

## FAT COWS, LEAN COWS



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Next year I want to celebrate my professional Golden Anniversary. I started in 1966, a time in which the country was going through another building boom, to give shelter –any old how- to a growing population which migrated from the countryside to the cities, thanks to the economic boom of the moment, was moving to the urbanisations of “garden city”, to obtain a second residence or to get a modern and improved first one.

The Architects started to learn, from one side, how to build tower blocs, high and dense, in places where before there were groups of old small **rural houses**, in emerging urban fabrics not much regulated by urban planning. On the other, to parcel plots where farming was being abandoned, making use of precarious local spatial plans, which later on would be used to fill them in with detached houses or villas, where the families could feel fulfilled, after having lived a long and grey postwar.

But as we already find in the Bible, with the seven fat cows and the seven lean cows of the pharaoh's dream interpreted by Joseph, the euphoria of the late

'60s ended up in the recession of the late '70s which especially hit the property market of Barcelona at the end of that decade.

With a New Land Act and its regulations approved at the time a State level, the Barcelona Metropolitan Urban Master Plan –which came by the hand of the **friends of Solans i Serratosa**- and its influence all over Catalonia and finally with de “calling” of the friend Cantalops from the brand new General Direction of Urban Planning of the retrieved Generalitat, declaring what he called the “war to the bulldozers” and reminding us that “behind every plan there is the signature of an architect” many professionals, we relied on spatial planning convinced that, with its tools, we could remake –this time with good sense- the mess that the snatching of de previous economic period hat left all over our territory.

These are the origins of the master plans of the '80s which, good or bad, would introduce a difference in the way to understand planning because, for the first time, they included the establishment of instruments for an interdisciplinary management which, no one can deny, allowed those of us who became involved, within the realms of possibility to bring order to so many municipal territories were previously was missing.

But history repeats itself, and just right when the professionals were starting to know a bit about it, around the 2000s, the group was joined coming in uninvited by mere “traders of whatever product” and speculators, converting our architectonic product “houses to live in” or “units to work in” into more financial products, clumsily priced and commercialized, in a way that the whole real-state property sector ended up devoured by the turbulences of a crisis which we are still going through.

However, it is the fat cows' turn again –at least that is what the Bible said- and we have to take advantage of it. We cannot fall into the same errors again, and this is why as professionals we should get more involved in the transversality of our sector. Architects, engineers, lawyers, environmentalists, economists, we have to overlap much more our different knowledge and professional practices

and block to entry to new opportunistic traders and speculators who, very soon, will be back knocking at our door, this time disguised as who knows what.

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