

## “GALICIA’S HURRICANE”: ACTOR NETWORKS AND ICONIC CONSTRUCTIONS\*

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**ABSTRACT.** Monumental constructions are created for a purpose, often as a symbolic representation of a particular vision of a people or a place. Spain’s Cidade da Cultura, a museum conceptualized by Galicia’s former president with the hubristic goal of creating a world icon, is one such example. Like many iconic constructions, the Cidade da Cultura project was highly contentious and sparked a regionwide political debate, vastly overran its projected cost, and years later remains controversial and incomplete. An actor-network theory analysis of why the project failed reveals the different roles played by individual components in the vast network of actors, including the monument itself, which came to exercise influence over the outcome of the project. Because the former president could not fully control this expanding network of actors, events soon spun out of control in what became popularly known as “Galicia’s Hurricane.”  
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In 1999 Manuel Fraga Iribarne, president of the autonomous Spanish region of Galicia, ordered the construction of the Cidade da Cultura (CdC), an emblematic, six-building complex dedicated to the preservation, celebration, and production of Galician culture and identity. In Fraga’s own words, the project was to be a “beacon for culture . . . [,] the greatest effort in the last centuries . . . [, and] conceived with greatness, representative of all Galicia” (GCXG n.d.).

Not all Galicians, however, shared this vision. Despite Fraga’s claims regarding the numerous benefits for the region, the grandiose project has generated much controversy. Although many Galicians anxiously await its completion, local opposition to the CdC has ranged from verbal discontent to attempted arson. Among the more critical local media it rapidly acquired the name “Fraga City,” suggesting that Fraga’s personal agendas, such as the encouragement of tourism or the construction of a grandiose monument to himself, influenced his political strategy to manipulate Galicia’s image (Seoane 2001). This, in addition to accusations of government graft, cronyism, and nepotism, fueled controversies surrounding the building that coalesced to form what became known colloquially as “Galicia’s Hurricane,” a tumultuous mix of political, cultural, and national sentiments encapsulated within an unfinished structure that purportedly represents the region.

Confident in his vision and authority, Fraga never anticipated that the complex network of human and nonhuman actors that came to surround it would erode his control of the project. Political tensions within and across party lines

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also plagued its timely advancement. Not only did the CdC project greatly exceed its initial projected completion date and triple in cost during its first years of construction, it also generated an international controversy.

In a globalizing world, iconic monuments can be drivers of economic development and are increasingly employed in symbolic efforts to assert or “reimagine” places. Urban regeneration projects that incorporate emblematic buildings are often closely linked to highly debated visions of cultural representation that negotiate a historic past with progressive development (Bianchini 1993). Although examinations of the outcome of competing interests and visions for such structures are critical, these studies often focus only on comparing the relative success or failure of projects involved with local cultural investments (van Aalst and Boogaarts 2002). The role of cultural architectural projects in urban redevelopment plans can also have influences that extend far beyond city limits to affect regional, national, and even global discourses (De Frantz 2005).

The controversy surrounding the construction of the CdC therefore is seen best as emblematic of an ongoing struggle among divergent interests over how Galicia should be represented on an international scale as well as a reflection of the various levels of political distrust within the region. In order to bring these divergent interests and the involved actors to the forefront of the discussion, I employ actor-network theory (ANT) as an analytical lens for investigating the layered meanings, unintended consequences, and turmoil generated by the CdC project.

An ANT approach is useful in this investigation because it can elucidate the network of relationships among the many subsidiary individuals and nonhuman actors involved in the CdC project and how the dynamism of these networked assemblages worked to undermine Fraga’s initial plans (Bingham 1996). As Ted Rutland and Alex Aylett attest, ANT “supplies a complementary set of tools to help reveal how political priorities and the capacity emerge *over time*,” due to the influence of humans and nonhumans alike (2008, 633; italics in the original). Following Murdoch (2006, 56–77), I focus on the “translation” of events, or the negotiations and alterations among actors that occurred throughout the mobilizations of networks pertaining to the planning and construction of the CdC over time. Translation, which Michel Callon described as a process in 1999, is never certain to follow a precisely predetermined path and is often quite susceptible to failure. I argue that, in the case of the CdC, the unsuccessful outcome of the project developed as a by-product of the configurations and interactions of actors entrenched in the network over time. Integrated actors, divided by different goals or purposes, became multifarious forces that undermined the stability of the network and the project that depended on it.

Many ANT investigations have focused on how the networks of assembled actors generate unique spatial configurations in time and space. Although networks may be redefined, they can also demonstrate an ability to endure even in the face of major situational changes (Whatmore 1999, 28); or, as Latour explained (1987), it is the interaction of materials and actions that allows networks to remain stable

across space. Because ANT argues that materiality is an effect of unfolding relationships, one can interpret the CdC as the transient physical manifestation—the materialization—of the assemblages (via networks) that extend across space on the local landscape. This materialization of outcomes emerges and can create an order, although that order may be in constant need of maintenance if it is to continue (Law 2009).

The theory is also particularly useful in the case of the CdC because one of its key departures from other theories is its denial of the existence of one prominent actor that single-handedly imposes its commands on others. Moreover, ANT recognizes the role of nonhuman energies, such as the cement, existing bedrock, and local quartzite incorporated into the design of the CdC—each with a price tag and varying degrees of quality and availability. Indeed, it would be incorrect to conceptualize the complex only as a passive or final product on the landscape. The physicality of the accumulative “weight” of this colossus on the Galician landscape actually made the CdC itself an increasingly influential nonhuman actor in the network. Its physical presence was a key factor in generating the storm of controversy surrounding the project.

#### GALICIAN NATIONALISM AND AUTONOMY

Galicia’s unique historic and contemporary political situation influenced Fraga’s desire to create the Cidade da Cultura. The region’s unusually wet climate, coupled with the presence of Celtic ruins on the landscape as well as a unique folklore and language, have contributed to its perceived distinction within Spain as one of the country’s three “historic nationalities,” each of which possesses its own distinct language, history, and culture (Luelmo and Williams 1999). Galicia’s “protonationalist” period began in the nineteenth century and continued through the presentation of a Galician Statute of Autonomy to the Spanish Parliament in June 1936, but the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936 interrupted further progress (García Álvarez 1998, 42). The war ended with the establishment of Francisco Franco y Bahamonde’s fascist dictatorship, during which displays of nationalistic sentiments in Spain were limited to expressions of Franco’s hegemonic vision of Spanish identity and culture.

Gradually, the enforced restrictions spawned such resentment that they inadvertently rekindled some nationalist sentiments in Galicia and other parts of Spain. By the 1960s, nationalist parties were becoming increasingly important political forces (Van Atta 2003). After Franco’s death, Spain successfully framed a constitution in 1978 that recognized seventeen “autonomous communities.” Among the rights granted to the autonomous communities was the ability to establish their own global connections throughout the world, thus effectively allowing each officially recognized region to bypass the state to forge new relationships across national and international lines.

Since the 1980s a Europe-wide transformation in which regions and cities have become increasingly important has encouraged the growth of regional identity

and prerogatives within Spain. The new European single market has done much to reinforce this trend by encouraging competition among regions for investments, technology, and markets (Magone 2003). Consequently, after the installation of the Xunta de Galicia, the region's own cultural government, in 1981, overt efforts to portray Galicia as a progressive, culturally rich region began. As the chief executive of the new government, President Fraga attempted to engage in the growing European regional market by following a path designed to blend Galicia's traditional culture with modern technological innovation (Keating 2001). The CdC is a direct outgrowth of his desire to integrate Galicia into the cultural, economic, and political networks that were extending across Europe and beyond.

#### POLITICAL CONTENTION IN GALICIA

Political divisions within Galicia have also contributed to the CdC controversy. Conservative parties have dominated Galician elections since the region gained autonomy in 1981, but nationalist sentiments are present. However, although his conservative party, the Partido Popular (PP), has publicly emphasized Galician regionalist themes from the first regional elections (Van Atta 2003), President Fraga himself has never gone so far as to support a separatist agenda. During his presidency, he declared that he would "tolerate nothing but mild administrative decentralization" (Núñez 2001, 723). To him, regionalism was different from nationalism; he saw regionalism as a third level of government incorporated within the Spanish state (Fraga Iribarne 1991). His refusal to lobby for greater autonomy made the PP and many of his personal projects the target of nationalist political activism in Galicia (Keating 2001). Thus, in order to fully understand the controversy surrounding the CdC, the project's visionary and his political career demand our attention.

President of Galicia from 1990 to 2005, Manuel Fraga Iribarne, considered one of Spain's most influential political figures, was one of the key collaborators in the composition of the 1978 Spanish Constitution. Nationally recognized as one of the founders of the largest conservative party in Spain, many Spaniards regard him as the "face" of the PP. His role as a Spanish politician is complicated by the fact that he served as Spain's minister of information and tourism under Francisco Franco from 1962 to 1969. Consequently, when Fraga became president of Galicia in 1990, some equated him and the PP with the former Spanish dictatorship (Gemie 2006).

Over time, electoral support in Galicia for the PP has declined. One of the main criticisms raised against the PP was that it exploited its long electoral dominance to pursue policies and projects that benefited the political power of the party at the expense of the region. Accusations of unqualified, nepotistic ministers employed in the Xunta also contributed to a gradual decline of support for the PP in the region (Gemie 2006, 144). Thus, even though President Fraga presented the costly CdC project as a facility for and representative of all Galicians, he did so in a political climate in which the project was increasingly interpreted as a physical manifestation of the PP's control of the region or as using regional funds for a

personal project. As a result, from its inception the CdC became entangled with a broader historic political turmoil.

The genesis of the CdC project dates back to 1995, when it emerged as part of a larger urban development plan for the urban core and rapidly expanding peripheral areas of Galicia's capital city, Santiago de Compostela. President Fraga saw the municipal plan as an opportunity to harness urban development to the goals of generating tourism and invigorating the Galician economy. As Spain's former minister of tourism, he was keenly aware of the role that tourism could play in a city's redevelopment plans. This was of particular interest to him because, although Galicia's famous Xacobeo, or Holy Year of Grace, produced massive tourism revenue, the celebration was not an annual event. President Fraga hoped to create a modern tourist attraction that generated steady revenue for Galicia.

During the celebration of Galicia's 1999 Xacobeo the president publicly asserted his desire for the creation of a structure that would become a center for Galician cultural preservation, promotion, research, and regional advancement. The startling economic success of Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, he said, was one inspiration for his idea. Before the construction of the Guggenheim, the economy of the deindustrialized city of Bilbao was in ruins. To revitalize its decaying urban core the city launched a large urban renewal plan, which included the international museum. The Guggenheim, considered the generator of 80 percent of Bilbao's 1 million annual tourists (Calvo 2001b), provided President Fraga with an example of a successful construction that helped to remake a city's image. He conceptualized the CdC as a means to produce and project far beyond its regional borders a new and progressive Galician culture. In his words, the CdC was to be a "place for drawing together the cultural expression and social interaction of our people with the rest of Europe . . . where today's avant-gardes of technology, thought, and creativity can meet . . . and show the world a modern and developed Galicia" (Fraga Iribarne 2005, 7).

President Fraga also envisioned his CdC complex as a place to host international forums, debates, transnational research, and seminars in a facility equipped with all the latest technologies. The strong emphasis on the advancement of new technology in the CdC reveals his anxiety about the rural and backward image of the economically depressed region. Like that of many cities that have incorporated the construction of iconic edifices into expansive restructuring projects, the president's marketing strategy relied heavily on the CdC to change Galicia's reputation to that of a modern, innovative region (McNeill 2000). But despite his personal aspirations for the complex, an unintended series of events involving the networked interactions of numerous human and nonhuman actors eroded President Fraga's absolute control of the project.

#### THE CIDADE DA CULTURA'S UNFOLDING NETWORK

In order to gain insight into the evolution of the network of actors surrounding the CdC that President Fraga instigated, I conducted interviews in Galicia during

the summer of 2005 and throughout 2008 with more than seventy key city officials, politicians, architects, administrators, and others involved with the construction project. The semistructured interviews were conducted in either Spanish or Gallego—the Galician regional language—based on the respondent’s preference. Although the interviews followed a set of research questions, I allowed respondents the freedom to express unsolicited opinions or observations. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed. I supplemented the information gained from them with more than 250 randomly generated public interviews with ordinary citizens and with a content analysis of all of the articles pertaining to the project that appeared in the two mostly widely read local newspapers, *La Voz de Galicia* and *El Correo Gallego*.

The evolution of the CdC network begins with the project’s two main progenitors and backers, President Fraga and Minister of Culture Xesús Pérez Varela. The president, as I have shown, steadfastly believed the CdC was an unprecedented project that would assure that Galician culture would henceforth evolve with a focus on the outside world. Indeed, President Fraga pompously declared while in New York City during an international promotional tour for the CdC, “At this moment, in the world, there is no other construction project that is as important as the CdC” (Peón 2001). Pérez Varela personally envisaged the museum both as a generator of future revenue and as testimony to Galician aptitude for meeting the challenges of a modern world. His public proclamations often emphasized these two main points. He once boasted that the project would be “a model of the capacity of Galicia to adapt to the new millennium and the information society” (CG 2002). He also took care to remind the public of the financial power of tourism. He avowed that it would increase under the direction of President Fraga, who was an “expert in tourism,” and in the next few years it would become a dependable source of income for the region. Like the president, Pérez Varela used the financial success of Bilbao’s Guggenheim as justification for the CdC project, ignoring the fact that, unlike its successful counterpart, the colossal CdC was a publicly funded endeavor that lacked previously established, internationally renowned cultural connections.

The network of actors involved in the project began to expand with the proclamation of the International Architecture Competition in 1999, when internationally renowned architectural studios received invitations to submit designs for a building that could fulfill Fraga’s vision (Figure 1). As interest in the competition grew, the international configuration of the CdC’s network began to emerge through the interaction of actors and materials, including what Paul Routledge calls “materials of association,” such as the Internet (2008). Nearer to home, the network grew with the addition of local stakeholders and actors, such as the regional bank, Caixa Galicia, which donated land on Monte Gaiás, a hill located in Santiago de Compostela, on which the complex would be constructed.

The merit-based, restricted-participation competition that Pérez Varela and the architect Alfredo Díaz Grande organized stipulated that the CdC was to be

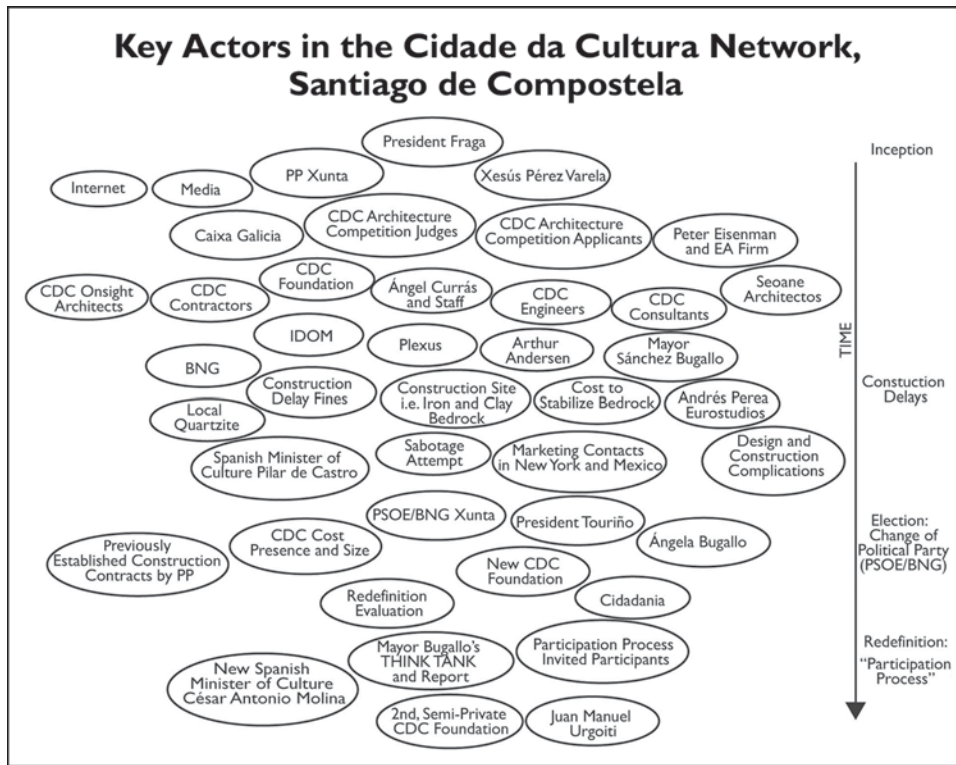


FIG. 1—This schematic shows the accumulation of some of the key actors incorporated within the Cidade da Cultura network as it developed over time. It does not detail the interaction between them. (Diagram by the University of Wisconsin Cartography Lab)

completed by 2004, in time for the city’s famous Xacobeo celebration. Following submissions, the selected jurors for the competition convened in November 1999 to review the designs. President Fraga’s goal of increasing the global recognition and marketability of Galicia influenced the competition’s judging categories and point values. A desire to select an international “star architect” in order to capitalize on his/her name clearly dominated the scaling system, as it represented 50 percent of the maximum points (CCG 2005).

The caliber of the applicants who submitted proposals is testimony to the CdC’s international architectural importance. But only after seeing Peter Eisenman’s design did the jury declare the competition’s victor. Eisenman’s 141,800-square-meter design consisted of a series of auditoriums, libraries, and museums dedicated to Galicia’s heritage and cultural production. Although the names, functions, and dimensions of the buildings have changed over time, the original buildings were the Hemeroteca (newspaper archive), the Biblioteca, the Museo de la Historia, the Teatro de la Música, the Nuevas Tecnologías, and the Servicios Centrales (Figure 2). The six buildings were arranged in pairs as part of a larger comprehensive design that unites the entire complex.

Eisenman, who now became an additional actor in the growing CdC network, explained that visitors should read his postmodern complex as a symbol and “legible text” on the Galician landscape. For this design, he claimed to draw inspiration from the city’s medieval core and the surrounding landscape of Monte Gaiás (Eisenman 2005). Despite the fact that Eisenman’s design received the majority of

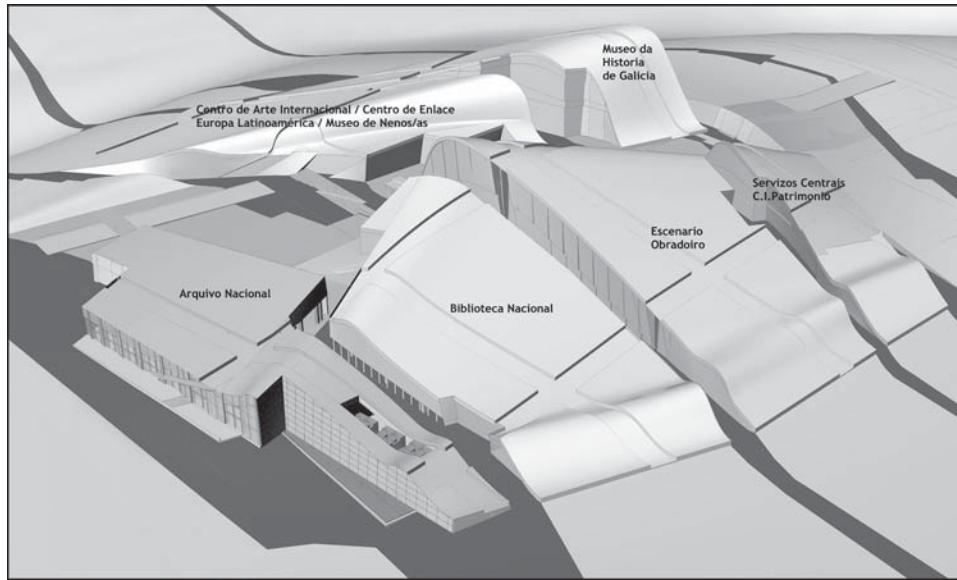


FIG. 2—Aerial view of Peter Eisenman’s modified design for the Cidade da Cultura, Santiago de Compostela, Spain. (Reproduced courtesy of the Cidade da Cultura Foundation)

votes, one of the judges of the competition, Wilfred Wang, voiced strong objections during the selection process. Among other concerns, Wang feared that the design, generated by a computer, would be impossible to construct, and he also criticized the scale and “excessive size” of the proposed complex (BOPG 2007, 32).

During this time Minister of Culture Pérez Varela worked to establish yet another actor, the Fundación Cidade da Cultura, for the purpose of managing the far-reaching network of architects, engineers, consultants, and contractors that stretched across international boundaries. In November 2000 Ángel Currás became the construction director, began to hire his office staff, and contracted with the consulting firm IDOM to manage the engineering of the CdC. In an effort to reach to a wider international audience he hired Plexus, an electronic and software design company, to create an informational Web site, [[www.cidadedacultura.org](http://www.cidadedacultura.org)], that would be available in several languages, including Basque, Catalan, English, French, and German, as well as Spanish. In June 2001 the Xunta de Galicia contracted the U.S.-based accounting and consulting firm Arthur Andersen to conduct a cost-and-development analysis for the future construction project. Even though the completed analysis contains strong warnings of the potential failures that the complex could face if the Fundación Cidade da Cultura did not take



certain measures and address financial risks, critics later claimed that the foundation did not make any amendments to the development and financing strategy (BOPG 2007).

Construction on the CdC began on 19 June 2001. New York–based Peter Eisenman and his affiliates in Eisenman Architects agreed to collaborate with Seoane Arquitectos, a Spanish architectural firm, to create the execution drawings for the complex. Despite Eisenman’s and Seoane’s collaborative efforts, President Fraga quickly grew impatient with what he considered slow progress on the initial drawings and in October 2001 gave the architects a twenty-two-month deadline to finalize and submit the completed execution drawings (BOPG 2007). Concerned that the CdC could not be completed by his initial 2004 target date, the president also implemented a system of fines should construction be delayed. Shortly after President Fraga established these penalties the media began to report various contentious statements he made, in which he suggested that he was not responsible for the construction delays. As discontentment with the project began to emerge within the Galician community, the Bloque Nacionalista Galega (BNG) became one of the loudest opponents to the CdC, contributing much to the media controversy (Redacción 2001).

Frustrations due to delays continued to mount both within the Galician community and in the Xunta. Finally, in July 2002, the Fundación Cidade da Cultura made the decision to expand the network further by hosting a competition for a technical engineer who would join the CdC construction project. A Madrid-based engineer, Andrés Perea and his firm, Eurostudios, eventually won the bid as the construction implementation director for the remaining buildings (CCG 2005). Under the direction of the new firm the project continued, but with the expectation that it would be completed a year later than the original 2004 projection.

In addition to the mounting difficulties he experienced over controlling the progress and direction of the architectural design as well as the technical implementation of the project, President Fraga did not anticipate the challenges that many of the nonhuman actors in the story posed. Over time, the great quantities of building material began to accumulate on the construction site. These materials, in turn, became nonhuman actors incorporated within the network that both contributed to the cost and delegitimized the claim that the CdC represented Galicia (Callon 1999). During an interview, an architect involved in the project explained to me that one of the challenges during the initial construction phase was the inconsistency of the bedrock, which contained hard iron deposits that were particularly difficult and costly to carve out and clear away. The discovery of large clay deposits on the opposite side of the hill that were too soft to provide a secure bedrock foundation further complicated the construction process. Over the course of six months, construction crews removed 1.5 million cubic meters of earth, equal to filling 90,000 dump trucks. The area then had to be reinforced to support the massive weight of the buildings, a process that was far more costly and time consuming than originally anticipated (CdC architect 2008).

Construction materials also contributed to complications. The complex's steepest roof slopes on a 58° angle. In order to waterproof the building's 51-meter-tall surface, construction crews had to pour a layer of concrete that could set on the sloped surface before installing the stone roofing on the exterior. This endeavor proved problematic and costly. Because a dry mixture would fall to the ground before hardening, a special experimental concrete mixture had to be created that would set fast enough to avoid sliding down the building's steep roofline. The first concoction slid to the ground soon after it was sprayed on the inclined surface, forcing crews to temporarily stop construction on the roof; a loss of time and money, both of which were of great concern to President Fraga and the Galician public. Not only did the subsequent experimental concrete not stick to the edifice's sloped surface, but the plastic spray nozzle of the hose used to disseminate the mixture exploded when pieces of stone aggregates blocked it. Fortunately, the third concrete mixture was able to set quickly enough to adhere to the steep slope (Frumkin 2007).

In an effort to fortify the material, visceral, and symbolic connections between the CdC complex and the natural landscape of Galicia, Eisenman decided to use local stone to cover the exterior of the CdC's six buildings (Figure 3). He mandated that each 32-kilo slab be a 50-by-50-centimeter, handcrafted piece of quartzite. Because the surface area covered 73,400 square meters, crews needed to manually secure 240–400 panels a day (BOPG 2007, 42). But the demand for slabs that fit the exact specifications proved to be too labor intensive and costly. Architect Eisenman therefore decided to import the same kind of geological stone from Brazil in order to reduce the ghastly expenditures that were rapidly accruing (Pontevedra 2010). In the end, that decision undermined Eisenman's claim that the CdC would fit naturally and symbolically into the landscape.

Growing discontent over the long-delayed and increasingly expensive museum complex had begun to foment strong criticism and poignant controversy within the Galician community. For example, in November 2001 local newspapers reported the scandalous news of a failed sabotage attempt on the CdC construction site. Although the PP government quickly attributed the bombing attempt to "radical independents," it was ultimately unable to identify a culprit (CG 2001).

Despite the growing controversy in Galicia, President Fraga continued to generate affiliations with new actors, particularly ones involved with international promotion for the CdC, which further extended the network outward across international space. For example, in 2001 President Fraga and the Spanish Minister of Culture, Pilar del Castillo Vera, traveled to Mexico City to promote the CdC project by emphasizing Galicia's connection with Latin America, a historic destination for Galician emigrants and the present home of large numbers of Galician migrants and their descendants. To the president, the establishment of new trans-Atlantic cultural and commercial networks was important not only for Galicia but also for the success of the CdC. Based on his calculations, the thousands of Galicians living in Mexico would have much to gain by visiting the cultural com-

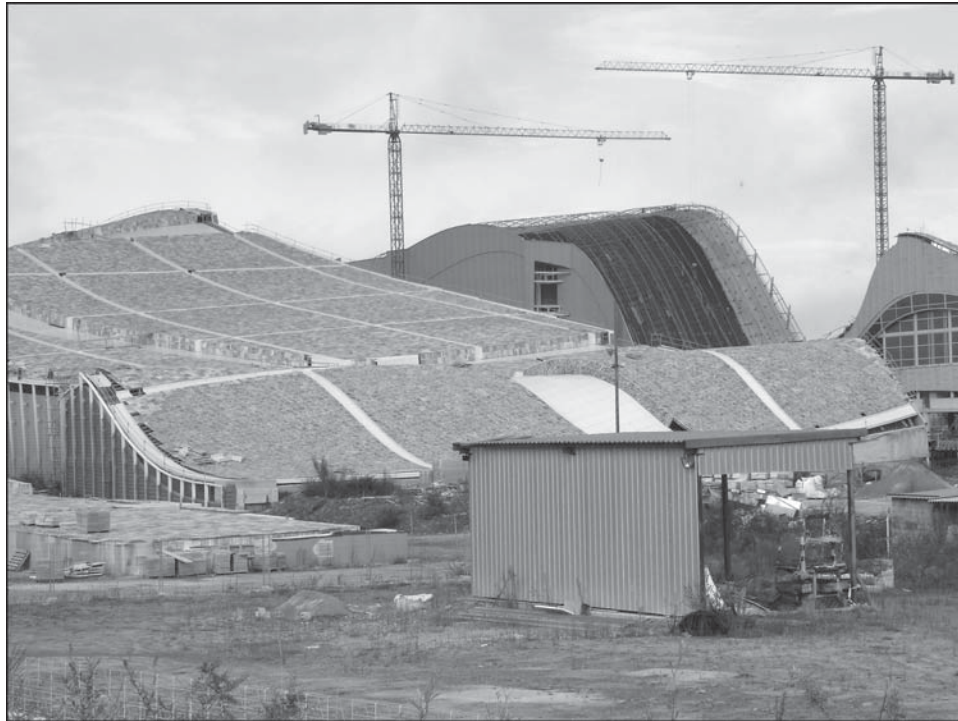


FIG. 3—Eisenman’s selected granite slabs are visible on the exterior of a Cidade da Cultura building, Santiago de Compostela, Spain. (Photograph by the author, November 2008)

plex. Shortly after their time in Mexico, the president and the minister traveled to New York City to join Eisenman in promoting the project in the United States (Calvo 2001a).

As the debate over the CdC’s purpose and image raged within the region, political tensions were further intensified in the 2005 elections when a hybridized Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE)/BNG party defeated the PP. Fraga’s electoral loss suddenly transferred the costly CdC project into the hands of the opposition. The change of power not only affected government appointments but also brought about a change in the direction, directors, and programs for the CdC network that the ousted government had established six years prior. In fact, shortly after taking office on 5 August 2005, newly elected President Emilio Pérez Touriño (PSOE) and Vice President Anxo Quintana González (BNG) abruptly called a halt to construction in order to evaluate the status of the project and the former government’s expenditures.

The new PSOE/BNG government appointed Ánxela Bugallo Rodríguez (BNG) to serve as the new minister of culture, replacing Xesús Pérez Varela as director of the Fundación Cidade da Cultura. As the new government worked to calculate the actual maintenance costs for the complex, rumors that the PSOE/BNG, which had so vehemently opposed the project prior to and during the election, might now



FIG. 4—The curved roofline and construction cranes of the looming Cidade da Cultura can be glimpsed from Santiago de Compostela’s iconic cathedral. (Photograph by the author, December 2008)

move forward with a redesigned construction spawned a media frenzy that occupied front-page space in regional newspapers. Although Santiago de Compostela’s mayor, Xosé Sánchez Bugallo (PSOE), publicly endorsed completion of the project, more than 2,000 people responded to an opinion poll about whether the construction of the CdC should continue. The split decision—54 percent said no, 45 percent said yes—reflects the public’s divided opinion regarding the complex (LV 2005).

By this time the international recognition that the CdC had garnered and the immense finances that had already been invested in it had made the complex itself a significant actor, one with the “ability” to coerce the politicians who had inherited it. The physical embodiment of the PP’s initial network loomed on the outskirts of the capital city as a visual reminder of the networks that were already established, which were still capable of exerting a powerful economic and emotional influence (Figure 4).

The reported cost of the inherited project had by now ballooned from €132.8 million to €373.7 million. Although many Galicians, particularly within the BNG party, had strongly criticized the CdC project, signed contracts between the previous government and several construction companies strongly compromised the new government’s ability to abandon it. Acknowledging that it was “too late to

stop the monster” (Losa 2005), the government announced that the immense finances already invested compelled them to continue construction of a project that was intimately associated with their political rival. As the BNG government spokesperson stated during an interview with me:

The grave, serious problem with the PP’s CdC was that there was no initiative or planning, no cultural plan, no economic planning. It was just a megalomaniac plan created by certain politicians. Now that we have control of it, we decided to manage the project, including its previously established million euro contracts. It’s a project we never would have done, but now that it’s here, we have to manage it the best we can. . . . We are a nation without a state and need the infrastructure, and we now have an opportunity with the CdC. (Aymerich 2008)

On 19 August 2005, Minister of Culture Bugallo announced that the complex would undergo a reformulation and reinterpretation process to distinguish it from that of the PP and to ensure that it would better serve the Galician community. In September of that year she reported that construction of the last two buildings, *Nuevas Tecnologías* and the *Teatro de la Música*, would be suspended for fourteen months, during which time a reconstituted *Fundación Cidade da Cultura* would redefine the buildings (CCG 2005). The new foundation asked Eisenman to modify some of the interior spaces while maintaining the overall form of the complex’s grand design (LV 2005).

Perceiving the CdC as an instrument for the “true” cultural representation of Galicia, in January 2006 the new government decided to host a “participation process” through which selected “Galician cultural actors” would voice their opinions, needs, and suggestions regarding the complex. Working with many of the same contractors, banks, and advisers, the CdC’s reassembled network quickly expanded to encompass numerous new human and nonhuman actors. At the same time, during an interview, the city’s mayor told me that, despite the fact that the CdC was a Galician project, its location in the city should have an appropriately beneficial impact on the small city and thus needed a clear plan for future development (Sánchez Bugallo 2008). He therefore added to the network by creating Santiago de Compostela’s own “think tank” to offer suggestions for the complex. The group included not only some of the most prominent contemporary Galician cultural figures but also other national and international cultural critics, professors, and members of similar projects in Europe, thereby further expanding what had become an exceedingly amorphous network.

The *Fundación Cidade da Cultura* also decided to hire *Cidadania*, a cultural consulting company, to ensure appropriate management of the participation process. *Cidadania* organized a series of twenty conferences during May through September 2006 that ranged from small groups, to roundtable debates, to large forum discussions, and even to a Web forum so that the general public could participate. By incorporating different cultural, historical, and social perspectives into a series of structured dialogues, the foundation’s overall objective was to effectively foster a new cultural image of Galicia through a “reenvisioned” CdC.

One of the most judicious suggestions raised during this redefinition process was to involve private investors as well as external governmental agencies such as the European Community or the Spanish government, in order to help finance and internationalize the complex. In addition to expanding the network, many participants also recommended emphasizing the role that Galicia plays in European and Latin American relations in order to further foster global networks among these connections. Realizing the importance of a marketable “brand,” creating one that would be associated with quality and international respect for the CdC also became a central theme in the discussions (Cidadania 2006).

Similarly, the Fundación Cidade da Cultura decided to conceptually redesign individual buildings to foster international collaboration. For example, the CdC’s Centro de Arte Internacional was to encompass a large exposition space for temporary, yet prestigious, exhibitions, which would be facilitated by the networked collaboration of several international museums. In order to appeal to both local and international audiences, some of the CdC’s art advisers suggested pairing modern and contemporary artwork with examples of fashion, design, or other thematic disciplines from various traveling collections in this display space. Ultimately the intention for this museum was to create and promote a unique artistic image within the European community, while boosting Galicia’s cultural tourism and investment. In October 2008 President Pérez Touriño announced that he intended to make the CdC a joint private-public–managed project like Great Britain’s Tate Gallery, Paris’s Pompidou Center, or Bilbao’s Guggenheim, not only to help internationalize the project but also to diminish its economic dependence on the Galician community. The merger required the incorporation of even more actors within the previously established CdC network. In hopes of establishing a partnership, the president courted various prominent European companies, including Inditex, Citroën, Unión Fenosa, and Banco Pastor. One of the most prominent modifications was the addition of a second, semi-private foundation, the Fundación Gaiás–Cidade da Cultura, to complement the previously established and redefined CdC Foundation.

The director of the second foundation, Juan Manuel Urgoiti, was hired specifically as an intermediary (AGN 2008). Urgoiti’s chief purpose as a codirector of the CdC was to further extend the network globally and incorporate new actors, including various human participants networked throughout the global artistic circuit as well as various nonhuman actors, such as art pieces, to be displayed in the museum. As Rutland and Aylett argue, “interests are translated in the enrolment of different actants” (2008, 643). In the case of the CdC, Urgoiti’s role has been to do just that.

It is important to recognize that, as was the case with the networks that the PP established, some individuals may challenge or oppose the new, ephemeral associations. The new materials incorporated into the project may also present major challenges or roadblocks to its successful completion, and further complications among human actors may occur. Whereas President Pérez Touriño, for example,

publicly proclaimed the CdC to be a state project, Minister of Culture Bugallo denied any relationship with the Spanish government, arguing that the CdC is solely a Galician project (Castro 2007). Her denial reflects the complexities of the BNG’s political and economic relationships with external political organizations. César Antonio Molina Sánchez, Spain’s minister of culture, further heightened hostilities when he brashly denied President Pérez Touriño’s statement and announced that he would not support the project because Minister Bugallo had neither asked nor agreed to collaborate with the Spanish government. As a result, the president felt compelled to explain to the media that, indeed, “certain semantic confusion” had arisen concerning this project (Redacción 2007). The frequent misperceptions about relationships among these politicians with regard to the CdC are an indication not only of a communication breakdown but also of the ongoing tensions that exist between some nationalist sympathizers and the Spanish government.

#### “FRAGA CITY” NO MORE

The Cidade da Cultura originated as President Manuel Fraga Iribarne’s effort to create a salable image for Galicia manifested through one monumental structure inscribed on the landscape. The building was to become the symbolic representation of what he believes Galicia is or should be. The CdC also represents the former president’s attempt to demonstrate the strength and attractiveness of the region for foreign investment in a globalizing world.

Although Galicia is not the only place that has attempted to create internationally recognized iconic buildings for these purposes, President Fraga’s approach was somewhat unorthodox. His intent was to replicate the success of the Guggenheim, the thriving Basque art enterprise that negotiated its inception and integration into Bilbao with the city’s officials. Moreover, while the Guggenheim, only one part of a larger urban-renewal strategy, was inspired by Bilbao, it made no initial claims to represent the Basque city. In contrast, the CdC, which lacked its own art collection and cultural programs, was instigated prior to concretely establishing partnerships with art museums or other cultural institutions. More significant, Peter Eisenman designed the CdC complex with the very specific objective of representing Galicia.

By taking an ANT approach, I have attempted to show how the “subjects and objects of politics and political debate come together in processes of consultation and contestation” (Rutland and Aylett 2008, 643). Despite President Fraga’s promise of a cultural acropolis, one may interpret the CdC as a landscape through which he attempted to establish and legitimize his own political power. To its critics, even the location of the CdC represents an authoritative space. As a number of media editorials have suggested, the massive, looming, and overpowering buildings that lurk high above the city on Monte Gaiás are a physical manifestation of the oppressive force that the former president Fraga and his administration wielded on the city below (Llano 2000). Such impressions seem

to highlight and exacerbate various new and previously existing divisions within Galician society.

Although the CdC began as President Fraga's personal aspiration, the consequent series of events that took place once the project was under way culminated in an unforeseen outcome. By following the development of the growing and increasingly amorphous network of actors surrounding the project, the former president's loss of control of the project is easy to see as a consequence of his having misjudged the forces he had set in motion. My study has also highlighted the complex interplay of relationships between various human and nonhuman actors that influenced the direction and development of the project and underlines the need to investigate the role of both traditional and "nontraditional" actors in narratives like that of the CdC. In this case, the massive complex itself, which became a powerful actor in the story, was able to both weaken its originator's creditability in the region and oblige the PSOE/BNG government to continue a project it had previously abhorred because of its sheer cost, size, and association with President Fraga and the PP. Given the immense investment and the international attention focused on the complex, the PSOE/BNG government changed its narrative about the building and began to reassemble and extend the multiscale network relationships behind the CdC project.

Ultimately, the negotiations about the meaning and purpose of the CdC are a marker of Galician society's contemporary political and cultural conflicts—transformations as well as current efforts to assert its special place and role in a globalizing world. Given Galicia's current emerging regional position in Spain, the European Union, and the world at large, a full appreciation of the evolving development of the network of actors at play behind the controversy surrounding the CdC contributes to our understanding of how regional representations, for reasons intended or unexpected, are constructed, perceived, negotiated, and reconstructed in the context of pressures of globalization as well as European Union, home state, and regional debates.

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