

New Participative Trends in Spanish Cities: Reality and Fashion (I)

- The importance of the Spanish urban system: an urban society in a rural country?
- Spain: 505.000 sq. km; 44.5 million people; 8.111 municipalities
 - 6 million people in 5 central regions excluding Madrid (265.000 sq. km): the same area than Italy or UK (60 million inhabitants)
- The local map:
 - 6.926 (85,42%) municipalities with less than 5.000 inhabitants
 - 328 (4,05%) municipalities with more than 20.000 inhabitants
 - 57 (0,70%) municipalities with more than 100.000 inhabitants
 - 40,53% of the population (17 million people) in 57 municipalities with more than 100.000 people
 - 65,70% of the population (27,4 million people) in 328 municipalities with more than 20.000 people

New Participative Trends in Spanish Cities: Reality and Fashion (II)

- Situation prior to Law 57/2003

1.- Acceptable level of electoral participation:

Abstention:

1995: 30.1 ▶▶ Nationalisation of the election

1999: 36.0

2003: 32.3 ▶▶ Nationalisation the of election

2007: 36.1

2.- Although based essentially on a representative model, the regulation contains elements that allowed citizen participation.

Generic duty to encourage citizens' participation.

Direct democracy system ("open council") in small municipalities (-100 inh.: 1000 municipalities).

Constitution preview direct and indirect participation. But clear imbalance in favor of the second one

3.- Enormous diversity of participative mechanisms and also enormous diversity of degrees of fulfilling the duty of encourage participation

-An insignificant use of local referendum: only 25 referendums in 22 years in 8.100 municipalities

-Fully consolidation of the mechanisms of public information (urban planning and development)

New Participative Trends in Spanish Cities: Reality and Fashion (III)

- 4.- Great traditional strength of Spanish local associative movements of a general nature (general neighborhoods associations during the last years of Franco's regime and the first period of democracy)
- 5.- From a general movement towards the development of an important sectoral movement
- 6.- Decreasing interest in participation has been detected: :
 - Non-attendance at council sessions
 - Non-attendance of citizens at assemblies in the open council system
 - Social demand of clear and strong political leadership
- 7.- Sub-representation of women (now partially corrected: about 37% of the members of the local councils -28% in 2003-) and over-representation of civil servants (teachers)

New Participative Trends in Spanish Cities: Reality and Fashion (IV)

- The reform of the local government model: the Law 57/2003, of measures for the modernisation of the local government
- The main goal of the reform: to establish a new model of organisation for big cities:
 - Cities with more than 250.000 inhabitants (13)
 - Provincial cities with more than 175.000 inhabitants (9)
 - Population concerned: 12,2 million (28,6% of Spain)
- 1.- Finish the process of strengthening the mayors' powers, distributing clearly the responsibilities between the Local Council (budget, control of the executive, regulations, strategic instruments of planning) and the Mayor (direction of the management in all fields). the local executive is formed by the Mayor and by a Board of Local Government appointed by the Mayor between the members of the Local Council and between other people (maximum 1/3)
- 2.- Establish a new category of public managers (director generals and sectoral co-coordinators) recruited among the senior civil servants of all the tiers of governments (state, regions, municipalities) and even among private managers. the Mayor and the Board of Local Government can delegate powers in these public managers (1st time in Spain)

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- 3.-Establish appropriate mechanisms for the participation and protection citizens and social and economic actors:
 - a) Division of the Cities in "Districts" as territories for the citizens' participation and the decentralisation of the local services. A part of the local budget shall be managed by the District
 - b) Establishment of a Social Council for the City, comprising representatives of the most relevant economic, social and neighbourhood organisations. Main functions: reports, studies and proposals regarding local economic development (terms used by first time at the Spanish Laws on Local Government), strategic city planning and major urban projects
 - c) Establishment of a "Commission for Suggestions and Claims", a kind of collective "ombudsman" or "public defender", formed by representatives of all the political parties existing at the Local Council, with powers over all the local staff in order to obtain documents
 - d) Establishment of a Body for the resolution of the claims against the local taxes, specialised and based on principles of technical independence, celerity and no cost

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- ***MESURES OF PARTICIPATION FOR ALL THE MUNICIPALITIES***
- -Need to regulate through organic norms (passed by absolute majority) the procedures and organs suitable for effective resident participation, not only in the area of the municipality as a whole but also in that of the districts (when these exist)
- -Rights for popular initiative (made up of 10% of the residents in municipalities with over 20,000 inhabitants, 15% in municipalities with a population between 5,001 and 20,000 and 20% in municipalities with up to 5,000 inhabitants.)
- -Impulsion for the interactive use of
- the new information and communication technologies for:
- Facilitate participation and communication
- Present documents and undertake administrative steps
- Carry out surveys and civil consultations

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- As a result of that, the citizens' participation has become a crucial part of the local policies and of the political marketing and political agenda at the local level in Spain, independently of the political trend of every Local Government.
- Even in some important cities, the Citizens' Participation Department is directly depending of the Mayor's Cabinet and is a key part of the Mayor's policy ie: The Chairman and the Vice-chairman of the Commission of Citizens' Participation of the FEMP, the mayors of San Sebastian (PS) and Malaga (PP)
- Strong development of the consulting business in this sector.
- Even the pluralist Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) has designed a strategy in order to strength the citizens' participation, implemented by more than 250 municipalities, and included the more important cities of the country.
- There is also an important effect of some mechanisms born in the context of the Portoalegre Forum, such as the participative budgeting at the neighbourhood level –Seville, Cordoba, Malaga

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- Citizens' participation has reached an important place in the local political discourse and in most of cases is a reality, but also there are cases of mere fashion and cleavages between words and reality.
- In some cases there is a gap between the regulation and its implementation
- Difficulties to implement the Districts at the neighborhood level in some cities. Not too much municipal competences and budget decentralized at the districts level
- In the large cities, regulations of citizens' participation and Districts were the last passed when adapting the local structures to the Law 57/2003
- Control by the Mayor Offices of the citizens' participation as a political toll: grants, activities. Risks of clientelism in some municipalities
- Citizens' participation as a tool for marketing and propaganda

New Participative Trends in Spanish Cities: Reality and Fashion (IX)

- ***LARGE CITIES AND STRATEGIC PLANNING***
- striven to make strategic analyses of their situation in the context of inter-urban competition:
 - Mostly doing so by invoking the active participation of the most important economic and social actors
 - There have also been some well-publicised attempts to draw up purely technical or “cabinet-based” strategic plans (the case of Madrid and Arthur Andersen)
- The scope of the strategic plans:
 - Municipal in most of the cases (Madrid, Seville, Valencia)
 - Metropolitan in the cases of Bilbao and Barcelona, the most interesting cases
- Initiative:
 - Public in most of the cases
 - Private in the case of Bilbao (an association of social and economic actor called “Bilbao Metropoli 30”). also Barcelona has establishes an “metropolitan strategic plan association”
- The cases of Barcelona and Bilbao as examples of good practices at the European level