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Leisure parks from the Spanish universal and international exhibitions (World's fairs, world expos)

Loisir et Société / Society and Leisure

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Abstract

Spain has a long tradition of organizing international exhibitions. Our analysis is based on archival research on the exhibitions (world expo, world's fair) of Barcelona (1888 and 1929) and Seville (1929, 1992) as well as a study of the international exhibitions of 2004 in Barcelona and 2008 in Saragossa (specialized expo). The legitimacy of large-scale amusement parks is based on the quality of the public spaces created and the parks' willingness to create places of both memory and innovation. Recreation contributes to the creation of a sustainable city by the imposition of an urban nature privatizing major parts of the city. New public spaces of quality are emerging, based on biomimicry and landscape-ecological urbanism. These spaces lack legitimacy because they are perceived as artificial and expensive despite rising attendance. Regarding large-scale landscape work, this is seen as being positive but in search of a new identity and sustainability.

Keywords: World's fair – world expo, landscaping; tourism; park; Spain

Résumé

L'Espagne dispose d'une tradition dans l'organisation d'exposition internationale. Notre analyse s'appuie sur des recherches archivistiques portant sur les Expositions universelles de Barcelone (1888 et 1929) et de Séville (1929, 1992) ainsi que sur une étude des expositions internationales de 2004 à Barcelone et de 2008 à Saragosse. La création de parcs de loisirs de grande envergure fait reposer leur légitimité sur la qualité des espaces publics créés et la volonté d'en faire à la fois des lieux de mémoire et d'innovation. Les loisirs participent à la création d'une ville durable par l'imposition d'une nature urbaine privatisant des portions importantes de la cité. De nouveaux espaces publics de qualité émergent, reposant sur le biomimétisme et l'urbanisme paysager-écologique. Ces espaces manquent de légitimité car perçus comme artificiels et coûteux malgré une fréquentation en hausse, quant au travail paysager à grande échelle, il est jugé positif mais en quête d'une nouvelle identité et durabilité.

Mots clés : exposition universelle ; paysagisme ; tourisme ; parc ; Espagne

Introduction

In the early twenty-first century, the architecture and urbanism of the fleeting prevail in the world's major cities as a means of creating new public leisure spaces within a system of symbolic representations of the sustainable city (Clarimont & Vlès, 2010, pp. 11–28). Over the past 20 years, Spain has established a record regarding the organization of these events by successively hosting the World Expo in Seville in 1992, an international exhibition in Saragossa in 2008 and an exhibition in 2004 in Barcelona not validated by the BIE,¹ but with the same characteristics (Ballester, 2012).

Moreover, Barcelona hosted the Olympic Games in 1992 and an international exhibition held since then in Lisbon in 1998, making the Iberian Peninsula an exception. For Spain, this phenomenon of city-exhibition takes root in a very specific political, economic and social culture as can be seen in the first Spanish Universal Exhibition of 1888 in Barcelona. As for the recent universal and international exhibitions of Seville in 1992, Saragossa 2008 and the Universal Forum of Cultures in Barcelona in 2004, they maintain the Spanish tradition of organizing large events, evolving towards more sustainable practices taken from modern recreational parks (Sanchez, 1998). Generally, a cumulative process is observed by its events (Monclus, 2007) involving an urban redeployment of considerable extent before, during and after the event, allowing the creation of tourist areas of quality, staged by the urban celebration (Pradel, 2007; Zukin, 1995) and legitimized by the endowment of hyper-facilities to serve the city (Beaudet, 2008, p. 5). However, there is controversy about the sustainability of these developments and the new leisure areas provided to citizens. What are the lasting effects of these fleeting events through the creation of recreational areas in direct link with a new urbanity required to be, among other things, in harmony with nature?

In addition, how do the exhibitions contribute to the creation of attractive (Ragu, 1982) or privatized public areas in the long term? From the first urban parks of the exhibitions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, why does the imposition of new recreational areas reveal human activity to still be looking for a form of utopia, balancing urban growth and respect for the environment in a globalized world increasingly prone to commodification? As for the landscaping process of contemporary Spanish leisure parks, does their large-scale design combined with innovative street furniture respond to the request for a new form of urbanity desiring contact with natural interfaces? Importantly, are these new public spaces significant, sustainable and popular with tourists?

1. From world history to urban history: the First exhibitions centers

From the first exhibitions, the implementation of these huge events involved some compulsory figures like the creation of leisure areas (1.1).

As for Spain, it had to wait until 1888 with Barcelona to experience this type of event (1.2), which was jointly renewed in 1929 for Barcelona and Seville. This practice allowed the creation of new high-quality parks, for Seville in 1992, despite some risks regarding the conversion of sites (1.3).

1.1 A geohistory of universal and international exhibitions (world expo)

An international exhibition is ‘an open event to all fields of human activity, where products from all nations are presented’ (Sirinelli, 2007, p. 392, author’s translation). The importance of the word ‘progress’ is obvious both in the works exhibited and in the specific result at the urban and architectural levels of the event. The exhibition center is considered as the beginnings of globalization, as well as being a mirror of the world and a way of accompanying globalization in an exhibition area both urban and in connection with the sustainable development concept for over 20 years. Generally, the creation of large sustainable landscape leisure parks is the result. These exhibitions represent the ‘first in situ planetary village’ (Bouilloud, 2000, p. 148, author’s translation). They are often located in major Western capitals and, more recently, in Asia with Shanghai World Expo 2010 and some 73 million visitors, currently representing a record for this tradition dating back over 200 years. France is at the origin of universal and international exhibitions beginning with the national exhibition of 1798 in Paris, organized by François de Neufchâteau, then Minister of the Executive Board, to show the value of French products and mark a new period of prosperity after the Terror (Tulard, 1966, p. 234). Its origins can be traced to major fairs in the Middle Ages and the Paris fair of Trône in 957 specifically (Dubois, 1980, p. 689). It was followed by 10 other national exhibitions in Paris in various symbolic places such as the Louvre, Place de la Concorde, the esplanade des Invalides or the Carré Marigny of the Champs-Élysées². The French influence on the exhibitions is crucial both in the philosophy of the events and in their design and organization. For example, this can be seen in London 1851 (Findling, 1990, p. 15), which incorporated the last two Parisian successes of 1844 and 1849, all attributes in revisiting and delivering to contemporary tastes an exhibition of international character to improve the image of the British Empire through the realization of the Crystal Palace (Greenhalgh, 1988, p. 24). This French influence is felt throughout the history of the international exhibitions (Schroeder-Gudehus & Rasmussen, 1992) such as with Paris 1855, which becomes an example by his modernity for other European nations (Ory, 1982; Tamir, 1939, p. 41).

More importantly, people like engineer Frédéric Le Play succeed by their ability to organize the base and the form of an exhibition like that of 1867, to offer to the world the idea of progress and to unite all knowledge in a spherical building (Vasseur, 2005, p. 574).

France became the role model to follow or exceed with the exposition of 1889, but also as a means of propaganda in a symbolic and polemical architecture such as that of the Eiffel Tower (Ory, 1989). The exhibition of 1900 influenced upcoming exhibitions in Europe such as Milan and the establishment of its international fair (the 1923 Triennale) on the model of the Grand and Petit Palais and allowed prominent figures of their time, such as Émile Zola, to rejoice in the splendor of industrial progress. Finally, the exhibition of 1937 allowed Americans to propose a manifestation in 1939 of quality with attributes recalling their Parisian counterpart. Today, the official candidate of Paris 2025 is may be an element in this story, making us think that Paris wants again to invent, create and innovate in the field of exhibitions³. Flamboyant architecture and celebrations are the most important attributes contributing to the success of any world expo, which is often symbolic and structured in its planning in the city, for example, the Crystal Palace in London in 1851 (Allwood, 2001, p. 11), moved to Sydenham in the suburbs of the British capital thanks to the reassembling of the prefabricated structure used as a place of celebration and British commemoration (Piggott, 1987). The supremacy of Parisian exhibitions created popular national celebrations, but very often controversies about their locations and disruption to Parisians, despite the holidays promised by politicians and new infrastructure presented as guarantees of legitimacy (Martayan, 1988, p. 57). The presence of human zoos certified another form of an exhibition of human beings as a source of discoveries, recreation and controversies (Blanchard, 2002). Fairgrounds or national village pastiches of regional architecture appeared, while becoming compulsory figures in 1930 (Brougère, 2000, p. 11; Robichon, 1983, p. 24). In 1929, the BIE allowed regulation at the international level in order to avoid geopolitical strife (Galopin, 1997). However other exhibitions, like Chicago in 1893, drew attention to their originality and ability to extend this Western practice by innovation in terms of organization or arrangement of pavilions. Twelve universal exhibitions were held after the creation of BIE: in 1935 and 1958 in Brussels, 1937 in Paris, 1939 in New York, 1949 in Port-au-Prince, 1958 in Brussels, 1962 in Seattle, 1967 in Montreal, 1970 in Osaka, 1992 in Seville, 2000 in Hanover and in 2010 in Shanghai (next to be held is in 2015 in Milan). During this period, 24 international exhibitions were held, including Yeosu in South Korea, in 2012. Currently, exhibitions are a tourist showcase and their parks a future eco-district, gardens, recreation areas or business areas based on innovation and the new economy. In the redrafting of the Convention of 1928 organizing exhibitions worldwide, the text of 1972 reminds us what is expected by the organizer and the BIE (1996, p. 4, author's translation):

an exhibition is an event that [. . .] has for main goal the public education, making the resources inventory available to man to meet the needs of a civilization and highlighting in one or more branches of human activity the progress made and the future prospects.

For this purpose, the exhibitions center should resemble as much as possible the message conveyed by the exhibition itself, its slogan, expectations of politicians and especially those of tourists wanting to entertain. But, gradually, the will to expose large numbers of people has become a way to conceive large parts of the urban space differently, while making available to the host city considerable financial means to boost the country's image internationally by looking for mass tourism and communication worldwide. By 1950, it was undeniable that exhibitions had lost their substance and their primary function due to the emergence of communication and measures of comparison on the global production scale. A fact remains : with the world's fair, we have a unity of time and also of place in an metropole for the demonstration of technological and commercial innovations, coming from around the world. This change of rules, defining the flow of scientific information, disrupts the intrinsic nature of exhibitions. In light of the words of Emilio Cassinello, General Secretary of Seville in 1992, it can be agreed upon that:

This is now a major event in the field of communication as the culture. Today it is a fabulous fun show. I would like to find in Seville in 1992 the intellectual evolution of encyclopedists, the organization of Disneyland and fervour of the United Nations. (Cassinello, 1992, p. 26, author's translation)

Finally, the imaginary of world exhibitions as a unique moment and place of the celebration of the world and globalized leisure is now part of a global 'collective memory', according to the expression of Maurice Halbwachs in 1950. The world's fairs are increasingly imbued with globalization attributes. The cinema audiences around the world can identify these characteristics. In the film *Iron Man 2*, released in 2010, directed by Jon Favreau with Robert Downey Jr. in the leading role, the hero of Marvel Universe, Tony Stark, presents at the beginning of this film his new demonstration space of his technological inventions for the good of humanity through an almost identical copy of the so-called Universal Exhibition at Flushing Meadows Corona Park, New York in 1964: the 'Stark Expo'. Two imaginary and temporal coincidences are shown in the film. Coincidentally, at the same time as the main competitor of the United States, China, inaugurated its First World Expo in Shanghai in 2010, a major American film presents in a blockbuster, an updated nostalgic copy of the Exhibition of 1964 in its plan and buildings. The port authority, the unisphere (giant metal globe, also a copy of the 1939 Exposition), the pavilion of the city of New York, as well as the plan of the Exhibition, are among others revealed on the film's website as an invitation to go to learn more about *Iron Man 2*, as a prequel (Figure 1).

In addition, the communication system by train with magnetic levitation to a large geodesic dome glass is reminiscent of EPCOT (Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow), designed by Walt Disney, who died before its inauguration in 1982. It is an ambitious futuristic and fun park, whose shapes are similar to the Stark Expo as well as topics such as technology at the service of mankind or that of Richard Buckminster Fuller for the Exhibition of Montreal in 1967. The slogan of the Stark Expo, 'Better Life Through Technology', is a reformulation of 'Better City, Better Life' of Shanghai 2010. As for the song of the Stark Expo, film composer Richard Sherman inspired by a former work with his brother Robert for Walt Disney, from the music of *It's a Small World*, which attraction is presented to the universal exhibition in New York in 1964 by the Disney group. This entertainment group was attracted by the exhibitions, showing several times his desire to collaborate with the project's operators. Finally, the beginning of the film has a sequence where the hero's father, Howard Stark, presents his project in a short film as a copy of the famous Walt Disney presentations for travel to Mars, the Moon or during the presentation of EPCOT. At the very end of the film, the hero fights with his double: the fight takes place over the exhibition center around the Unisphere exploding in a prosthetic escalation in the penultimate scene. What remains is the concept of sustainable development, which is superimposed on that of urban regeneration, thus legitimizing holding an exhibition next to that of the public fairground. Finally, we cannot help seeing in the world exhibitions an attempt to create a symbolic space. The legitimacy comes from the transformation of a no-man's land in a leisure park. If, for the city of New York, universal exhibitions are a burden and a financial cost to manage post-event, the parks of the different New York exhibitions have very small sustainable land use and become no man's lands waiting for viable projects. It is different for Spain: from the creation of perennial recreational areas to the attempt to create a national, regional or universal identity, exhibitions are a way to legitimize political action through the search for international prestige, but also a way to create a sense of place from modern leisure areas⁴.



Figure 1. Flushing Meadow World's Fair 2010: 'Stark industries international technologies Exhibition' by the scripwriters of *Iron Man 2*. © Marvel Univers Paramount pictures.

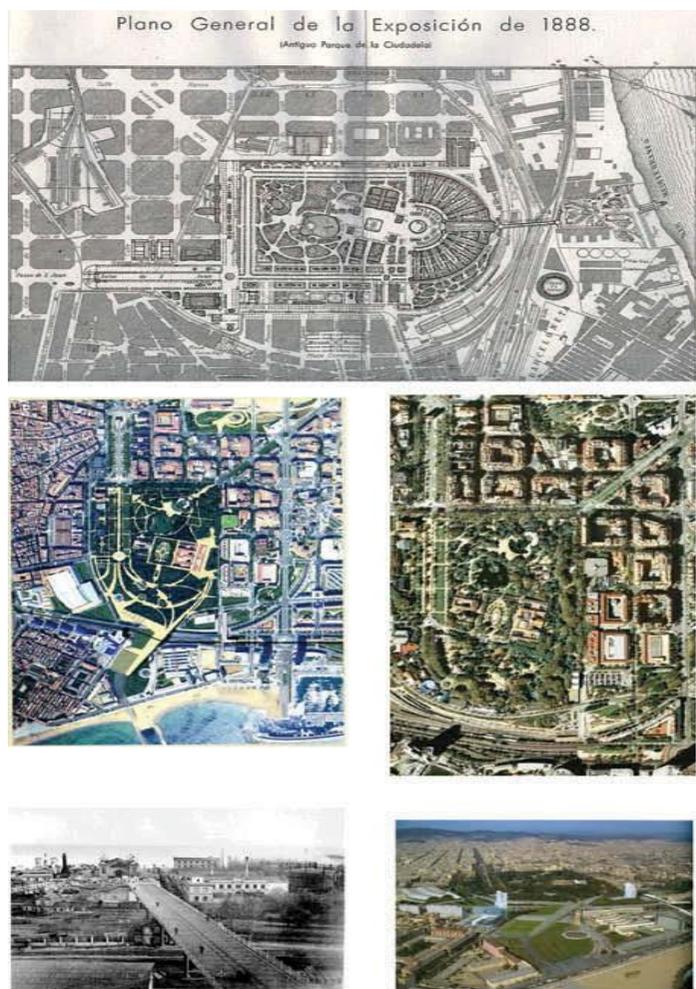
1.2 The First Spanish Universal Exhibition: Barcelona 1888

Barcelona was the first city in Spain to organize a universal exhibition at the expense of Madrid. Its location (Vilar, 1977) and its major industrial center (Ferrás, 1976), explain the holding of the event as well as the attempt to link this event to the regional history of Catalonia. The exhibition officially took place between 8 April 1888 and 10 December 1888. The important thing was to give to Barcelona a special event celebrating the millennium of modern Catalonia in 1888. The organizers officially counted 2.3 million visitors, characterizing this exhibition as a second-category event in Europe, but urbanizing a part of the city (Espuche, Guardiola, Monclus, & Oyon, 1991, p. 139). Its cost was high, a total of 8.5 million pesetas at the time for a revenue of 2 million pesetas, including tickets plus concession rights for foreign pavilions. Its total area was 111 acres. For Barcelona, it permitted the creation of a new urban form to overcome the monotony of the Cerdà plan and new public space (Boladeres, 1990). This location is not accidental as it forges connections with the port, the city center and the interior (COAC Archives, 1888 funds: Plan of the Exhibition)⁵. The Exhibition of 1888 became a lever of communication for the Spanish economy and symbolizes the transition of Catalonia into modernity. Undeniably, the exhibition makes sustainable the Citadel Park with two influences: the parkway model in USA and also the French model with the Park Monceau of Paris (Archive AHCB, 1888 resources, creation of the park). The contribution of the first Iberian exhibition is significant in the field of leisure infrastructure and public buildings.

The completion of the Salon de San Joan, the creation of a new commercial market, the restructuring of a military barracks, the construction of recreational buildings Hivernacle and Umbracle (winter gardens cafe's and greenhouses), benefited the Catalan bourgeoisie while drawing up a new urban landscape. The Chapel of the restored Citadel and the Arsenal (the governor's palace) now centralizes the Catalan parliament, after redevelopment in years 1980's. The creation of a landscape park of 55,000 m², divided into five distinct parts, complete and rationalize the decree of planting trees on the citadel territory of 14 February 1873 (Archives COAC: 1888 – Accounting of the gardens, planting of trees and approval of the work). An elegant maritime section is added to main park, on 32 acres, with a bridge forming a passage between the two sections of the exhibition overlooking the first railway line in Spain: Barcelona–Mataró (Archive AFB, 24 shots). The Passeig of Columbus, a new avenue, is urbanizing ensuring consistency between the city center and the Citadel Park. The monumental garden was designed by Ramon Oliva, head of the parklands department. Palm trees were planted and lights incorporated (gas and electricity) along avenues of exhibition, Isabel II square and the Peace Gate (electrification of Moll de la Fusta, Park and Passeig San Joan/Lluís Companys, three great avenues around the exhibition). A maritime section and baths were created for the bourgeoisie next to a wooded park and a lake in front of the coast, which later became a zoo. Yet there was an original rescue procedure⁶ for the first project, abandoned by the businessman Casanova, clumsy in its preparations, the project had a low financial cost, so the population does not cast opprobrium regarding the costs of investment, but rather on the quality of the equipment and organization.

In addition, this must be associated with significant work to reconfigure flows and delivery of water to the Gaudí's fountain, the creation of an artificial lake with a water tower and facilities for other fountains called magical and bright (COAC, 2A, 1887). The government resumed the project with the School of Architecture of Barcelona, using a methodology of remedial work showing undeniable know-how (COAC: reception and correspondence between the chief architects Amargós, Fontserè and Rogent). Since then, the Citadel Park has been a symbol of the Catalan uprising against Madrid's military influence: ceremonies of the National Day on 11 September, *the diada*, are held in the main tree-lined avenue. Celebrations of all kinds, as well as a place for youth and contemporary art, contribute to a pleasant lifestyle and opportunities to relax for Barcelona residents and visitors. A founder urban act, this appropriation of regional identity is through by the spirit of the place. The national feeling is sometimes mystified in framework of a creative project of imaginary and new ambitions in the articulation of 'monumental decentralization and recentralization of urban space around a core defined as history. Homogeneity and centrality are complementary sides of a unification of the symbolic space of Barcelona by the play of memory' (Michonneau, 2000, pp. 6–32, author's translation).

However, it remains a key event in the history and geography of the city. Currently, the transfer of the zoo to the Forum space allows us to find unity between the park and the coastline, allowing for the reconstruction of the bridge in 1888 overlooking the waterfront (Enric Batlle for the structure and Michel Corajoud for landscaping). However, the city's funds were required to pay for this work (Figure 2).



Figures 2. From 1888 to 2012: the exhibition park of Ciutadella.

2a. Plan of Exhibition of Barcelona, presentation guide of the French section, official catalogue of 1888, Ed. Selvat, archives COAC.

2b. Enric Batlle's project of 2004 for the reorganization of the Citadel Park. 2c. Satellite image of the Citadel Park in 2012, ICC.

2d. Bridge of the maritime section of 1888, Photographic Archive of Barcelona, resources 1888, official album, shot n°34.

2e. Gateway project for 2017, Barcelona municipality.

2f. Google doodle of 20 May 2013 recalling the 125th anniversary of the inauguration of the Universal Exhibition of 1888.

1.3 International Exhibitions of Barcelona and Seville 1929 as an urban lever

Since 1900, a litany punctuates political discussion among Catalans for the *gran ciutat* (big city - metropolis) and the provision of structuring facilities to support urban growth (AHCB: Josep Puig y Cadafalch). Again, in 1929, Barcelona hosted an international exhibition combining the urbanization of the Montjuic hill but also its *enjardinement* pretty Catalan word (author's translation: city landscaping) of the early twentieth century, showing the will to make this area the largest city park in Spain with 210 hectares (Voltes Bou, 1957). By 1905, the idea had developed of a new exhibition and a metro associated with a leisure park and fair. Between 1905 and 1911, the Jaussely plan included a modern fair complex with buildings that met the requirements of product demonstration near Montjuic and the future place of Spain (AHCB, Jaussely funds). Again, Madrid was selling unsuitable military land and offered Barcelona the opportunity to occupy the site with a series of gardens and buildings (AHCB, resources 1929, Municipal Propaganda). The infrastructure from the Barcelona Expo was plentiful and had benefited from unsuccessful bids for the Olympic Games in 1924, and also the 1955 Mediterranean Games and the 1992 Olympics: landscapers and park staff redesigned the work of two major Mediterranean landscapers and friends of the Exhibition of 1929: one French, JCN Forestier, one Spanish, Mario Rubió i Tudurí. With this exhibition, it is also a questioning of planning landscaped parks (Rubió i Tudurí, 1926, 1930). The 1929 Expo was held from 20 May 1929 to 15 January 1930, over an area of 118 hectares. Its direct impact was based on the consolidation of a new park and buildings for the great annual fair, and a monumental neoclassical baroque entrance. However, the entire city benefited from a system of avenues, and an upgrading of parks (pergola system) and palaces built for the occasion. This was the largest exhibition since the Great War and another accolade for Barcelona and Spain (Solà-Morales, 1976). The scope of the project is quite different from that of the 1888 Exhibition. Today, its importance is tangible (Figure 3).



Figure 3. A bird's-eye view of Montjuïc in 2000, the fair complex and large entertainment, recreational and landscaped parks used by the people of Barcelona. Courtesy of Fira of Barcelona.

The works are intended to be sustainable as evidenced by the photographic archives of Barcelona on the impressive earthworks and new installations of water mains, sewers and electrification (AFB resources 1919 to 1929). If the original idea of the Catalan landscaper, Mario Rubio i Tudurí, was to create a green arc between Llobregat and Besòs through the hills in the background in Barcelona, the 1930 exhibition was an opportunity that permitted a total of 1104 acres of parkland in Barcelona to be included, the main areas forming part of the Guell park, the Citadel, and now, half of Montjuïc. In 1916, the regional capital had only 64 acres of recreational gardens. However, Montjuïc had potentially 1235 acres. With the German Pavilion by Mies van der Rohe, a positive image is offered in this architectural competition. A location for fairgrounds was added to the Spanish village as well as vacant land for future pools, restaurants, cafés and businesses. Along the main street and at the top of the National Palace, illuminations, still existing today, are visible (AHCBC, resources on fountains, Spanish village and gardens). The Cat Fountain, the Greek Theatre, Laribal Park and the Miramar became identity spaces for the city.

As for the people of Seville, they asked Madrid to organize an international exhibition at the same time as Barcelona to balance regionalist claims. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Spanish monarchy had increasing difficulty maintaining a semblance of national cohesion following the loss of the American colonies and the economic crisis of the 1920s.

The dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera, was to 'revitalize' the country, while trying to entrench the national idea in the popular imagination and to silence the regionalist claims such as *noucentisme* in Catalonia (Canal, 2009). This cultural and artistic movement wished to forge a new Catalan national identity while becoming a political object through the construction of places of memory, symbolism and creations of a new urbanity (Michonneau, 2007, p. 221)⁷.

The Ibero-American Exhibition of 1929 profoundly transformed the urban fabric of the Andalusian city, but it also worsened its budget deficit and Barcelona's at the same time (Assassin, 1991). The Sevillian taxpayers paid for the stock market crash of 24 October 1929, the partial success of their exhibition as well as construction costs for more than 70 years. In addition, the Catalans organized a more attractive international exhibition, which eclipsed that of Seville in Europe. But what would Seville be without Maria Lluïsa Park, its large avenues, the Alfonso XIII hotel, the theatre of Lope Vege, Betis stadium, and the legacy of the 22 pavilions reused as a museum, embassies, administrative and community centers? The Plaza de España, designed by Aníbal González, is the most famous landmark of the Expo as well as the National Palace in Barcelona. Built between 1914 and 1928, it is a great semicircle of 170 meters in diameter crowned by two towers of 80 meters, a replica of the Giralda (Figure 4).

The symbolism and the spirit of place are inspired by the paths to reach this exhibition area from the four bridges devoted to the kingdoms of Castile, Aragon, Navarre and León. They symbolize the political unity of Spain, to the delight of the Madrid authorities. The monument is decorated with 48 ceramics bearing the names of all the Spanish provinces. The scenes serve to recall the historical events related to the Reconquest, the Discovery and the War of Independence: 'As noted by Anthony Gristwood, the place is decorated as a panoptic view of history and Spanish territory' (Marcihacy, 2012, p. 151, author's translation). Urban space refers to a national space while projecting the symbolic harmony contradicted at that time by the Spanish regional rivalries.

Today, this remarkable architecture is a setting for walking, both an identity area and a place for strolling. For his movie *Star Wars: Episode II Attack of the Clones* (extended version), George Lucas chose the setting and scenographic quality of Spain for the meeting of the Jedi Padawan Anakin Skywalker and Princess Padme Amidala of Naboo. This example shows the strength and originality of the new timeless architecture from the universal exhibitions. This idea of building symbolism, as the intersection of Spanish identity, is included in the project of the park of the Abu Dhabi World Expo 2020 with the sun square, the diversity of cultures and the inherent amenities of the country taking center stage.



Figure 4. The Plaza de España. Seville 1929. Universal postcard. Author archives.

1.4 The revival of world exhibitions: Seville 1992

Despite some international exhibitions such as Saragossa in 1908, it was not until the 1980s that Spain was again interested in the organization of major events in Barcelona and the 1992 Olympics, coupled with the Universal Exhibition in Seville in 1992. The end of the Franco regime allowed Seville to consider a new universal exhibition. However, with the debt burden of Seville 1929, the citizens fear new taxes. Multiple controversies arose about its location and governance (Roulland, 1990, p. 24). The decision was made to repeat the experience by amplifying the scopes, objectives and reasonable boundaries for an average European metropolis. The Municipality makes contact with the BIE in the 1980s. On a new scale for Seville, that of the metropolis, a typical solution of large modern European development projects was applied, namely the creation of a limited company with public capital and the division of Cartuja island into four areas: recreational, cultural, administrations and services. Post-exhibition, the balance sheet is a semi-failure for the new district reconverted in ICT, congress hall and leisure park. The words of the famous city planner Joan Busquets (2001, p.123, author's translation) show the disenchantment of some of the local elites with the project:

Seville from grace to disgrace, the architecture did not save this monumental work, the result of a monumental urban error (disproportionate scale). But the city retains its charm. Despite the failure of its candidacy for the 2004 Olympics to complete the planning of Cartuja Island, Seville tries its luck again for the games of 2008 and 2012. An Olympic Stadium project continues, support for an ambitious program (5-star hotels, television studios...).

Rushing headlong, using a hypothetical staging of the Olympic Games, did not allow the project to be saved: recreational areas created for the occasion with fountains, leisure parks and public spaces for the people did not take advantage of the event. The will to make the site comply with the expectations of tourists fitting into the communication strategy. For instance, many pergolas, water jets, fountains and giant mist sprayers to lower temperatures during the event are a means of public communication.

In fact, the common point of these examples is the large-scale management of the water supply in the Citadel Park Lake, the network of fountains of Montjuic mountain and water games in the Cartuja recreational park to create recreational areas using water to create a new urban landscape. Underground planning is crucial in the formation of large parks implying, for Barcelona 1888, a delay in the implementation of ancillary facilities for the rest of the city. The identity struggle imposes a spendthrift budget strategy. Last, the film industry uses these exceptional recreational areas for their decors. The contemporary examples of Barcelona and Saragossa, wishing to remedy some shortcomings, are another argument.

2. Towards the hybridization of the new exhibition center in the twenty-first century

The facilities designed to develop new leisure parks in Barcelona in 2004 and at Saragossa in 2008 have three attributes' constituents of legitimacy: the green utopia, the quest for profitability and urban marketing (2.1). However, the search for a new urban nature provokes debates with *landscape urbanism*⁸ over how to develop new recreational areas differently, especially for urban furniture (2.2).

2.1 The origin of new contemporary leisure parks in Spain

Regarding the example of Barcelona and the Space Forum 2004, this new public space is listed as a new form of international exhibition as part of the embellishment of the Diagonal-Besòs district. Located on the eastern seaboard of Barcelona on the border of the municipality of San Adrià del Besòs, it largely reflects the attributes of an international exhibition. It opens and sanctifies a large site on the eastern sea front of the Catalan capital. An initial project established in 1996, called 'The Infrastructure and General Metropolitan Project', was the draft of the Diagonal-Besòs area. A kind of entertainment landscape became a reality between 2000 and 2004, during the celebration of the World Day cultures. José Acebillo, Director of the Metropolitan Agency of Barcelona, reported at the time of the project:

This is an urban geography, as an urban cliff over the harbor, a large space that should not be at the service of a pre-established or specific use. Today, it hosts the Forum, tomorrow the Feria, the Merce Celebration, it will always be a space where citizens will compare the hardness of the sea. The platform is like a piece of urban nature, it will not have monuments, only a sculpture to keep the memory of those who have lived and got together in the camp de la Bota, as well as two huge photovoltaic pergola that will provide energy and shade. (Acebillo, 2004, p. 44, translation)

This fleeting area must become sustainable on two points: firstly, in terms of underground infrastructure, the water treatment plant must be upgraded because it is impossible to move her and deprive Barcelona of drinking water for years. Secondly, from a strategic point of view, a giant concrete slab must cover the water treatment plant and be able to accommodate buildings intended for congress and leisure. Thirdly, the planning must allow the creation of a public space and district renewal, especially symbolically, with the decision to locate on the Forum esplanade, the largest urban photovoltaic panel in the world with pergolas generating 1.3 MW. So, leisure activities related to the sea become amenities with a positive view for residents and tourists. The panel becomes a player of the urban landscape as a promotion of the new district, capturing the sun's energy as a renewal of the district (Figure 5). Since the event in 2004, this site has been partially defined as an eco-park. Geographical, symbolic, identity and social dimensions of this contemporary park can be read into the urban fabric. The general appearance of the place comes from managing the transition from the ephemeral to the sustainable, from the attributes of a giant celebration of a few months to allowing the existence of a public space, enabling the hosting of other Catalan traditional celebrations such as the *Diada* and fireworks/air force events, thanks to the perspectives and decentralization of the celebration for the general public, offering much more space.



Figure 5. Space Forum Barcelona, 2011. Courtesy of CCIB.

As for the hybrid form of the new public square, it comes directly from the dialogue to create a symbolic architecture that can adapt to new conditions of competition between global cities, while creating a unique perspective on the new inner city and the waterfront. To do this, planners are working on complementarity between the color of asphalt, architectural forms and the urban furniture. The esplanade of the Forum is the work of José Antonio Martínez Lapeña and Elias Torres. The *Insomnia* nightclub in the old Poblenou district must create an entertainment company based on electronic music and restore attractiveness to this symbolic place, according to the French architect Jean Nouvel.

As for the Luis Buñuel Park of Saragossa, it is derived from the old park of the international exhibition of 2008. The city stages the ambitions of the urban elite with the urbanization of the banks of a river: the Ebro become a new image of the city. The largest leisure park and economic activity from a new exhibition require a complete redefinition of the riverbanks and district, including, for Saragossa (Figure 6), a new high-speed railway station, a landscaped park of more than 296 acres, the Water Park of Luis Buñuel, the TIC entrepreneurial park and new channels of communication within and outside the walls, all being located between the old town and the nearby suburban area with 14 priority areas of development along the Ebro river.

The most impressive aspect of the planning is based on the creation of a large urban park of 296 acres on the north shore, benefiting the entire city.



Figure 6. A city and its river. Cover of *Leer* magazine, 2008, Expo Agua Zaragoza, Rivers in Literature, © P. Alonso.

The originality rests upon a hydraulic system dividing the Park, about 5 km long, into three bands while providing a main tank with a large basin 500 meters long and 20 meters wide located in the eastern part of the park. It allows the new district in the east of the city to enjoy the variety of regional species. A major point and sign of rupture in the history of the exhibition is that, during the accompanying process of the exhibition leisure area, the organizers decided to pay more than the amount allocated throughout its implementation (Consortium Pro Saragossa, 2004).

2.2 *From new urban nature to new leisure: landscape urbanism as a means of resilience?*

From these two examples, the meeting of the city with its natural interfaces often on the periphery becomes a primary objective. The result of this landscape creation must allow a coalescence of opposed territories. For the forum space, the park of the 'Sea dune' from the FOA Teresa Galí agency acts as a maritime interface and serves as a recreation place for young people from concrete dunes, creating a unique atmosphere in a greenery space, as well as being a way for skateboarders to find a 'good place' (Broto, 2011, p. 74). Assimilation between the reconfiguration of the coastline and the necessary materials for durability is based on concrete, stone and impressive earthworks.

This park is certainly the most ambitious, with the obligation to design a new beach and promenade with the sea in the background, the incinerator of the city of Barcelona and three towering chimneys from an old cement plant being reconfigured by Jean Nouvel. The key idea is to combine the meeting of two territories hard to aggregate. For this, trompe l'oeil are designed, such as the famous *magic mountain* (according to the words of professionals), hiding the incinerator facilities while offering to beach attendants a vision of nature or, at least, a mixture of a bit of green and a forest of palm trees, concealing the foundation of the installation (Galí, 2004, p. 7-11). Finally, the surface of the walk represents fish scales that start from the beach, go through the factory and eventually beyond the ring road in the popular area of Mina via a gateway (Foa, 2004, p. 94). Reeds or families of low-growing plants are present in the two projects quoted: the famous *cana/canya* – reed – (or *carabènes* in the south of France and Spain) bring to mind the vegetation of the place before the major intervention, on the one hand as a landscaping instrument, on the other as a means of treating the polluted waters of the Besòs with Asian plants.

As for the Luis Buñuel Park in Saragossa, this represents a new concept of an urban park combining vast green spaces, services and leisure activities for all city-dwellers. This park is one of the city's new poles of attraction. Near the Exhibition Centre Aragon and on 24 acres, one can choose between 40 different activities (Alday, Jover, & Dalnoky, 2008), such as adventure sports or recreational activities. This is the largest leisure provision the city offers. Visitors can use the free parking with a thousand spaces; the park includes a channel for rough water, an adventure area for children and a small golf course, several areas of restaurants, hotels, recreation centers for children and adults, a whitewater channel for rafting, Hydrospeed or open kayak, another calm water channel, an adventure park, a spa and river beaches and a vast botanical garden center.

Near the park are other facilities, also in connection with the Expo 2008, such as the Saragossa aquarium and the bridge of the Third Millennium (Zaragoza, 2012). The park combines vast green spaces, services and activities for all ages. Its variety is found in the discovery of the municipal aquarium with an initiation course through four rivers, allowing visitors to experience the natural life of the Nile, Mekong, Amazon and Ebro. Parks, shorelines, woods and bayous alter the cityscape of Saragossa on the meandering Ranillas to make a kind of urban nature tamed by man for the purposes of recreation. The park should summarize the importance of the Ebro to the local population, but also show that through him the history of the city is renewed. Between environmental and urban geography, the park reveals a dynamic vision of Zaragoza (Pellicer *et al.*, 2008, p. 134-143).

The size of the metropolitan park compared to the city of Saragossa totally transforms the existing settings: its construction doubles the area of green space for a city of 650,000 inhabitants. These two metropolitan parks are like a part of the city, but they use similarities with nature to create a special architectural and landscaped environment. One can talk about biomimicry, with building forms taking advantage of natural forms to become more sustainable, while remaining at the district scale (Somalo, 2004, p. 109). As to the form of the two parks, Saragossa takes up the meanders of Ranillas like model and Barcelona reproduces maritime interface for his new waterfront. However, it remains controversial, and the uses of these two parks show us the difficult acceptance or attendance of these public spaces, which have a public garden as an added value.

The importance of panoramas and street furniture is paramount to these new projects. However, the monumentalization of the Barcelona periphery is an unfinished project where the concrete dominates the coast landscape, despite of a giant photovoltaic panel like landmark. On a large scale, panoramas and the significant opening up of the Barcelona coastline offer breathtaking views. Viewed from afar, the solar panel in Barcelona and the Water Tower in Saragossa proceed as a kind of signal used by politicians for tourists to take in the site. Like the cable car in the Saragossa Park, they act as an instrument of entertainment and photography, but the financial crisis, attendance and maintenance imply their closure. Moreover, in terms of street furniture, it is the return of the urban tourist telescope; the tourist uses it to enjoy the great view from the tops of skyscrapers, but also from public spaces with a viewpoint. They are red, as in Barcelona, to be more easily identified, they allow tourists to have a clear view of the Pilar temple in Saragossa, or the Olympic Port in Barcelona. In Zaragoza, the street furniture fits into the landscape with a ecogeographical bench (Figure 7): a linear construction of 675 meters long and 2.10 meters wide, to form with 103 mini benches a set of juxtaposed arches with various curvature angles, all is done for the repeating of patterns to avoid a heavy effect and find a solid unit, but also consistent with the site (Batlle, Roig, Gayarre, Marco, R. Architectes, 2008). The bench fits closely with the landforms, the horizon and the river, and offers a link with the natural interface while recalling, by its form, the liquid element diluted in space (Waterman, 2010, p. 12).

We are witnessing a privatization of these recreational areas. Privatization with excessive cost sometimes, particularly for a Spain in crisis: for example, the channel Aguas Bravas of the Luis Buñuel Park is open to the public for a fee of 32 euros to enroll in a rafting course with the family. If, technically, the activities are a success, attendance is low because the facilities have a significant tariff including water management and protection equipment for surveyors of these artificial cascades.

Community experiences to connect urban nature certainly require debate, democracy and new technical potential (Klanten, Ehmann, Borges, & Feireiss, 2012), but also a plurality of practices both paying and free of charge which parks have trouble maintaining and keeping operational due to the mortgage crisis.

So, the presence of many infrastructures on the recreation site involves many negotiations between architects, city-planners and landscapers, the controversies give a new landscape, outcome the necessity of collaborate. As for infrastructure such as photovoltaic panels for Barcelona, we find in the work of art, or land art, an action model representing a social role while going beyond the boundaries of technology with the natural environment and leisure sheltered by the shadow of the giant photovoltaic panel, as a quaint symbol or beautiful space for advertisements for Mercedes cars (Kohn & She-reen, 2012). A landscape architecture, between ecology and green design under limits awkward to define, presents itself to multiple users of these public spaces, but it is always necessary to go to the garden to talk about the form and content that consistently meet in a toing and froing – technical/aesthetic – in dialogue (Jodidio, 2010).



Figure 7. The ecogeographical bench of the Saragossa Expo Park 2008. 2011. Patrice Ballester.

If the river is a new legacy for the city (Clarimont, Vlès, & Kildine, 2013), this new leisure landscape should be understood like mediator of social tensions, in order to highlight urbanization by greenery and mimicry of natural elements (Vercelloni, 2009, p. 261). The soil can reveal its ‘qualities’ and recover through a new urban nature the landscaped codes before the exhibition of Zaragoza 2008 (Lecardane, 2011, p. 251).

But the reality is quite different due to a new complex and unfinished urbanization, as a planning from old theories of CIAM (International Congresses of Modern Architecture), and cannot deceive people in search of different nature. However, according to Corajoud's (2002) four functions of nature in the city – emotional, social, educational, cultural (identity) – the element of urbanization causes an undeniable change in the landscape perception of versatile spaces, the pretext of urbanization sometimes ruins the overall view, not giving any chance for the unexpected, or perhaps one fears the worst: the entrepreneurial failure of some components of the urbanization elements, such as the cable car in Saragossa, and therefore, the return of urban wasteland and wild vegetation on roofs, around and into buildings like some American cities. A discourse of defiance towards these areas is felt. If cyclists' spaces or the botanical garden are assets for Saragossa, their evolution over the long term seems to upset the local population. Seeing an urban nature replace an old natural space, orchard areas and peri-urban agriculture shocks some people who do not understand the maintenance costs of this new recreation area, such as multiple-lined bands of lawns, purchased or funded by the mayor to fill the holes caused by users or the weather. Added to this are defects in the coating of the ecogeographical benches caused by the elements.

As for football pitches, deserted for the benefit of old improvised fields, they puzzle observers. Regarding the artificial beaches of the Space Forum in Barcelona, their promotion is difficult: the Ebro's artificial beach, despite its modern and ecological water treatment, does not inspire confidence in a population that has more or less in its ancestors' farmers who were comfortable about dumping many harmful products into the Ebro. To a lesser extent for the Space Forum, the Besòs' olfactory pollution issues must be emphasized. Despite the mayor's efforts, the image of the place remains negative, mainly because of the smell of the sewage treatment plant. What remains is the Forum football field park to show a different idea of sharing and contact with marine elements in the dunes of concrete, a kind of bandage on a landscape wound caused by the water filtering system and concrete beaches facing another concrete strip.

Conclusion

Mechanisms of appearance, dissociation and involvement of the population are at work in these spaces of globalization that prioritize leisure infrastructure. The urban palimpsest is convincing with the example of Citadel Park and its evolution between 1888 and 2013. The creation of hybrid landscaped parks is the main contribution, while becoming a political, symbolic and controversial subject. The Luis Buñuel Park as well as the Space Forum become difficult to characterize as urban nature and sometimes lack legitimacy among the general public.

Leisure and tourism allow the creation of a sustainable city by the imposition of an urban nature, but it privatizes significant parts of the city. For the Luis Buñuel Park, the question has arisen as to the length of time of a sustainable urban revolution and its maintenance costs. However, the architectural quality of some buildings is good, like the bridge of the Ebro, the ecological treatment plants and the festivals in the park.

They offer a place of escape to a population under stress of the crisis. Mass tourism requires a restructuring of the urban morphology, creating an architectural and landscape heritage based on sustainable development in the form as well as its networking: for example, the Forum area and its connection to the rest of the city through soft mobility, and soon a new maritime zoo which will give more attraction and consistency in this district.

A consequent urbanization pairs with 'touristification' or attendance of residents, involving efforts in the field of control and site security. National or regional celebrations take place on these sites while changing nature over decades. More than 100 years after the holding of the first Spanish exhibition, we must recognize that these recreational parks are finally places for a form of sociability, sometimes through a world of false pretenses where the paradoxes of public action are confronted at the new habits of Sunday walkers and tourists, in search of meaning and calm. In short, public gardens require reverie probably to hide the profound failures of lost time, according to the words of sociologist-philosopher Pierre Sansot (2003).

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Notes

1. The Bureau International of Expositions is like the International Olympic Committee, an NGO deciding through a vote at a plenary meeting the selection of the host city at two types of exhibitions: international and universal. 'Universal' should be understood in terms of its content, which includes in the program and framework more or less everything concerning human and international activity involving active foreign nations. An exhibition can be universal without being international; it will remain national by its name.

2. The French national exhibitions from 1801, 1802, 1806, 1819, 1823, 1827, 1834, 1839, 1844 and 1849.
3. Official website of the Paris candidacy for 2025, <http://www.expofrance2025.com/index.html>.
4. See the website of the prequel to the film *Iron Man 2*. We understand that the authors take a perverse pleasure in finding the traces of the past to better handle present cinematographic purposes: musical ambiance, monumentality, image synthesis are there to put in a festive atmosphere and offer visitors a virtual tour in the first page of the presentation as well as an imaginary explanatory letter from Tony Stark recalling the previous exhibitions including one in 1941 that never existed, which refers to New York World's Fair in 1938 and another in 1974, which refers to another New York World's Fair in 1964. See Paramount's website, <http://www.starkexpo2010.com>.
5. We indicate the archives consulted in Spain for our research. See the list below for full details.
6. Procedure: (1) a report on the difficulties of design and control of materials following the failure of Casanova, (2) to operate the redistribution of work on competition and to impose specific time frames to meet (abundant correspondence), (3) to hold a rigorous accounting procedure for each step and propose an original plan of quality of Catalan inspiration.
7. Geopolitics at the national level requires Madrid to grant at the same time two international exhibitions in Seville and Barcelona. Nevertheless, the Seville Exhibition commemorates a past empire with a colonial legacy compared with Barcelona, dedicated to material progress, industry and technology.
8. Landscape urbanism is a concept of ecologic urban planning which considers the landscape more important than architecture is the driving force of local urban development with a new design and organization of urban life. This notion of planning notes the expansion of cities, in urban areas and their suburban fringes, but considers the scope of the current urban planning limited and narrow, its concepts and its structural organization insufficient to solve the problems of diffuse urbanization. Territoriality, perspectives, potential, participation, good practice, small, medium and large landscape scale, palimpsest and reversibility must bring about flexibility and hybridization of spaces that remain. Think the surface rather than the form, horizontality and new environmental technology and the provision of facilities.

Consulted archival funds and photographic scans on the Internet

Archives of the College of Architects of Catalonia (COAC). Fond 1888: C314/4.1 section 6^e Parque (archive folder 345): Architect chief José Armargos. Director-general of the structures (archive folder 34-F) Exemple de l'Umbraculo, 2A 1887. Lettre n° 3, 7, 35/11, 50 recorded par Elies Rogent on 6 September 1887 (final reception act), the planning conversation of all the architects. Arxiu historic de la Ciutat de Barcelona (AHCB): N°11668 à 19259: Fond 1888. Parc de la Citadelle. IMHB Fond 1888. Formerly IMHB grouped in the AHCB. Fons 1888, 30 septembre 1871 (1872), of José fontseré y Mestre, *Proyecto de un Parque y Jardines en los terrenos de la ex-ciudadela de Barcelona*, Barcelona, Narciso Ramirez y C., 54 p. (n°117).

Field investigation between 2002 and 2012 in Spain, photographic reports and interviews with the population.

Hermenoteque (AHCB): More than 20 reviews on the parks of Montjuich and the words of Puig y Cadafalch, Léon Jaussely, E.I.B, *Exposició Internacional de Barcelona Guia oficial*, Barcelona, 1929, *Catálogo Historico y Bibliográfico de la Exposición de Barcelona de 1929*, Barcelone, Oficinas de la Exposición Internacional de Barcelona de 1929-1930, Kerta, 2 volumes.

Personal archives of Seville 1929 and 1992: photography, pamphlets, books and official exhibition guides, collection of postcards, testimony of Henri Delmas, donated by the Calderón and Arquíé families.

Website laboratory GEODE UMR 5602 CNRS Toulouse MSH: <http://w3.msh.univ-tlse2.fr/bipt/> (go to Barcelone 1888, 1919 and 1929).

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