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Regional Entrepreneurialism, 'Creative City' and Strategic Projects in València

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The relationship between models of local development and cultural policy is one of the key issues in the debate on the role played by culture, in which some cities have highlighted their desire to project themselves as 'global cities' (Sassen 1991; Zamorano and Rodríguez Morató 2015) or as 'creative cities' (Landry and Bianchini 1995; Patricio Mulero and Rius-Ulldemolins 2017; Vanolo 2008). Likewise, the evolution of post-industrial society has given rise to a new relationship between economy, culture and leisure that boosts centrality in the economic development of advanced societies (Scott 2010b; Lloyd and Clark 2001). The crises of: (a) the Fordist system of industrial organisation and (b) The Welfare State and its workings, have led to a profound re-organisation of politico-economic systems. The local and regional levels gain new relevance

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against this background. Both tiers of government have won and embrace a new role, described as ‘the entrepreneurial turn’, mainly based on large-scale urban development projects (Harvey 1989; Madureira and Baeten 2016). Thus, lower-tier public administrations have gone from being passive implementers of State policies to being active promoters of local development (Lazar and Leuprecht 2007; Molotch 1976; Cooke and Lazzarretti 2008). As a result, cultural strategies are increasingly seen as key to the development of cities and regions (Scott 2010a; Montgomery 2003; Currid-Halkett and Scott 2013). Among these cultural strategies for the promotion of regional development, we find the generation of mega-events (Rius-Ulldemolins et al. 2016), the construction of flagship cultural institutions (Halle and Tiso 2014; Plaza 2015). Since the 1980s, cultural policy has been seen as a driver of cities’ economies and a lever for urban renewal and the fostering of ‘creative districts’ (Cooke and Lazzarretti 2008; Rius-Ulldemolins 2014).

However, the size and nature of the changes made to urban development policies has to be seen in the context of European cities, especially in their port areas, industrial districts and historic centres from the 1970s to the 1980s (Bianchini 1991; Lemasson 2015). The end of the industrial model meant that some cities—for instance Liverpool, Manchester, Barcelona, València—had to grapple with social problems such as unemployment and economic stagnation/decline (Connolly 2013; Martí-Costa and Pradel i Miquel 2012; Quilley 1999). In some cases, the ‘entrepreneurial turn’ was a success as projects led by the local and/or regional government adopted ‘good governance’ approaches in transforming the city and/or region economically, socially and culturally (Marshall 2000; Pike et al. 2011). Furthermore, in most of these cases, local government policies have to be seen against the background of late twentieth-century decentralisation and State deregulation (Mitchell 2009; Losada and Máiz 2005; Brenner 2004; Dubois et al. 2017). Those trends were accompanied by changes in governance strategy and the inclusion of non-governmental actors in decision-making. This in turn led to the expansion of development strategies based on competition between cities and between regions—something that has been criticised as an ‘elitarian turn’ in public management (Degen and García 2012; Blakeley 2010; Jessop 2004).

Nevertheless, it was not until the beginning of the 1990s that culture and sport were seen in Europe and the United States as key elements for urban renewal, regional development and social inclusion (Moomas 2004; d'Ovidio and Cossu 2017, Halle and Tiso 2014; Moomas 2002). This type of strategy supposes a break with the former approaches in which regional and local public administrations saw cultural policies mainly as a tool for: facilitating citizens' access to High Culture; encouraging local creators; incorporating greater cultural diversity (Urfalino 1996; Zapata-Barrero 2016; Kangas 2016). In this new stage, culture in its broadest sense (including cultural and creative industries, leisure and sports) is seen as part of a new paradigm and as a resource that can make a direct economic impact on cities (Scott 2010a; Lloyd 2010; O'Connor and Gu 2012). In this context, regional and local strategies are drawn up by public-private agencies to create a positive image and branding of the region to appeal to investors, art and craft professionals and tourists. 'Culture' is simply harnessed as a means to these ends (Cooke and Lazeretti 2008; Markusen and Gadwa 2010; Pike 2011). In some cases, the crafting of this image is intended to dispel a reputation for industrial decadence or even political conflict. A shining example of both is furnished by The Basque Country, where cultural investment has had a positive impact on the region since the 1990s. The Basque Country has also carried out local projects based on the leisure industry, allowing bottom-up participation that has fostered economic diversity at both the regional and local level, as well as innovation (Plaza 2015; Carvalho and Van Winden 2017). In some cases, urban renewal has been based on environmental and social sustainability, as in Malmö. In this Swedish city, public administration went to great lengths in developing long-term, well-balanced urban governance (Kärrholm 2011). In other cases, only a few perfunctory nods were made to 'sustainability'. This was Barcelona's case, with a couple of high-profile 'green' projects (renewable energy and water purification plants) featured in the 'The Forum of Cultures 2004' (Majoor 2011). The so-called Barcelona Model of development based on long-term projects has received many brickbats over the last decade for its elitist, gentrification impacts on city centres and for its sheer cost (d'Ovidio and Cossu 2017; Degen and García 2012; Delgado 2007; Blanco 2009).

In this context, the entrepreneurial approach first tried in cities is now being adopted by regions to boost the economy and build a brand (Prytherch 2006; Prytherch and Huntoon 2005; Stevenson and Magee 2017). The approach has become more and more central to the strategic plans drawn up by cities and regions (Evans 2001; Patricio Mulero and Rius-Ulldemolins 2017). Various plans were drawn up to boost cities and regions' competitiveness through large infrastructures and/or huge cultural events. These initiatives covered such things as revitalising city centres, ports and declining industrial districts (García 2004a; Connolly 2013; Díaz Orueta and Fainsein 2008). Furthermore, in keeping with the entrepreneurial slant and with a view to fostering competitiveness, the traditional 'public administration' approach is usually spurned. Instead, the projects use public-private co-operation for the management of these large projects (Barber and Pareja Eastaway 2010; Majoor 2011; Casellas and Pallares-Barbera 2009).

However, what one might term 'the entrepreneurial approach' is often used in a highly opportunist fashion—especially in Southern Europe. Large-scale projects—such as those covering infrastructure and/or events—have been used to attract investments from higher-tier administrations, Central Government and the European Union. This has led to investment in projects of questionable public and socio-economic value in the medium and long terms (Martí-Costa and Pradel i Miquel 2012; Rodríguez-Pose and Courty 2018; Comunian 2011). Likewise, the way these projects are executed (in the case of large infrastructure) or rushed to meet tight deadlines (especially in the case of cultural and sports events) hinders effective managerial control and makes it much easier for the unscrupulous to waste resources and rip off taxpayers (Majoor 2011; Romero 2018). Moreover, the relationship between public authorities and civil society in Southern Europe reflects the negative side of Social Capital (Portes 1998), 'Back-scratching' and outright corruption abound (Villoria and Jiménez 2012; Jiménez et al. 2014). Given this background, it comes as no surprise that Spain's property boom and building bubble over the last ten years have been marked by spectacular corruption cases. The problem is exemplified by València (Castillo 2013; Boira Maiques 2012; Boix et al. 2017).

The entrepreneurial approach became particularly alluring in Spain following devolution in the 1980s and 1990s, and European convergence since 1986, which has speeded up de-industrialisation and a shift towards the service and tourism sectors (Prytherch and Huntoon 2005; Bel 2011). Yet paradoxically the new 'regionalism' and 'European convergence' is offset by a trend towards re-centralisation of political and economic power in Madrid and permanent competition with other regions, leading to a loss of local competitiveness (Boira Maiques 1988, 2012; Flor 2017).

One way that the Valencian region could kick against Spanish re-centralisation was to go for strategic projects based on large infrastructures and global events—a path it took in the late 1990s. This trend peaked in 2000, a year the elites and economic experts saw as auguring a new 'Horn of Plenty' and an excuse to spend on infrastructure and the rail network, boost education and research, attract more tourists, create jobs and put the València Region brand on the map (IVIE 2010). It seemed the region's problems could be solved by simply throwing money at them but the reckoning came ten years later, when the Valencian government was forced to suspend payments (Boira Maiques 2012). The slump and savage budget cuts meant that all of the strategic projects sparked a deep institutional crisis. València's Pharaonic City of Arts and Sciences was a case in point. Other projects were doomed to vanish—such as València's Formula 1 Circuit. Thus the economic sustainability criteria for these projects (exponential growth in both local audiences and of tourists) are based on a non-realistic extrapolation and shallow disregard of the deleterious environmental and other impacts of such schemes. The building of València's Formula 1 circuit (which involved bulldozing the city's older working-class districts and greatly worsening air pollution) went ahead without even so much as an environmental impact study.

Despite the huge economic and social damage wrought in the Valencian region by this lavish spending (Flor 2015) and the strategic projects that flopped ignominiously (IVIE 2010), there are those who still defend the so-called Calatrava Model (which is largely based on mega projects linked to culture and sports). Their argument is that while excesses were committed in the past, the region overcame them but that the end result was

some potentially valuable infrastructure. This kind of revisionism can be seen in the media (Molins 2017) and also in academic circles (Boix et al. 2017). València has certainly been ‘put on the map’ but for all the wrong reasons. The city’s world notoriety for corruption is hardly something to boast about (Observatorio de la Marca España 2013). Here, one should note that the growth in tourism in València not only stems from the region’s attractions but also from destabilisation of the Arab world. Put another way, terrorism and instability in North Africa make the European Mediterranean that much more alluring—something from which Barcelona has also benefited (Salom Carrasco and Pitarch-Garrido 2017).

Yet the overall cost of putting València on the map through strategic projects has not been studied in depth. There are various reasons for this: (1) the scant information provided by regional government; (2) the complexity of considering not only economic factors but also the political and ideological factors driving mega projects; (3) the difficulty of evaluating long-term urban, political and social costs. This chapter gives a broader overview by: (1) drawing on twelve qualitative interviews on cultural development in València; (2) conducting a survey of local and regional press coverage; (3) examining reports by Audit Agencies on four strategic projects. These projects are: The Fifth World Meeting of Families (2006); The America’s Cup (2007); Formula 1 (2009); The City of Arts and Sciences [*Ciutat de les Arts i les Ciències*] (2006).

2.1 The Strategic Projects and the València Region’s Planning and Development Policies

València, Capital of the Valèncian Community, went from being an almost-agricultural city in the 1950s to a service city in the late 1980s. However, until the mid-1990s the city’s economy and population stagnated as a result of the post-industrial crisis. The malaise was symbolised by the closing of the Sagunto Steel Factory in 1984 and the economic ‘developmentalism’ characterising the latter years of General Franco’s dictatorship (Alcalá-Santaella et al. 2011). As in other Spanish cities,

strategic planning projects began to emerge, such as The First València Plan, marking the inception of 'the entrepreneurial turn' in urban management (Vidal Climent 2016). The idea behind the Plan was to 'open up València to the sea'. In practice, it boiled down to *sventramento* [the gutting of old districts] to gentrify the working-class areas of the seaside and port district. The city was also to be expanded inland (that is to say, to the East), an area in which the first strategic project was to be key: The City of Arts and Sciences (CAC). The project formed part of the Socialist City Council's 1987 Urban Plan and was given the name 'The City of the Sciences'. The idea was to build a leisure complex in the old area of the mouth of the Turia River, following the French example of *Cité des Sciences et de l'industrie*, de La Villette (Paris) opened in 1986. València's initial version of the scheme was to include a Science Museum, a Planetarium and a large Communications Tower to symbolise the modernisation of the city and region, and to act as a tourist attraction (Rausell Köster 2006). The plan was a response to the way the Central Government had left València out in the cold when dishing out major events in the early 1990s. Here, it should be remembered that in 1992, Barcelona hosted The Olympic Games, Seville held a Universal Exposition and Madrid was named European Capital of Culture (Puncel Chornet 1999).

At that time, the initial purpose behind the strategic projects and events planned by local government in the late 1990s was to carry out city-wide marketing of València (Vidal Climent 2016). In the early 2000s, the City Council's València Strategic Plan Association set up the Centre for Strategies and Development (CEyD), where ideas for and the legitimisation of strategic projects at the local level were to be drawn up. The 'creative city' paradigm was chosen to attract tourism and investments. Neither the cultural sector nor the opposition political parties raised any objections (Cf. Raussell 2006). However, unlike Barcelona, the main protagonist of the entrepreneurial venture was not the City Council (Rius-Ulldemolins and Sánchez 2015). It was the Regional Government (*Generalitat Valenciana*), which was dead set on strategic projects based on culture and leisure as the main strategy for driving regional development (Prytherch 2006; Raussell 2006). To this end, the Valencian Regional Government set up 'The Valencian Company for Thematic Projects' to give the organisation of these initiatives a strong

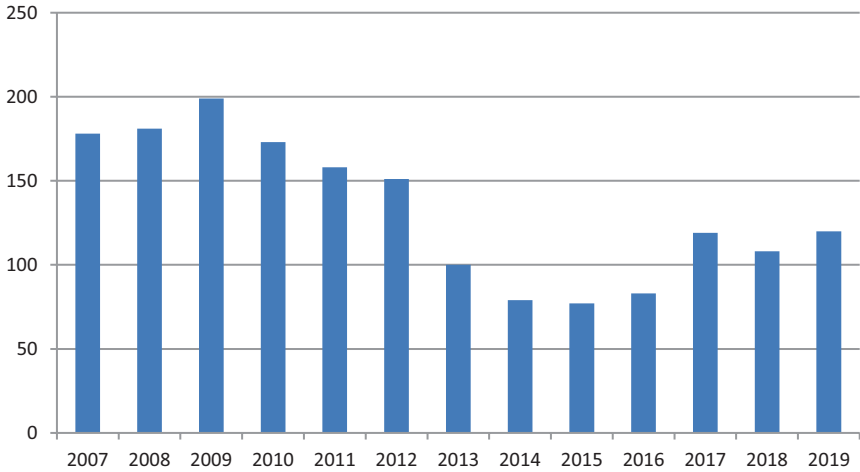


Fig. 2.1 The Valencian Regional Government's cultural budget: Generalitat Valenciana (2002–2019). (Source: Spanish Ministry of Education and Culture (Ministerio de Educación y Cultura 2019) Budgets of the Generalitat Valenciana (Generalitat Valenciana 2019))

entrepreneurial slant and to expand the cultural budgets from 2004 to 2009 as we can be seen in Fig. 2.1.

At that point, strategic projects such as the CAC were scaled up by the PP (Partido Popular, a centre-right political party) and their international targeting was beefed up by hiring Valencian-born ‘star’ architect Santiago Calatrava (Moix 2016). The architect was given *carte blanche*. Thus, the functional Communications Tower was replaced by the *Palau de les Arts* [‘Palace of the Arts’] though in fact it boiled down to an opera house—thus pandering to the cultural elite—ignoring that the city already had The Valencian Music Palace (built a decade before) and had no tradition of opera (Rius-Ulldemolins and Hernández 2016). The choice of a so-called artistic architect was to set a precedent for what we can call ‘The Calatrava Model’, which basically gives an architect free rein to indulge his fantasies regardless of the purpose of the space or building. In the case of Calatrava’s *Palau de les Arts*, this led to seats without a view of the stage, outrageously expensive designs, systematic cost overruns and virtually no public control over the works. This model of mismanagement and

waste became the paradigm for all the great events and infrastructures dreamt up during this period in València (Moix 2016).

These projects were to establish mechanisms of elitist governance, cronyism and an apparent bonanza that gave PP governments economic, social and ideological hegemony over the region for over two decades. The Partido Popular ruled with absolute majorities in local and regional government, engendering a wave of systematic corruption and the squandering of public money (Flor 2015; Rius-Ulldemolins et al. 2017). The map of public money wasted in Spain drawn up by Joan Romero et al. (2018a) shows that the Valèncian region's pointless and improper 'public investment' comes to almost €7000 million (7% of all Spain's misspent public expenditure). This figure alone reveals the utter lack of proper regional and urban governance, participation and assessment mechanisms applied in mega projects for urban renewal elsewhere (Majoor 2011; Parés et al. 2012).

Back in the 1970s and 1980s, Valèncian governments encountered stiff resistance to their plans to turn *L'Horta* [literally, 'The Market Garden'] girdling the city like a 'green belt' into land zoned for development. Moreover, in the case of Albufera, a wetland area surrounding València, social movements managed to stop plans to build a seaside suburb in the 1980s. However, PP governments 'strategic projects' in the 1990s such as The City of Arts and Sciences were built on what had previously been zoned as agricultural land (Cabrejas and García 1997). Unlike Barcelona, where 'strategic cultural events' such as The Forum of Cultures 2004 sparked growing opposition, the València Local Council and Regional Government could do much as they pleased in re-zoning the Port area and in gentrifying the south-eastern quarter of the city on the pretext of carrying out strategic projects. Most of València's citizens either approved of these projects or simply let the plans go through without demur (Cucó i Giner 2013).

Wild promises of economic growth and a reshaping of regional identity forged a consensus that explains the PP's twenty-five unbroken years running València's local and regional government (1995–2015). The Party commanded close on 50% of votes, showing how strong and long-lasting its political and social hegemony was (Boira Maiques 2012; Flor 2015). The projects boosted Valèncian's self-esteem and gave them an

almost euphoric vision of their region. This was despite the fact that the region's industries had been practically wiped out, leaving an economy mainly based on seaside tourism—even though the city was the third biggest in Spain (Boira Maiques 2012; Flor 2015). When Francisco Camps, then President of the Generalitat Valènciana (Valèncian Autonomous Government), announced the Formula 1 Circuit, he said it was as if València was celebrating The Olympic Games and The World Expo all rolled into one, in what was a calculated swipe at Barcelona and Seville (Romero 2017). The commitment to strategic projects, as we shall see below, appears more as a descent into economic and political insanity than rational planning serving sustainable development and creating public value. In terms of the Regional Government's budgetary priorities, strategic projects showed a marked rise as a share of cultural expenses in the period 2010–2013 yet vanished altogether after 2014 as the axe was taken to the cultural budget (Fig. 2.2).

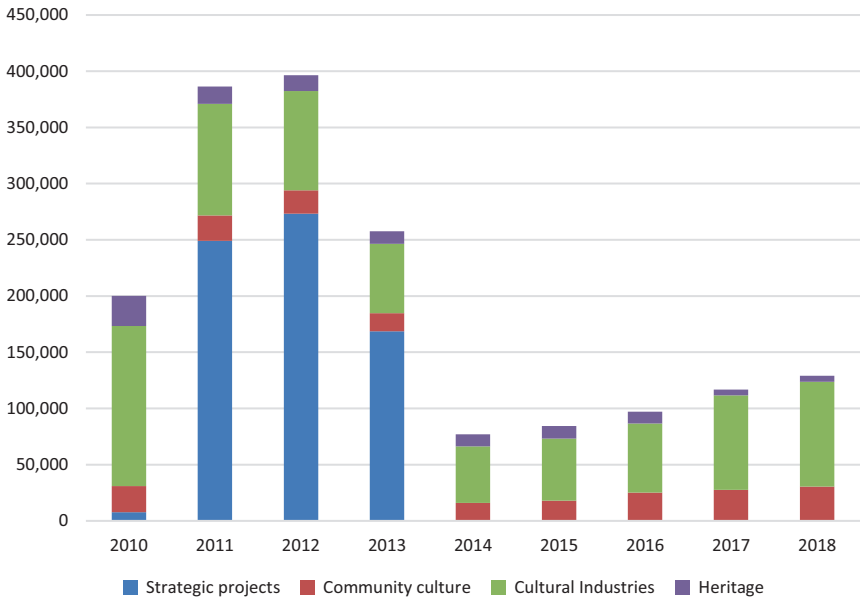


Fig. 2.2 Strategic projects in the cultural budgets of the Valèncian Regional Government (Generalitat Valènciana) 2010–2018. (Source: Author, from the Generalitat Valènciana's budgets (2018))

In the following section we analyse four strategic projects carried out between 2006 and 2018 in the city of València: (1) The City of Arts and Sciences (in Valencian *La Ciutat de les Arts i les Ciències*) and The Palace of the Arts (*Palau de les Arts*); (2) The Fifth World Meeting of Families (2006); (3) The America's Cup (2007); (4) The European Grand Prix (2008–2012). The following aspects are considered for each of the cases: (i) the genesis of the idea; (ii) the legitimising discourses presented in the media; (iii) economic development and political management; (iv) the results in terms of the economic impact and the debts racked up; and (v) the urban and social impacts, and the corruption spawned by the projects. The legitimisation of these strategic regional development projects, their expected impacts, management agency, final cost and outcomes are then all compared and discussed.

2.2 Urban Transformation and Cultural Policy in València

In the 1980s, as in other Spanish cities, València's urban policies focused on the extension of facilities and basic services to poor, working-class neighbourhoods and the initiation and development of infrastructure that is now central to the life of the city, such as the Garden of Turia and the tram system. Additionally, some "typical big-city" cultural facilities were constructed, for instance the València Arts Centre (Institut Valencià de les Arts, IVAM) and the Opera House (Palau de les Arts), which sought to turn València into a Mediterranean cultural landmark.

In the late 1980s, the policy shifted from a few proposals for modest growth, remedying the infrastructural deficits bequeathed by the dictatorship and raising quality of life to a focus on economic growth, urban space as a commodity and business-friendly 'deregulation'. With certain nuances, this transformation resulted in the basic agreement between the Popular Party (PP) and the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) (Alcalá-Santaella et al. 2011; Gaja 2002) on a strategy that has been seen as entrepreneurial regionalist planning in the context of European economic and political integration (Prytherch and Boira Maiques 2015).

That strategy had a political agenda and legitimising discourse that combined local sustainable regeneration and the ability to develop large projects and events worldwide (Sacco et al. 2009). The General Plan of 1988 established a strategy of urban expansion towards the sea, with the Turia Gardens as one of its axes. In 1991, the Socialist-run Council approved the construction of a City of Science and Technology that (after much remodelling) would become the City of Arts and Sciences (CAC) ten years later. This scheme covered the southern area of the city following the diversion of the River Turia to the outskirts (a measure taken after severe floods). The area then had a hotch-potch of market-gardening activities, factories and shanty dwellings (Santamarina and Moncusí 2013). The City of Arts and Sciences (CAC) project involved eliminating market-gardening land uses but failed to take into account the scheme's environmental impact or public transport needs. It was simply assumed that people would drive to the new complex. A large car-park was built for buses and cars but it is still largely unused. The project 'planners' did not consider an underground station or bike lanes because they quite simply failed to give any thought to the project's sustainability over the medium term.

València's business-urbanism orientation was secured by the first Conservative Council, in 1991 and was exacerbated after 1995 with Conservative hegemony in the government. In 1998, the Foster Palace of Congresses designed by Norman Foster was inaugurated—the first of successive buildings by leading architects. Also, that year, the government and city council gave new impetus to the CAC project, which became the flagship of the new València. After that date, we can speak of a Valencian model of neo-liberal urban development, which compared to Barcelona (or the first stages of cultural policy of the Catalan city) was more openly aimed at instrumentalisation of culture to promote urban development and branding and was less responsive to citizen participation or cultural sectors. In València, this urban development has focussed on major projects and events, urban marketing, new and affluent neighbourhoods and new road infrastructure interconnecting those spaces (Alcalá-Santaella et al. 2011; Gaja 2013). Large projects and facilities have played a central role in city management both at the socio-urban level and in cultural policy. With respect to València's urban development, the highlight of

this period is the emergence of new neighbourhoods, directed towards middle- and high-income sectors. In many cases, these include condominium towers and socialisation spaces that are closed to the outside world, imitating the U.S. pattern of 'gated communities'—something that is becoming increasingly common in Spain (Díaz Orueta 2013; Bellet 2007). The case of València stands out because these are the only neighbourhoods constructed in the last twenty years and because they are linked to major projects that, like these projects, were conducted based on "*à la carte* urbanism" (Gaja 2006). This includes the neighbourhoods *Penya-Roja* and *CAC*, located on the left and right of the *CAC*, and 'Nou Benicalap' at the intersection of *Corts Valencianes* Avenue and the *Foster Palace of Congresses*, the *Campanar Nou* district, and the new *Mestalla* (València football stadium). In other cases, these neighbourhoods have arisen without ties to large events, such as *Sociopolis* and *Avenida Alfahuir* but still form part of their 'narrative': embracing and leveraging businesses that were intended to generate an affluent, cosmopolitan, interconnected neighbourhoods enshrining global València (Cucó i Giner 2013). Furthermore, the infrastructure, new avenues, the Northern Ring and extension of the metro and tram network have largely served the new business areas of the city (Torres and García 2014).

This urban development and the cultural policy that accompanied it enjoyed broad popular consensus based on the hegemony of the Popular Party, the media impact of major events, the alleged benefits generated and the long cycle of economic growth. However, unlike Barcelona, since its inception the València model attracted criticism from many urban planners, architects and cultural managers, in many cases leading to open clashes with the City Council (as in the case of the project to extend *Avenida Blasco Ibañez* to the sea, destroying part of the *El Cabanyal* district). Criticism has focused on: (a) the social and economic sustainability of the city model; (b) the priority given to large projects, global events and affluent neighbourhoods over the needs of lower-class neighbourhoods; (c) the massive transfer of public funds to private capital in both projects and events. This approach ensured that the construction industry lobby got its way on projects and gentrification schemes, making a financial killing (Cucó i Giner 2013; Boira Maiques 2012; Gaja 2002). With the economic crisis, the failure of this city model is evidenced by:

the paralysis of major urban renewal projects (such as the Cabanyal district scheme or the undergrounding of railway tracks); a municipality with a huge debt (€1046 billion in September 2012); the crisis of great cultural and leisure projects (Cf. Boira 2012; Castillo 2013; Tudela 2014; Miralles 1997); the closing of neighbourhood facilities due to lack of maintenance funds; more expensive (and thus less efficient) municipal services (Torres and García 2014).

2.3 Strategic Projects in the Valèncian Region: Genesis, Development and Economic, Urban and Social Impacts

The Fifth World Meeting of Families in València (2006): Using the Pope's Visit to Promote the Region and Consolidate the PP's Political Hegemony

This huge event was held in the city of València on 8 and 9 July 2006. Organised by the Spanish Catholic Church, it involved the visit of the then new Pope, Benedict XVI. The event was presented by València's regional and local government as an event of global impact. The venue was the newly opened complex of The City of Arts and Sciences and was passed off as a strategic opportunity to launch the image of the new València brand. No expense was spared: €7.7 million was lavished on advertising, while audio and video coverage came to a further €7 million. These expenses were not questioned. They included the €3.5 million wasted on backpacks for attendees or the €3.1 million on urinals. A further €900,000 went on a single-use altar. Contracts awarded to large construction companies such as Acciona and FCC brought the total splurge to €22 million (Generalitat Valenciana 2016). Moreover, the logic of the great event, its repercussions, and the religious, heavily 'pro-family' slant were shamelessly exploited to justify a host of public 'investments' paid for by Valèncian taxpayers, and that would end up being written off. Moreover, the Pope's visit fuelled the growing controversy between the ultra-Conservative Spanish Episcopal Conference and the PP Regional

Government on the one hand and the Socialist National Government on the other regarding the legalisation of gay and lesbian marriage. The issue was the focus of the Pope's homily in the city before a local and international audience (Benedicto XVI 2006).

Furthermore, a private foundation set-up was chosen to escape the control of public administration audit mechanisms. The excuse was such a foundation would facilitate private contributions and cut costs for taxpayers. However, as the Regional Audit Office (*Sindicatura de Comptes*, in Valencian) states, most of the contributions were public and therefore the foundation should have been considered a public body and so subject to public controls. On its dissolution, the foundation left debts totalling €1.3 million, which the Valencian Regional Government ended up paying (Generalitat Valenciana 2016). Furthermore, there was funding by backdoor methods. One such wheeze was the Valencian Parliament's acquisition of a building owned by the Valencian Church shortly before the Pope's visit. No justification was given for the purchase and the building served no parliamentary use. The purchase price was €6.8 million for an old, ruinous building valued at €2.6 million. The exorbitant sum was a shot in the arm for the Archbishopric of València and a huge waste of public money (Pitarch 2018). Finally, the management of this mega-event was considered irregular with regard to nine contracts, which are the subject of several corruption investigations (Generalitat Valenciana 2016). No fewer than eight public officials have been charged, including the former President of the Valencian Regional Government, Francisco Camps. Last but not least, the Pope's visit perversely blinded the media to an event of much greater impact (both literally and metaphorically), namely the biggest underground rail accident in Europe. The rail disaster, which left 43 dead and 40 injured, occurred a few days before the Pope's arrival. Despite the tragedy, València's publicly owned regional TV television did not cover the accident during the Pope's visit. The TV station made no change to its programming save for a fleeting view of the Pope at the station where the accident took place. Furthermore, to date no public officer or transport authority has been sentenced or fined for the disaster. This sparked controversy that continues today. The incident highlighted the impunity of those responsible and the way the Pope's visit was cynically used to sweep the disaster under the carpet (Muñoz 2017).

The America's Cup (2007): An Elite Sport as a Gentrifying Development Plan

The celebration of The America's Cup in València was announced in 2003 by the Nautical Society of Geneva, after a selection process in which the Valèncian Capital beat other candidate venues such as Barcelona, Palma de Mallorca and Marseilles. The 32nd edition of this prestigious, elite regatta was held in València and a new building erected for the occasion, the *Veles e Vents* [literally 'Sails and Winds'], designed by David Chipperfield. The pretext for the building was to provide the headquarters for The America's Cup teams. The building won the European RIBA Prize, transforming the old industrial port, which was promptly renamed Marina Juan Carlos I as a symbol of the region's adherence to the Spanish national project and its monarchical regime. Thus, the 2007 race was considered a great success and some experts euphorically stated that the city had been "shaken by a positive demand shock", pulling a figure of €2700 million out of the hat as an estimate of the 'positive impact' (IVIE 2008: 1). These astronomical figures for notional economic benefit were used to legitimise the €24-million contract awarded to the America's Cup Management Company (ACM) for running the 2009 and 2010 regattas. This largesse flowed just as the region was entering a severe economic and social crisis.

However, this 'economic impact' report—like others produced for strategic projects—did not bother itself with costs, even though these were huge in both the short and long term. To begin with, the València 2007 Consortium was set up to develop the project. The Consortium involved Central Government, València's Regional Government and València City Council. It was charged with developing all the facilities and infrastructures for The America's Cup and racked up debts of almost €500 million. This gargantuan debt was something that neither the Regional Government nor The City Council will ever be able to repay (Marina de València 2016). The America's Cup as both a 'white elephant' and a shameless rip-off is epitomised by the València Port Authority's purchase of a luxury yacht for €4 million in 2008. The yacht's upkeep has now become unsustainable, with insurance, crewing and maintenance

costing the public agency €9 million. The Port Authority is currently trying to vend the vessel for less than half of what it paid for it (Herrero 2017).

Last but not least, The America's Cup has left a poisoned legacy in the form of the buildings used to house the sailing teams. These have lain empty for five years. Their deterioration led to them finally being demolished in 2015 to open the docks to the public, leaving behind an image of an urban wasteland. Furthermore, the flagship *Veles e Vents* headquarters building was much underused from 2010 to 2018 and was privatised in 2018. Heineken Spain has been licensed to use it and its luxury restaurant for just €360,000 a year. This is a bargain-basement rent for a huge building by a flagship architect at a seafront location. The building cost the public purse about a hundred times more than that at €35 million (Romero 2016). Likewise, other spaces have been offloaded to the private sector. One of these is the one now used by EDEM Business School, owned by the CEO of Mercadona (a major supermarket chain), revealing the trend towards privatisation of this public space. At the same time, the Consortium's debt mountain makes it impossible to generate leisure and cultural activities in the Port that would offer both social and financial returns on the public investment.

European Grand Prix (2008–2012)

València's city Formula 1 Circuit emerged as one of the Regional Government's flagship projects. Building works began in 2007 and by 2008 the 5.4-kilometre circuit ran through the Port area of the city in the Grau and Natzaret neighbourhoods. In this case, the political partisanship driving this kind of project was clear. Bernie Ecclestone, the man managing Formula 1 racing, officially announced that he would only install the circuit in the city if the Popular Party candidate won the elections (Ferrandis 2007). This statement, coming as it did in the middle of the election campaign at a Press Conference held at the Palau de les Arts made a big media impact and might well explain why the PP romped home to victory with over 50% of the votes cast. This landslide victory allowed the Partido Popular to govern with an absolute majority, with all that implies in Spain (Romero 2017).

The project was endorsed by large Valencian companies and leading figures in the business world (Bancaja, Dorna, Team Aspar, Telefonica, El Corte Ingles, and businessman Fernando Roig, shareholder of Mercadona—one of València's biggest companies, owned by Spain's fifth-richest man). The project was theoretically managed by a private company formed for the purpose—Valmor Sport SL. Yet this private management format was merely a ruse to make voters believe that the Regional Government President's promise that the Formula 1 Circuit would not cost Valencian taxpayers a penny (Ferrandis 2010). Citizens discovered the ghastly truth ten years later. The cost of the investment (calculated at €83 million) was paid by the Valencian Regional Government's Transport and Ports Network (GTP). The public investment was later justified on the grounds that the money would be recouped through planning permits for private developers. This prospect vanished into thin air when Spain's housing bubble burst in 2008. To make matters worse, the fat fee of €17 million paid to Ecclestone was never paid by Valmor Sport SL but by Thematic Projects, a public regional corporation. The cost to the public coffers rose yet again in 2009, when the Valencian Government bought out Valmor Sports SL and by so doing, assumed the company's debt. The acquisition was made by the public company Circuito del Motor y Promoción Deportiva, S.A. This operation was based on the positive report by the Valencian Institute of Economic Research (IVIE). The Regional Audit Office was not informed of the justification for the purchase or consulted on its wisdom or its legality. The acquisition meant that taxpayers were saddled with a further €83 million in debt (Tribunal de Cuentas 2016).

Revenue from the event was both lower than expected and shrinking. There are no official figures for the tickets sold by the organisation but it is estimated that some 212,000 seats were occupied in 2008, falling to just 162,000 in 2012 (IVIE 2012). Although the Formula 1 Circuit was initially planned to operate until at least 2015, the Grand Prix was held for only five years, from 2008 to 2012. The Grand Prix was axed in 2013 because of the Regional Government's financial problems and the swelling deficits generated by the event. This left the urban area of the circuit abandoned and undeveloped. Port Warehouses 4 and 5, which had been used as race boxes, and subsequently for storage up until 2018, were

abandoned. Like so many other projects, this operation too is the subject of a criminal investigation into corruption and the misspending of public funds (Sindicatura de Comptes 2012).

The City of Arts and Sciences, and the Palace of the Arts: The City's White Elephant (2008)

From the second half of the 1990s, the PP-controlled Valencian Government set out to redefine the region's cultural and tourism profiles. In this project, the area formed by The City of Arts and Sciences (CAC) played a central role in the strategy for putting València on the map (Santamarina and Moncusí 2013). After the PP's victory in 1995, the initial project drawn up by the Socialist Party was reformulated and greatly expanded. Built between 1993 and 2008 in the park following the former course of the Turia River, the CAC covers an area of 35 hectares and is 1800 metres in length (See Figure 2.3).

The CAC was the pin-up of the PP's 'cultural policy', constituting the largest cultural investment in the region's history, amounting to some €1282 million (Rius-Ulldemolins et al. 2016). The 'investment' was given the seal of approval by academic institutions such as The Valencian Institute of Economic Research (IVIE), which from 1999 to 2011 produced no fewer than thirteen studies costing a total of some €250,000 to justify the spending. These studies came up with positive economic impacts for the local and regional economy: a total economic impact of €8000 million, five thousand jobs and a 0.20% boost to the region's gross added value in 2007 (IVIE 2007). In addition, IVIE estimated that CAC would boost revenues by selling enough tickets and sponsorship to cover 50% of the expenses (ibid.). However, CAC fell far short of these wildly optimistic forecasts. The City of Arts and Sciences' debts had grown to a massive €579 million in 2014 (Fig. 2.3). The debt is snowballing because CAC has an annual deficit of almost 50 million a year (Sindicatura de Comptes 2016).

Furthermore, the concept was one of a cultural institution that would confer international prestige: a Science Museum and an Opera House tied in with international High Culture networks (Castelló et al. 2006).



Fig. 2.3 The City of Arts and Sciences: The Science Museum and the Hemisferi [IMAX/3D/digital projection complex] (2017)/Palau de les Arts and Hemisferi and Umbracle (2020). (Source: The Authors)

In keeping with this elitist choice, a private management model was drawn up for the *Palau de les Arts*. Project management was plagued with irregularities in hiring staff and contracting services, with bloated expense accounts (living it up in 5-Star hotels, first-class tickets for favoured artists and other lavish spending by the General Manager) drew repeated criticism from public-sector audit bodies (Sindicatura de Comptes 2013). Since 2015, several cases of corruption have come to light that have shown the Director of *Palau de les Arts* in a bad light (Fig. 2.4). He now stands accused of taking back-handers in managing sponsorships (Ballester 2016).

Finally, since its inauguration in 2012, the Agora building has only been used on the odd occasion—especially for the Tennis Open (held



Fig. 2.4 The City of Arts and Sciences' Agora (2017). (Source: The Authors)

between 2009 and 2013), which the Valencian Government supported to the tune of €12 million. The debt run up by the managing body and failure to define the purpose of the facility have led to the privatisation of this building, at a cost of €89 million to Valencian taxpayers (Sindicatura de Comptes 2016). The Calatrava Building has been put in the hands of a private foundation—Caixa Bank. This major bank, which in other cities such as Barcelona or Madrid has paid for its own headquarters, snapped up the building in València for a mere €18 million. The bank's lease on the building—the last in Calatrava's herd of white elephants—will run for fifty years (Romero 2016).

The Cost of Putting València on the Map: A Balance

Based on our analysis, we can summarise the four projects in terms of their legitimisation and impact (or on the assessment made by the contracted consultants), the organising entity and the cost, and finally, the final result as at 2018.

From Table 2.1 we can highlight some common strands in the strategic projects: (a) Big promises to boost overall growth through events or flagship buildings; (b) Regional planning and policy studies by academic

Table 2.1 Comparison of strategic regional development projects (2006–2018)

Draft	Legitimation/ expected impact	Management agency/final cost	Outcomes
City of Arts & Sciences; <i>Palau de les Arts</i> ['Palace of The Arts']	Culture and leisure complex seen as fostering tourism projection and the regional brand. The IVIE issued 13 'economic impact studies' giving both projects the thumbs up.	CASM. €1282 million in 'investments', €579 million of debts.	Management crisis and corruption cases in the <i>Palau de les Arts</i> . Underuse and privatisation of the Agora building.
The Fifth World Meeting of Families (2006)	The city's international projection through the Pope's visit.	The Fifth World Meeting of Families. The cost is calculated at €22 million. The public funding is unknown (calculated at €3.4 million).	No contribution to urban infrastructure or facilities for citizens. Investigation of the <i>Gürtel</i> corruption plot. Eight accused.
America's Cup (2008)	Regeneration of the old industrial port and touristic promotion. Favourable economic impact study (IVIE).	València 2007 Consortium. It is calculated that debt ascends to €486 million and is considered irrecoverable.	Abandoned spaces. Privatisation of the <i>Veles e Vents</i> space [HQ building for the Americas Cup]. Investigated because of its links with the <i>Nóos</i> corruption plot.
Formula 1	"Putting València on the map" of global cities. IVIE's 'economic impact study' gave it the thumbs up.	<i>Valmor Sport SL</i> (firm) acquired by <i>Circuito del Motor y Promoción Deportiva SA</i> (firm). €183 million (€100 million in 'investments', €83 in debt from Valmor Sport SL).	Cancellation of the contract. Abandoned circuit/Port Warehouses 4 and 5 abandoned. Thirty accused of corruption, including the former President of the Valencian Regional Government.

Source: The Authors

experts based on the 'creative city' paradigm. The studies were cobbled together after the fact to legitimise public investment. Furthermore, they systematically overestimated the positive impacts and ignored the risks and opportunity costs; (c) Creation of *ad hoc* companies, agencies or foundations for holding events. There was no effective control to ensure the avoidance of unnecessary duplication of governance, participation and control mechanisms; (d) General cost overruns and the racking up of debts that were then shouldered by the public sector, which then had to find some way of putting the huge spaces and facilities created for the mega projects to some practical use; (e) Political manipulation of these events and infrastructures by the Partido Popular to gain and maintain its electoral hegemony; (f) Paltry final results in terms of infrastructure provision for citizens, especially given subsequent privatisation of publicly owned spaces and facilities; (g) The links between strategic project management, the wasting of public money and corruption are the hallmark of these schemes in València. The end result is an economy that is a monoculture based on the leisure and touristic industries—a strategic *cul de sac* that led to València's relative economic decline against the background of the Spanish and international crises of 2008 (Boira Maiques 2012; Flor 2015).

Can we identify the urban and social impacts of these strategic projects, and more generally, of the Calatrava Model policy? As in Madrid and Barcelona (Giménez et al. 2018), València at the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century is a more polarised, fragmented and unequal city, as a result of the growing dualisation of the labour market, of hegemonic Neo-Liberal urbanism in the last three decades and of the impacts of the crisis and subsequent austerity policies. Overall, the structure of the labour market has become polarised, with professionals and technicians on one side and broad swathes of precarious jobs on the other hand. There is also growing inequality, which the economic boom, abundant work and cheap credit masked until the crisis of 2008. Despite the subsequent recovery, the economy remains below its pre-crisis levels. In 2017, 30.66% of households in the City of València were at risk of poverty and social exclusion (Lorente et al. 2018). This rise in socio-economic inequality is distributed differently in an urban space that was already fragmented by the priorities, forgetfulness and failures of Valencian



Fig. 2.5 An empty City of Arts and Sciences in the aftermath of the COVID-19 lock-down (September 2020). Key: From left to right and from top to bottom— Photo 1: Outside the Hemisferi and The Science Museum; Photo 2: The City of Arts and Sciences car-park; Photo 3: The entrance to The Science Museum; Photo 4: Science Museum ticket booths (during opening hours)

Neo-Liberal urbanism. The 2015 elections led to a Left-Wing majority. The new government broke the PP's hegemony and stated its will to clean out The Augean Stables. However, the new City Council has been hobbled by the debts racked up by its predecessor, lack of resources, the weakening of the local welfare system (Felipe-Tio 2017), and the need to deal with the urban mess left by the outgoing Council. The difficulties posed in renovating the El Cabanyal district (Hervás Mas 2017) is just one example of this poisoned legacy.

At a regional level, the economic crisis in València has had a bigger impact than in the rest of Spain. The reasons lie in València's flawed growth model and in its cronyism, corruption and inefficiency. Over the last 25 years, the Valencian Region's per capita GDP rose by 25%, while Spain's grew by 36% (Ariño Villarroya 2018). The widening of the gap with Spain in this and other indicators (Goerlich Gisbert 2018) shows the need to chart a new path to growth (Romero et al. 2018b). At the same time all this has had major social repercussions. After four years of economic recovery, with a weak growth model and public services still bleeding from the cuts, job insecurity has soared with 20% doing part-time work in 2015. Inequality and marginalisation is also growing, with almost a third of households (30.5%) at risk from poverty and social exclusion (Goerlich Gisbert 2018). Likewise, the COVID pandemic has gravely affected culture and tourism in València even though there are no statistics on the subject. However, the lack of visitors at The Science Museum and the empty ticket booths and car-park speak volumes. They all highlight the sheer unsustainability of a model based on mass foreign tourism, international mobility and private transport (Fig. 2.5).

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