forum area



on towards the mouth of the Besòs. The vicinity of the large power plant next to the beach dramatically visualizes the decision to combine these installations with recreational uses in the area.

The two most important buildings in the area are the Forum building and the convention centre. The triangular Forum building was designed by Jaques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron. This 70,000m² triangular multifunctional building is one of the icons in the area. It has a large auditorium inside (with a capacity of 3,200 people) and an exhibition area. It has an underground connection to the other main building of the area, the Barcelona convention centre (designed by Barcelona's Josep Lluís Mateo and covering 120,000m², see Figure 5.8). The Convention Centre is advertised as being the largest in the Mediterranean area. The buildings are not only completely different, but also quite independent, mono-functional colossuses. They hardly interact programmatically with the vast public spaces around them. In the case of the Forum building, the architecture is such that the building almost floats above space and its ground level is a rather mystic space. Since the Forum event it has hosted some exhibitions but it makes a rather deserted impression. The convention centre on the other hand is heavily used nowadays but is basically isolated from the areas around it. Although it has a quite interestingly designed façade, it is basically an internally organized big box. The development in the area is typified by the fact that the side of the building that faces the open space and the Forum building, which is the most natural entrance to the whole area, is the rear of the Convention Centre and hence an offload bay used by large trucks.

After its very rapid transformation the area was being almost fully used during the Forum 2004 event which attracted a total of 3 million visitors. The important question of course is how the Forum area was used after the event. At the time of the research, in the spring of 2005, this issue was very relevant since the area made a very deserted impression (see: Figure 5.9, next page). However, it still is difficult to provide definitive answers. Although the convention centre, in particular, is frequently used for national and international conferences it does not seem to add much liveability to the huge Forum area next to it. The city of Barcelona is retaining the large public areas that often made a very deserted impression. Discussions are currently going on about whether the area should remain completely public or partly closed off. It is certain that the harbour will become a private place. It seems that, due to the speed by which the area has been planned, designed and developed, the question of its future use has been insufficiently thought through: "The question is now how citizens can use it. It is also a question of finding this out by trial and error. We thought about this before but, in reality, you can only see what works. This is not a very common project, so we should test solutions" (interview with Miquel Sodupe, Barcelona Regional). It seems clear that the appropriation of the spaces by citizens still has to develop: "It is unclear what kind of centrality it will be. You have connections to the area now with a new subway station, tram and even a tourist bus, but now you come to the second part, which is that there is nothing to do there at the moment. You basically have an excessively large public space..." (interview with Maria Buhigas, Barcelona Regional).

Not only is it difficult to assess the urban character of the Forum area now in a straightforward way, it is also quite difficult to judge to what extent the ambition for new urbanity has developed into a social norm, judged on the basis of the concrete building initiatives, or rather public space designs and uses, as is more relevant here.

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It is certainly not a traditional urban space like those in downtown Barcelona or other traditional Mediterranean cities. Basically it is a large publicly accessible space in between – and over – large installations. In the case of the Forum area it is probably necessary to stop comparing the urban character of this intervention with historic references in the city to better understand it: '[Forum] ...will disappoint those expecting to find a major concentration of stellar world architecture, or a new urban centre on the scale of the Olympic Village, since what it proposed is much more innovative and thought-provoking...The result is a departure from the careful 'good taste' that has often limited the aesthetic ambition of Barcelona design, and an opening towards rougher, freer, more lucid and expressive forms that organize and focus the urban territory' (Cohn 2004, p.43). As another observer noticed, 'Certainly looking out over the construction it seems like no other place in Barcelona and, at times and for some, has an

Figure 5.9: The empty Esplanade after the Forum event. The large photovoltaic panel construction on the right



entirely other worldly and perhaps unsettling, even dystopic appearance...' (Rowe 2006, p.139).

Nevertheless, our study is not so much intended to be an urban design or architecture critique, but rather and predominantly an investigation of governance processes that lead to certain decisions. We can conclude that three crucial aspects influenced the (social norms on) new urbanity for the Forum event area: (1) the introverted governance domain which was dominated by the public sector that moved forward without a lot of participation by other groups, (2) the challenging area with the installations that limited all kinds of uses, and (3) the Forum event which forced the whole operational domain to move extremely quick and invited the project initiators to make 'spatial statements'.

As regards 1: due to the fact that the municipality of Barcelona was clearly in control of all operations, it was possible for them to translate the ambition for new urbanity into an avant-garde 'post modern' and – for many observers – also rather extreme way in the designs for open spaces and buildings. No other interpretations were seriously taken into account. In the view of the municipality, Forum was not meant to be an urban space in the traditional sense, using traditional success formula, but was purposefully designed to be a 'new kind' of urban space, largely focused on open areas.

As regards 2: the challenging space around and above the installations made the Forum area unique. Although the nasty odours have mostly disappeared, the industrial feel

Figure 5.10: The Forum building



remains, adding to the confusing urban experience when visiting the area. The central position of the wastewater treatment plant, that had to stay in that place, limited urbanization possibilities in the most central part of the area.

As regards 3: the quick deadline of the event in many respects added to the introvert operational domains regarding the planning and design for the area. It also 'finished' the physical urbanization quickly and left hardly any opportunity for changes. The Forum event itself was mainly an outdoor event, and – except for the Forum building that seems quite unsettled after the event – the indoor spaces have found their post-Forum use. However, the whole event and the (international) attention it resulted in seemed to have created an atmosphere wherein the planners and designers were stimulated to make several 'spatial statements' in the area that strongly influence its 'new urbanity'. This related to the Forum building, as well as to the large photovoltaic solar panels installation and the stone 'dunes' and concrete bathing area. These interpretations of new urbanity may be eye-catching but their real urban functioning after the event has proved to be very limited till now.

Something that is perhaps even more important than these observations is the conclusion that we have to understand the peculiar interpretation of new urbanity of Forum not only in conjunction with a wider ring of development projects around it – with a much more traditional urban program – possibly profiting from the vast open spaces in Forum, but also in a much more strategic sense of urbanizing a zone of Barcelona and making it an added value for the city based not on an urbanity found in many other downtown districts of Barcelona, but another strategic interpretation. "It may also be that a whole program, or set of programs, is new to the city, although logically required in order to move forwards and to make better lives for people, bringing with it elements of different scales and expressive strangeness." (Rowe 2006, p.147)

Although this might be an analytical explanation for the kind of new urbanity that has been created in the Forum event area, it is clear that this reasoning has not (yet) been recognized or appreciated by most of the common Barcelonense at the moment.

5.6.2 New urbanity in the ring of projects around the Forum event area

A more traditional ring of projects with urban functions surrounds the Forum area. Just outside the project area there are two office towers and a new hotel. Next to the Forum area is the Lluïa-Taulat area which is currently being developed in stages. It is expected to be an important connecting area between the Forum area and the neighbourhood of La Mina. During the Forum event itself it functioned as a parking area. Now it is expected to be transformed into a mixed-use area with 51,450m² of housing (515 units), a university campus and research centre (148,266m²) and a geriatric centre (21,000m², completed). The idea is that the education and research centre will be linked to, and involved in, the new technology districts of 22@. In 2005 the Ministry of Environment confirmed that Barcelona was allowed to build a new marine zoo next to the Forum area on another piece of reclaimed land, in front of the Diagonal Mar development. This new zoo will partly replace the old zoo in the Parc de la Ciutadella and is expected to be an important future tourist attraction in the area.

Judging by the proposals, the ambition to create new urbanity is normatively reflected upon in the programmatic aspects of these projects in a much more traditional sense than in the Forum event area. However, at the time of the study, these projects were still in the planning phase. Therefore, their real contribution to new urbanity cannot be

assessed at this moment.

5.6.3 New urbanity in the Diagonal Mar area

Compared to Forum, Diagonal Mar is a relatively small area (23.5 ha), located on a former industrial site, and subject to an extensive program. Its most important programmatic features are 87,000m² of shopping centre and a 169,978m² housing development (4,500 units) in 10 free-standing towers, targeting the upper parts of the market. This is combined with 57,000m² of offices and 58,000m² of hotels. The apartments are located on the side furthest away from the Forum event itself in a park environment. In two respects, the Diagonal Mar development is completely different to most of the rest of Barcelona's development. On the one hand, a number of Cerdà's blocks are being reassembled to form a couple of larger 'super blocks' with green spaces in between (see: Figure 5.11). On the other hand, the façade urbanisation of the Cerdà grid that is common for most of Barcelona is being abandoned to make way for a more free-form constellation of high-rise towers scattered in a green environment. The Diagonal Mar shopping centre is one of the biggest in the country and is oriented around the higher segments of the market. Contrary to other shopping centres its focus is on fashion, leisure and quality food.

In terms of numbers Diagonal Mar is a very urban project. It has a solid mixture of uses. However, the site plan and urban design of the area does not give the area the urban character that Barcelonese are used to in their city. There is no mixture of uses at

Figure 5.11: The Diagonal Mar area: condominiums in a semi-privatized park environment



the level of the individual building. The shopping centre is – rather traditionally – oriented around the inside and does not add any urban character to the streets surrounding it. The park has an interesting design, but is not really public. It is closed off during the night because of safety concerns and does not relate to the neighbourhoods around it. We can therefore conclude that ambitions for new urbanity have been normatively reflected upon in Diagonal Mar, especially when we consider the initial spatial situation in the area. However, the reflection has resulted in a quite privatized commercial interpretation geared towards maximizing profits for the developer.

5.6.4 Conclusion on new urbanity in Forum

Our conclusion regarding social norms on new urbanity in Forum should be ambivalent. An assessment of the contribution of these projects to the objective to create new urbanity in the area demands reflection at two levels, namely a strategic one and a more concrete one.

At a strategic level we can conclude that the whole Forum project has been very successful till now in urbanizing an area that had been little used for a long time. The impressive improvements in the environmental facilities are complemented with new road and tram infrastructure. Together with the scheme of strategic urban development projects on the eastern side of Barcelona (22@, Sagrera) the physical conditions are being realized for a reinvention of urbanity in this part of Barcelona that was known for its industrial functions. At this level we can therefore conclude that the general concept of new urbanity has been normatively reflected upon in a strategic sense with success.

However, at the more concrete level of the actual new urbanity created in these areas the results are rather disappointing. Obviously we have to take into account that – at the time of our fieldwork – the operations were not totally finished. Certainly the development of the Llull-Taulat area could contribute to a better physical connection between the Forum area and La Mina. In a similar way, the new marine zoo may attract new visitors to the area.

Due to the very introverted operational domains, a situation in both Forum and Diagonal Mar existed in which the social norms of certain parties were very dominant. In the case of Forum, the social norms were those of a city council that wanted to develop a deteriorated place into a new ‘post-modern’ space for events and businesses. In the case of Diagonal Mar the social norms were those of a private investor that tried to create as much benefit as possible (for its company) by introducing an ‘American’ style development. For the critics of Barcelona’s urban development, the Diagonal Mar area has developed into a leading example for failing large-scale private urban interventions. Criticism is being levelled not only at the program for being too focused on high-end housing, but also on the urban configuration, with the free-standing towers in a landscaped area and the high-end shopping mall often being perceived as negative items (Balibrea 2004).

These quite straightforward operational domains did not change as regards group composition during the (relatively short) course of time. The chances for involvement of other groups in Forum were only available in connection with the cultural event, which was not that successful either as we have seen above. The results of these introverted operational domains were that no conditions existed for very complex ‘urban’ interventions in Forum and Diagonal Mar. The results can be read in its physical outcome: “It lacks a certain complexity. With this I mean it is all so straightforward. A big

boulevard, some high-rise buildings for housing, offices and hotels whose architecture is poor, together with a big shopping mall [Diagonal Mar], and in the [Forum] area itself which comprises two big boxes” (interview with Francesc Munoz, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona).

We can therefore conclude that Forum shows that new urbanity cannot be created by planners, urban designers or architects alone; its true value is determined by its use. It is still early days since the Forum event but the conditions for a very active use of the Forum area as an urban space are not very strong at the moment. In the way the project has been set out, it is now initially dependant on the developments in the ring of projects around it. At the same time, a programmatic use of the open spaces has to be found. However, the problem is that, although Forum’s centrality has improved, it is certainly not a site accepted as an urban domain by its users. It is questionable whether the design of the open spaces and buildings will help trigger a change in that perception in the future.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter we studied the following scientific oriented main research question:

As regards the initial ambition for new urbanity: how can we understand the dynamics between the connectivity of Forum in the metropolitan action space, the systems of rules that structure operational domains and social norms?

In many respects the series of projects that are currently being implemented to transform the mouth of the river Besòs provide food for thought. They often feature in fierce polemic debates about the current state of planning policies and development in Barcelona. However, it may be too early to make any definitive observations about their economic, social, cultural, environmental and spatial effects. The fact that major parts of these projects are not (or have just been) finished is often used by opinion makers as an excuse to fill in the rest of the story themselves. It would be interesting to revisit the area in 2014, ten years after the Forum event, to see how this part of Barcelona is then functioning. However, this does not mean we cannot come to any conclusions about these projects and the success of their integrative ambitions at the moment. Most of the decision-making and planning processes are finished and they portray an interesting image of current planning affairs in Barcelona. In the previous sections we analysed the Forum project and its first ring of neighbouring projects at different levels and studied to what extent conditions for new urbanity have been created.

As regards the connectivity to the metropolitan action space we identified a very innovative and complex project. The symbolic-cognitive framing of the Forum project was particularly interesting being an urban transformation, an event with a cultural focus and a project of environmental excellence. This way of framing gave the early Forum project a supportive appeal. The project was an elegant solution to solve an environmental problem, to create new facilities beneficial for the city’s spatial and economic development and to accommodate a new kind of mega cultural event that would boost the city’s ego. Interestingly enough, the huge construction works and urbanization took place in a run down former industrial area. This very diverse symbolic-cognitive fram-

ing has only partly resulted in a very varied connectivity to the metropolitan action space. It became clear that the main initiator of the project, the Barcelona municipality, used the project especially to acquire subsidies from higher levels of government. As we have seen, this met with considerable success. However, much less attention was paid to the connectivity with the other domains of the metropolitan action space. In a quite early stage, due also to the peculiarities of the site, it was decided that the urbanization of the Forum event area itself would be an almost pure public investment. The private developments were planned to take place in a ring around it.

However, the strategic connection to the private sector was maybe more important than the material link. Especially via the public investment in the convention centre that was expected to improve Barcelona's competitive position as regards attracting large national and international conferences. However, the connections with the social, civic and cultural domain, for which the Forum event would have been an interesting vehicle, resulted in significant failure. This was partly due to Forum-specific reasons, namely the initiative's unclear (and also questionable) mission and its very politicized (and introverted) organizational aspects. However, there were more general reasons as well which were related to broader dissatisfaction with Barcelona's direction and approach to urban development.

One of the major points of criticism relates to the closed forms of interaction in which projects are conceived and designed. In the Forum case the pressure of the deadline for the event seem to have made the operational domains even more introverted. At operational level the decision was taken to operationalise the ambition for new urbanity in the area in a rather experimental way, which was partly necessary due to the site constraints. As regards the Forum event area the decision was taken to concentrate on very large-scale public spaces rather than on more traditional ways of urbanization. The closed character of decision-making made the subsequent implementation of this spatial concept rather straightforward (although technically very challenging due to the installations and the tight deadline). In the Diagonal Mar area, on the other hand, a process took place that was almost completely closed off in which a powerful private firm was able to create its own enclave, without much interference of the public or the government. These developments in the strategic and operational domain have resulted in a quite mixed result with regard to new urbanity. We can conclude that it created two sides of *experimental urbanity*, namely a purely public, rather post-modern interpretation of it in the Forum event area and a purely private, rather 'American' interpretation of it in the Diagonal Mar area. Social norms on new urbanity as normative rules of conduct that influence a group of actors in operational domains over the course of time, are hard to distinguish in these projects, since they were both set up and are being executed very unilaterally.

We can conclude that the latest series of projects in the north-eastern part of Barcelona represent another leap forward as regards the spatial scale of the interventions compared to the Olympic era, with more compact urban interventions like the Olympic Village, or the Port Vell. More so than in the past, these new series of projects are parts of an overarching vision of improving Barcelona's competitive position. To a certain extent, their point of reference is not so much the current resident or user of the place, but the parties to be attracted to invest in, use, or visit the place in the future. The particular case of the Forum and Diagonal Mar project is also a move away from the spatially integrated public-private project that typified Barcelona's development in the last

few decades. Within the new spatial scale of Barcelona's latest set of projects in mind, this is not a problem. The search for equity and balance, both in spatial arrangements and in finances has left the safe setting of the integrated mixed-use project. Forum was never meant to be a financially reasonable project in the sense of a balance between investment costs and gains. It was always planned to be a strategic device to improve and promote private investments in a much wider area. Diagonal Mar was never considered by its initiators to become an integrated mixed neighbourhood in a traditional urban sense. It was set up as an exclusive high-rise residential enclave with offices and a shopping centre. In the case of Forum, the 'old trick' of organizing a huge international public event with a hard deadline was chosen with a view to linking public, private, social, civic and cultural agendas with a series of large investments, in this case in one of the most deteriorated parts of the city. The strategy was successful in actually mobilizing these investments and to some cynical observers, the goal had therefore been achieved. However, the Forum event also shows signs that this strategy of integrated framing is exhausted, politically and culturally, since the event was very unsuccessful in creating enthusiasm and connections to a wider group of people. The connection in the preparation phase and during the event itself with neighbourhood groups and other non-governmental organisations was weak. Two related problems were that, in contrast to the Olympic project – that had an impact throughout the city due to the scattered sporting activities and urban developments – this event was extremely localized in one area. On the other hand, although a previously run down area was now visited, for most people, the legacy of the project, that is the urban intervention, was not very clear.

5.8 Epilogue

What does the Forum project teach us about the development of the assumed Barcelona-model (or experience) of urban development we introduced in section 5.2?

Although it is necessary to put some question marks behind the celebrated period of 'broad consensus' between public sector, civic and private interest in the period just after democracy, it seems clear that the current series of major urban interventions is taking place in a situation with much less support from the civic domain. It is not easy to explain this in a straightforward manner. There are links to different complex socio-cultural and political developments in society. However, if we stay close to the urban interventions themselves, we can identify more strategic disagreements about the direction of Barcelona's urban development as well as more practical concerns regarding the concrete implementation of projects.

The problem with the first aspect is that the direction that Barcelona has set out for itself, with a focus on competitiveness, the development of the high-end service sector and tourism, necessary as it may be to counteract the decaying industrial base of the city, has not been generally accepted as the right way forward. This is especially regarded as being the case if the direction taken is not balanced against a greater emphasis on other needs in the city, like the continuation and lack of attention for problems regarding immigration and rising housing prices (McNeill 1999; Balibrea 2004; Borja 2004). Large-scale urban events play a particular role in this debate. The city defined the need for such an event based strategy like Forum, by referring to Barcelona's

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enduring struggle to secure outside public and private funding for its ambitious development agenda. However given the increasing difficulty in a very diverse society of fostering unified support for large-scale (cultural) events, the question arises as to which alternative route Barcelona should follow. The depth of the cultural variety, history and cultural institutions of the city seem to be something to cherish. Their relationship with urban interventions could even be strengthened in the future as a specific aspect of the Barcelona 'experience' especially to (recreate) enthusiasm and civic spirit. However, to use a cultural event especially as a means of realizing political priority and subsidies for large-scale urban interventions seems to be a way of 'selling' culture for a political goal. As far as Barcelona is concerned, it would seem to be more beneficial to make the city's finances less dependant on these special events and subsidies. It is no surprise then that the city is negotiating hard with the central government to secure higher stable forms of finance, which the government is trying to secure in the post-Forum era. "The fact that they are pushing so hard for this now is a recognition

Figure 5.12: Hotels and offices at the edge of the Forum event area



that this model of events has exhausted itself” (interview with Marisol García, Universitat de Barcelona).

Another aspect that needs some thought is the strong cadre of dedicated professionals involved in Barcelona’s urban transformation. This is often referred to as one of its successes and we reiterated this in our analysis. However, it recently seems to be the case that the working methods established in Barcelona – in which these professionals play an important role – have come under increasing pressure. The dominance of urbanists and architects in early phases of plan making (initiation, spatial concept), together with representatives of the city council and private interests have made people doubt the democratic value of planning initiatives (interview with Marisol García, Universitat de Barcelona). This is confirmed by two major participants in the latest series of strategic projects in Barcelona: “You have a closed group that decides on the strategic direction of our city. (...) For many years we worked in this way. We are trying to change and adapt” (interview with Oriol Clos, Ajuntament de Barcelona). “It is true that a very small group of people decide. The architects in this city have always had a strong influence. The mayor and the former mayor were very much influenced by architects. But they wanted to be, because they wanted transformation. Therefore they were surrounded by this elitist group of architects. But there was not much opposition from citizens because they believed that the transformations were good for the city” (interview with Antoni Ollé, Consorci del Besòs).

The need for an early integration of other voices, of a broader embeddedness of planning initiatives in wider domains of society was, for a long time, not really necessary to get support for urban interventions. Some even argue that the successful aesthetics of Barcelona’s transformation have distracted attention: ‘The constant tributes paid to the city’s beauty have helped to distract the attention of visitors and citizens alike from other fundamental, much less satisfactory issues such as employment, housing, public transport, or have even led to people questioning the same urban projects whose aesthetic value has been so intensely praised. One could say, provocatively drawing on Walter Benjamin’s famous dictum, that the more aesthetics are politically used in Barcelona, the more politics in itself is aestheticized...’ (Balibrea 2004, p.211).

Highly praised aspects can sometimes work against you. The overt emphasis on the aesthetic, the morphology and the architecture of urban interventions, together with an elitist and technocratic ways of decision-making has created remarkable – and also praised – effects in Barcelona. Whether you like the result or not, the Forum and Diagonal projects are prime examples of this way of working. However, if this ‘strategy’ is deployed in a period in which people are more focused on their own rights and interests and a general consensus on the direction of the city’s development is lacking, problems arise.

5.8.1 Barcelona and the search for a new equilibrium

Then core of our study dealt with the way large urban interventions are strategically positioned in society and how they are thought out, planned and implemented in operational domains. If we formulate recommendations it is firstly important to state that aesthetics, urban shape and architecture are trademarks of Barcelona’s development. It is something that earned the city a lot of respect but also hides the fact that any urban intervention has a social, political and economic dimension as well. However, a new balance has to be created in Barcelona between these different aspects of large urban

interventions (Majoor 2006b). A new equilibrium has to be found by initiating projects that not only help position the city in a global competitive world, but at the same time benefit the needs of citizens. A more interconnected strategy and a renewed focus on the particularities of spaces is necessary.

To reach this new equilibrium, changes are needed in the way urban projects are strategically framed and operationally organized. A prerequisite seems to be a wider public debate about the strategic projects for the city's future with a special emphasis on the connection to the social, civic and cultural domain. Within the operational domains in concrete projects, projects need to gain complexity through the addition of a wider array of actors – especially those that can make a connection with society. Generally speaking there is a demand for more emphasis on the procedural and communicative aspects of planning and spatial interventions and not only on the urbanistic/aesthetic aspects. In the current situation in Barcelona of varying wishes and demands as regards the city's future, one cannot expect people to be enlightened by the final physical results of the transformation (the buildings, the plazas etc.) if they fundamentally disagree on their intentions and are frustrated or excluded by processes of decision-making.

A more connective situation can help to improve future developments in Barcelona by making their strategic framing more effective and by creating more diversity in their operational domains. For the Forum and Diagonal Mar projects this would have probably resulted in an additional emphasis on the integration of the area with the surrounding neighbourhoods both socially, economically and spatially, and more consideration for the urban use of the area after the Forum 2004 cultural event.

Barcelona needs such a new equilibrium as a basis to continue building on its legacy as an international frontrunner in urban (re-)development. In such a situation an updated interpretation of the meaning and form of new urbanity can be developed, but not as an expression of architecture and capital only, as in the case of Forum and Diagonal Mar, but with due regard for the depth and variety of expertise in the societal domains of the city.