

EP^UM

European
Public
Mosaic

June 2017

1

CITIZEN
PARTICIPATION

OPEN
JOURNAL
ON PUBLIC
SERVICE

EDITORIAL

From the past to the future

ARTICLES

Roger Buch, Catalonia
Arne Pautsch, Germany
Elisabeth Alber, South Tyrol
Liesbeth van de Wetering, The Netherlands

INTERVIEW

Jordi Barrat Esteve, Catalonia

Good practices
New trends
Newsflash



Generalitat de Catalunya
**Escola d'Administració Pública
de Catalunya**

From the past to the future



**Agustí Colomines
i Companys**
Editor



The Public Administration School of Catalonia (EAPC) is one of the oldest of its kind in the continent of Europe. It was founded in 1912, which is significant because Catalonia was merely a province of Spain at the time. The School has therefore enjoyed a long and lasting history, except for the two times it was closed down by military dictatorships, between 1924 and 1931, and from 1939 to 1979.

Its creation was driven by Enric Prat de la Riba, who was the leader of the Catalan autonomist party, the Lliga Regionalista (Regional League). Despite the Catholic and conservative origins of this important figure and his party, founded at the start of the 20th century, both, in fact, acted as driving forces for the democratic renewal of a very centralist Spain dominated by local political bosses, caciques, with the distortion of democratic standards.

Enric Prat de la Riba forged modern Catalan nationalism, popularly known as *catalanisme*. The supporters of Catalan autonomy, asserting that Catalonia is a nation from a cultural and historical perspective, which brought them close to the theories of the German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder, and convinced that a nation only survives by force of will, which brought them close to the French theoretician Ernest

Renan, pushed for the creation of the State structures that Catalonia lacked. Before entering politics, Prat de la Riba wrote that “abstract work in the depths of a solitary study is not possible among us. The special situation of our land, its tragic conflict with the State that governs it, turns all of us into politicians, priests and workers, businessmen and artists, farmers, industrialists, thinkers [...] Therefore, those who, in a free Catalonia, in the scarcely-known peace of archives and libraries, would calmly embellish new ideals, the ideals of future generations, must, in the Catalonia of today, where all of us double as politicians, apply the ideas we develop immediately, and we develop those ideas while experiencing them, while fighting in feverish combat, always on the streets and public squares, like the men of the Hellenic democracies”.

In that sense, Catalanism acted as a modernising factor in Catalan society, the most industrialised in Spain, innovating in various spheres of public life, as well as in public administration. The long struggle to achieve Catalan autonomy, or at least the decentralisation of the State, which was actually achieved between 1914 and 1924, was accompanied – or preceded – by other initiatives such as the founding of the EAPC. For Catalan autonomists the nation was the people, the economy, the transport network, the introduction of the telephone, its industrial colonies (company towns), the promotion of reading and education, and, of course, the Catalan language and the reassertion of Catalonia’s past, which was particularly

“The EAPC wants to maintain a dialogue with the world and revive its founder’s spirit of modernity. Here we will discuss and debate everything associated with public administration and those who serve it. Catalonia has to take part in the debate on innovation in public services to achieve a real transformation in the administration of public well-being”



glorious during the Middle Ages, when the Catalan count-kings expanded across the Mediterranean. Political autonomy was the organisational translation of the national ideal of a period known as the *Renaixença*, which was a synthesis of Catalan modernity.

Perhaps because, geographically, Catalonia is in the north-east of the Iberian peninsula, looking out to sea and with the Pyrenees as the only obstacle in the way of linking up with France, it has naturally become a crossroads and a recipient of all kinds of international influences. Today that is expressed by a strong pro-European sentiment, the conviction that our problems are the world's problems and the only way of solving them is by promoting universal dialogue. A look through the yearbooks of the Institute of Catalan Studies (IEC), the Catalan academia from the time of its creation in 1907 and another initiative of Enric Prat de la Riba, shows the internationalist spirit of Catalan autonomists was essential. At that time the world communicated in French.

The EAPC wants to maintain a dialogue with the world and revive its founder's spirit of modernity, precisely in the year we are commemorating the anniversary of his death, on August 1, 1917. This e-journal in English is the result of that. Here we will discuss and debate everything associated with public administration and those who serve it. We will present experiences and good practices, just as we will debate the underlying currents that threaten public administrations and what the possible solutions are. Catalonia has to take part in the debate on innovation in public services to achieve a real transformation in the administration of public well-being. To innovate without reforming is pure rhetoric. The important thing, therefore, is to transform. ■

EPuM

Training public employees to better serve citizens



“We want to be a medium for advances in public sector services, making them effective, efficient and optimal in their response to the challenges posed by 21st century society. Read it, subscribe, and share it with fellow professionals. Make the most of it! Welcome to our new EPuM community”



Participatory processes for government: seeking deliberative democracy

Roger Buch,
director of Innovation
and Democratic Quality
Program. Government
of Catalonia.



1 Deliberative democracy as a form of democratic participation

Looking at democratic systems, three types of participation are often mentioned: representative, direct and deliberative. Participation in a representative democracy is practised by means of representatives elected to a parliament, to which the citizens delegate functions. In a direct democracy it is the citizens who make decisions and, free of any intermediaries, cast their votes accordingly, in an assembly, a referendum or some other form of ballot. And last of the three, a deliberative democracy is based on reaching agreements through discussion and the exchange of opinions by citizens. In this model decisions are taken by a representative government after discussions have been held with the public. This last type of participation is the most complex, requiring – as we shall see – not just readiness among citizens and authorities to play their parts, but also a methodology that can enable a constructive exchange of opinions.

Deliberative citizen participation is one of the greatest challenges for proponents of open government seeking to enhance the democratic process. It is a concept that offers three main benefits: first of

all, it improves social cohesion. The method followed empowers citizens and makes them participants in public policy and its results, but above all, it gives citizens a much greater understanding of the workings and consequences of implementing one public policy or another. Citizens who participate in a deliberative process, one for instance that is aimed at deciding on the budgets for the local authority, end up with a heightened awareness of not just the cost certain public actions could have, but also of other people's reasons for defending priorities different to their own.

Second, it is a process that helps with the implementation of public policies. A public policy will receive greater support if citizens have been asked to participate and are aware of its reasons. It is sometimes thought that participatory processes delay decisions, but the reality is quite the opposite: these processes shorten decisions because the deliberation comes first, which helps make people aware of both the decision itself and, most importantly, the reasons behind it. It is preferable that different points of view surface in the debating arena before a public policy is applied rather than afterwards, as this may result in conflict, head-on opposition and reduced effectiveness.

And third, deliberative participation improves the decisions themselves. A decision made following deliberation will always be better than one made in isolation by experts or politicians, as it will encompass more points of view, ergo

“A public policy will receive greater support if citizens have been asked to participate and are aware of its reasons. It is sometimes thought that participatory processes delay decisions, but the reality is quite the opposite”





greater collective intelligence. More knowledge exists outside public authorities than within, and it is important not only to prize this knowledge, but above all to find ways to channel it.

Deliberative democracy does not aim to replace representative or direct democracy, rather it seeks to complement and enhance them.

The purpose of this article is to offer an overview of the way deliberative citizen participation is being applied and the challenges it currently faces.

2 Characteristics of deliberative citizen participation processes

How can the implementation of deliberative democracy in public authorities be brought to fruition? While attractive, it is complex in equal measure. Initial steps should be taken slowly but surely, choosing which issues should be deliberated.

The norm in deliberative democracy is citizen participation processes. These can be implemented at a local level or on a wider scale, although the latter case often involves only experts or entities representing the affected parties, without making calls to the general public.

There exists a wide range of arenas dedicated to citizen participation, for example well-established forums where citizen representatives meet regularly to keep track of certain particular matters. In this article, however, we are concentrating on participatory processes instigated by public authorities, initiatives which have existed for a number of years and are growing in sophistication.

These are participatory processes of a limited duration that concentrate on a specific public decision needing to be made; this could be a strategic plan, an action plan, a law or perhaps the remodelling of a public space. As such, the idea is not to hold public discussions on generic topics, but to focus the debate on a decision the public authority has to make.

In particular, these processes seek a qualitative participation from citizens. Unlike elections and referendums, where the number of votes is an important element, what counts here is the quality of the contributions. It is not about getting the most votes, but about creating a space for proposals and arguments. In addition to the quality of the contributions, the diversity of contributions also matters. What is important in deliberative participatory processes is the appearance of different opinions resulting from different perspectives on the same situation, which could relate to differences in people's lifestyle or the knowledge they possess. To achieve this diversity among participants, it is often necessary to call upon people with varied profiles,

“Unlike elections and referendums, where the number of votes is an important element, what counts here is the quality of the contributions. It is not about getting the most votes, but about creating a space for proposals and arguments. In addition to the quality of the contributions, the diversity of contributions also matters”





as not everyone has the same disposition towards participating.

The method is not to make an open call to the public to come and participate, but rather to ensure a diversity of profiles in terms of the way in which a situation is perceived. In a neighbourhood where the pavements need modernising, different opinions will be held by a parent using a pushchair, a driver needing a parking space and a local trader needing customers. Each person has their own point of view in relation to their position in society.

To ensure the success of participatory processes, the limits to any discussions held must be made clear right from the start. These include limits to the topic to be dealt with as well as the budgetary and legal limits to potential proposals. This is key to avoiding participants having expectations frustrated. Many misunderstandings will be avoided if it is made clear the meeting or process is to discuss, for example, requirements for school classrooms, not to discuss how teachers should run their classes.

For the deliberative process to work, methodological thoroughness is required. A participatory process is normally limited to several weeks and involves different stages,¹ but the aim of this article is not to enter into full detail on all it entails, or the numerous techniques to encourage

1. From the extensive bibliography on methodologies for participatory processes, we particularly recommend Bryson, J. M., Quick, K. S., Slotterback, C. S. and Crosby, B. C. (2013), 'Designing Public Participation Processes', *Public Admin. Rev.*, 73: 23–34. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6210.2012.02678.x

debate and full participation from those involved. However, it is worth noting that a key feature of deliberative processes are the face-to-face workshops, in which it is essential for participants to meet in an environment that engenders participation. It is not about packed assemblies where whoever is the best speaker can spin the story their way, rather it is about structured spaces with small groups of people where ideas can be shared or can emerge, points of view can be explained, and proposals can be agreed upon or prioritised.

Related to this, it is normally recommended that there be professional facilitators in attendance, who understand the topic but fulfil the role of neutral helpers without offering their own views. Rather than expressing any opinion, the facilitators must moderate the discussion, keeping it on track, summarising and proposing a consensus of opinion among those that emerge. The facilitators encourage participation as well as mutual respect between the different opinions.

Lastly, for participatory processes to work it is imperative that two things occur. First, all participants must be given a record of the contributions expressed in the workshops, and second, a global assessment of the participatory process must be made, providing the public with not just the conclusions but a full account of the process.

3 What to make of the results of deliberative processes?

What is the result of a deliberative participatory process? To start with, in many cases the result is a collection of contributions, consisting of a list of comments, proposals or amendments. These cases would not entail a binding participation, rather contributions from citizens to help the public authority to make the best decision.

Another variant – which despite being more interesting is not always more recommendable – is that of a deliberative process to conclude with the making of a decision by consensus among all who participated. This does not mean that it ends with a vote between two options, as this would be direct rather than



“People who are given a chance to talk to each other and can rely on sufficient information are capable of finding a rational compromise in a relatively short time. This has even worked in deeply divided societies”

participatory democracy; what it entails is some form of agreement after extensive debate bringing participants' positions together.

But is it always possible to find a consensus? Seeking consensus is what drives the deliberative process, but clearly the inherent difficulties must not be underestimated. Sometimes it is hard to achieve due to the length of time needed for discussions, other times there may be very little compatibility between the initial positions.

However, it is worth citing an excerpt from the Belgian G1000 Manifesto² – one of the most interesting deliberative processes in recent years – for the optimism it expresses towards the challenge:

‘The American researchers James Fishkin and Robert Luskin have convincingly demonstrated that people who are given a chance to talk to each other and can rely on sufficient information are capable of finding a rational compromise in a relatively short time. This has even worked in deeply divided societies like Northern Ireland! Catholics and Protestants who talked more about than to each other, have now managed to find solutions in very sensitive fields such as education’.

Somewhere in between a consensus that satisfies everyone and the need for a vote between starkly opposing alternatives, there is an intermediate possibility whereby the final report for

2. Idea of the G1000. The manifesto: <http://www.g1000.org/en/manifesto.php>

the process details the proposals where there is consensus and those where there is none, also making clear the arguments made by the different parties defending each position and whether any progress towards compromise was made.

4 A dual commitment between citizens and the public authority

For participatory processes to work properly, simply following a good method is not enough. What is needed above all is honesty and a favourable disposition, from citizens but especially from the public authority.

The citizens who participate may confuse participation with freedom of expression. It is very normal for there to be people who attend the participatory workshops in order to defend a set opinion or a private interest. Faced with a general question, for example 'what are the key requirements for our schools?', it is all too common for participants to unfurl a list of accusations and complaints about their school. Spaces must exist for people to express their dissatisfaction, but they are a separate matter. Making sure participants understand the context is one of the most typical tasks the facilitators must tackle.

While it is clear that citizens must attend with a readiness to participate, it is even more important that the same can be said of the public authority. Opening up government processes and decisions is only worthwhile if there is real belief in participation; doing so without conviction





is pointless. The public authority must act in good faith, that is to say it must have a genuine intention towards listening to and conversing with its citizens. Participation must not be a mechanism for political propaganda by which decisions already made are ratified by citizens without proper criticism. There must be a commitment to acknowledging new points of view and, most importantly, to providing accountability, reporting the proposals and saying which were accepted, which were not, and the reasons why.

5 Challenges and current trends

In recent years, deliberative and participatory processes have been on the rise, but there are challenges still to be surmounted and others coming into view. One of the most important challenges is to go beyond deliberative discussions that address strictly local or very specialised matters. There is a great deal of experience of deliberative processes on a local level, but this is harder to apply when it comes to higher levels of government that are further from the public and closer to the centre of power. Experience tells us that to get the lay public to engage in important debates, a huge amount of work must be done on communication and getting people involved, something that is not always within institutions' means.

Next, there is the issue of how these processes tie in with modern online participatory experiences. Recent years have seen growth in online participatory experiences, which are very useful for

allowing citizens to make proposals and take positions on issues, for conducting polls and for calculating support. However, where they are still found wanting is in matching the workshops' discussions involving contrasting opinions. What is more, there is very little evidence to show that online environments allow for the empathy that is required to bring people's positions towards compromise, whereas the face-to-face discussions do allow for this.

Some experts say that within four or five years artificial intelligence will provide the means to moderate online debates between hundreds of citizens, doing the job currently done by a good human moderator, i.e. grouping similar comments, highlighting relevant comments, summarising the current position, and drafting consensus proposals. Current trends generally point towards continuing uses of digital and face-to-face participation to complement one another and in combination.

Lastly, another challenge public authorities face is their flexibility when it comes to welcoming participation that is initiated by citizens, not through any top-down channel prepared from above. When a public authority opens a channel for participation, it may sometimes struggle to find participants. In contrast, when a bottom-up participatory process emerges, the public authority may sometimes not be flexible enough to take the contribution on board, evaluate it or take it into consideration, simply because it has not arrived through one of the administration's own channels.

“When a public authority opens a channel for participation, it may sometimes struggle to find participants. In contrast, when a bottom-up participatory process emerges, the public authority may sometimes not be flexible enough to take the contribution on board”





6 On the up: citizens' conventions and panels

Among the latest trends in deliberative democracy, the start of the 21st century has seen innovation in formats and the emergence of what are known as citizens' conventions. Various countries have organised major citizens' conventions to debate issues of great political importance through citizens' panels.

Among the cases that have most interested specialists³ are the citizens' assemblies in British Columbia (2004) and Ontario (2006) on electoral reform, the constitutional conventions in Iceland (2010) and in Ireland (2013), and, in particular, the G1000⁴ experience (2011–2012) in Belgium.

While not identical in every respect, these experiences give direct and open backing to medium- and large-scale citizen deliberation, encouraging 'ordinary citizens' to define their outlook on political issues. The goal is not to find members of political parties or NGO activists, but rather 'regular' members of the public who may bring 'common sense' to decisions up till

3. A good summary can be found in the following paper, *We, the People: Constitutional Decision Making Through Citizen-led Deliberative Processes*, Jordan Kroll & Juliet Swann, Edinburgh, July 2015.

4. Vincent Jacquet, Jonathan Moskovic, Didier Caluwaerts and Min Reuchamps 'The Macro political Uptake of the G1000 in Belgium' in *Constitutional Deliberative Democracy in Europe* (2016). The website <http://g1000.org> contains full information and the manifesto can be read in English at <http://www.g1000.org/en/manifesto.php>

then in the hands of politicians. In some cases, such as Ireland, participants for intensive weekend meetings were chosen randomly, through statistical methods to ensure the presence of varied points of view.

These conventions use original debate methodologies that require both time and a high level of commitment from participants, far more than a brief two-hour workshop or a few clicks made from home on a website.

In general, the aim is to gather a relatively large number of citizens in order to reach a consensus on various topics following a ‘funnelling’ method. This consists of starting the debate with a large number of people separated into small groups who come to initial agreements, then a second stage where there are fewer people and new agreements are reached, until finally, in a group that is smaller still, the definitive agreement is made, comprehending all of the previous debate.

It is interesting to note that, unlike the other participatory processes considered throughout this article, these last cases did not address local matters affecting citizens’ everyday lives, rather they dealt with more general matters of major political importance and nationwide significance, such as constitutional or electoral reforms.

In conclusion, deliberative democracy is not just on an upward curve in its ability to influence everyday political decisions – all the while developing and refining its methodology –, it is also making strides towards new and as yet unexplored horizons. ■



The assumed crisis of representative democracy and the role of citizen participation in Germany

Arne Pautsch,
professor of Public Law
and Local Government
Law at the Ludwigsburg
University of Public
Administration and
Finance (Baden-
Württemberg,
Germany).



This short essay gives an overview of how democracy as a whole can be strengthened by establishing stable structures and procedures of dialogue-oriented participation as a key to more democratic participation. The perceived crisis of representative democracy appears more and more as a chimaera when taking into consideration that political procedures are not only based on one single pillar – the representative one –, but, between elections, include citizens through consultation and deliberation in a second, independent pillar.

1 Introduction

In recent decades an increasing loss of trust in democratic institutions has been visible in nearly all Member States of the European Union (EU). First of all the declining degree of trust in traditional politics seems evident in view of the decreasing participation in general elections and other direct-democratic procedures (Heußner & Pautsch 2016). With a focus on the particular situation in Germany, a lower voter turnout has become more and more significant with voters staying at home in elections at all three levels of the federal system. It is an especially crucial fact that on the local level this development has resulted in the

lowest voter turnout, even though people are assumed to be much closer to the municipal politicians and can even directly elect their mayors and the members of the municipal councils. Normally, the system of local self-government is considered to be the basis of democratic legitimation (CoE 2010) and to form the so called 'school of democracy' (Heußner & Pautsch 2016).

A possible explanation for this development can probably be found in the typical answers given by people asked about the actual state of representative democracy:

- Political affairs have become too complex to be understood by most of the people.
- Political decision making processes are often perceived as not being transparent.
- The political elite, even on the local level, takes decisions in isolation without asking the people that hold sovereignty.

Although direct democracy is established on two out of three levels of the political system in Germany (except on the federal top-level) and citizens are enabled to initiate a citizens' initiative such as a popular referendum, the grade of satisfaction concerning democratic institutions is significantly lower than it was decades before. This may well be due to the complexity of political issues, such that even referendums on the municipal level are not attracting citizens to participate in strengthening

“Although direct democracy is established on two out of three levels of the political system in Germany (except on the federal top-level) and citizens are enabled to initiate a citizens' initiative such as a popular referendum, the grade of satisfaction concerning democratic institutions is significantly lower than it was decades before”





local policy by taking an active part in the decision making process. The main option observed that is taken by the initiators in a direct-democratic procedure is to oppose the municipal council by nullifying a council decision ex-post. This supports the assumption that direct democracy is also too often characterised by complex matters that have to be explained to the voters – and to be discussed with them – before making the final decision.

At present, it can also be stated that, on one hand, citizens consider their municipality as a place with intact political institutions (Egner, 2016). But on the other hand it is obvious that the voter turnout is lowest on the local level: The average participation in municipal elections over the last five years is 49.6% over the whole of Germany, whereas the average of those participating in parliamentary elections on the federal state level is 59.3% and on the federal level 71.5%, both significantly higher (Egner, 2016).

As a result – particularly in German municipalities – we have to face the issue that there is a gap to be closed between the existing procedures of representative and direct democracy. And, especially in this context, citizen participation has to assume a more important role as long as it is understood as a complement

to the representative and, to some extent, also direct-democratic pillars of democracy. It depends on the fact that citizen participation has to be seen as an opportunity to involve people in the procedures of decision making rather than only in the result of such procedures.

2 Rethinking democratic procedures as a possible remedy?

As mentioned, democratic participation is based on two main pillars: the representative and – if existing – the direct-democratic pillar. In terms of decision making both forms of participation are characterised by the binding character of the decisions finally taken. But at the same time the grade of democratic legitimation is declining, because less people participate in elections (representative form of legitimation) and in popular votes (direct-democratic form of legitimation). Hence, it seems obvious that a third pillar in the democratic process is needed, which could be completed by an institutionalised framework of citizen participation (Nanz & Leggewie, 2016). Rethinking democratic procedures also means strengthening the interdependency of all pillars of the democratic system – and not only highlighting the disjunctive aspects.

The proposed remedy can be characterised as follows:

- Representative democracy as the main pillar and the basis of any democratic

“We have to face the issue that there is a gap to be closed between the existing procedures of representative and direct democracy. Citizen participation has to assume a more important role as long as it is understood as a complement to the representative and, to some extent, also direct-democratic pillars of democracy. It has to be seen as an opportunity to involve people in the procedures of decision making rather than only in the result of such procedures”



legitimation which itself is based on legitimation derived from regular elections.

- Direct democracy as a partial corrective and as an element leading to binding decisions on the same level as decisions taken by the respective representative institutions.
- Dialogue-oriented democracy as an institutionalised framework of citizen participation that works as a permanent safety mechanism ('umbrella function') with regard to both other pillars.

3 Citizen participation as a term with wide interpretations

If citizen participation takes on the role of a complementary pillar in between the pillars of representative and also direct democracy, it will be important to define its sub-functions as a part of the general umbrella function. It is obvious that terms and definitions of what is meant by 'citizen participation' are not consistent. On the contrary, citizen participation is a term with wide interpretations. In this context we understand citizen participation as a dialogue-oriented framework of democracy consisting of the two sub-elements of consultation and deliberation in a permanent form, e.g. by establishing permanent open councils or political idea competitions. Thus, through strengthening citizens' democratic competence, people can, furthermore, open up their ideas for inclusion in political procedures. Recent studies prove that there is a correlation between the degree of participatory activity and the level of interest in politics, overall policy and trust in others (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016).

4 Constraints

To strengthen citizen participation as an independent pillar in the democratic system it is necessary to overcome systemic constraints. First of all it must be ensured that the fear of the political system's representative elements and institutions being undermined is properly dealt with. Although this fear is unfounded (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016), it depends, nonetheless, on the forms of regulation that enable people to



take part in dialogue-oriented procedures – in consultation or deliberation. The role of citizen participation must not be to replace decisions of the representative institutions or to avoid direct-democratic initiatives. Therefore it is important to keep dialogue-oriented instruments and procedures informal, without a legally-binding character. It is obvious that informal citizen participation promotes the acceptance of policy outcomes because it makes people better informed about the crucial details of complex issues. As long as the right to take the main decisions is vested in the representative institutions or the people itself through direct-democratic procedures, citizen participation can play an important complementary role between the pillars.

Another constraint to be faced is the common fear that citizen participation (as well as direct democracy) would only promote the special or partial interests of particularly active and well-organised

“As long as the right to take the main decisions is vested in the representative institutions or the people itself through direct-democratic procedures, citizen participation can play an important complementary role. The choice of the right instrument and procedure is the most important aspect to ensure a balanced process of citizen participation. This could – for example – be reached by random selection of participants or a balanced scoping procedure”





citizens (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016). Recent studies prove that it depends mainly on how citizens are chosen or involved in dialogue-oriented procedures of citizen participation (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016). The choice of the right instrument and procedure is the most important aspect to ensure a balanced process of citizen participation. This could – for example – be reached by random selection of participants or a balanced scoping procedure.

5 Conclusion

As long as it is well-organised and well-implemented, citizen participation can play an important role in strengthening the confidence in our democratic institutions. The so-called crisis of representative democracy will become more and more of a chimaera when dialogue-oriented instruments and procedures of citizen participation, consultation and deliberation are used for consultation and deliberation. In this context citizen participation – especially if it is applied on the local level – is an eligible way of completing the democratic system consisting of representative democracy as the main pillar, direct democracy and – as a new addition – dialogue-oriented citizen participation as a third pillar with a certain umbrella function. ■

Literature (cited and for further reading):

Bertelsmann Stiftung. *Partizipation im Wandel – Unsere Demokratie zwischen Wählen, Mitmachen und Entscheiden*, Gütersloh, 2016 (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2016)

Council of Europe. *European Charter of Local Self-Government and explanatory reports*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, 2010 (CoE 2010)

Egner, Björn. *Kommunale Demokratie*, Stuttgart, 2016 (Egner 2016)

Heußner, Hermann K. and Pautsch, Arne. *Die Kommunalisierung des Kommunalwahlrechts – Ein Weg zur Durchsetzung wahlbeteiligungssteigernder Wahlrechtsreformen*, Deutsches Verwaltungsblatt, 2016, 1308 (Heußner & Pautsch 2016)

Nanz, Patrizia/Leggewie, Claus. *Die Konsultative – Mehr Demokratie durch Bürgerbeteiligung*, Berlin, 2016 (Nanz & Leggewie 2016)



The 'Autonomy Convention': Debating South Tyrol's prospects of self-governance

Elisabeth Alber,
researcher,
group leader and
program manager
(Federal Scholar in
Residence Program)
at the Institute for
Comparative Federalism
at Eurac Research
(South Tyrol, Italy).



1 Introduction

There are two reasons that make 2017 an important year for the Italian Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen (South Tyrol). Firstly, it marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the formal settlement of South Tyrol's conflict at an international level. Secondly, and most importantly, in September 2017, the two consultative bodies of the 'Autonomy Convention', the 'Convention of 33' and the 'Forum of 100', will officially present their proposals regarding the revision of the Second Autonomy Statute of 1972 (Second ASt) to South Tyrol's provincial parliament. Regardless of the extent to which the provincial parliament decides to take them into account, any revision of the Second ASt has to be coordinated with the Autonomous Province of Trento. Art. 103 of the Second ASt vests the right to initiate amendments to it in the parliament of the region of Trentino-South Tyrol, following the proposals put forward by the parliaments of the two autonomous provinces.

2 Twenty-five years of formal conflict settlement at an international level

As to the first reason, 2017 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the formal

settlement of South Tyrol's conflict by the handover to the UN Secretary General of the 'deed of discharge' by the Austrian and Italian governments¹. Its submission acknowledged the closure of the Austro-Italian dispute over South Tyrol, the northernmost Italian territory inhabited by a German-speaking majority².

In 1992, it was demonstrated that the provisions enshrined in the Second AST of 1972 had been successfully implemented by the establishment of a detailed regime of territorial autonomy that recognises and protects the rights of German speakers within South Tyrol. Under constitutional law no. 1 of 10 November 1971, both administrative and legislative competences were transferred from the regional to the provincial level (thus to the predominantly Italian-speaking Autonomous Province of Trento and the trilingual Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen; please note that together they form the Autonomous Region Trentino-South Tyrol). Prior to the Second AST coming into effect on 20 January 1972, South Tyrol was unable to properly address its own political and cultural affairs because the First Autonomy Statute (1948) vested the relevant competences at the regional level. It took 20 years to satisfactorily implement all of the provisions and to formally close the conflict over South Tyrol, an Alpine area that, in 1919, was forcibly annexed to the Kingdom of Italy, and whose German – and Ladin³– speakers suffered from harsh assimilation policies until 1943. After World War II, the Brenner Pass was confirmed as the border. However, Annex IV to the Paris Treaty of 1946, the 'Gruber-Degasperi Agreement' between Italy and Austria, urged Italy to establish autonomy arrangements that 'safeguard the ethnic character and the cultural and economic development of the German-speaking element'. Among other things, it urged for the German language to be set on a par with the Italian and to establish an ethnic quota system ranging from the field of public employment to education and finances.

1. UN Doc A/46/939 and 940 of 17 June 1992.

2. South Tyrol's population amounts to 524,256 (31/12/2016). See <http://astat.provinz.bz.it/de/bevoelkerung.asp> (all Internet sources in this article were last accessed on 07/04/2017).

3. Ladin is a Rhaeto-Romance language spoken in the Central and Eastern Alpine region. In Italy, it is spoken in the valleys of the Dolomite mountains situated in the provinces of South Tyrol, Trento and Belluno

Today, the Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen enjoys a far-reaching autonomy within Italy's asymmetric regionalism. Indeed, South Tyrol enjoys a very broad legislative and administrative autonomy, which includes nearly all competences except the army, the police and a few minor issues. Its institutional set-up is based on the principle of power-sharing among its two major language groups, German and Italian speakers (respectively 69.41 and 26.06 per cent), and a series of rules applying to the third language group, the Ladins (4.53 per cent)⁴. Most importantly, all stipulations on the use of language are enforced through strict legal remedies, available to individuals and groups as a means to strengthen mutual trust.⁵ The system of group rights functions according to the declaration of belonging to or affiliation to a language group and establishes a system that follows principles of consociational democracy: the participation of all language groups in the joint exercise of governmental power⁶, language parity between the two major language groups⁷ (with an administration and judiciary running in two languages), a system of veto rights to defend each group's vital interests⁸, the principle of cultural autonomy⁹ for groups and an ethnic quota system based on a linguistic declaration or affiliation¹⁰.

3 The Autonomy Convention

As to the second reason, 2017 will go down in South Tyrol's history as the year when its first large-scale participatory process, the 'Autonomy Convention', presents its interpretation of

4. See online Elisabeth Alber and Carolin Zwilling, *Continuity and Change in South Tyrol's Ethnic Governance*, in: *Autonomy Arrangements in the World*. Website: www.world-autonomies.info/tas/styrol/Pages/default.aspx. See also the volume Jens Woelk et al. (eds.), *Tolerance through Law. Self Governance and Group rights in South Tyrol*, Martinus Nijhoff, Leiden-Boston, 2008.

5. Elisabeth Alber and Francesco Palermo, 'Creating, Studying and Experimenting with Bilingual Law in South Tyrol: Lost in Interpretation?', in: Xabier Arzoz (ed.), *Bilingual Higher Education in the Legal Context*. Martinus Nijhoff, Leiden-Boston, 2012, 287–309.

6. Art. 50 of the Second ASt.

7. Art. 99 of the Second ASt.

8. Art. 56 of the Second ASt

9. Art. 2 of the Second ASt.

10. Art. 89 of the Second ASt.



the status quo of South Tyrol's autonomy, and, most importantly, it advances its proposals as to the revision of the Second ASt.

In 45 years of its history, the Second ASt has never been formally reformed, even though the autonomy has been considerably enhanced by other legal tools such as enactment decrees¹¹, constitutional reforms affecting the distribution of competences¹², European jurisprudence¹³ and the institutionalisation of cross-border cooperation¹⁴. Politically, in South Tyrol, the formulas of 'provincial autonomy' (until 1972), 'dynamic autonomy'

11. Enactment decrees were used to implement all provisions enshrined in the Second ASt. After 1992, enactment decrees continued to be the legal instrument for enhancing South Tyrol's autonomy. A special commission ('Commission of Six') whose members are representatives of both the two major language groups and the State and Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen ('double parity principle') draws up the enactment decrees. They are submitted to the national government, which approves them in the form of a legislative decree. Thus, they are not debated in the national parliament. The 'Commission of Six' evolved from an instrument for the implementation of the Second ASt into an ordinary instrument of government.

12. Constitutional reform no. 2/2001 as well as significant changes in the financial relations. See various articles in Francesco Palermo, Sara Parolari and Alice Valdesalici (eds.), *Federalismo Fiscale e Autonomie Territoriali*, Cedam, Padova, 2013.

13. See the cases Bickel and Franz (C-274/96), Angonese (C-281/98) and Kamberaj (C-571/10).

14. In 2011, the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) 'European Region Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino' became functional.



“2017 will go down in South Tyrol’s history as the year when its first large-scale participatory process, the ‘Autonomy Convention’, presents its interpretation of the status quo of South Tyrol’s autonomy, and, most importantly, it advances its proposals as to the revision of the Second Autonomy Statute of 1972”

(especially from 1992 onwards) and, more recently, ‘full autonomy’ and ‘participatory autonomy’ are endorsed. By ‘participatory autonomy’ the ‘Autonomy Convention’ is meant, a consultative process officially initiated by the South Tyrolean provincial parliament on 16 January 2016. Before the two bodies of the ‘Autonomy Convention’, the ‘Forum of 100’ and the ‘Convention of 33’, started to meet regularly from April 2016 onwards, in winter and spring 2016 a series of events were initiated under the slogan ‘Thinking out South Tyrol together’ (author’s translation of the trilingual slogan Südtirol mitdenken - Immaginare l’Alto Adige - Pensé l Südtirol)

In eight ‘Open Space’ events, one ‘Future Lab’ and four ‘Thematic Workshops for Associations’¹⁵, South Tyrol’s population and its civil society organisations were asked to put forward proposals as to the revision of the Second ASt, which were then handed over to the ‘Convention of 33’ and the ‘Forum of 100’. Between 23 January and 5 March 2016, nearly 2,000 people participated in 258 rounds of discussion carried out according to the ‘Open Space’ method¹⁶. In each city or

15. Unlike for the ‘Open Space’ events, pre-registration was required at the ‘Thematic Workshops for Associations’ that took place on 3, 4, 5 and 6 May 2016. The outcomes of the workshops are available in German and Italian language at www.konvent.bz.it/de/files.

16. In an ‘Open Space’ there is a clear, pre-defined structure of workflows, but there is neither an agenda nor a guest list. Every participant is invited to be an agenda-setter. The outcomes of the ‘Open Space’ events are summarised in German, Italian and Ladin language and available at www.konvent.bz.it/de/files.



village, the participants differed in their demographic composition and political affiliation. Italian-speakers, women and young adults were under-represented¹⁷. At the 'Future Lab', specially designed for young people, approximately 150 people participated, while at the 'Thematic Workshop for Associations' from 3 to 6 May 2016, 128¹⁸ associations participated.

In sum, the most recurrent and controversially discussed topics were aspects regarding the enhancement of the 'competence-catalogue' of South Tyrol; the institutional relationships with Austria, Italy and the neighbouring province Trento; the role and function of the regional level of government, the EGTC 'European Region Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino'; (im)migration; the interests of the Ladin minority; multilingualism; the ethnic quota system; the separated school system; external self-determination; toponymy; and the coexistence of the language groups.

During the period of the 'Open Space' events, 1,829 people registered as potential members of the 'Forum of 100'¹⁹, whose members were selected by means of a stratified random sampling taking into account the 2011 census data on language, age and gender proportions²⁰. The 'Forum of 100' met six times at regular intervals between April 2016 and April 2017. It organised its work into eight working groups, each covering a different issue: (1) the development of autonomy, the role and future of the region, the institutional relationships with Rome and Vienna, and dual citizenship; (2) self-determination, the European region, the institutional relationships with Austria and Italy, and South Tyrol activists; (3) culture, education and toponymy; (4) declaration of linguistic affiliation, multilingualism, the ethnic quota system, the Ladins, and bi- and trilingualism in public administration; (5) sustainability, economy, research and labour; (6) social affairs, healthcare and sports; (7) people with a migrant

17. The minor representation of the Italian language group was widely discussed in the media. See press releases at www.konvent.bz.it.

18. Some associations participated in more than one workshop. 128 is the sum of the numbers of registered associations counting each day and each workshop.

19. Prerequisites for putting forward one's own application were residency in South Tyrol and a minimum age of 16 years.

20. See at <http://astat.provinz.bz.it/de/volkszaehlung-wohnungszaehlung-2011.asp>.

background and coexistence, and multilingualism; (8) forms of participation (representative, direct and participatory democracy). Alongside the elaboration of its own proposals, the 'Forum of 100' gave input to the main body of the 'Autonomy Convention', the 'Convention of 33'. It did so by handing over its content on 12 May 2017, and by having nominated eight of its members to represent its interests within the 'Convention of 33'.

The composition of the 'Convention of 33' is as follows: eight people elected by the 'Forum of 100', four people suggested by the council of the municipalities, two people suggested by trade associations, two people suggested by trade unions, five legal experts nominated by the provincial parliament, and twelve people nominated by the provincial parliament representing both the political majority and minority. The 'Convention of 33' first met on 30 April 2016, and its last meeting is scheduled for 30 June 2017. On average, it meets twice a month in the late afternoon for work sessions lasting three hours.

Both bodies are required to work according to the consensus principle, which was a big challenge for them both. Moreover, the members of both bodies work on a voluntary basis, without remuneration, their work sessions are publicly accessible and, in the case of the 'Convention of 33', are broadcast by live streaming.

Although a comprehensive content analysis is not yet possible due to the ongoing work of the 'Convention of 33', the following trends are emerging: in general, the members of both bodies underline the importance of the international anchoring of South Tyrol's autonomy and the necessity of upholding key instruments of minority protection. Their opinions, however, differ with regard to if and how the details of key instruments of minority protection could be regulated differently: for example on (1) the possibility to temporarily suspend the ethnic quota system or to apply it ever more flexibly; (2) the introduction of a multilingual school model alongside the German and Italian school systems that are based on the principle of mother tongue education; (3) the option to completely abolish the region as opposed to the one favouring a newly conceived region as a body coordinating strategies between the autonomous provinces if they so wish; (4)

the opening up of secessionist discourses seeking a different status of a multilingual South Tyrol within Europe.

4 Concluding Remarks: Placing the 'Autonomy Convention' in a Broader Picture

Participatory democracy has become a trend, worldwide and in Europe. At various governmental levels, participatory practices are complementing traditional decision-making processes. Scholars of political and legal science, albeit at a different pace, have begun to pay increasing attention to the proliferation of practices of participatory democracy. Depending on the geographical context in which forms of participatory practices have developed and that in which they are put into practice, they are named and classified very differently. As a general rule, they are: (1) neither instruments of representative nor of direct democracy; (2) complementary to the mentioned forms of democracy; (3) the expression of (institutionalised) debates involving the citizenry and (political) decision-makers; and (4) as regards their outcomes, result-oriented but open-ended.



“Participatory democracy has become a trend, worldwide and in Europe. At various governmental levels, participatory practices are complementing traditional decision-making processes. Scholars of political and legal science, albeit at a different pace, have begun to pay increasing attention to the proliferation of practices of participatory democracy”

21. Scholars talk about participatory, deliberative or associative democracy when referring to democratic practices. See various articles in Cristina Fraenkel-Haeberle et al. (eds.), *Citizen Participation in Multi-Level Democracies*, Martinus Nijhoff, Leiden-Boston, 2015. See also Elisabeth Alber and Martina Trettel (eds.), *Partecipazione e democrazia partecipativa nell'Euregio Tirolo-Alto Adige-Trentino*, Eurac book, 2015.





The 'Autonomy Convention' responds to these criteria: provincial law no. 3/2015²² provided for its establishment as an auxiliary instrument to the South Tyrolean provincial parliament. Its design consists of different discussion fora in which to freely reflect on and debate South Tyrol's autonomy. Its uniqueness lies in its contextualisation in a minority area characterised by a power-sharing system that combines legally guaranteed separation of groups with institutionalised forms of cooperation between their political elites. Both in its scope (revision of the Second ASt) and method (opened debates across language groups and political ideologies involving both the citizenry and the institutions), the 'Autonomy Convention' is certainly a novum to South Tyrol's self-governance. Up until now, all processes linked with the creation, implementation and development of South Tyrol's autonomy were exclusively elite-driven with the South Tyrolean Peoples' Party (Südtiroler Volkspartei, SVP) as the chief negotiator²³.

22. Published in the Official Gazette of the Autonomous Region of Trentino-South Tyrol no. 17 of 28 April 2015 at http://lexbrowser.provinz.bz.it/doc/de/201949/landesgesetz_vom_23_april_2015_nr_3.aspx?view=1.

23. The SVP was established in 1945 as the legitimate representative of all German and Ladin speakers in South Tyrol. Until 2008, the SVP always gained the absolute majority of votes and seats in the provincial parliament; in 2008, the SVP for the first time received less than 50 per cent of the votes, but managed to obtain 18 seats out of 35 in the provincial parliament. In 2013, the SVP again won the elections, but it managed to obtain only 17 seats out of 35 and, thus, it needed to enter a coalition with an Italian-speaking party not only because it is one of the specific requirements laid out in the Second ASt, but through the necessity to form a government.

The future will show if the ‘Autonomy Convention’ is groundbreaking in terms of the enhancement of a political concept of ‘participatory autonomy’ across language groups, if those who deliberately provided for its setup will simply sweep its results under the carpet or if it is the harbinger of a renewed flaring-up of ethnic tensions. Three issues are undoubtedly true. First, the institutionalisation of the ‘Autonomy Convention’ was only possible against the backdrop of South Tyrol’s successful conflict settlement by power-sharing mechanisms. Second, regardless of how the results of the ‘Autonomy Convention’ are processed by South Tyrol’s ethnically demarcated (political) arenas, data from a recently concluded project shows that although separation is still the (institutional) rule in South Tyrol, this rule is becoming increasingly less rigid among the majority of South Tyroleans; they view cultural diversity and multilingualism positively²⁴. Third, the ‘Autonomy Convention’ is South Tyrol’s first-ever institutionalised platform where its citizenry debates autonomy across language groups in a controversial but fair manner, far away from political arenas (at least officially). From this point of view, it is definitely a breakthrough in South Tyrol’s self-governance. ■

“The future will show if the ‘Autonomy Convention’ is groundbreaking in terms of the enhancement of a political concept of ‘participatory autonomy’ across language groups, if those who deliberately provided for its setup will simply sweep its results under the carpet or if it is the harbinger of a renewed flaring-up of ethnic tensions”

24. See Günther Pallaver, Max Haller and Hermann Atz, ‘Ethnische Differenzierung und soziale Schichtung in der Südtiroler Gesellschaft heute. Resümee und Ausblick’, in: Hermann Atz, Max Haller and Günther Pallaver (eds.), *Ethnische Differenzierung und soziale Schichtung in der Südtiroler Gesellschaft*, Nomos, Baden-Baden, 2016, 383-405, 400.



Groningen as a participatory municipality. The art of joining, letting go and being supportive

Liesbeth van de Wetering,

civil servant and resident of Groningen (The Netherlands).



1 Mind the gap

In Groningen, by far the biggest city (200,000 inhabitants) in the northern part of the Netherlands, we experiment with new ways of working together with the community. More people as well as different people participate in networks on a city and neighbourhood level. That makes me proud. And that is why I find my job as a civil servant so important. But is it the municipality itself that should involve citizens with their own environment? Or is it, in the end, the community itself that should participate and build the community? We are used to thinking in a citizen-government relationship and conclude that there is a gap between those two worlds. Step by step, piece by piece, we try to bridge this gap. However, using the word 'gap' means that we think in terms of two different worlds and stresses a static 'us' versus 'them'. This gap leaves no room for 'me' and 'you'. I believe the real task lies in building bridges among citizens themselves. Because that is where the real gap arises. We all live in our own safe bubble and surround ourselves with familiar faces. Highly educated and well-paid people rarely meet with people who are less well-off.

2 Connections don't come easy

This brings us to a vulnerable reality, in which connecting with one another doesn't come easily. We see that it is hard to mobilise people who are less well-off. There are groups which are disconnected from society, distrusting the government and other institutions. And, to be honest, sometimes it seems that the government distrusts citizens just as much as citizens distrust the government. This can be explained by the exclusive appropriation of the public good by the government, something we all, as citizens, let happen. This citizen-government relationship, or 'us' versus 'them', is quite a comfortable contradiction in which we don't ask ourselves: 'why am I not participating?' Just as government struggles with its role, wondering how to put itself in the position of its citizens, citizens have also 'forgotten' what citizenship consists of and how to shape society together. We have forgotten how to really listen to each other and familiarise ourselves with the world the other lives in. For this, we need to leave behind suspicion, competition and ignorance, and enter into dialogue with one another. Undoubtedly, this will bring discomfort and conflict. In the end, however, we will understand each other and will have new perspectives on society. For many issues we look to the government for solutions when in many cases we have to resolve them amongst ourselves. Elected representatives, executives and civil servants can play an important part in connecting different groups. Moreover, a

“Is it the municipality itself that should involve citizens with their own environment? Or is it, in the end, the community itself that should participate and build the community? We are used to thinking in a citizen-government relationship and conclude that there is a gap between those two worlds. Step by step, piece by piece, we try to bridge this gap”





lot of citizens' initiatives are doing exactly that, and better, and more enjoyably. For governments, and municipalities in particular, that means they really need to participate in the worlds of their citizens and have to be part of what is happening in their neighbourhoods.

3 A vital democracy needs permanent attention

A vital local democracy needs permanent attention and investment. Our executive office, represented by our mayor and aldermen, wants to be in the midst of its citizens and defines its role from that place. Renewal of the role of our local government and cooperation with our city is a top priority. We are giving our citizens more influence and ownership over their own environment. This commitment goes a lot further than voting at the ballot box. This commitment asks for a right to speak, as well as a right to vote. We notice people have an urge to contribute to their way of living together, to make their city together, to organise solidarity and to shape our local democracy. Here and in the rest of the Netherlands we notice people are asking for a different government. In Groningen we are working hard on that.

Vitalising democracy is not easy and adapting a democratic system that has been around for ages isn't either. It takes time. We need more than new methods or a different toolbox. We experiment by developing building blocks for new methods and, if necessary, learn about the

structures of our democratic system. Our local executives focus on a coherent approach, including our system, methods and behaviour. For this, we need intensive and innovative cooperation between citizens, representatives, executives and civil servants.

4 Experiments in Groningen

In Groningen we started a number of experiments in local democracy and our area-based programmes. Some of these experiments are based on co-creation: together with local residents and stakeholders analysing the neighbourhood, describing its challenges, translating these to an agenda, and carrying out the plans together. Other experiments are about giving influence to neighbourhoods, with participatory budgeting for example. We also experiment with random selection, digital panels and the right to challenge. The most far-reaching experiment is the cooperative council.

5 Democracy on a neighbourhood level

We believe our area-based approach is very important to strengthen involvement of our citizens with local democracy. The municipality changed its working methods adapting to the complex dynamics of every single neighbourhood. Every alderman was appointed a specific area of the city, working together with an area-team consisting of civil servants: nearby and approachable. This new approach brings us to questions about the design of democratic processes on a neighbourhood-level and the role of the city council during these processes (representative, policy-making, controlling or connecting). Also, citizens make their own decision of which role to play in these processes: informing, consulting, advising, co-producing, co-executing, deciding or executing. Every neighbourhood or situation demands different roles.

6 Cooperative council

In Oosterparkwijk, a gentrified former working-class neighbourhood, we are setting up a cooperative council. Together, people can feel a renewed ownership over their street



“We believe that with random selection more people will join who are not eager to voice their opinion or people who think that they have always been denied a voice. This way, the cooperative council will become a more balanced representation of the neighbourhood”

and neighbourhood and make decisions about it. The council is not an end in itself. It is a means to have significant conversations between residents, making decisions about their neighbourhood. Both residents and city councillors sit on the cooperative council. They are randomly selected. We believe that with random selection more people will join who are not eager to voice their opinion or people who think that they have always been denied a voice. This way, the cooperative council will become a more balanced representation of the neighbourhood. Members will rotate after a few years, so everyone has a chance to sit on the cooperative council.

For this, we consider the neighbourhood as a cooperation and every inhabitant as a member of this cooperation. The cooperative council decides on (parts of) the neighbourhood agenda and its budgets. Beforehand, topics will be chosen by the cooperative council itself. Decisions about these topics won't be made at City Hall, but in the neighbourhood. Hence, as a resident you decide on your own neighbourhood. We hope this will create more dialogue between residents in this neighbourhood. With consultations, meetings, brainstorming-sessions, panels and polls – offline and online – the cooperative council will involve as many residents as possible. We will pay particular attention to the turnout of vulnerable and infrequently heard residents. City councillors will work together with residents on an equal footing. This way, we connect participatory democracy (active citizens) with our representative democracy (elected representatives).



7 G1000

In 2015, an active group of citizens organised a G1000, a citizens' summit. On a sunny day in June, one thousand residents of Groningen made an agenda for the city. In groups of ten, they translated this agenda into concrete ideas. They experienced 'dialogue' and 'working together'. Mutual trust starts with little steps, getting to know one another again, and continuous dialogue. Looking for subjects that bind us and finding agreement. However, you don't have to agree on what you find interesting and fun. That was what the G1000 was all about: dreaming and sharing ideas. Your own preferred topic did not always resonate with the other nine participants in your group. Sometimes that hurts. Because making decisions together also brings disappointment. And in the groups where new things were created together it brought joy.



8 The beauty of learning to compromise

“The citizens’ summit demanded something of our expectations. We are used to coming up with clear cut plans. To measure results. To be efficient and effective. However, establishing dialogue is hard to measure”

Recently, a former politician called this ‘the beauty of compromise’. Not standing on the side with a clear conscience, but making concessions and getting dirt under your nails. Setting aside your own interests for the collective interest, because compromise is the very foundation of our democracy. Too often, we blame politicians for not keeping their promises and making compromises. David van Reybrouck, a Belgian author and founder of G1000 in Belgium, once said: ‘Democracy is not about making everybody happy. But about letting all people live with their little piece of unhappiness’. One of the participants of the G1000 in Groningen concluded afterwards: ‘I never realised democracy was so complicated’. The G1000 concluded the day with a choice of ten plans which people could join. Remarkably ambitious plans, like a basic income.

During the follow-up it became clear that self-organisation asks for working together pleasantly and in a practicable way, for perseverance, for not leaning on civil servants who will do the job, for making strides. A few pioneers who keep the process going are quite convenient and, sometimes, so is the municipality. How nice, and rightly so, it can be to grumble at them sometimes. To be honest, it wasn't easy for the municipality either. Sitting on its hands, not taking over all these ideas. Not immediately judging an initiative on feasibility within established policies.

9 Lessons learned

The citizens' summit demanded something of our expectations. We are used to coming up with clear cut plans. To measure results. To be efficient and effective. However, establishing dialogue is hard to measure. Civil servants as well as citizens exposed themselves to a vulnerable position and were allowed to make mistakes. They shared the fact that they were nervous and didn't know where conversations were heading to. Nonetheless, it brought a valuable democratic experience for everyone. There's 'a long way to go' but we'll make it an inspiring journey! ■



Interview with Prof. Jordi Barrat Esteve,

Rovira i Virgili
University
(Tarragona,
Catalonia)

Professor of Constitutional Law. His research has focused on e-voting, secret ballot and human rights. He has an extensive experience as an international observer in electoral processes. He has been an election consultant for international institutions such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE.



“We live in a very dynamic society where common interests are much more difficult to achieve, even to define. Maybe a good idea would consist in going back to fundamentals”

ESCOLA D'ADMINISTRACIÓ PÚBLICA DE CATALUNYA

Capacitar
persones per servir
les persones



Good practices

A Scuola di OpenCoesione / Open Cohesion School (Italy)

A *Scuola di OpenCoesione* (ASOC) is a massive open online course designed for students in Italian secondary schools. ASOC was launched in 2013 within the open government strategy on cohesion policy carried out by the by the Italian Government, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) and the Representation Office of the European Commission in Italy, it is also supported by the European Commission's network of Europe Direct Information Centres. About 2,800 students and 200 teachers are involved (March 2016) in a collective learning experience focused on civic monitoring of public funding through open data analysis, and also by visiting sites and conducting 'data journalist' research. The main objectives of ASOC are to engage participating schools in actively promoting the use and reuse of open data for the development of civic awareness and engagement with local communities in monitoring the effectiveness of public investment.

Gobierno Abierto / Open Government (Zaragoza, Spain)

A digital platform created by the city of Zaragoza, in 2014 it won the Open Knowledge Award for the best public open data initiative with involvement of citizens/society, given by the Spanish chapter of Open Knowledge International. This tool is based on the management of unique, accessible, open formats, geo-referenced and semantically described. It pays special attention to opportunities for citizen participation and collaboration as the fundamental basis for a smart city. It also takes advantage of the potential of new technologies to develop innovative mechanisms in order to facilitate access to municipal information and promote increased citizen participation. Another goal is to provide permanent access to public information and administrative processes to help people exercise an adequate oversight of public matters. It has a specific section for participation and collaboration with all the municipal initiatives aimed at informing, seeking opinions and consultations, allowing citizens to make decisions. Zaragoza is a partner of the **Clarity Project**.



Paris Budget Participatif / Paris Participatory Budget (France)

Since 2014, the city of Paris has offered its citizens the opportunity to decide on the use of 5% of its investment budget, which amounts to 500 million euros for the period 2014–2020. The aim is to involve citizens in municipal politics to foster social cohesion and to learn their preferences. It builds on the principles of open government and promotes a stronger relation between citizens, their representatives and the public institutions. In the 2015 edition of the **Budget Participatif**, participation was deepened by providing citizens with the opportunity to propose projects that would then be voted on. The project tries to harness the creative ideas of Parisians and the process is as follows: Parisians propose their ideas for investment projects on a website, the city evaluates the feasibility of the proposals, and project proposals are submitted to a vote by Parisians.



Pla Estratègic d'Acció Social / Strategic Social Action Plan (Sabadell, Catalonia)

The city of Sabadell (a city of 208,246 residents, near Barcelona) has initiated the **Strategic Social Action Plan Sabadell 2025** which is the result of joint work carried out by the City Council with various stakeholders in the city to fight against inequality. During its creation many voices were taken into account such as public employees, social organisations, experts and politicians. Deliberation took place between November 2015 and July 2016 with the participation of more than 260 people from different sectors. One of the key elements of the Plan has been this process to ensure everyone is involved and to build a prior consensus, before beginning with the strategies and the specific objectives. Another key element has been the incorporation of impact indicators during the participation process. Before shaping ideas and proposals, there has been an input of scientific knowledge to facilitate an understanding of other experiences around the world that have demonstrated good results.

Junts Fem Barri / Building the Neighbourhood Together (Gavà, Catalonia)

Junts Fem Barri is a programme initiated by Gavà City Council (a city of 46,266 residents, south of Barcelona) to improve public space and to promote citizen participation. The sequence spans taking the decision to rethink the investment plan, undergoing a participation process and determining which projects would be carried out, decided by residents. This has created a double logic of Administration-citizen dialogue, on one hand; and commitment-compliance from the Council, on the other hand. Co-responsibility and greater legitimacy are also emerging. The participation process includes polling stations in 20 municipal facilities and a mobile application to propose improvement projects in the neighbourhoods and to vote. The first edition took place in 2014 and collected 72 citizen proposals. Almost one thousand people voted in person or via the Internet.



New trends



Participatory budgeting

OpenBudgets.eu is an EU-funded project, aiming to support journalists, civil society organisations, NGOs, citizens and public administration agencies, by providing an overview of public budget and spending data as well as related tools and stories, thus serving advocacy and fiscal transparency objectives. Openness and transparency can act as a disincentive to corruption and also as a motivation to citizen participation. Citizens and other stakeholders usually stay outside the budget preparation process, impeded by factors such as lack of resources to influence decisions, lack of understanding of the different budget concepts, and ignorance of the approval process. Openbudgets.eu's Participatory Budgeting Platform (PB Platform) addresses some of the problems identified by citizens and public administration agencies. The platform is designed to enable real participatory experiences and decision-making processes, providing solutions that are easy to implement by all stakeholders involved, thus strengthening the democratic process.



Citizen Science

Citizens can play an essential part in the data gathering for many public services and scientific research initiatives that are only possible with the cooperation of hundreds of people. The city, the region, the country... becomes one enormous laboratory to create knowledge by people for the people. For example an analysis of local biodiversity based on photographs containing geolocation data, a real-time observatory of the condition of the seabed with the participation of volunteers, or control of tiger mosquitos through a mobile app that citizens use to upload information about the presence of this invasive species. **Barcelona Lab** is a collaborative platform of the City Council of Barcelona that promotes innovation and creativity. In 2012 the Citizen Science Office was created which helps research groups and institutions to share experiences and improve strategies that encourage citizen participation in scientific research. The new science, which stems from citizens and not only from universities and research centres, is here to stay and is in fact a necessity. Science and citizens unite to create knowledge and facilitate governance and decision making. Find more information at www.socientize.eu from the European Commission's Digital Science Unit, a project that has mapped ongoing activities, institutions, funding programs and initiatives on citizen engagement in science, or in the **Green Paper Citizen Science Strategy 2020 for Germany**.



E-voting

The Council of Europe continues to be the only organisation that has set intergovernmental standards in the field of e-voting. The **Recommendation on legal, operational and technical standards for e-voting** (2004) remains the only source of reference on the subject. It is used in national jurisprudence even in non-member States, as well as by other relevant international actors. Since its adoption, the Recommendation has been subject to biennial review meetings. Discussions in the Council of Europe's competent Rapporteur Group as well as a recent expert meeting have also shown a growing consensus as to the need to update the present Recommendation, given newer technological and societal developments over time. The new Recommendation should appear in 2017 with a new structure: the new Recommendation itself, the Guidelines on the implementation with specific requirements for each e-voting method, and the Explanatory Memorandum which explains the reasoning behind the amendments and the new structure.



New Politics

The much-discussed crisis of political parties poses a challenge to democratic theorists as institutional designers: how can the capacity of parties to mediate between society and state be resuscitated? Parties need to become more internally deliberative, allowing partisans to debate policy and more general visions for the polity. A prescriptive model of deliberative intra-party democracy must be outlined, drawing on the empirical literature on the changing structure of civic and political engagement. This is what Carlo Invernizzi Accetti and Fabio Wolkenstein argue in the article **'The crisis of party democracy, cognitive mobilization, and the case for making parties more deliberative'** from LSE *Research Online* (London School of Economics and Political Science). Both authors argue that deliberative reforms are the most appropriate response to the demands of an increasingly more cognitively mobilised citizenry which seeks self-expression and non-hierarchical forms of political engagement. They highlight the model's distinctive strengths and defend it against several objections.



Newsflash

CLAD 2017

From 14 to 17 November 2017, the **XXII International Congress of CLAD on the Reform of the State and the Public Administration** will take place in Madrid (Spain), organised by the Latin American Centre for Development Administration (CLAD), the Spanish Government and the National Institute of Public Administration (INAP). The slogan for this year is 'Towards an Administration based on sustainable development'.

GIGAPP 2017

From 25 to 28 September 2017, the **VIII International Congress on Government, Public Policy and Administration** will take place in Madrid (Spain), organised by the research group in Government Administration and Public Policy (GIGAPP). It is entitled 'Governing the Future: Latin America at the Crossroads'. This year the Public Administration School of Catalonia will coordinate three working groups. Find more information about the conference, registration and location on the website.

Alfons Ortuño Awards

In March 2017, the Minister for Governance, Public Administrations and Housing of the Government of Catalonia, Meritxell Borràs, chaired the ceremony for the third edition of the **Alfons Ortuño Awards**. The initiative, created in 2012, aims to provide honorary recognition to innovative actions and good practices in matters of public management in the Catalan public administration. In the same ceremony the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) presented the **European Public Sector Award (EPSA) 2017**.





Twitter Manual for Governments: Guidelines for public institutions based on the experience of the Government of Catalonia

Twitter and the Government of Catalonia have jointly published the *Twitter Manual for Governments*, a reference guide that provides techniques and ideas to help governments and public authorities around the world operate coherently and effectively on this social media platform. The Government of Catalonia's experience may be of great assistance to other governments. The manual offers specific resources for institutional Twitter account managers to optimize their content and interaction. It explains why a Twitter presence is important and how to draw up a specific communication strategy. It provides answers on what to post on an institutional Twitter account, when to tweet, how to interact with the public, how to react to criticism and how to measure effectiveness, among other issues.

Code of Ethics of the Public Service of Catalonia

A committee of experts is working on the **Code of Ethics of the Public Service of Catalonia**, this represents the first stage in drafting the code of ethics for employees serving in the Catalan public administration. This should be an open document to live up to society's expectations, reaffirming the commitment of the Government of Catalonia in the field of public ethics and complying with the law on transparency. The drafting of the code of ethics is part of the plan to reform the administration of the Government and the public sector, including ethics as one of its axes. In 2016, the **Code of Conduct for Senior Officials and Executives of the Catalan Administration** was approved.

Debates cycle 'Constituent processes around the world'

The Ministry of Transparency and Foreign and Institutional Relations and Affairs of the Government of Catalonia is promoting the debate cycle 'Constituent Processes around the World', from March to June 2017, with the aim of studying and discussing the main experiences of participatory democracy in constitutional processes that have occurred in recent years around the world. With the participation of academics and top international experts, there is a special emphasis on deliberation and involvement of citizens.

Senior managers of the Government of Catalonia show their commitment with the referendum on Catalan independence

The Government of Catalonia reaffirms its commitment to holding the referendum and applying its results. On April 21 the President of the Government of Catalonia, Carles Puigdemont, together with the Vice-president and Minister of the Economy and Finance, Oriol Junqueras, presided over the 'Compromís amb el Referèndum', a manifesto reaffirming the commitment to hold a binding referendum on Catalan independence. The symbolic event involved the signing of a manifesto by members of the government and senior officials entitled The Government of Catalonia's Commitment to the Referendum. The declaration reiterates the government's commitment as a whole to hold a referendum that exercises an inalienable right: the right to self-determination. The document was signed by all members of government, as well as the Secretary Generals and Director Generals. The document had close to 200 signatures, including the one from de Director of the Public Administration of Catalonia.



European Public Mosaic (EPuM). Open Journal on Public Service

Editor

Agustí Colomines i Companys
*Director of the Public Administration School
of Catalonia (EAPC)*

Assistant editor

Maria Eulàlia Pla Rius
*Deputy Director-General for Research and
Training in Senior Management*

Assistants to the editor

Núria Guevara Pedemonte
*Head of the Research, Publications and
Documentation Unit (EAPC)*

Elvira Riera Gil
*Secretary to the Editorial Board and Senior
Specialist in Research and Publications
(EAPC)*

Josep Ginjaume Font
*Research, Publications and Documentation
Unit (EAPC)*

Editorial Board

Manel Bardavio Novi
Assistant to Director (EAPC)

Montserrat Clavell Vergés
*Subdirector-General for Administration,
Services and External Policy (EAPC)*

Tània Fernández Lleonart
Head of the Senior Management Unit (EAPC)

Jesús Palomar Baget
*Project Manager for Communication,
Dissemination and Social Media (EAPC)*

Lluís Ràfols Ràfols
*Head of the Continuous Professional Training
Unit (EAPC)*

Advisory Board

Amadeu Alfataj Tardio
*Permanent Representative of the Government
of Catalonia to the European Union*

Elsa Artadi Vila
*Director-General for Interdepartmental
Coordination of the Government of Catalonia*

Marc Balaguer Puig
*Director of Ivalua, the Catalan Institute of
Public Policy Evaluation*

Lluís Bertran Saura
*Deputy Director-General for Administration,
Services and External Policy (EAPC)*

Gabriel Capilla Vidal
*Director of the Centre for Legal Studies
and Specialised Training (CEJFE) of the
Government of Catalonia*

Albert Carreras de Odriozola
*Full professor at the Faculty of Economic and
Business Sciences, Pompeu Fabra University
(UPF)*

Jordi Graells Costa
*Director-General for Citizen Information of
the Government of Catalonia*

Mireia Grau Creus
*Head of research at the Institute of Self-
Government Studies of the Government of
Catalonia*

Dolors Llorens Ardiaca
*Head of the Department for Innovation and
Public Employment Analysis of the Ministry
of Governance, Public Administrations and
Housing of the Government of Catalonia*

Lourdes Muñoz Santamaría
Founder of BCN Iniciativa Open Data

Sergi Pardos-Prado
*Permanent Official Fellow in Politics at Merton
College, University of Oxford*

Clara Ponsatí Obiols
*Professor at the Institute for Economic
Analysis of the Spanish National Research
Council (CSIC)*

Marc Sanjaume Calvet
*Advisor to the Institute of Self-Government
Studies of the Government of Catalonia*

Anna Tarrach Coll
*Director-General for Budgeting
of the Government of Catalonia*

**European Public Mosaic (EPuM).
Open Journal on Public Service**

No. 1 / June 2017

ISSN 2565-0378

DOI: 10.2436/20.8030.08.1

eapc.gencat.cat/epum

epum.eapc@gencat.cat

Subscriptions [here](#)

This journal is published three times a year. The articles published reflect only the opinions of their authors.



Creative Commons

This work is subject to a Creative Commons license. Its reproduction, distribution and public communication for non-commercial uses are thus permitted as long as specific credit is given to the authors, and to the Public Administration School of Catalonia as publisher of the journal. More information on the license 3.0 [here](#).

© Photos by 123rf (page 8 Aleksandar Radovanovic, 10 rawpixel, 13 rawpixel, 14 luminastock, 16 rawpixel, 20 strangeways70, 23 ostill, 24 Daniel Ernst, 29 Paolo Amiotti, 30 tolikoffphotography, 33 dizanna, 34 Christian Mueringer, 38 Shahid Khan, 41 Olha Rohulya, 42 Dmitriy Shironosov, 43 Shahid Khan).

© 2017, Escola d'Administració Pública de Catalunya (Public Administration School of Catalonia)
Barcelona, June 2017





Free subscription
to EPU_uM

EPU_uM

European Public Mosaic

OPEN
JOURNAL
ON PUBLIC
SERVICE



Generalitat de Catalunya
Escola d'Administració Pública
de Catalunya