

Andreu Ulied

“CATALONIA TOWARDS 2020:
VISIONS OF THE FUTURE OF THE TERRITORY”

*Special issue: “European Spatial Planning: a View
from Spain.*

Quaderns de Política Econòmica.
Revista electrònica. 2^a època.
Vol. 6, Enero-Abril 2004

Edita:



Dpto. de Economía Aplicada - Universitat de València
Av. Tarongers s/n, 46022 Valencia
FAX: 963828415 - WEB: www.uv.es/poleco

ISSN: 1579 - 8151

**CATALONIA TOWARDS 2020:
VISIONS OF THE FUTURE OF THE TERRITORY**

Andreu Ulied

Mcrit, S.L.

ulied@mcrit.com

Abstract:

Any given moment in time is a crossroad between the past and the possible futures ahead; but only seldom do we become aware of where it might be that our decisions take us. This is the situation of Catalonia at present, at the turn of a new century and millennium, and with Jordi Pujol stepping down as President after 23 years in power. As in other critical periods of our history, we tend to dramatise affected threats and go as far as to question the mid-term survival of Catalonia as a collective project for the future.

This preoccupation is often expressed in terms of historical urgency in relation to a purported loss in economic power, social and environmental impacts, landscape degradation, etc. The authors of such moratoriums often seem to be implying that Catalonia lacks the structure of a modern State to continue to progress socially and economically without mass mobilisation. Despite some real shortcoming and problems, Catalonia is in fact in a fairly auspicious position.

This work is meant as a contribution to the current debate on the future of Catalonia. Four visions are presented here, in the time horizon of 2020, offering a territorial perspective that goes beyond zoning and land-use planning, that imagines a country which reconciles social and political volition, economic development, housing, transport, water and energy demands, the local and global limits of the environment, etc. All policies are ultimately territorial and personal, and every territory is political.

The territorial visions here exposed, with its many differences and counted similarities, are meant for strategic reflection; as a provocation for many pending debates rather than a preliminary study for future territorial or sectoral plans.

Beyond the particular historical vicissitudes of Catalonia, all societies need renewed collective visions in order to be able to live with the complexity of an ever so interconnected and interdependent world, where every decision, whether public or private, and no matter how beneficial to the larger part of the population, may nevertheless have detrimental impacts on a given minority or location. Ultimately, however, although the world may appear to be far more complex than we initially thought, the causes of that complexity are in fact quite simple. We ought to distinguish between what is sporadic and conjunctural from what is strategic.

In our day and age, one of the greater challenges for governments and companies alike is to develop sufficient organisational intelligence to be able to anticipate problems and

opportunities, guarantee common interests in both the short and longer term and to foster truly democratic participatory processes.

1. No Longer 6 Million

At the turn of the 21st century, Catalonia is no longer the “triangle with two sides left to civilise” that the noucentisme movement spoke of a century ago. Many of the deficits that built up during the period of unfettered development of the sixties and seventies have now been overcome, and today Catalonia enjoys a balance, integration, social welfare and access to health care and education comparable to that of the most developed European States. A reconstruction policy has been implemented at all scales. In major cities, the most dilapidated neighbourhoods have been urbanised and equipped, while considerable improvements have been achieved in rural areas traditionally lagging behind. In fact, regions such as the Alt Pirineu, the vertex of those two sides of the triangle that a century ago had to be “civilised”, today enjoy among the highest national incomes per capita. In addition, more than a hundred years after the Universal Exhibitions, Barcelona, an emblematic Mediterranean city, but also Catalonia as a whole, have regained international projection. But today’s World also brings greater uncertainties, and Catalonia, with its mountainous relief, its location in the Western Mediterranean, its fragile vegetation and scarce natural resources, is undergoing critical and complex change: demographic, economic, technological and institutional, both in Spain and Europe. These changes have been sudden and unexpected, and have proceeded a period of relative internal stability during which Catalonia had “6 million”.

A common feature of many of the news found in the media, irrespective of their accuracy in figures or the covert motives of the journalist, is the marked concern for the accelerated pace of change occurring in the World and in Catalonia: unexpected migratory flows frustrate the best demographic forecasts made only five years hence, birth rates rise for the first time in twenty years, as does the percentage of children in schools with foreign parents; working conditions become more precarious and temporary, access to housing is poor –and the object of much speculation; a bubble, they say, ready to burst any minute-, young people reach emancipation later by the day – beyond the age of thirty-, and more people live on their own. There is stagnation and decline of the social use of Catalan, even among youngsters educated in the language, and its penetration in some important sectors of society such as Justice is anecdotal. There are sudden peaks in convict populations, large multinational companies pull out of Catalonia while others arrive, tourism continues to grow despite the international crisis, there is an unprecedented rate of intermunicipal change of residence, traffic around Barcelona continues to increase despite heavy investment in public transport and rail, the growth of the logistical and industrial area of the Llobregat delta creates a high risk of congestion of the accesses to the port of Barcelona, demands for freight high speed rail lines are being made even before the passenger line has been completed, there are forest fires and torrential floods, 2003 has experienced the hottest summer in 500

years, finally, the landscape is becoming increasingly peri-urban, particularly around Barcelona and along the coast: “we are destroying beauty!” exclaimed a poet in a newspaper some days back.

As for the World, when we thought History was arriving at its end, just over 10 years ago the communist regimes in Europe collapsed, and new wars, many in areas of Mediterranean influence, broke out. In Barcelona and Catalonia, the largest mass protest since the 1970s have recently occurred on account of the attack on Iraq. Europe is on the brink of enlargement with the accommodation of a group of smaller countries from the East, and yet, following the adoption of the single currency, she seems more concerned with bringing back the old power and glory to its great nation states than with pursuing the ambitious project of building a “Europe of the people”. In the last twenty years we have swapped typing machines, calculus rules and calculators for computers, the Internet and mobile phones. Electronic mailing lists allow for swifter and more efficient social mobilisation, organised independently from traditional institutions, political parties, the church or trade unions, all burdened with red tape and more distant from society than twenty years ago. As for land-use, the new communication technologies have increased the distance of geographically neighbouring spaces, while drawing closer more remote ones. Land-uses have become more segregated and flows more specialised, overcoming both political and administrative borders.

In the news we often find alarmist reports of the apparent inability of public authorities to guarantee the safety of a territory in turmoil from natural or technological hazards, to control immigration or to carry out the necessary structural reforms in poorly regulated markets such as housing, land-use and other resources like transport, water and energy.

In this context of rapid change and apparent lack of control, with the fall in legitimacy of government and public institutions, it is not surprising that thematic social platforms have come forth, ready to contest large infrastructure projects and territorial modifications. On their part, chambers of commerce and other associations such as the *Cercle d'Economia* have started to issue declarations, not only in favour of proposed policies and projects, but also warning against the opportunity cost to the economy of delays. Ultimately, the larger part of today's news and debates bear the mark of greater complexity, so apparent in other aspects of life, and bring into crisis the old certainties, reductionist visions and prejudices.

Catalonia is very different today to what it was twenty years ago. We are no longer the 6 million we were for a whole decade, but nearly 6,5 million. However, this figure needs to be qualified in the light of illegal immigration and other phenomena such as weekend or seasonal tourism, and according to some experts, we should really be measuring population in a given place in terms of inhabitants per unit of time. The question is simple: “How many inhabitants does this city have?”, but the answer is harder to give than it may first appear. The new immigration wave –we can speak of a migration balance of over 30.000 people per annum– arrives from more countries from further

away than ever before; there are municipalities in the interior of Catalonia with residents of more than 100 different nationalities; and in some public schools, children of immigrant parents already represent half the students in class. Alas, Catalonia has a history of attracting new people and activities, and if it weren't for immigration of "other Catalans", today's population would only marginally exceed the 2 million inhabitants that originally populated Catalonia in the early 20th c.

In an increasingly integrated and globalised World tending towards the harmonisation of lifestyles and the, often coarse, simplification of cultural differences, maintaining a distinguishable cultural and linguistic identity can be ultimately useful to navigate and interact with changing and extremely diverse worlds, as long as we avoid dissolving into uniformity and keep something truly genuine to offer. So far, social integration and the reconstruction of a cultural identity in Catalonia has been feasible through an economy that stimulates social dynamics, a culture of association, socially inclusive health and educational policies and, finally, urban structures with fairly homogenous quality standards, offering sufficient public space to foster casual meetings and spontaneous interaction among neighbours, visitors and foreigners alike.

While a dynamic economy has been one of the main forces of social integration in Catalonia, we no longer have the leading Spanish companies that were on a par to top European firms: those first nabob factories, the steam-run industries, the textile colonies and the pharmaceutical companies of the beginning of the 20th c. At present, the large companies established in Catalonia are foreign, and the economic fabric far more diverse. For instance, the agro-food industry, the largest industrial sector, represents a mere 4% of GDP. In Catalonia, more than 250.000 companies export over 50% of their production; the tourism industry is very important, albeit lacking in sectors of excellence and Catalan multinational companies; finally, despite slow progress towards the Information Society, 42% of Spanish technological exports have their origin in Catalonia. Education for innovation is scarce, and schooling programmes do not encourage experimentation or interdisciplinarity. The fragmentation of knowledge into distinct and separate subjects is schematic and boring and does not stimulate the entrepreneurial character or the vital curiosity of students. Continuous education and innovation are crucial in order for SMEs to jump in the bandwagon of the Information Society and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the new forms of network, delocation and organised work. SMEs can follow a project logic rather than a corporate one, and concentrate on the management of knowledge processes rather than on final products. The image of the entrepreneur has lost its gloss, and the truth is that there are hardly any successful businessmen young people can look up to today.

Social integration or earlier emancipation of the young (in Spain, 7 out of 19 people under the age of 30 live at their parents' home), as well as their entrepreneurial character and disposition to take risk, depend on education and training, but first and foremost, on access to housing. Catalonia has a rigid real estate market, with few flats for rent, while the price of housing in the city and surroundings areas of Barcelona has

doubled since 1996. Whereas the price of property in other cities of Catalonia remains lower, in tourist coastal areas, prices can be as high as in the city of Barcelona. On average, in order to buy a property in the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona, 50% of the salary is required over a period of 30 years. Moreover, property for rent is scarce, negligible compared to other European countries, with hardly affordable prices for most families. The rate of council flats to newly-built ones has dropped to 1 to 25. Although the urban quality of most towns and cities in Catalonia is high, there are 50 or so neighbourhoods, primarily in the surrounding areas of Barcelona, where the quality is very poor. These neighbourhoods are experiencing the exodus of middle-income residents and the imminent threats of social segregation and an underground economy, brought about by the new illegal immigrant population living there.

Five percent of the territory is built-up, a significant enough proportion considering its occupational pattern. In the 60s and 70s, tourism and traditional industry occupied the territory sparsely. Today, secondary residences represent almost 50% of all housing in coastal and mountain counties, and recently, more than one hundred new periurban activities have been catalogued: from campings, to car-dismantling and water treatment plants, landfills, cargo stations, teleports, golf courses, hotels, petrol stations and theme parks, generally, implanted in green fields under different legal forms. This exerts significant pressure on the landscape, which appears almost entirely occupied, all along the coast and the interior axes of the Besòs-Congost, the Llobregat and parts of the N-II from Lleida. Maintaining agricultural land in periurban areas, even in counties such as the Penedès, represents a high opportunity cost for land owners in relation to sale prices resulting from speculation of future land reclassification. In rural areas, the fragmentation and smaller dimension of properties render conditions for their exploitation more difficult. In total, agriculture manages to keep 30% of the total surface in relatively good landscape conditions, while forests, due to their low economic value, have grown spontaneously, without restraint, leading to an excess of biomass and a high risk of forest fires in the hot summer seasons.

More than nine hundred municipalities suffer from poor financing conditions, depending largely on the taxes and levies raised from urbanisation and construction. This situation does not exactly encourage the containment of urban expansion and concentration. Neither does it favour the realisation of strategic supramunicipal projects, whether we are talking about intensive economic activity or active protection of ecological corridors. Thus, in only a few decades we have gone from worrying about the high density and centralisation of Barcelona in relation to Catalonia to pondering about low densities and dispersion; from fearing extreme population densities to dreading population loss in the municipalities of Barcelona and its first inner city ring. The landscape of Catalonia has undergone discontinuous urbanisation processes and, as in so many other places, the activities have tended to de-localise according to connectivity to transport and communication networks rather than proximity to other activities, consumption centres or production. This new non-urban geography, discontinuous and

characterised by overlapping heterogeneous uses, is basically irreversible, and exerts a lot of pressure on the landscape while generating demand in transport and natural resources beyond the ideal territorial pattern based on continuous and compact cities.

Transport, people and freight infrastructure, as well as infrastructure for producing and transporting resources, energy, water and managing waste are fundamental in Catalonia's open development model. Catalonia has always had a shortage in natural resources, and has lacked the necessary infrastructure and services to get hold of them, as well as the appropriate Government to lead the country's modernisation. For this reason, ever since the Mancommunity's first Six Year Plan in 1920 through to the Public Works Plan of the Republican Generalitat (both attempts failing due to military uprisings), the main objective was to overcome these historical deficits by "structuring" the land with infrastructure and public equipment. The conditions of autonomous financing result in a negative fiscal balance vis-à-vis Spain representing a transfer of funds of 7- 8% of Catalonia's GDP. This figure is unmatched by any other European region and limits substantially the public investment capacity of Catalan institutions. Historically, the larger part of Catalonia's infrastructures were built with private capital: the Urgell Canal, the railways and the toll motorways. At present, Catalan infrastructure management companies have sufficient critical mass to project their activities towards international markets.

Despite the volume of public transport investment underway and planned for the coming years (e.g. the extensions of the port and the airport and the High Speed Rail), according to experts, the underlying infrastructure deficit is a persistent bottleneck for Catalonia's development. If the volume in freight traffic continues to increase in a scenario of moderate and sustained economic growth, and if Catalonia pursues its aim to become the logistic platform of the Mediterranean, we can predict congestion problems in the mid-term, especially in roads. Another growth model based on other sectors such as tourism and entertainment would lead rather to the substantial increase in passenger flows by plane or rail. Ultimately, the bickering and disagreement among Catalan institutions over priority infrastructures and their inability to define concrete and agreed investment plans and programmes have not eased the task of central government when deciding upon infrastructure building in Catalonia. On the other hand, the existence of a strong corporate group managing transport infrastructure, and the water and energy sectors, should improve the management of the existing networks and introduce a more efficient tariff system -in particular of direct motorway tolls, traditionally imposed based on criteria far removed from the efficient management of traffic and territorial equity-.

What new technologies will be available in the next two decades remains one of the greatest uncertainties we need to live with. Will there be integration of communication and navigator systems, the hydrogen car, nuclear fusion and magnetic levitation? How about new salt water desalination technologies, the exploitation of aquifers, aerogenerators, more efficient solar panels and new pipeline transport systems? Genetic

engineering or biotechnology at large, could lead to substantial improvements in human life, prolonging human life to over 100 years. Equally uncertain are the limits of natural resources and of the planet's capacity to cope with environmental impacts, for instance CO₂ emissions provoking the gradual rise in temperatures of the planet.

As for the global problems affecting Catalonia, the most environmentally significant are climate change, deforestation and hydrological deficits. The landscape in Catalonia is relatively fragile and difficult to restore. If the extraordinary rise in temperature should be confirmed, the risk of forest fires in the summer would increase whereas the capacity of the soil to absorb rain water would decrease, as fatally occurs in the autumn season. On the other hand, the rising sea level could accelerate the salinisation of deltas and damage coastal infrastructure and buildings. The North and South divide, particularly acute in the Mediterranean area, encourages high migratory flows and exacerbates latent cultural tensions. The greater risks and costs for Catalonia arise from autumn showers, summer forest fires and road accidents; the reduction of either requires more efficient management of land use and of mobility demand.

To conclude, the greatest complexity today derives from the increasing interdependency across sectors and scales. It creates new challenges for local, regional, national or international governments, both in terms of efficiency and legitimacy. The territorial organisation and division into zones falling under different and exclusive administrative jurisdictions is in direct conflict with the de-location parameters of companies, families and the operators of inter-relational networks. Historical legitimacy can no longer justify the efficiency problems of the administrations. New forms of co-operation and institutional reform are required to confront new territorial problems, which may indeed have more diffuse and volatile causes but certainly more concrete impacts on a given place and on people.

Many of the social conflicts arising in Catalonia in recent years have a specifically territorial foundation whereby a social group contests an infrastructure project or some other government or business initiative: the Gavarres power line, the eolic parks in the Pàndols range, the Cardona landfill, the Bracons tunnel, the Ebro River transfer, the fourth ring road, pig slurry in the Ter basin, segregation of marginalised population nuclei in Sant Miquel de Balanyà, secession of municipalities such as Badia and Salou or of entire counties; and so, a long list of conflicts as extensive as for any of our neighbouring countries. So far, conflicts due to immigration have been few and far between, but there is nevertheless a latent risk, even in such a balanced and traditionally welcoming society as Catalonia's. Health and social assistance services will have to provide better and more personalised services to encourage interaction in an ever more socially and culturally diverse society.

The political state of affairs in Spain indicates that self-government is unlikely to strengthen in the coming years. Europe is unlikely to become the Europe of the people or of the nations without State. As for the Mediterranean, it seems to have temporarily

vanished from the centre of European interests. The transformations occurring in the European institutions and in the framework of Enlargement point towards a reduction in the Commission's budget and the re-nationalisation of policies. Spain will inevitably receive less structural funds and support to agriculture than in the past. With the decrease of net external contributions to the less developed Spanish regions, reducing the fiscal deficit or improving significantly the autonomous financing of Catalonia is likely to become even more difficult. Moreover, while city councils only manage around 5% of Catalan GDP, in the U.K and Denmark these entities manage 12% and 32% respectively. Thus, the contribution of urbanisation and construction activities to the municipal finances continues to generate excessive urbanisation dynamics, dispersed across the territory. The reform and modernisation of the different administrations and their finances is a basic element to acquire more institutional intelligence.

2. Exploring the Future

The number of personal opinions and studies on the future of Catalonia published in recent years is indicative of a growing feeling that times are changing and that after a decade of stability, including demographic, the future is now more uncertain than ever before, with greater opportunities and threats.

In the final years of the 21st c we have been living successive and perpetual presents, oblivious to the long-term future. In every day life, time has simply been one of the multiple operations required to move resources across the territory. Moreover, despite broad acceptance of the relatively ambiguous concept of sustainability, concern for the World we wish to bequeath to future generations has not affected everyday decisions remarkably. Hence, it is not surprising that since the sixties and seventies, the work of the Club of Rome and other institutions has contributed to discredit futuristic visions due to their popularity in more open debates. Nevertheless, in 1984 La Caixa hosted a one off international gathering under the title *Prospective of the year 2000: man, society and the World*.

It is also true that since the 1992 World Summit in Rio, many significant works have been carried out on the future of the planet from a sustainability perspective, and organisations such as the World Watch Institute publish annual reports on the state of the environment and future trends that complement the prospective works of international bodies such as the United Nations, the OECD and the World Bank. At the beginning of the 1990s, a first interdisciplinary and prospective study was carried out for Catalonia by the IEMed: *Catalunya 2010: prospectiva mediterrànea*.

Between this first study and *Catalunya a l'Europe del 2010* recently published by the Bofill Foundation, several other strategic analyses have been published; notably, *Catalunya segle XXI* and *Catalunya demà*, the result of interdisciplinary working groups that were hoping to serve as a platform for political debate. More recently, in the so-called *Concert d'idees per al segle XXI*, published in issue 8 of the magazine IDEES, the Centre of Studies of Contemporary Issues presents a broad picture of the question at

hand, complementing the series *Documents de reflexió estratègica* and part of the CAT21 Government Plan, and the collection *Territorio y Gobierno*. Other important strategic analyses of a more sectorial character have also been published: *Catalunya futur: Impulsem l'economia catalana, l'Economia catalana davant del canvi de segle* by the BBV, *Informe per a la Catalunya del 2000* by the Jaume Bofill Foundation, *La Societat Catalana* supported by IDESCAT and finally, some white papers analysing key sectors and policies, such as agriculture, cultural industries or the new occupational sectors.

Some departments of the Generalitat have realised sectoral prospective studies, such as the Department of Universities and Research for the Information Society or the Department of Labour, Industry, Commerce and Tourism, who developed a strategic report on the future of Catalonia in the 21st c. From the perspective of institutional relations between Catalonia, Spain and Europe, the Catalan Centre of Prospective published the study *Catalunya a l'horitzó 2015. Opcions polítiques per al segle XXI*, includes a series of scenarios based on different political models ranging from *integration* with Spain, to *federalism* and *sovereignty*. From an environmental perspective, in the *Paisatge ambiental de Catalunya al 2050*, of the Department of the Environment, three extreme scenarios are elaborated, based on the discussions by experts on the issue of the future of the landscape: *ecologicalism* (an idealistic vision of the ecological reconstruction of Catalonia following a serious technological accident in 2014); *Sand and palm trees* (a catastrophic vision of Catalonia in line with the most dramatic ecological predictions); and *Virtual but nevertheless real : the Noosphere* (the vision of an exacerbated technological optimism, capable of pushing the planet beyond its current boundaries and recreating a completely independent Second Human Nature).

Based on all the works of strategic analysis, the following table aims to provide a broad explanatory synthesis of changes and trends occurring in different ambits, arbitrarily grouped into three episodes of 20 years:

	1960-1980	1980-2000	2000-2020
Demography	From 4 to 6 million	We are 6 million	From 6 to 8 million?
Technology	Transport networks	Information networks	Communication networks?
Economy	Industrial protectionism	Tertiary sector globalisation	G-local integration?
Society	Large-scale migration	Demographic stability	Various migrations?
Politics	Authoritarian centralism	Democratic self-government	Participatory governance?
Institutional framework	Spain	The Spain of the autonomies	The Europe of States?
Culture	Dissolution of an identity	Recovery of an identity	Recreation of an identity?
Spatial planning	Suburbanization	Periurbanization	Discontinuous

			rururbanization?
Environment	Limits on growth	Sustainable development	

The ideas in the above table could in turn be organised in terms of ideas under the following headings:

- Techno-economic: the Space of Flows
 - Networks of international financial flows at the core of the economy
 - Economic globalisation
 - Knowledge and information creation and management
 - New technologies (hydrogen, solar-eolic, biotechnoly, etc)
- Socio-political: the Network Society
 - North-South divide
 - Growing population migration from South to North and greater personal mobility
 - Social organisations virtual networks
 - Expansion of the “euro zone” and a weaker EU vis-à-vis Member States
 - Post-nationalism in modern Spain: the Fiscal Balance
 - Institutions with corporate intelligence
 - Informed and participatory democracy
- Cultural: the Open Identity
 - Interculturality: multiethnic Catalans?
 - Active education to grasp the surrounding growing complexity
 - Multiple virtual identities
 - Rapid social mobilisation, more conflicts over concrete problems
 - Loss of collective citizen values and sentiments: individualism
- Spatial and environmental
 - Greater segregation of uses: discontinuous cities
 - Excessive rigidity of the property market
 - Specialisation in flows of over-layered networks
 - More relations and greater mobility of passengers and freight
 - Major energy consumption and development of alternative sources
 - Stabilisation of water consumption and better sanitation
 - High emissions into the atmosphere unless there are technological development

- Growing risks and vulnerability of the territory

In terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the following table could be drawn:

STRENGTHS: equilibrium	WEAKNESSES: external dependency
Collective rather than historical myths of progress	Migratory waves
Social cohesion and dynamic	The digital revolution still imminent
Territorial balance	Insufficient training in the new technologies
Diversity of exporting SMEs	Shortage of RTD; Too few Catalan multinational companies
Mediterranean landscape	Tourism is a risky sector
Quality of life	Diffused urbanisation; Productive infrastructure deficit (airport...)
Few critical situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - poverty pockets - dilapidated neighbourhoods - highly contaminated rivers - landscape degradation along the coast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - degraded coastal landscape - natural hazards (floods, forest fires, climate...) - Shortage of natural resources (energy, water)
	Politics: limited self-government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribution of competencies and local financing - Negative fiscal balance - Insufficient autonomous financing - Non-participatory governments
THREATS: stagnation and disintegration	OPPORTUNITIES: self-organized creativity
Centrifuge multiculturality	Interculturality as a traditional value
Rapid mobilisation of minorities	Civil dynamic: Network Protest Society
Progressive industrial delocalisation	Large internal market
More congestion due to lack of infrastructure	Technological conversion of exporting companies
Insufficient connection with Europe and the Mediterranean area	Exploitation of tourism sector
Shortage of natural resources	Leader companies in the management of key sectors
Pressure on the landscape	Building of new transport infrastructure
Impact of the agricultural reform	
Provincial Spain	Intelligent institutions
Little influence in Europe	Subsidiarity and multi-level interdependence
Insufficient coordination between administrations	Multilateralism: inter-Mediterranean cooperation

There are strategic questions that benefit from relatively high levels of social awareness (for instance, housing), others that have been identified by experts (for instance, the depletion of the ozone layer or the fact that the expansion of the logistic and industrial area of the Llobregat delta can cause congestion in motorway accesses to the Port in a matter of few years), and some which are perceived as contradictory by experts and citizens (for instance the tolerable level of security and risk). At present, there are many

social and political conflicts based on territorial and environmental issues, arising from different perceptions regarding the nature of a problem or from the so-called “Not here!” syndrome, that is, the systematic opposition of those directly affected by projects involving some form of traumatic territorial transformation, be it eolic parks, river transfers or new roads. The sociological and political dynamics of such conflicts, their creation and evolution involve important challenges for governing the territory.

These challenges are common to all territories and levels of governance, even to those with more deeply rooted planning traditions. It is significant that recent evaluations of regional development policies carried out in the different member states under the auspices of the European Commission show that, with the exception of the Nordic countries and Germany, and perhaps France, territorial planning and prospective studies ceased to be a common practice in the eighties and nineties. This decline can be partly attributed to the fact that conventional methods and techniques were being overwhelmed by the growing complexity of social and territorial dynamics.

The studies *Catalunya 2010* of the IEMed and *Catalunya a l'Europa del 2010* of the Bofill Foundation are the only published studies to have defined reference scenarios or visions of the future of Catalonia, albeit with no truly quantified predictions. The scenarios of the Bofill Foundation are the same presented in *Scenarios Europe 2010: Five Possible futures for Europe (1999)*.

The five European scenarios basically refer to four positions that we can rather schematically and grotesquely label: neoliberal (triumphant markets, trains on the move, the engine of Europe) eco-anarchist (a hundred flowers, new technologies, creative societies), conservative (law and order and resistance) and social democrat (shared responsibilities). It is impossible to establish precise classifications of the scenarios, but some are close to the precepts of the Third Way, while others are closer to what we could call Liberal Communitarism, for instance.

On the other hand, the works that have actually produced quantitative forecasts in some sectors have not examined in much detail the scenarios or visions they refer to. Below are some examples of works carried out in the sectors of demography, economy, transport, water and energy.

The 1998 population forecasts of IDESCAT published in *Projeccions de població de Catalunya 2010-2030*, are available for three different scenarios (called low, central, tendential or high) and arrive at estimated figures of 6.230.000 to 6.860.000 million inhabitants in 2020. These predictions were elaborated in 1998 based on a hypothesis of low migratory balance (between 2.500 and 15.000 persons per year, according to the scenario) as compared to that which actually occurred in 1999 (around 20.000). Based on these forecasts, updated or contrasted in view of the proposal of 7.500.000 inhabitants for Catalonia laid out in the General Territorial Plan, other governmental departments have carried out prospective work, often to support the drafting of sectoral plans.

The Department of Economy and Finance of the IDESCAT has elaborated four macro-economic scenarios for the Catalan economy (low, medium-low, medium-high and high), where the medium-high scenario positions Catalonia at 10% of GDP above the European average in 2010. The Directorate General of Architecture and Housing has realised forecasts according to a single trend scenario in the horizon of 2010.

In the 2010 Energetic Plan for Catalonia, the Institut Català de l'Energia defines the BASE (or tendential) and EEI (or Energy Efficiency Intensity) scenarios, inspired by the "Tendential and Forum" scenarios of the prospective document *European Union Energy Outlook 2020* of the European Commission. The scenarios use as reference the tendential and medium-low scenarios for population and the economy respectively.

The Catalan Water Agency proposes in the Internal Basin Plan for Catalonia two combined scenarios of population and water consumption: a tendential scenario of 7.500.000 inhabitants resulting in an increase in water demand of 182,9 hm³ and a scenario of intensive savings with an increase in demand of 47,7 hm³. It then proposes scenarios of tendential water consumption and intense savings based on a population of 7.000.000 inhabitants resulting in demands of 132,3 hm³ and 9,1 hm³ respectively.

The Territorial Planning Secretariat of the Department of Territorial Policy and Public Works has developed a forecast road traffic model called SIMCAT. This model is currently being used to revise the Road Plan and to support the Partial Territorial Plans. It predicts that, assuming that a road network such as the one laid out in the 1995 Road Plan is fully operational, the percentage of congested or nearly-congested road network in 2026 is likely to increase from 7 to 18% in Catalonia, and from 23 to 41% in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, with traffic rising from 80.000.000 to approximately 140.000.000 cars per km.

The Institute for the Development of the Ebro Counties has developed a monitoring system of the recently approved Partial Territorial Plan called SIRGA. SIRGA includes modules of demographic forecasts and land-use requirements and has managed to show that, based on the most recent demographic trends in the region, attaining the objective set out in the Territorial Plan of 80.000 inhabitants by 2026 is in fact the most plausible scenario.

Many of the municipal or county strategic plans developed in Catalonia carry out prospective exercises. For instance, in the case of the Strategic Metropolitan Plan, the Prospective Commission has carried out forecasts of housing demand with a twenty year horizon estimating some 500.000 houses will be needed. The exercise assumes the sustained growth of the economy generating tax revenues of 1,1% and employment growth in the order of 1,25%.

3. Visions of Catalonia, The Debate.

Although prospective studies and forecast models are still relatively few and far between in Catalonia, many politicians and experts have published their visions; not so

much of plausible futures as of ones they themselves personally propose for Catalonia. In general, they consist of reasoned arguments about principles and objectives leading to more or less concrete and quantified social, economic, environmental or territorial propositions. Of all the visions identified and listed in the biography, some are described below, grouped into four different types.

If we still wish to imagine the future today, it is not so that we can create a perfect world, but in order to deepen, objectively, into some unanswered questions and share these results in debates open to many other considerations.

The answer to each question cannot be given in isolation from others; every response depends as much on the expectations created along the evolution of global trends as on the impact of determined decisions and policies. In other terms, the answers only make sense in the context of a specific vision of the future that integrates consistent expectations for all sectors.

At the end of last year, the Circle for Knowledge published a vision of a Catalonia capable of jumping into the bandwagon of the Information Society. The Ignasi Vilallonga Economy and Business Institute published a series of articles and documents on the need to structure the Mediterranean Arc Euroregion (EU-RAM) for the development of the Mediterranean axis. Some months ago, the Urban Ecological Agency jointly edited with the Barcelona City Council a study proposing a more sustainable vision of Barcelona and its metropolitan region, directly extended to the rest of Catalonia. Barcelona Regional presented Richard Forman's ecological proposals, coinciding and contradicting in parts the vision defended by the Institute of Territorial Studies. This latter vision was conceived based on the studies carried out prior to the Barcelona Metropolitan Territorial Plan and the partial territorial plans designed to complete the already approved plan on the Terres de l'Ebre. The Barcelona Strategic Territorial Plan, which resulted from a long series of works and debates, has also formulated a document with visions for the future. The Promotion of Work and the Chamber of Commerce have divulged reports demanding of administrations a series of investments and infrastructures considered necessary to pursue their idea of what should be the future economic development of Catalonia. In the meantime, old and new platforms of civil society protest against some of the projects being undertaken, proposing alternatives according to their own views, for instance in favour of a new water culture.

Equally interesting are the dozens of books, essays and articles published in recent years by politicians and experts in different sectors, many of which are included in the bibliography: *l'Estimada pàtria* by Josep M. Puigjaner, *La Catalunya inacabada* by Pere Baltà, *Catalunya es revolta* by Xavier Garcia, *Ni som ni serem* by Xavier Roig, *6 milions d'innocents* by the J.B. Boix collection, *Modernitzar Catalunya* by Miquel Puig, *Catalunya entre la perplexitat i el somni* by Antoni Vives, *Catalunya com a projecte* by Àngel Castiñeira and *Ciutat de ciutats* or *Aquí no!* by Oriol Nel.lo.

Despite the extraordinary diversity of points of view and the vitality of the debate, in Catalonia, as in so many developed European countries, there is remarkable consensus regarding collective objectives and principles, articulated around concepts of catalanism and sustainable development.

The Global objectives of Catalonia 2000-2020 could be classified as follows:

- To guarantee the security of all people and their belongings
- To maintain social cohesion
- To revitalise the Catalan culture, favouring interculturality
- To stimulate continuous, active and interdisciplinary education
- To promote creativity and entrepreneurial culture
- To promote technological innovation
- To connect the territory to transport and communication networks
- To guarantee the availability and efficient use of natural resources
- To ensure levels of environmental quality locally and globally for all

When dealing with fundamental principles, the discourse on the future of Catalonia seems to fall primarily into four different visions, each responding to one particular priority *historical exigency*:

- Catalonia will be balanced or will not be!
- Catalonia will be digital or will not be!
- Catalonia will be open or will not be!
- Catalonia will be ecological or will not be!

Each vision, can be characterised as follows:

3.1. *The traditional vision, revisited: Catalonia-City*

Catalonia enjoys social and territorial equilibrium, diversity of open economic sectors and an established cultural identity. In the face of current economic and technological uncertainties and the likely stagnation in the years to come of the level of self-government, it is timely to deepen in issues of territorial balance (still largely incomplete), reinforce social cohesion (threatened by the new migratory waves) and defend Catalonia's cultural identity (jeopardised by globalisation), all of which are necessary to support Catalonia's harmonious development. It is incumbent upon civil society to lead the great projects of future economic and technological development, with the necessary support from the public administrations. Emblematic interventions for the promotion of cultural identity, social cohesion and territorial balance such as have been made in recent years should continue, for instance: TV3, the deployment of

regional police forces, the Transversal Road Axis, the Segarra-Garrigues Canal, the new INCASOL polygons and the policies on Social Welfare. We should also look towards the Italian region known as the Terza Italia, Flandres, Scotland or even Denmark for valuable references.

3.2. The most necessary vision? Nodal-Catalonia

Catalonia has a sound corporate base that has survived the opening to European and International markets. However, there is still a shortage in terms of volume and excellence in strategic sectors and in Catalan multinational companies. Without the ability to excel in some internationally strategic areas, Catalonia will tend progressively towards economic dependence and decline, unable to maintain social cohesion and loosing cultural vitality. The public institutions should lead Catalonia into the Information Society, promoting activities in strategic sectors of sufficient quality and volume, for instance in biotechnology or multimedia contents. They should stimulate research in technological development and be outward looking in the same way countries similar in size such as Switzerland and Finland have done in the past. Scientific and technological parks in Catalonia require greater specialisation and critical volume, new cooperation models between companies and universities need to be established and there ought to be greater interregional integration in the Mediterranean Arc Euroregion. The new infrastructures such as the extension of the port and airport of Barcelona or the new High Speed Rail connecting Catalan cities and neighbouring regions currently under construction need to start generating benefits before any of the strategic steps required for the development of Catalonia are taken.

3.3. The most adequate vision? Global-Catalonia

Catalonia is by definition an open and welcoming place, attracting population and external activities of all kinds. Congruence between a dynamic civil society and the public institutions have contributed to making of Catalonia a creative place, harbouring acknowledged artists, offering an unrivalled quality of life, World leader in the tourism industry and with extraordinary capacity to organise great international sporting and cultural events. In a world where tourism and leisure in areas such as culture and technology are becoming key sectors, Catalonia has nothing to envy regions such as California, and should not hesitate to make of this emerging sector a true engine of the country's economy. The success of installations such as the Port Aventura theme park or rally circuits, the celebration of fairs and congresses, major sporting and cultural events such as the Olympic Games or the Forum 2004, made of Barcelona the European city with most growth in tourism. The objective is clearly to exploit the array of opportunities offered in this context by a more globalised World before it's too late.

3.4. The most responsible vision? Eco-Regional Barcelona

Catalonia, like the rest of the world needs to introduce corrective elements into the social and economic model in force in order to evaluate the limits of accelerated growth and the risk of excessive economic dependency of the few large companies, mostly

foreign, and of those sectors which depend most on the state of the global economy. Development strategies should be based on promoting endogenous growth, traditional clusters, co-operatives and integration into networks of exogenous activities. The Agenda 21 process is a first step towards greater awareness of the state of uncertainty in which we live, and we should adopt the precautionary principle at all levels to minimise risk. Diminishing social disequilibriums should be a priority in terms of income levels, access to housing, health and education, but we also need to stimulate more active participation of social society, channelling reactive movements that are emerging at different points of the territory towards a more proactive role. Acknowledgement of the irreversibility of land occupation processes and its environmental impact makes urban remodelling and new more intensive mixed uses of occupation a priority, designed to include participation insofar as possible, in order to adapt to the specific development potentials of each place.

3.5. Governance and the future as pact for progress

Any one of these visions assumes the evolution of a more complex society. Government will require more institutional intelligence to anticipate problems and to guarantee more stable and active citizen an institutional participation in decision-making processes. Social movements will react faster to specific and topical problems, with often antagonistic objectives (green groups defending the valleys, businesses demanding investments in better communication infrastructure). The legitimacy of public administrations in societies where consensus regarding key collective objectives is high will depend far more on the efficiency with which government is able to anticipate solutions to emerging problems than on historical or moral authority.

Ultimately, however, what we are facing are four schematic visions of Catalonia, neither of which is very compelling. Rather than wasting time trying to choose the least abhorrent, by examining each vision carefully and detecting the various inconsistencies, we can attempt to develop new visions and concepts, less abstract and more operational, while acknowledging that these will not be complete or consistent either. The final aim of such a work is not to concoct the perfect plan to create the perfect state, but to think about the underlying interdependence between sectors and geographical scales, to observe that consolidated order in a given sector or a given scale can bring disorder and mishaps in others, and to be able to distinguish what is, simply and fundamentally, from what is only passing and ephemeral. Ultimately, territorial transformations are very difficult to reverse, even more so than social and cultural ones.

For more information and documentation related see: <http://www.catalunya2020.net>