BUILDING EMBEDDEDNESS? DECENTRALISATION AND URBAN GOVERNANCE BARCELONA

"ASSOCIATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND DEMOCRACY IN CITIES"
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ABSTRACT:
This paper addresses the relation between citizen's participation and the existence of instruments of participation in a decentralised city like Barcelona. Within a setting in which participation is a key variable in the city model and instruments of participation are provided at the decentralised districts, there are different outputs of participation. As I shall argue this is due to specific associative traditions and particular social capital styles and by the interaction of social movements and local authorities. Not every kind of social capital with similar participation policies grant the same results in terms of local democracy.
1. INTRODUCTION

The term citizen participation was a fashionable concept in the early years of the Spanish political transition to democracy. One of the major challenges of the regime that emerged after the first democratic elections in 1977 was the profound reform of local government both from a political and administrative point of view. The first local elections two years later were won by left wing parties in the main cities. The urban model developed along the last two decades of Franco’s regime was by then the cause of a profound urban crisis in metropolitan areas like Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia or Seville. Immigrants from the southern and central regions settled into deprived downtown neighbourhoods and self-constructed slums in the outskirts gave place to severe urban fragmentation patterns. These were featured by the absolute lack of facilities (education, health, transport), class segregation and the spatial concentration of deprivation. This context of crisis and change saw the most significant urban mobilisations in Europe since 1945 (Castells, 1986), between the late sixties and the early eighties. The demands for the improvement of urban quality of life came jointly with the claim for democracy and participation. Both working classes living in the deprived barrios (neighbourhoods) and the progressive sectors of the middle classes joined together in the mobilisations. For those new democratic municipalities, achieving a democratic governance became one of the main challenges. Citizen’s participation was deemed to be the magic formula.

The political dimension of governance, this is, how this relation is mediated by ideology or an specific city model, is often underestimated in the literature on local government. Political ideologies of local governments have different ideal types of urban governance. A city model is an ideal type of urban governance as perceived from political party or coalition in office. City models are developed through urban policies and by building up or transforming urban governance patterns.

The question leading this research is to what extent are the instruments of participation enough to enable local democracy and effective citizen participation, and how do certain social associative traditions achieve better outcomes than others, this is a higher degree of influence in the policy making process?

Other issues are addressed to answer this one. A) The concept of social capital will be discussed in terms of its relation to both the impact of institutions over its creation,
reinforcement or weakening. B) To what extend we can speak of one single form social capital in a single city.

The municipal democratic reform in Barcelona meant a shift from a weak non-elected local government to a city-model in which urban governance included both the civil society, public-private partnership and other institutional actors like the regional and national and the EU. It can be say that the urban governance pattern that has came out from such process has been in a big deal due to the process of decentralisation carried by the local government and to the special features of social capital in Barcelona.

First of all two concepts we need to define: participation and decentralisation. Citizen participation is understood by the action of taking part in, or at least trying to influence, the local decision-making process. Participation can be either formal or informal. There are two main ways in which citizens can participate formally: through representation, by voting in elections; and by taking part with voice and vote (or only voice) in the local institutions through the instruments provided. Informal participation comes through extra-institutional mechanisms like mobilisations, pressure groups, etc. Informal participation is articulated through social movements and grassroots organisations, or by individuals or non-organised groups.

From a territorial point of view, decentralisation can take two forms: administrative and political. Administrative decentralisation or deconcentration derives from the delegation of responsibilities from the headquarters of an organisation to the field. Although the authority delegated is managerial or administrative, its political relevance at the area level might be significant (Smith, 1985). In this study administrative decentralisation is going to be considered within the municipal level and consists of a variable degree of autonomy of sublocal units (districts) with respect to the municipality through the delegation of authority. Political decentralisation can range from the possibility of voting for district councillors and policy makers in the local elections through an open list, to different degrees of citizen participation in the design and implementation of policies in a given territorial unit, namely a district or a neighbourhood.

Decentralisation is not always related with a territorial dimension. Bureaucratic decentralisation can refer too to a policy area or to a particular policy making mechanism. Delegation in this case can also imply the participation of different actors in the policy making process.
However, it should be noted that decentralised local authorities might vary in the extent to which they satisfy democratic criteria. Local government might be highly decentralised formally, but might be not in reality. This is the case of Brazil, where local government is highly decentralised and potentially very participative, but the role play by traditional elites turns it into a classical oligarchic regime.

In Barcelona the process of decentralisation started with the democratic reform of municipalities. It implied not only an improvement in administration and management, but also a redefinition of the concept of citizen. The analysis of these developments is framed in the following section by evolution of the local institutional scenario on the last thirty years with some considerations about local democracy and the role of citizens in it. Social capital is regarded, further on, as a key factor to explain these relations illustrating the case of Barcelona.

2. CITY DWELLERS AND LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Local politics in Europe have traditionally been kept in a secondary position in modern nation-states. Both from the French centralist tradition –which inspired Spanish local administration– to the British managerial one, -the so called self-government- the decision-making capacity of municipalities has been limited. The result has been local administrations with little competence and little room to manoeuvre with respect to higher institutional spheres. From a political point of view local politics have been strongly influenced by the trends of national parties. Local politics where a mirror of national politics. From the seventies onwards, the role of municipalities has been increasing in importance in what has been defined as the new localism. New Localism can be recognised in a wider paradigm: local governance. Local governance can be regarded from two points of view. For some authors it is:

A term which seeks to capture the shift away from a system in which local authorities were the key actors in their localities to one where decision making authority and service provision is shared among a range of agencies. (Pratchett & Wilson, 1996)

One consequence of this is the dispersion of decision making among different organisations of several kinds, both public, private and non-profit. The sphere of decision-making and accountability moves from its former centre in democratic elected representatives to a rather blurred scenario.
From another perspective urban governance can enable new means of participation and accountability precisely by the *deconcentration* of decision making among different actors. New localism is embedded in a process taking place in Europe that tends to reduce the role of nation states in benefit of regions or quasi regions like metropolitan areas. These trends have enhance the leading role of local contexts both in political and economic issues. Local institutions have experienced profound changes as a result. As Dente and Kjellberg (1988) suggests, the changes of local government have mainly addressed at three areas: organisation, financial resources and decisional aspects. Regarding this last aspect there was a growing demand for alternative means of participation due to the legitimacy crisis of liberal democracies and the growing role of municipalities in designing and implementing social and economic policies for the city. Some authors pose that the result has been a trend towards the *re-politicisation* of local life through the devolution of power to the citizens (Brugué, Q. & Gomá, J., 1998) and by the ´emancipation´ of local politics from national ones.

So local governance can be both interpreted as a fragmentation and withdrawal of the public sphere from the local arena and *therefore* of local democracy, or else a way in which new forms of accountability and participation are developed, besides the traditional representative ones or else (like different kinds of councils). If we speak about an ideal local democracy it would be that in which accountability and transparency is achieved among decision-making organisations and there are institutional effective mechanisms of participation. Urban dwellers are given an active role in the city building-process. On the other side of the continuum, a poor local democracy will show low accountable decision making in the different organisations and a lack of effective instruments of participation. Urban dwellers would be given passive roles and have little to say in the city-building process. But, does a local democracy need the participation of the majority, to be efficient?

We should be cautious with mythodolisation of local democracy and of participation. Not every one wants to participate. Associative networks (neighbours, environmental...) and some individuals keep on using the available instruments of participation, but generally they only represent a small share of population. High peaks in participation come with demands about collective consumption issues. These are generally proactive, seeking improvements in infrastructures, facilities (public transports, a park). They can also be reactive to certain policies that will change living conditions (building an airport, a rubbish dump). These issues attract some attention, and contain generally a political load too. Generally participation is not
a mass phenomena, although its degree of intensity depends on social capital, political culture and transitional variables. Therefore we can find societies with a higher degree of participation than others, both from chronological perspective and in specific key historical moments i.e. transitions to democracy.

When we talk about an ideal democratic setting it implies the existence of certain instruments of participation and prerequisites of democratic control and the possibility of using them rather than a massive participation of the citizenry. This answers in part the question. Participation is in most cases exercised by a minority:

The crucial value for good governance is that the system is open, has low barriers to the expression of dissent and limits the disadvantaged of the poorly organised and resources (Stoker 1996).

Although transparency and accountability should be present in democratic local governance, these are not natural features of local governance and rely on variables like political culture and ideology. The role given to the citizens in the city-building process depends greatly on the city-model seek by a party or a coalition in office. Although we tend to think that progressive or left-wing parties tend to develop more democratic local governance arenas, the case can be the opposite. The political culture pattern under which the actors interact is going to play a key role over the democratic quality the local governance. That will be the cases for Madrid and Barcelona, which had a socialist-communist majorities for at least three legislatures in the early transition to democracy. The city-models developed in both cities where different with respect to democratisation of urban governance and the role given to the city dwellers: decentralised and participative in Barcelona and deconcentrated and politically centralised with little interest in promoting participation in Madrid.

In the European local context the concept of city dweller has evolved in relation to local government during the past decades. The British literature give some ideal types of this in what is called ‘the four C’s’: clients, customers, consumers and citizens’ (Burns, D., Hambleton, R. & Hogget, P. 1994). This four types live together in local governments depending on two aspects. On the one hand the kind of functional relation or service provided by the municipality, and secondly and more important for our purposes the city model implemented by a particular local government. Different city-models are implemented from different ideologies and therefore different patterns of governance appear.
In the relation between a manager and clients the latter gives up his/her privileges and accepts the decisions of an expert. The customer, has the capacity to choose from among different options, criticise and reject. From a client to a customer, there is a move from bureaucratic paternalism to managerial paternalism. The concepts of consumer and citizen, on the other hand, place the emphasis on the idea of capacity of decision.

The concept of citizen draws a line between citizenship and the principle of market, though this line does not have to be necessarily 'destructive' (Barbalet, 1988). Citizen and consumer can be understood as a political and economic creatures that are perfectly compatible in their behaviour.

The main function of local government as understood by market oriented models is to administer services in competition with private sector. Public choice theories of local government are related to the postulates of the 'new right' specially in the aftermath of the fiscal crisis of the seventies. From this point of view, local institutional structures should be as close as possible to markets, allowing individuals to make choices about services, taxes and collective consumption goods. Otherwise, institutional bureaucracies and representative democratic institutions are assumed to produce an excess of supply that is used by politicians to gain voters, from whom the truth about the fiscal and economic situation is hidden (Buchanan & Tullock, 1967; Niskanen, 1977; quoted in Stoker, 1993).

As suggested above, local government can be more than a service provider. The relation between the administration and the administered is not limited to management and administration, even if this is provided by grassroots associations through quasi-market mechanisms, but it is also related to the promotion of civic culture and the improvement of the quality of life in a broad sense (Burns, Hambleton, & Hogget, 1994). Local government is a potential school of democracy. It is the closest sphere to the citizen and therefore the one in which a participatory political culture can be acquired in the day to day interaction. Active citizenship contributes to socialise individuals integrating them into the community. The more micro-level this takes place the higher chance of social integration would be. The consolidation of the citizens as suppliers or co-producers of public services eases local democratisation.

In the case of Barcelona, the bottom- up demand for participation instruments and a city model based on an idea of active citizenship have been the back bones of the transformation of the city.
3. PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL COHESION

The optimal conditions for the devolution of power include the existence of a set of adequate participation instruments, and a political opportunity structure, but also the existence of societal values and of social networks. Social capital can be initially defined as a dimension of social cohesion being its main elements interpersonal ties in the neighbourhood or district level, the acceptance of common values and norms and membership to associations (Vranken & Friedrichs, 2000). The main values that frame this concept are loyalty, trust and reciprocity between the actors (Woolcock, 1998, Torcal & Montero, 1999). In this section we are going to discuss the concept and seize which of its elements are useful to understand citizen’s participation in Barcelona and to what extend politics and institutions can influence social capital.

Social capital is rooted in three basic concepts. In the first place, beliefs, that is, the construction of cognitive frameworks related to the ends, the aims and place were the process takes place. Secondly, the social relations in which through mutual interaction, individuals elaborate and negotiate common identities, and finally, the fact that breaks with the individualistic pattern, the ‘emotional investment’, through which people link themselves to a community (Melucci, 1994). From a rational choice perspective, social capital is more the result of a calculated action (Coleman, 1980) rather than of cultural behaviours.

Robert Putnam (1992) links the performance of institutions with social capital. Social capital is defined as:

the social networks and the links of reciprocity and trust that are generated between the members of a community due to the experience given by social interaction and co-operation (Putnam, 1992).

His main arguments in Making Democracy Work are a) that social capital has a positive impact on urban governance because it allows the members of a community to overcome social action dilemmas that could otherwise become an obstacle to attempts at co-operation to improve social life; and b) that civic tradition is rooted in history.

One of the main criticisms made to this work is that he does not mention the opposite effect: this is the impact of institutions and of politics on social capital -although he mentions it in ‘Bowling alone’ (1995)- which is a crucial issue in those contexts where social capital is strong where it has been weak or non existent before i.e. transitions to democracy (Torcal & Montero, 1999)

This argument is situated in the middle of different interpretations of the concept. Some theorists regard social capital as cultural mechanism used to define and reinforce the boundaries of a particular status group (i.e. bureaucratic structures). Social capital is
regarded also as a kind of magic formula that can solve virtually every social problem, specially in the context of the retreat of the State from the social policy field. The argument largely supported by conservatives goes beyond and regards the spontaneous development of civic associations as ‘mediating structures’ to cope with social problems in the aftermath of the dismantling of the welfare state. Some extreme versions even suggest that social capital is so rooted in a society through culture that it could only be enhanced by dismantling the state and pose as an example the revival of the church in Russia (Woolcock, 1998).

Although Putnam’s social capital is rooted in historical facts, he is also critc with its ‘natural’ role as a social catalyst to achieve development and involvement of the society turned into ‘community’. A longstanding tradition of civic engagement like the one found in the United States is not enough to have a dynamic participating society and to prevent democratic disarray as a result of decreasing density of certain traditional networks. Several facts could cause this situation: macrosociological crosscurrents, the increasing openness of US conservative small-town societies and even some public policies. But he also points out that government and political institutions can be efficient tools to encourage social capital formation and its re-activation (Putnam, 1995). With out going back to pre-modern times it can be said that political institutions can influence or might attempt to influence on social capital, both fostering or weakening it. There are trends in current urban governance models that tend to foster those ‘mediating structures’ mentioned before, aiming at different objectives. Some models are aimed at the generation of a third sector based on low commitment social networks that can provide services not provided anymore by the state. Some others instead tend to integrate the notion of social capital into that of local democracy and participation, through initiatives to promote social trust.

Despite its historical roots, it can be said that social capital is submitted to socio-political processes that might influence over its intensity and quality. It is important to have in account how the different ways in which social capital takes form can be affected by exogenous variables such as the institutional setting (available instruments of participation), the local governance pattern and the mentioned city-models. These influence can have a quantitative dimension, namely the amount of organisations and membership, but also a qualitative one: this is what kind of social capital results from it, as we will see for the case of Barcelona in following sections.

As discussed by several authors (Maloney et al., 1998; Levi, 1993), the existence of social capital does not grant trust at least between communities living together or social benefit for the whole. Boix and Posner (1996) criticise Putnam for not doing a deep qualitative analysis
on the social networks that he described in his research in Italy. From their point of view, not all kinds of social networks promote social and political participation, or at least the same kind of it.. There are three important features that describe the quality of social capital.

The first one is the kind of interaction that takes place in an association, i.e. vertical interaction vs. horizontal interaction, this is, whether based on equality and mutuality or in authority. Putnam assumes that certain kinds of networks like neighbourhood associations, choral societies, sport clubs or even mass-based parties are horizontally integrated per se (Putnam, 1992). But it is important to regard carefully the way actors interact in the daily basis and in decision making inside the network.

Secondly, the purpose of the association, that is, the outputs of that social action and how social capital is used. Associations can produce private goods or public goods. In the first case, personal enjoyment among participants is the main aim and only co-ordination is needed, while in the second, co-operation is required and the main aim is to benefit the community. In the case of public goods a further distinction should be made: whether they seek traditional collective consumption issues or new political culture issues. Both kinds of social goods can act as means of cohesion. Private goods generate strong links between people in generally small and medium size groups, with the exception of entities like big sport clubs. These kind of networks can be found in social context with strong cultural identities based on a common land, language or traditions. Public goods generate also cohesion among its members but in many cases integrate or prevent exclusion of members of vulnerable social groups (drug addicts, poor, immigrants...) or work to obtain benefits for the whole community, i.e. collective consumption in a neighbourhood.

Finally, it is important to make a distinction between communities with segregated or without segregated social networks. (Boix and Posner, 1996). Segregated social networks could have a cohesive membership, but not integrated into other broader networks or in society as a whole. Segregation can also refer to lack of access to the decision-making process. This can be due to the lack of instruments of participation, or to the different degree of access by the different social groups.

Up to this point we have discussed the main features of social capital and some of the tools required to approach it empirically. Social capital is based on social trust, with some historical roots but it is also exposed to the influence of political variables. It is not only relevant its dimensions, but also its quality. In the following sections the origins of social capital in Barcelona would be traced as well as the decentralisation process that has been taking place during the last two decades.
3. ASSOCIATIONISM IN BARCELONA

The notion of ‘association’ comes from the voluntary grouping of a number of people that join together to achieve certain aims that go beyond their possibilities as individuals, although the means employed to achieve those aims can change with time. Associations and social networks are created and develop in the specific social and historical context of each period. To track the current forms of social capital we have to go back to C19th where the evolution in time of a modern associative tradition in Barcelona takes place. This process can be divided into several periods:

1) From Industrial Revolution to the Second Republic: From mid-nineteen century onwards, traditional social movements developed in Catalonia with the growth of industry and urbanisation. Social and spatial segregation made of Barcelona a splendid bourgeois city surrounded by miserable, segregated working class neighbourhoods. In the context of the expansion of socialist and libertarian ideas, strong working class identities were forged through a set of highly cohesive social networks based on co-operation values, personnel commitment and ideology. Syndicalism was the most important movement, but it was also the most unstable and vulnerable to political repression. Often workers organisations where banned and prosecuted after strikes or riots. These then had to be substituted with alternative associative forms, not directly involved in political struggle, such as secular schools, cultural and leisure clubs (ateneus and casinos) or civic centres. Professional federations and associations of common activities lead to the formation of production and consumption co-operatives in the mid-nineteen century. The importance of associations was such during those restless decades that the leitmotiv of the worker’s movement in Catalonia was “Associate or die!”.

Later on, the ateneus gained importance as means of improving the cultural level of workers through conferences, courses, seminars or libraries. For a number of workers they were the unique means of access to literacy or printed material. Mutual aid societies were another pillar in the associative network of Catalonia. They provided workers with a minimal protection against labour uncertainty, illness, accidents and death. All these groups and entities formed dense networks with a strong local identity that combined political struggle with education, co-operatives, welfare and leisure. Cultural associative traditions has been embedded cross class in Catalonian society since those days too. Workers and middle classes, socialists and Catholics, and the upper classes had each their own specific context. Dancing and singing for middle and working classes and through the opera theatre for the upper strata (McDonought, 1986).
With the Second Republic (1931-1939) the density of the network boosted with the Popular Front government and the recognition of a certain degree of autonomy for Catalonia.

2) Dictatorship (1939-1975): Catalonia was regarded by Franco as one of the treacherous provinces for its support to the Republic, and therefore the regime repressed anything related with the left, democracy or catalanism for the following thirty years. Two facts defined the associative life from the fifties onwards in Catalonia, like in most big Spanish cities. First, a strong process of social and urban change took place, with the industrialisation process that Spain experienced from the late fifties onwards. Within it, conditions of life for working classes worsened due to the massive arrival of immigrants from the impoverish rural areas, secondly the lack of control on speculation and corruption of urban policies, that lead to a chaotic city-building process in most cities. Within this context there was a revival of a worker's democratic and catalanist resistance culture through the remains of the associative networks: churches, excursionist groups, students associations (these linked to a catalanist bourgeoisie), and of neighbours commissions in the immigrant areas. Most of the actual leftist and centre nationalist political class in Catalonia was bred in these networks. The anti-francoist conscience spread with cultural and nationalist expressions, that contribute to the recuperation of catalanist symbols and at the same time reinforced the basis for the develop of strong associations and entities. During the last years of the dictatorship (late sixties to 1975) workers struggles and popular protest increased in factories and neighbourhoods. In the latter, the neighbourhood associations channelled political and urban struggle. One of the main features of these urban social movements, was that apart from pro-democratic issues, they demanded better living conditions in cities. The concept of urban space and the self-perception of city-dwellers as citizens with the right to participate in urban governance, was the main engine of the federations of associations that made common cause from 1972 onwards through the political transition to democracy. Popular urban plans where made in every neighbourhood as a response to the official plans, questioning and challenging the local government’s city model. These social movements had a cross-class composition including the participation of many anti-francoist professionals (architects, lawyers, sociologists, journalists, social workers...). The popular plans included issues like education, healthcare or quality of life. In some way they could be taken as a ‘popular strategic planning’. This active citizenship guaranteed some social cohesion in a urban context where segregation of working class neighbourhoods from
Neighbourhood associations where a channel for civic participation that comprised not only workers leaving in the new peripheral neighbourhoods, but also the catalanist sector of the middle classes living in the central neighbourhoods. The former demanded better conditions of living (housing, proper planning...), while the latter demanded protection and rationality with the inner city heritage. In 1974 the Federation of Neighbourhood Associations of Barcelona (FAVB) was created, grouping together all the neighbours’ associations of Barcelona.

3) Transition to Democracy (1975-1990) Once the democratic period begun (1977), the character of urban conflict changed -but did not disappear- and the associative movement played a decisive role taking part in the conception of the city model through mobilisations and demands, achieving a minimal space in the local institutions that has been gradually widening with the subsequent decentralisation process. The role of social networks was not only political. In the aftermath of the Oil Crises of 1973, lower strata of society were exposed to severe deprivation. The social cohesion could only be achieved through the neighbourhood associations and the other social and cultural networks.

After associationism was regarded in the 1978 Constitution as a fundamental right, the number of associations in Catalonia increased dramatically: from 669 in 1980 to 1779 in 1990 (Sarasa, 1998b). The issues of interest changed and widened (environment, pacifism, women’s groups, cultural, solidarity, international co-operation, plus urbanism and political participation). Two main trends emerged during in the eighties. In the first five years of the decade, the economic crisis caused a certain withdrawal of the social movements already established although new groups appeared dealing with issues not regarded before (environment, age, pacifist). Another decisive fact of this withdrawal was the overwhelming majority achieved by the left in both most municipalities of relevant cities in the first local democratic elections (1979) and in the general elections (1982). These two events implied the beginning of a process of de-mobilisation in Spanish urban social movements. Barcelona was also affected by it, but in a different way the other comparable city: Madrid.

De-mobilisation implied that the membership and support for urban social movements diminished, although the organisations did not disappear, and kept on playing as political actors in the local governance scenario, with different degrees of success and influence on local political life. The causes for demobilisation where: the achievement of demands of
democratisation, the agreement of socialist and communist in office of withdrawing power from the urban social movements (through weak instruments of participation at the local level, this is reducing the political opportunity structure) and the co-optation of leaders for local, regional and national politics.

De-mobilisation in Barcelona was not so dramatic as in other cities like Madrid, where a plan for building 38,000 houses was passed in 1978, with the subsequent reduction of social demands (Villasante et al., 1989). Due to the reasons mentioned above, social capital had in Barcelona stronger historical roots than in other places. The demands on collective consumption where very strong (big scale urban renewal came only with the Olympic Games make-up in 1992) and the co-optation of leaders and significant activists had a positive effect on the promotion of social capital. Institutionalisation of activist and therefore the transformation of their goal orientations, followings Kriesi´s typology (Kriesi, 1996), did not implied the abandonment of values and beliefs, or some degree of commitment with the former organisations. De-mobilisation can have indeed a positive effect on social capital and on governance (Tarrow, 2000), as is the case of Barcelona.

The second half of the decade, featured by the economic recovery, was marked by an upward trend in the creation of new associations (Sarasa, 1998b), with a favourable political opportunity structure boosted by the introductions of new issues and the public funding granted to many of them.

The main trends of the local government in relation with participation in the eighties were towards a certain monopolisation and rationalisation of policy making, with little space for participation. Although participation was meant to be ‘the’ issue, the emphasis was made on representative democracy. The establishment of an efficient welfare local administration had as a cost certain degrees of bureaucratisation that reduced the capacity of citizen organisations to influence in policy design and implementation. In this scenario of narrow instruments of participation, the personal knowledge of the actors ‘at both sides’, activists and politicians and officers, substituted somehow formal participation with informal but regular contacts. It was through these that urban social movements could influence in the city-building process.

4) The Nineties. The Olympic Games meant a change both in the patterns of mobilisation and in the attitude of the local government towards the issue of participation. On the one side the demands on collective consumption issues decreased in general terms due to the improvements made in the urban conditions of the city. On the other hand the
implementation of a new ways of participation, like the Olympic volunteer, brought new ideas about the relations between actors. The Olympic Games consolidated a local governance model based on social movements providing services and competing in market conditions with private enterprises. The participant citizen started to be regarded by the local authorities more as an individual that as a member of an association. Meanwhile, associations were given technical support to become service providers, through different agencies and municipal institutions.

New forms of co-ordination and co-production were introduced and citizens started to be regarded as consumers. Participation became more accessible to active associations that build links of trust and co-operation with the local government. A good example of governance is the case of Secretariat d’Entitats: 191 associations, clubs and groups of all kinds with a total membership of about 35,000 (out of a total district population of 167,000 this is about 20%). This group is running the sports centre and co-managing a civic centre. The sports centre management was obtained, competing with the private sector, and it is run, with entrepreneurial criteria. With the profits obtained the civic centre is financially supported and all kind of services are provided to the member associations.

Although heavy investments were made in most districts for the Olympic Games of 1992, there are some areas where there are still important deficits in infrastructures in spite of the urban renewal. These areas tend to be those that arose in the fifties on the outskirts of the city in the form of slums with no facilities provided by the municipality. Only through conflict and strong mobilisation changes had been obtained gradually. The associative culture in those areas inhabited by immigrants from the south and centre of Spain remained more based on protest and mobilisation to solve conflicts with the local authorities. There is proportion of associations vertically integrated, that have failed to renew their leaders for decades. It is a fact that in many cases a strong conflict persist because the ‘old’ problems still persist. Most of these claims have to do with urban issues like streets, public transport, security; in some neighbourhoods the demands are as old as the associations. We will call these associations the confrontational type.

In those areas where there are dense social networks with a certain tradition of catalanist working class, the conflict resolution generally comes through negotiation and consensus, with rare hostility between them and the local or sublocal authority. In this cases the use of informal relations is very common and there is an articulation between the professionals of the municipality, politicians and the movements leaders, who are often members of the same cultural associations (ateneus, folk dance etc) or institutionalised ex activists, with a positive
attitude towards them. These associations generally show higher degrees of renovation among their leaders and of internal democracy, this is, they are horizontally integrated. They also have become ‘umbrella associations’. In a large proportion these are collective consumption associations, with a number of other groups of all sorts (environment, gender, culture or ethnic minorities). These associations will be called the consensual type.

It is important to underline that the kind of relations between district politicians and the leaders of social movements tend to be different in each of these environments. In Barcelona we cannot say there is a full political segregation but there are certain degrees of segregation if we compare how certain associations can influence at the district level in the decision-making and how others cannot do it in the same way. Confrontational relations with the local authorities or consensus relations show different degree of political segregation of the associative networks in Barcelona.

Both types represent two styles of social capital (see table 1). These styles of social capital differ not only in the content of their demand agendas, but also in the patterns of organisation and internal democracy (vertical and horizontal integration), the ways they interact with the local and sublocal authorities their capacity to modernise, their access to the instruments of participation, and the use of both formal and informal means of negotiation (degree of political segregation).

4. THE PROCESS OF DECENTRALISATION

The evolution of the decentralisation process had as a result some mechanisms of participation that have different outcomes for both types. These process was the result of both the implementation of a city model based on co-operation and participation and of a strong civic tradition that managed to influence the local policy making specially with regard to collective consumption issues. At the beginning of the process there was not such a strong distinction between styles of social capital, but this changed with the development of the decentralisation process and the means of participation plus the general increase or urban quality of life.

In Barcelona the decentralisation model was focused around a number of issues such as: territorial divisions; giving competencies to the districts; political and administrative reform; political representation and participation in the districts and improving the provision of services (Amoros, 1995).
The process can be divided into two main periods.

a) In the first one, the definition and consolidation of democratic local government and the establishment of the city-model guidelines took place. Between 1979 (first democratic local elections) and 1985, the bases to decentralise local government were established through two important elements: the division of the city into its current ten districts (1984) and the Regulatory Norms for the Organisation of the Districts and Citizen Participation (1986).

The design of the new districts involved considerable participation of the FAVB, which gathers together the most important grassroots associations in Barcelona. The fact that the new districts were established after consultations with the FAVB is important, since it means that social movements were given, in the days of the political transition to democracy, a space to take part in the implementation of the city model of the local government. The division was made after a consultation process and as a result of it, the limits of the neighbourhoods that formed the districts were often the same as the area of influence of an association or a small federation of these. As the result of the new territorial division the ten Districts appeared as the units of management and the neighbourhoods (barrio or barriada), as the units of participation. This fact was the recognition of the barrios as key territorial units to social integration in the still fragmented pattern of Barcelona.

The decentralisation norms, passed in 1986, had both administrative and political dimensions. From the first administrative point of view, Districts were given the power of decision, management and control over several areas and had three ruling bodies: the President of the District Council, the District Council with 15 and the Government Commission. The President is chosen by the most voted party in each district, and the councillors are elected through a system of closed lists. As in other aspects of political life in Catalonia the idea of ‘pactisme’ is relevant. Pactisme means the will or art to negotiate. The fact that the most voted party in a District names the President is not a legal prescription, it is a ‘gentlemen’s deal’ between the PSC, the ruling party, and the opposition. Each president can develop a coherent policy with regard to his/her own voters in his/her own district. Open lists at every institutional level, national, regional and local is an old demand from some left-wing sectors in all the State, but several reforms of electoral and municipal laws have not yet tackle this issue.

The political functions of the district are to elaborate and manage the annual budget, to assess the needs of the district and to inform and approve those parts of municipal plans and programs that affect the district. To fulfil these aims the District does not rely only on the
work of the Commissions of Government and the District Council. Working Commissions and Councils (*Comisiones y Consejos de Área*) can be named to carry out the studies and activities required by the District in different functional areas like sports, education, participation, public works, security. The Working Commission’s role is to follow up the ‘day to day’ implementation of the district policies on a particular issue. Citizens can control in some way that the implementation is correct. In the Working Councils the main lines of specific issues are discussed. Citizens, therefore can influence in the design and evaluation of public policies.

The whole process of decentralisation in this initial stage was open to consensus with different political actors. A Citizen’s Commission was established to advise on the process. It was formed by the representatives of the regional government, prominent citizens and different groups and associations. Both decentralisation and the participation norms were submitted to a process of information and consultation by the City Council. In this first period of early transition to democracy, the grassroots organisations had great expectations that they would be given a real participatory role in the political and administrative organisation of the city.

b) The second stage develops from 1986 to the 90’s. During 1986 and 1987 the process of competence transference to the districts was fulfilled. The result was a two-tier local administration, fully decentralised at least in its administrative dimension, with a strong managerial and rationalising impulse and with a moderate degree of political decentralisation that turned citizens into *customers*.

Finally, from 1988 onwards the districts received all their competencies and started to function as decentralised units. Although the administrative decentralisation has been fully achieved, it is important to point out that the political process is still going on at different speeds in each district. The aim of the whole process of decentralisation in Barcelona was to provide services in a more efficient way and to promote citizen participation, as well as to redress imbalances between the different districts and neighbourhoods.

The values on which the participation instruments were inspired were *public information* and *communication with the citizenry* (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1995). The stress was given to ‘voice’ rather than on the right to vote. Effective voice can influence in the decision making process, while giving formal right to vote decisions, does not imply necessarily the participation of all the citizens, but only of those involved in social movements. Therefore the milestone of citizen participation in Barcelona is the concept of consensus between actors.
In Barcelona most social capital has historical roots, but the institutional impulse given to associative networks in certain key moments of the decentralisation process has contributed to consolidate it. If we assume that social capital has to do with both socio-historical experience and the influence of institutions, for Barcelona we found out that this has worked very well for that style of social capital linked to local associative traditions, specially those developed throughout C19th. Nevertheless a number of networks that grew around the immigrant neighbourhoods and that have in common some features with the confrontational style (shared collective consumption demands or the social and geographical origin of the members), also have developed consensual patterns, in part because of the influence of the associative tradition of the city, the policy emphasis on participation and the presence of charismatic leaders that have good contacts with the local authorities and innovative ideas.

In the case of the confrontational style, we can say that the emphasis of local policies on participation as a key element of the city-model has kept ¨alive¨ some networks, that otherwise would had follow the same fate as most similar networks did in Spanish big cities along the late 80’s. In the case of Madrid the demobilisation process has been specially intense. The structural conditions of associative networks were in some aspects similar to the confrontational type: this is a very high degree of mobilisation in the between late 60’s and mid 80’s, high degree of confrontation in conflict resolution with the local authorities, social capital based on the need to co-operate in harsh political and material conditions, rather than in a historical associative tradition. In this case the city model was not so much aimed at citizen participation as in Barcelona, although for almost ten years it was virtually the same political party in office in both cities.

5. THE ASSOCIATIVE MAP OF BARCELONA

Measuring citizen´s participation and social capital has been always problematic. Robert Putnam (1992) solved the latter through the civic community indicator. This has four elements: preferential vote, electoral participation, press reading and the existence of cultural and sport associations. Each one shows problems and virtues. On a whole of more of 2500 associations in Barcelona it would be almost impossible to establish in a reliable way their degree of activity. Membership, like in political parties or trade unions, is not relevant any more in relation to the mobilisation capacity. In the case of associative networks there can be a large number of people that take part in the activities with out being members. The opposite, takes place too: it can be found an organisation with hundreds or even a few
thousands of members, that are kept alive by a few dozens of people. In general terms the information available about membership is not very reliable, for archives and census are not regularly updated. Press reading is not such a relevant indicator, specially in the case of Spain where the demand on press is very low as compared with other countries. Maybe these indicators could give a hint to say that in general terms Spanish society has not got a strong social capital, which is Torcal and Montero’s hypothesis (1995) although the take national data on values like trust as referent with out crossing it with class or regional variables.

(electoral turnouts have still to be introduced into the research, specially in the detailed study of the districts, which I have not included here).

For the case of Barcelona, the associative network is measured through a typology of its activities and density, in relation to the number of inhabitants. It is used the third indicator suggested by Boix and Posner about the kind of social capital: the goods that the entities produce. Four indicators are used here to measure the quality of the social capital: two qualitative and two quantitative. Firstly, the kind of interaction in the organisations (vertical vs. horizontal) and the degree of segregation, that we have seen already in table 1. Secondly, the purpose of association, this is, whether the associations produce public or private goods; and the density of the social capital, measured by the number of inhabitants per entity. The first two indicators have been taken for neighbourhood associations, that are the most active in the use of the decentralised mechanisms of participation at the district level, while the other two have been used to asses the quality of social capital at the city level.

To measure the kind of goods produced by the entities a typology has been designed to classify the associative network of Barcelona taking into account two variables: social capital and the territorial dimension. Social capital can produce public goods or private goods. Each of these categories has been divided in several kinds of sub-categories depending on the kind of organisation that produces the good. The territorial level has been regarded from two points of view. In the first place it has been made a distinction between those associations whose activity is mainly related with the city of Barcelona and/or its districts and those whose main activity is concern with a bigger territorial unit i.e. Catalonia or Spain. Secondly, the ten districts of Barcelona have been taken into account encompassing a population of 1,508,805 (Departament de Estadística, 1997).

The associative map of Barcelona shows a very high number of associations and entities of all kinds (2527) for a city of about 1.5 million inhabitants. This figure includes both those associations that ‘operate’ only in the Barcelona (at a city, district or neighbourhood level) and those others that develop their activity in a broader territorial context. Although
Barcelona is the second Spanish city and is the capital of a region with such a high associative activity only 16,7% (422) of the entities are not developing their activities only for Barcelona and most of them are producers of public goods (scientific promotion, through foundations, health care or culture and education). The index of inhabitants per association is fairly low \( \text{vi} \) (I= 597,1) which for a population of around 1,5 million indicates a very dense associative network, and therefore a high rate of social capital. As a matter of fact this density tends to concentrate in the central districts and to disperse in the most modern ones, much more populated, that are where the confrontational type associations are.

If we regard the distribution of associations and entities whose activity is centred in Barcelona alone, we find out that private goods are produced by a 51,7% (1088) and public goods by a 44,3% (923).

In the case of private goods, the three main types of social networks that show higher rates are Leisure and Popular Culture, Catalan Culture and Culture and Education. Culture and Education, 20,6% (224) gathers a big number of clubs and association related with music, literature, science, nature and theatre, as well as groups of progressive educators and parents.

Leisure and Popular Culture 10,5% (114) and Catalan Culture 8,9% (97) contains some of the key elements mentioned before, that constitute a collective identity: beliefs and emotional investment. Under the category of leisure some of the most typical forms of associationism in Cataluña have been grouped. The esplais, are a sort of club run by volunteers where children spend several hours a week after school time doing leisure. These activities are the fist link to associative life that socialises the individual in a milieu of trust and reciprocity. Other important leisure networks are those around excursion groups. Catalan cultural associationism makes reference to a whole set of activities of popular culture that range from choirs of several types, traditional dancing to ateneus and collas. A colla is a group of people performing something together on a regular basis. There are different kinds: diables (fire dancers), gigants (huge dancing dolls) or castellets among others. Most of the members are young people. Castellets are probably the best metaphor of co-operation and co-ordination in Catalanian society. The aim is that a group of some times two or three hundred people from age 40 to age 8 or 10 build a human tower of up to nine or ten ‘storeys’. The tower itself does not have more than thirty or forty people but they are supported by the rest of the colla that form a compact base of knitted arms. The tower is ‘done’ when a child climbs up and raises for a few seconds a little flag. Although the collas
only perform their activity in specific festivals throughout few months, the groups meet and work the whole year.

The most remarkable public goods produced are those related to Collective Consumption (associations of neighbours, customers, immigrants, consumers, local media, among others), with 15.3% (141), and to the New Political Culture (NPC: Solidarity, gender, ecologists and social economy), with 15% (141). Neighbours associations are the most significant among the former. A large number of NPC groups have grown around already established associations. They have been promoted by young members which are less concerned with collective consumption issues. The symbiosis between both kinds of associations has given back meaning and importance to the oldest associations that have turned into ‘umbrella associations’, mentioned already. In these, there was an original nucleus, generally aimed at collective consumption issues, which gradually is enlarged by other groups of different kinds, from NPC to all kinds of cultural issues.

The associative map of Barcelona shows a strong social capital, based on solid social and associative networks. The main feature of the social networks producing private goods is that they deal with culture and education. This implies, specially in the case of Barcelona, that there are a range of possibilities for the individual to be integrated into a network virtually since early childhood to maturity. Those entities dedicated to leisure and popular culture, and to Catalan culture especially imply frequent interaction and the construction of common identities and a emotional investment. The last group mentioned shares a feature with the two more important expressions of public goods entities (collective consumption and NPC): beliefs, this the construction of common reference frameworks, through which members link themselves to a community, to ends and values, and to place.

6. INSTRUMENTS OF PARTICIPATION: MEANS OF COOPERATION?

One on the most significant effects of decentralisation for citizens have been the development of instruments of participation at the district level.

These instruments mentioned before, mainly Councils and Commissions, showed different degrees of development in each district. On the one hand, there are certain issues that generated more interest among citizens and their associations in order to participate in the design and implementation of public policies in the districts: those that deal with personal or private benefits for the citizens (sports, civic centres, schools etc) and those issues addressed to specific groups (aged, youth, women, etc.) (Equip d’Analisi Política, 1998). On the other
hand there are lower demands for participation in collective consumption issues (urbanism, security or culture).

It is important to note that there are more Councils than Commissions and that the latter are present in those areas where there is a higher demand for participation. So in those areas where there is a demand for an instrument of participation it is more likely that a Council is established. Councils are not supposed to follow up implementation and therefore their capacity to influence is lower than Commissions.

The way the instruments are formalised\textsuperscript{vii} is also important to enhance formal participation in the districts. There are several degrees of planification with which Commissions and Councils can be arranged as well as the access that the social movements have to them. There is a medium-high average of planification, while the access tends to be medium-low. The assistance is low in general terms, with exceptions\textsuperscript{viii} in those districts where there are conflicts between local authorities and grassroots groups, generally on collective consumption issues (see table 2).

The formalisation of mechanisms to enhance participation appears mainly in those districts where there is not a significant tradition of it, mainly upper-class areas. In those other districts where there is a certain participation tradition, virtually the rest (being confrontational or consensual), the influence of low rates of formalisation (mainly due to low access, rather than planning) is not associated to the assistance of the citizens to the Commissions and Councils sessions. This is, in some districts with very low degrees of formalisation, there is a high assistance to the sessions, while in others where it is “easier” to take part, the assistance is lower. This could indicate that informal means of influence and participation, through networks among actors could be an alternative in those districts where there are demands for participation and the instruments provided are not used. Other forms of \textit{voice} could be used, aside the formal means of participation. This option is not equally possible everywhere. In those districts where there is a dominance of the confrontational association and local authorities, it is less likely that this informal channels of communication exist.

It is more feasible in those districts where the consensual type is dominant, with the existence of links between grassroots leaders, district politicians and municipal technicians. \textit{Voice} is therefore not only being used in Commissions or Councils but can be used in the street, in the politician’s office or in a festival.
6. CONCLUSIONES

Social capital is expressed in dense social networks and in associative traditions linked with values, beliefs and personal commitment, jointly with co-operation and co-ordination.

We have also assessed the impact of political institutions on social capital and participation. The same formal instruments can have different outcomes in different districts with different styles of social capital. This is also a consequence of the influence of de-mobilisation and co-optation of leaders of urban social movements into local politics.

The influence of institutions on social capital is positive for the case of Barcelona. With respect to participation, although this is present in Barcelona’s city model, there are still some breaks to full openness of the instruments of participation at the district level.

Barcelona is a city with a rich social capital if we look at the total figures of associations and to the number of inhabitants per association. There is a slight trend towards entities that produce private goods, than those which produce public ones. We can say that in general terms Barcelona shows a high rate of social cohesion.

To achieve political integration as a mean of social integration an appropriated institutional context is needed, like in the case of Barcelona with the decentralisation process and the districts mechanisms of participation that came with them. In this paper we have given account on how this socially active arena can give ground to different degrees of integration in the decision making process.

This fact is influenced by the different styles of social capital that exist in Barcelona. Two main ones are found, each one with specific features if we analyse them through some of the quality of social capital indicators defined by Boix and Posner. Confrontational and consensual are not only two different kinds of grassroots associations, but also two different styles of relation both inside the entity itself and with the local authorities. The outcome of this different social capital styles is a different degree of access to the decision-making process. Confrontational associations do not have, in general terms, other means that the institutional mechanisms or mobilisation (exit). This is due to both the attitude of the associations, reluctant to consensus, and to the authorities which do not always provide the best accessibility to the decision making process. Generally conflict derives in confrontation, and there are no alternative means of voice, so in this cases we can talk about some degree of political exclusion, in spite of the existence of participation mechanisms. This situation takes place in those neighbourhoods with a tradition of social segregation and exclusion, that still carry on with ‘old’ demands on collective consumption.
Consensual associations have easier access to the decision making process: if the conventional voice mechanisms do not work, alternative means of bargaining are used. These are based on an extension of social capital networks existing between the leaders of the associations and district politicians and technicians. The culture of consensus (*pactisme*) to resolve conflict and the kind of issues negotiated contribute to explain the situation. This type are found in working and middle class neighbourhoods with strong Catalan identity but also in some of those inhabited by immigrants from other parts of Spain with a different associative background.

Even though the decentralisation process in Barcelona has provided the citizens with instruments of participation, these do not have the same outcomes in relation with the actors taking part nor with the issues dealt with. Despite the great achievements of Barcelona’s local government in the last two decades, in terms of urban governance, there are still some deficits in the implementation of the city model in relation with citizen participation at the district level.
References


*Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements. Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framing.* New York: Cambridge University Press.


Table 1: Styles of social capital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of associations</th>
<th>Confrontational</th>
<th>Consensual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>Confrontation (+++)</td>
<td>Mobilisation (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mobilisation (++)</td>
<td>Consensus (+++)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal means (+++)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation with Local Politicians and Bureaucrats</td>
<td>Hostility</td>
<td>Co-operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Organisation</td>
<td>Cooperation ++</td>
<td>Cooperation ++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Degree of Internal Democracy (Horiz/Vertical integration) +</td>
<td>Degree of Internal Democracy (Horiz/Vertical integration) ++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associative Agenda</td>
<td>Collective Consumption +++</td>
<td>Collective Consumption +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Political Culture ++</td>
<td>New Political Culture +++</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each + accounts in a 1 to 3 scale of intensity. These results have been obtained in the qualitative research part of this study in which 35 in-depth interviews where made with leaders, politicians and experts in Barcelona.

Table 2: Styles of social capital and the use of district mechanisms of participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style of Social Capital</th>
<th>Confrontational</th>
<th>Consensual</th>
<th>Weak social capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistance to Commission/Council and effect on decision making</td>
<td>High assistance</td>
<td>Low assistance</td>
<td>Low Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Little effect</td>
<td>Not relevant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Formalization</td>
<td>Medium-low</td>
<td>Medium-low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exit/Voice Option</td>
<td>Conflict: exit</td>
<td>Informal negotiation: Voice</td>
<td>No participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The competencies were over the following areas: security in public places, traffic regulation, fire brigades, legislation, management and implementation of planning rules, historical monuments, environment protection, public markets and customer protection, grave yards, social services, water and electricity supply, street cleaning, cultural and sport resources, and participation in the management of public schools (Normas Reguladoras de Ordenación de los Distritos y de la Participación Ciudadana, Art. 5).

The data base in which this section is based has been collected by the Municipal Agency for Participation (Agencia Municipal de Serveis als las Associacions – Torre Jussana) its degree of reliability is high as it is constantly actualised. The fieldwork for this research was developed in Barcelona during 1998. Primary and secondary sources were used. Thirty five in-depth interviews were done to grassroots leaders, city and district politicians and technicians, and experts.

Measuring social capital in Spain through membership is considered by Torcal and Montero (1999) in relation to national figures. Actualised data, this is with out the disappeared associations, is not available at national level and in most regions and cities. This fact makes the figures provided by them (specially fig 8.1) as hardly significant. In Barcelona the data of the Municipal Agency for Services with the Associations keep an updated file as an exception.

Public goods: There are five main types of associations that provide private goods:

- **Pr1**: Collective Consumption: associations of neighbours, customers, immigrants, consumers, local media, among others.
- **Pr2**: New Political Culture: Solidarity, gender, ecologists and social economy.
- **Pr3**: Religious organisations: churches with associative network, health care, mutual aid groups.
- **Pr4**: Assistential: aged people, non religious foundations, health care, mutual aid groups.
- **Pr5**: Cultural aim: foundations, scientific organisations, etc.

Private goods:

- **Pb1**: Leisure and popular culture
- **Pb2**: Culture (theatre, history, literature) and education.
- **Pb3**: Sport
- **Pb4**: Confessional associations (small denominations: evangelic churches, mosques, others)
- **Pb5**: Specific cultural associations
  - 5.a: Regional associations from outside Catalonia
  - 5.b: Traditional Catalan culture associations
  - 5.c: Catalan nationalistic associations
  - 5.d: Foreign cultures associations

A third category (To) has been established to group those associations that cannot be included in the previous ones but still take part of the social network of Barcelona.

The formalisation of an instrument of participation depends on the degree of planification and on the access of citizens to use it. Planification refers to the previous information given to the participants about the issues to be dealt with in the Commissions and Councils, announcing the sessions widely and with time and encouraging citizens to take part. Access refers to the way in which their opinions will be presented, if all participants can speak or only those who have ask for previously, and so on.