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*Enrique PASTOR SELLER*

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# IMPACT, EFFECTIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY OF SOCIAL POLICIES AND LOCAL DEMOCRACY THROUGH THE SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT

*Enrique PASTOR SELLER<sup>1</sup>*

## **Abstract**

The paper presents an analysis and an evaluation of the opportunities, contributions and limitations that the institutionalized participation structures present in the field of Local Social Services to study in depth the democratic process in local public policies, as well as the proposals and alternatives that, from their participants would suppose to intensify for the local governance and for the efficacy of centers, organizations and social intervention professions. For its proper illustration and contextualization we mention the reform lines that introduce the new Autonomic Social Services Laws and also the findings and conclusions obtained through an empirical research about citizenship in The Region de Murcia Social Policies contrasting and comparing their results with realities and trends observed in others studies and experiences.

*Keywords:* Civic participation; community development; local social services; local social policies; community intervention.

## **Human development and sostenibility of participacion processes**

New social realities require integrated strategies for development planning, local development. In this sense, social inclusion and local development are essential and inseparable dimensions in the management of analysis and intervention strategies for sustainable integrated municipal level (Pastor, 2009a). On the one hand, social exclusion requires a different approach, global, com-

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prehensive, cross-lasting progressive and sustainable, and other local development needs while responding to integrate people, families, groups, collectives and territories a project to improve its capabilities, opportunities and promote an atmosphere of quality of life.

It is essential to promote endogenous development - from below - and comprehensive project management participation through innovative and creative formulas for local partnership, capable of converging capabilities and values of sustainable development in a globalized competition that goes beyond economics, as the only value, and seeping into all areas of our lives (structures, relationships, personal imaginary collective). This approach allows new processes involved in analysis and community intervention from a creative and innovative review of the roles of different stakeholders

A local development based on associations, local agents and that focuses on collective action. Means giving priority to territorial social policy that favors the proliferation of trading spaces, as noted Hamzaoui (2006), localize is politicizing the local area, in the sense of making him constantly stake in a democratic debate, is to revitalize democracy, is to “democratize democracy” (Giddens, 1998: 19).

Participation is deeply linked to human development, social sustainability (Munday, 2001, UNDP, 2002, 2003, 2008, Alguacil, 2005, 2008, Pastor, 2009a), one of the keys in the policies that underpin Social associated with social integration. Democracy, citizenship, pluralism and interdependence are inseparable in our societies, in which there are different, asymmetric, scattered and divergent power centers. The interdependent nature of issues and actors involved overcoming traditional models of intervention based on schedules and unidirectional segmented, being necessary to recognize, accept and integrate the complexity as an intrinsic element of social intervention process, articulating inclusive systems of participation of different actors in within local networks

It Supposed to move towards the implementation and management of strategic programs and projects, comprehensive and participatory cross, whose owners and players are citizens. These assumptions guide to using the reference of network to describe and analyze the complex, dynamic and diverse civic and institutional set and to move towards ecological strategies of collective governance at the municipal level. It is becoming more plausible, that „to take the political decisions necessary to ensure sustainable development, defending the long-term common good is possible only with and not against the public” (Harms and Pereyra, 2006: 23).

Contribute to human development in the s. XXI, means expanding people’s choices so they can have a standard of living to appreciate, being necessary for it to develop human capacities, among which participation. The ability to participate in the life of the community to which they belong is fundamental to human development. In the classical approach of the theory of human needs and Goug

Doyal (1994) and human-scale development of Manfred Max-Neef (1984), participation is a human need to acquire a strategic value to intervene directly and transversely optimizing access to the satisfaction of other needs, being, as we said Alguacil (2008), the most radical. Local policies on human development should emphasize the strengths, capacities and resources of individuals, families, groups, organizations, companies and communities to develop their full potential and generate personal mechanisms and processes, institutional and environmental prevention and resolution of difficult situations

Involvement linked to economic and social development, quality of life, the integration of micro and macro realities (Max-Neef, 1984: 84), where the human development of people and their living conditions are real priority, because these dimensions are truly enhancing a sustainable and lasting development. Download this philosophy of sustainability into local sustainable development requires greater democratic control, transparency (Herranz, 2007), innovation (Marcuello and Sanz, 2008) and a real participation and noticeable impact on the decisions of the local environment by citizens.

Defending Human Rights and Social Development are referring only be reached through full citizenship, that is, through commitment to the consolidation and expansion of individual rights and freedoms, social and political. Difficulty arises when people are denied to institutional, legal and social rights of citizenship and therefore cease to have rights or opportunities access of effective rights.

There are groups in that, the context of virtual citizenship are reflected, but not real in the sense of having rights, that can not realistically be pursued. We are talking about putting into practice the „politics of presence” based on involvement of excluded groups, in our case „not heard” in the decision-making processes, under the hypothesis that the presence of representatives directly influence the decision making, creating conditions for a stronger defense of the interests they aspire to these groups. This would facilitate the transformation giving previously excluded categories time and opportunity to build their political preferences and express their concerns. But the subject, as pointed out by Sheriff, only access to full citizenship if you are able to create, re-define, discover and re-building rights, duties and alternatives. The right to human needs, to define the rights of citizenship, is considered as a fifth generation of rights of way cross articulate citizenship and democracy, through actual participation.

A notion of political community is an inclusive democracy, pluralistic and egalitarian one. A democracy based on a notion of an open citizenship, differentiated, inclusive (Lucas, 2004) that promote policies and measures to build a more universal citizenship, while distinct, avoiding denials or limitations due to age, legal status, employment or other categories that all scenarios that cause citizens are unable to participate democratically in the life processes that affect them. In this sense, as pointed out by Colino and Del Pino (2003: 27), the majority of

citizens who engage in a participatory experience report having experienced a personal enrichment and have improved their understanding of local issues, although it is true that these benefits of participation are dependent on many factors (legal, attitudes, skills, etc.).

### **Local governance, social capital and social initiatives**

The intense timing of the changes taking place in our complex societies in the emerging third millennium is resulting in profound changes in the model of society in which new institutional and political configurations in the reorganization of the *welfare society* or supportive Company (*caring Society*). A reorganization of both objectives, instruments, and the actors involved in the welfare of citizens, provoked by the welfare state to a fourth-generation, having left behind the paternalistic, the welfare and interventionist, welfare state called relational.

The current welfare pluralism<sup>2</sup> - *welfare pluralism* - involves the redefinition of the roles of different sectors that make up society: state, market, social institutions or third sector initiatives and primary or supportive networks (family and informal networks). Constitutes a reconsideration of the transactions of social actors (citizens and association networks, politicians and leaders, technical and economic interest groups), aimed at creating shared leadership (participatory pluralism), which implies not confuse the different roles, responsibilities and rights of politicians, technicians and citizens.

The relational state is configured as a legal and social duty to perform the *complex citizenship*, understood for three reasons: it recognizes the civil, political, social and human intertwined state citizenship (traditional relationship with the State) and corporate citizenship (membership of associative forms of public recognition of non-state collective actors) and integrates the social formations of civil society.

The most significant change in the current “governance”, local roles and relationships between actors, are manifested in changes in: the relationship be-

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<sup>2</sup> The innovation of pluralism on the welfare state, is the proposal of a new articulation of the relationship between the different actors in the significant decrease in the role of the state would correspond to a greater voluntary sectors, informal and commercial (Johnson 1990: 16). In principle, as stated Espadas (2007), pluralism advocated a greater role for social enterprise as a solution to ease the bureaucracy, rigidity and remoteness of citizens in the provision of social services and emphasizing that change supposed to address these strategies should not be used as an excuse to cut public spending. But as pointed out by Norman Johnson (1990: 86), which raised pluralism in the background was not only greater participation of citizens through social entrepreneurship, but a profound change in the balance of power and a reduction in the role of State.

tween government and citizens can influence the nature of local politics, the role of managers and public organizations, with emerging new forms of organization (strategic alliances, partnerships, participatory experiences, etc.) residing and conflicted with traditional management systems. In this new relational context arises the debate on social policy instruments and subjects that can and should enable it, gaining a significant importance on the third sector and citizen participation, and opportunities to influence social issues and, therefore, elements inherent in the development, management and evaluation of social policies, especially local.

The third sector-nonprofit organizations, like all organizations, are a benchmark in the social construction of civic identity and the daily exercise of citizen participation. Contributes to extend the general welfare through the practice of participation of individual subjects with their actions contribute to the social fabric density and promote the integration of individuals and groups. As pointed out by Torre (2005), to the extent that the Third Sector is perceived as a set of actions directed by the universal principle of extending social welfare in the context of sustainable growth, reaffirming its status as space for citizen participation consideration of instrumental means for the development of civic identity and expanding its institutional recognition. The importance of expressive possibilities in the public arena and the ability to integrate cultural diversity and at the same time, manage facilities, services and productive activities of goods regarded as relational assets covering social needs. Research on Third Sector agree on the need to preserve the independence of the organizations and strengthen their social and participatory watershed in the development of community life more fully, based on consensus and the cooperation of citizens and the development of a more participatory democracy and cooperation between the different actors involved in welfare. Currently, access to the area of public decisions by citizens requires the mediation of social organizations to take strategies to promote the activation and processing of so-called social capital into political capital (the capacity to government influence).

At present, the effectiveness and efficiency of social policies is measured on the basis of implementing processes and tools appropriate interaction between social actors to achieve satisfactory compromise and consensus of all involved in the design and / or management of policies in a specific territorial level. Hence, the purpose of institutions and public policies is not so much direct intervention, but rather, encourage organizations that address the felt needs of individuals-recipients of intervention, and held in place processes that enhance communication, participation and capacity relationship between social actors.

In today's knowledge society decreases the willingness to accept the decisions made in a hierarchical or non-transparent way. On the contrary, new forms of participation and communication are demanded. Rule and can not be a uni-directional and hierarchical action from public authorities towards the citizens

and the social fabric. Rule requiring more capacity for involvement and commitment, both in defining problems and policies, as well as in the management of facilities, services and programs. The local level is an experimental area to test new procedures for cooperation and innovative ways to articulate political leadership and social participation. News and discussions on municipal issues are specified in the transition from the traditional local government to the current „governance” local - network government or relational government / administration / municipality. The local context provides a privileged environment to revitalize democracy, that we find the earliest and best examples of new ways of understanding the governance of public affairs from the relational municipality model. Characterized local government and legitimized by the relational, the ability to create and foster networks, to encourage participation of civil society and government to exercise leadership (representation) from a new model of municipal management more relational and open and therefore based on more key, more democratic and participatory citizenship. This model of “doing politics” and managing public affairs with local proximity favors constructing identities / memberships community feel involved in the conflict, the needs and common coexistence and, therefore, alternatives and decisions finally adopted. Local governments no longer converse with a homogeneous community, but multiple communities and identities that coexist and / or interact in, from and with the territory. Moreover, the public demands quality and efficiency in delivering public services but also participate in the same definition and articulation of public policies that guide local development. Hence, the challenge is to create conditions and opportunities for participation / citizen involvement and favorable generate real opportunities for deliberation and collective construction of social policies from the formation of strong, informed preferences among citizens in the local complex relational universe. The question is about how citizens should participate in defining the model of the city and its territory. Governance is increasingly the ability to have ready solutions to any problems as the development of capabilities to solve problems.

It is demanded to the political system, what to do with the training of its citizens. Putnam (2001a, 2001b, 2002, and 2003) summarizes this requirement in the idea of local social capital; the quality of public life depends largely on accepted norms and social trust networks formed by a commitment to active citizenship. Social capital is a resource embedded in the social structure of individuals that is generated through interaction, is not „private property” and its value can't be monetized like other forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986), instead it lubricates the relationship between agents and links through networks of trust (Anderson and Jack, 2002) Adler and Kwon (2002) identifies three components / conditions that must be present in the structure or network so that there is social capital: opportunity, motivation and skill. In the development of social capital involves factors affecting the evolution of social relations and interdependence, interaction and time.

In addition, there are three interlinked dimensions: structural (characteristics of the established social network) or relational links (levels of trust, shared norms, obligations and mutual recognition) and cognitive (understanding and sharing common language shared). This analysis is of particular reference to allude to the concept of social capital reported by Marcuello (2007), who defines it because of their content, origin, effects, and measurement properties. Social capital is difficult to transfer among agents because of their intangible features and provides the capabilities required for knowledge creation (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). Hence, it is a complex and unique strategic asset, forming a significant source of heterogeneity and sustainable competitive advantage for organizations. Thus, social capital is a significant resource for solving problems of coordination, and it reduces transaction costs, facilitates information flow between people and organizations, and promotes learning and collective commitment

The greatest wealth of our cities, towns, neighborhoods, etc., is precisely the quality of public space as an area for the exercise of citizenship, which proves the ability of democracies to shape spaces of legitimacy, participation and responsibility (“governance capacity”). This is because cities are places for dialogue and conflict, a “space” that must have an infrastructure „hard” (structural / tangible) and “soft” (relational).

The local government is presented as a privilege to participate, being especially visible in the emergence of spaces / mechanisms involved in this area. This lower level of government facilitates the development and ongoing evaluation of policies and participatory practices, while allowing dialogue and interaction, inter-agency and inter closer to everyday concerns and interests. The proximity of the subjects to citizens leads to a greater willingness on their part to get involved and participate, so it is necessary to innovate in bodies, mechanisms and participatory practices that allow the voices of citizens in decision-making processes at local. Most European local governments are, as indicated by various studies and authors (Löffler, E., 2005, Colino and Del Pino, 2008; Ganuza and Frances, 2008, Navarro, Cuesta and Font, 2009, Pastor 2009a, among others) for at least two decades, involved in reform processes. The objectives to be pursued with these reforms can be summarized in two: on the one hand, aimed at achieving administrative efficiency, effectiveness and quality of local administrative structures and outcomes in relation to public desires, and secondly The policies they pursue the enhancement of local democracy, usually in the form of greater inclusiveness and citizen access to public decisions that affect them.

## **Democratizing local government stepping up participation**

Today emerge a growing demand for reconciling/compatibility of representative democracy (in crisis according to many authors) with participatory democracy / direct citizen participation in public policy management. Thus, participation becomes a central transverse value in the political, social and academic and substantive meaning to politicians, managers and professionals involved (directly or indirectly) to the general public policies and social conditions in particular.

The complexity and interdependence of phenomena and social facts, as well as difficult situations spanning individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities requires commitment, skills and interactions of different stakeholders (public and civic), making participation in an inherent in this new pluralistic and relational context.

Citizenship „calls for” a new „way” of government and mutual relationship and influence and continuous relationship between local government and citizenship. A deepening of democracy, understood as an extension, in quantitative and qualitative, both actors (number and plurality representative) which may be involved in participatory processes, as the issues and production levels of influence and social policy by different actors involved (politicians, organizations, technicians and citizens). Hence the undeniable growth of participatory experiences and policies designed to promote citizen participation in public affairs, especially at the local level. A clear progressive renewal and adaptation of democratic structures through more direct participation and involvement of citizens, contributing to enhance democracy, promote greater transparency, legitimacy, effectiveness, efficiency and influence in public decisions, optimize institutional performance and train better citizens and politicians. But this progressive provision of opportunities for participation in public policy coexists with political and institutional contexts reluctant to push policies designed to promote participation and opening up new spaces and participatory processes and prefer to be confined to traditional mechanisms of representative democracy / delegate.

The expansion and diversification in the participation produce a mobilizing effect in the sense that people with similar orientations toward local democracy (Navarro, 2008) and / or organizational levels, are more involved when there are more opportunities when they live in a context participatory, providing an increased exercise of active citizenship. Hence, the challenge is to create conditions and opportunities for participation / citizen involvement and generate real favorable opportunities for deliberation and collective construction of social policies from the formation of strong, informed preferences among citizens in the complex relational universe. The challenge is how to be able to build a good society (Bellach, et.al. 1992), where “the public is built by creating an active society. This involves the establishment of networks of participation and action, where they have responsibility and make commitments” (Marcuello, 2008: 177-178).

## **Civic participation in the Autonomy System of Social Services in Spain**

The set of regional laws provide for social services, albeit, at different levels, the principle of “citizen participation” or “civic participation” by creating the conditions and channels to promote citizen participation in the management of the Public Social Services, as well as planning, monitoring, control and evaluation of social plans and programs. Recent laws identify the promotion of participation as intended and / or principle (Cantabria Act 2 / 2007, Law 12/2008 of the Basque Country) objective (Regional Law 15/2006, Law 12/2007 of Catalonia, Law 13 / 2008 in Galicia, Law 5 / 2009 of Aragon, Law 4 / 2009 of the Illes Balears, Law 7 / 2009, de la Rioja), provision (Law of the Principality of Asturias 1 / 2003) of social service policies, municipal competition and / or function of basic social services.

It also includes the creation of mechanisms to lead the rights and duties of the users of facilities, services and programs, or in a individual way, through representative social organizations (non-profit, voluntary initiative.) Both exercise of citizenship is reflected especially in the laws enacted from 2005 to reinforce the protection of users, with a guarantee of the principle of participation and a detailed description of rights and duties, including identifying the involvement of people as agents of change and their own groups and civil society entities operating in the Social Services System.

In order to ensure participation in the planning and management the Public Social Services provide the creation of advisory and consultative bodies for citizen participation and association: Local Councils of Social Welfare, Regional, Local and Social Services Sector, as appropriate.

Regarding the participation of the users, the laws of “second” and “third” generation are attributed, at least formally, a more active role, specifically to participate in all decisions that affect them directly or indirectly, individually or collectively. All institutions and centers of social services should have procedures for democratic participation of the users, or their legal representatives, in accordance with regulations to be determined, for this purpose the Council establishing a mechanism for users.

It is interesting to note the rights and obligations of users / recipients incorporated in the recent laws, conceiving social services as a legal right and a clear line / influence / integration of the Law 39/2006 of 14 December Promotion Personal Autonomy and Care for dependent people. (B.O.E. No.: 299, 15 December). Among the rights granted to highlight the importance to the user about making decisions in the process of diagnosis and intervention.

## Practices of participation in municipal social policies

Despite the heterogeneity of mechanisms of participation, coupled with its continuous evolution and innovation, it is possible to systematize this complex scenario of experience, considering the different types of classification: level of institutionalization, formalization and stability jurisdictional level that affects the decision ; level of participation offered, source of the initiative; nature of their jurisdiction (territorial or sector), stage of the process of policy, interests or goals that have or sharing basis. Focusing on the latter for comparative usefulness and further analysis, we distinguish (Pastor, 2009b): (a) *Associations*, It is focused through organized groups of citizens. They are mechanisms very widespread in Spanish municipalities, particularly urban ones, in the diagnosis and training of the local agenda, as well as facilities management, services and programs. It revolves mainly through: Municipal Councils of Citizen Participation Councils or Sectoral Committees of service users and Local Development Partnerships. (b) *Direct staff*, are spaces for individual citizens participation. Sometimes it is established representativeness on the selection criteria of participants, while others are a sample by a random system. In this area could include experiences such as participatory budgeting, citizen juries or cores participatory intervention, gatherings of citizens, neighborhood meetings, community service or, referendum or popular consultation satisfaction surveys, deliberative polls, discussion groups, etc. (c) *Mixed*, combine the two preceding: regional strategic plans; agendas 21, tips, forums, regional meetings, of sectorial or services; workshops prospective territories and services. In an analysis of research on participation in the local area (Sarasa, S Obrador, G., 1999, Constable, 2008; Brugué and Vallés, 2005; Colino and Del Pino, 2008, Del Pino and Colino, 2003; FEMP 2002; Font, 2001; Font and Blanco, 2003; Gutiérrez, 2005; INAP, 2008, Navarro 2002, 2008, Navarro Cuesta and Font, 2009, Montero, Font and Torcal, 2006; Morales, 2005, Pastor 2009a, 2009b; Pinder , 2008, Rodriguez and Codorniu, 2000, Rodriguez, et.al., 2005, Rodriguez and Ajangiz, 2007; Ruiz, 2006, Salamon et al., 2001; Subirats, 2007, etc), we observe two phenomena, first, the decentralization of the Welfare State since the mid-eighties has led to municipal governments, especially cities, have had to find partners - third sector / system - for its new powers, and, secondly, that municipal governments employ adaptive strategies in relation to the stable and dynamic features of its political structure in its history. Hence, providing opportunities that encourage political participation, initially, local councils, mainly urban ones (Navarro, 2002, 2008), are based on the traditional and typically associations (regional and sectoral councils), but increasingly are being put in place mechanisms for direct participation - guidance model citizens - good information and / or consultation (surveys, ombudsman, referendum, Internet) and / or deliberative, involving a process of public discussion about decisions and / or initiatives (participatory budgeting, citizens' councils).

**Trends, civic opportunities and civic dilemmas in the politics of institutionalized participation of social services in primary care.  
Case analysis.**

Here are some findings from recent empirical research on participation in the field of municipal social policies, comparing their findings with facts and trends observed in other studies and experiences of national and international level and, more specifically, contributions, limitations and significant trends in local councils in their ability to influence the processes of democratization in the construction of social policies at the municipal level (Pastor, 2011).

The methodological approach used was based on the use of techniques, primarily qualitative, including: interviews targeted the universe of units of study, in depth interviews with key informants and focus groups with strategic participants. In turn, we used document analysis and internal and external content to the units of observation. Considering the complexity of the phenomenon is developing a strategy of triangulation methodology in order to enhance analytical capabilities, reliability and validity of results in research, thus avoiding methodological bias. This perspective has led to collect the speeches, opinions, voices, suggestions and interpretations of the protagonists in the process of citizen participation in social services at local level.

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In the empirical study conducted in the context of the Region of Murcia, we find that of forty-five municipalities of the Region, only eleven of them (24.4%) have formal mechanisms for concentration and / or participation in Welfare Social or Social Services at large (general or sectoral), although in practice councils have launched participatory these organs are eight (17.7%). Of these, two have only Sectoral Councils but not general, and three others cover a broader subject to Social Services itself, to deal with different areas of public activity of the Local Corporation (Municipal Council Citizen Participation and NGOs). Therefore, there are five municipalities in the Region of Murcia have Council (three) or Municipal Social Service Institute (two), general and operating at present, representing only 11.1% of Local Authorities in the region. Respect of Sector Councils,

six local councils that have been launched, representing 13.33% of Local Authorities in the Region of Murcia. They are in first place Women and Aging, which exist in four municipalities. Specifically, one has two, two are Women's Council (Equal Opportunities and other connected with the Violence Against Women) and other seniors. In response to other groups, two municipalities have the Immigration Advice and two focusing on Drug Addiction.

Therefore, only five municipalities have municipal councils (or Citizenship) and Sectorial simultaneously. As for the institutes currently operate only in two municipalities, accounting for 4.4% of the municipalities, although it should be noted that two local corporations which currently have City Council, were originally Institutes of self-management of social affairs municipal. Here are some trends in participatory mechanisms institutionalized in municipal social policy.

### ***Institutionalization, monitoring and proactive policy development and flattering***

Policy development at European, national, regional and local levels, both general and specific of Social Services System, is supportive and proactive in the creation, promotion and consolidation of decentralized management bodies and citizen participation both general / regional areas as municipal jurisdiction, population groups and / or social problems. We find a framework that favors the creation of Councils of General Services and / or sector to which channel the participation of citizens and users and improve the management of municipal social issues. Moreover, and given the nature of Performance Basic Social Services and Social Cooperation Program, participation is central to management and substantive quality of Primary Care Services.

The analysis of the regulations concerning the Council notes that it gives to the administration a large and flexible capacity to control the agenda and participatory processes. The statutes and regulations define and determine standards and matters for which you may participate, thus limiting the framework and possibilities for effective participation of public social affairs, while allowing the policy maker / technician in the agenda introduce sessions on issues that he is interested in. In this way, participants become „consumers-invited” but not actors, can bring their voice, but filtered in view of their attachment to the agenda and strategy of political action. Participation mechanisms are not perceived by organizations as a private space, but a meeting with the local where it offers information about the actions taken or to engage in Social Policy. For technicians is a framework where accountability for the management, of an explicit and systematic way, they could perceive them as workload, institutional and social control, to a greater extent as job sharing. In short, a model focused on the institutional and procedures and controlled by and for the administration.

***Public initiative and participatory processes marked by administrative processes***

The analysis of the creation and history of the Municipal Council, notes that the initiative in creation is always from Local Government, that is in the supply side. They are not arise in response to a lawsuit or claim more explicit citizen participation or involvement, nor in a socio-technical intervention community strategy, but they tend to respond to the concerns of Area Councillor in response to policy guidelines it is proposed to certain social entities involved in these mechanisms, usually after the approval of their statutes, which disables the different actors involved in the preparation, execution and / or deliberation of these Councils. In this sense, it is clear that the policy of participation in social services has depended on the structure, dynamics and willing of the political system, reflected in the social actors linked to the reforms of welfare, relational dynamics and policy changes that have taken place since the mid-nineties. The creation and changes reflect political will to give greater or lesser role for participation in the social agenda, causing discretion and instability and contributes to a progressive's perception of being just instruments for their own management interests, rather than spaces of real and substantive participation. However, regulation and implementation of the Council encourage the progressive perception of „right” of participation, beyond the gracious granted, where appropriate and subject to conditions, by the administration.

***Associational involvement and interference / interdependence for participation***

The councils composition and representation have a base of participation, primarily associative, with a clear role of federations, foundations and associations to citizens individually, platforms and minority institutions, while the focus is on territorial sectors of representation. These preferences by social organizations, mainly sectorials (specialized nature), as protagonists in the interactional participation is a very common pattern in the policies and participatory experiences.

We have observed a progressive bureaucratization, professionalization, functional specialization and voluntary dependence from the government. The procedures and conditions for access to a decreased and exiguous public funds (contracts, agreements, grants) may lead to the entities to reduce their potential for flexibility and innovation, because at the end the administration determines what (centers and services), for what (meaning and purpose) and how (methods of intervention) and who (collective and / or target problems) have to provide services. This domain public logic, both institutional policy and the provision of services, submit to the organizations to dilemmas on their own identity, independence, ethics and social intervention strategies. This context can generate

competition relations between entities - the struggle for positions to available capacity of administrative power -in a greater measure of cooperation / networks / alliances.

The fragmented and atomized associative reality difficult the plural representation and participation processes, especially in larger municipalities where the social network is very large and diverse. Certain groups tend to hoard the social representation in many forums and participatory contexts observed asymmetrical ability and opportunity of access to political affairs. Inequality, on the one hand, access to spaces and opportunities for participation by organizations and, second, the capacity and ability of participants to formulate political opinions, determines the asymmetry in the representation of different groups and problematic subject and object of the action of social services.

### ***Divergent expectations between stakeholders***

The objectives of the Councils are advisory, not binding on the authorities (giving and collecting information) and, therefore, based on a narrow concept of participation, understood in terms of information, consultation and collaboration. It notes the existence of a gap between formal and real objectives are achieved in practice, as well as the different perceptions that actors have about the objectives they have and they should meet (expectations). On the one hand, social institutions involved are perceived as a tool to stay informed about local social issues, exchange views, to inform the administration of the actions they take, have a space for encounter and collaboration between social entities that are provides information about the existence and work each one does, coordinate services and activities and transfer of collective needs and demands. This communication has improved, in some cases, referral of cases and the development of concrete actions between the Department of Social Services and social organizations. These very highly valued these mechanisms, particularly by the possibility of dialogue and exchange of information with social services professionals. For technicians is a tool for identifying social needs, streamline processes and, sometimes, better coordination of daily matters of the District (case tracking, ups and downs in economic benefits and services, project information and results).

One of the most visible and important aspects of participation is analyzed jurisdiction in determining the ways of doing, the methodological aspects of the meetings, issues and how they are addressed and do not facilitate the consultation, deliberation and preparation proposals. The participatory process is perceived and considered a formality more administrative than substantive.

### ***Instrumental participation***

The issues addressed relate to the presentation and information on services, projects, activities, budget, regulatory requirements and benefit and assistance cases. Therefore, they are focusing on technical and administrative requirements rather than political, such as making diagnoses, projects and shared decision making. The issues of most concern and demand are crime, drugs and immigration, on the contrary being under-represented groups in these mechanisms. In turn, the superficiality with which they are treated creates confusion in understanding the complex reality of these phenomena.

Technical management / administration of social affairs becomes preferentially on the agenda, organization, functioning and dynamics of these mechanisms. The participatory process is conducted by technical discourse from and / or as a result of the issues decided politically, discouraging participation. The necessary incorporation of the debate and discussion on social issues requires „time” and „languages” that allow the analysis and elaboration of proposals from institutions and be elaborated before to the meetings. But it is also true that there are significant administrative and technical limitations when certain proposals for centers, programs and projects must comply with deadlines set by bodies outside the Council, including the local or central administration itself, in order to raise funds autonomous and / or from the state.

### ***Citizen ignorance of institutionalized mechanisms and bodies***

It is noted that the general public and social non-participants are unaware of the existence and / or operation of the Councils, as the process of formalization and operation has not been accompanied by actions, before and after, enough information, dissemination, consultation, proposals and debate. This lack of transparency, feedback / contributes to the arbitrariness in the selection of actors and mechanisms function, playing the participation bias.

### ***Prevalence of non-binding information and / mandatory***

The policy analysis of citizen participation in municipal social services shows that most municipalities have set up councils, allowing opportunities for participation in levels of information and booking times for consultation and decision-making bodies of government municipal.

The actors come with a documented, comprehensive information but also biased and filtered by whom and what information and how it is offered, which determines the formation of individual and collective views of the reality and alternatives that present themselves as objective and possible. The information is not something given, it is undergoing to a process of data building and previous

interpretations that are used to define reality and propose possibilities courses of action.

The consultation, if any, appears as a “democracy rite” limited to express, not always, the opinions about what is being asked in the context of alternatives defined as possible. It does not involve a discussion but just an aggregation of opinions and thus, more related to a strategy of knowing the possibilities of success or failure of a particular action - political and / or technical - to do or even performed. The topics and the like are raised, often can not choose to amend or, in the case, if the margin is very small.

The limited involvement of the agreements and the perception of not local influence in social policy, in a practical way, means that members feel sometimes “guest”, “not participating” in the process of decision making. It appears situations of “absenteeism”. Organizations „mute” adopting a role, “absent” or even “compliance” on session, using other more useful ways to channel their demands, as noted above, and influence in decision making. People are willing to spend their free time and other resources if their participation enhances their quality of life and quality of services they use. If the participation of citizens, by contrast, offers no visible results, people lose interest. Thus, the consultative processes that lead nowhere and are restricted only to the decision making process certainly does not increase public confidence in their local government if, as we said Loffer (2005), decisions are not taken into the perspective of citizens.

### **Conclusions and opportunities to exercise citizenship: from the symbolic to the genuine**

The results of empirical research report that the Councils and Institutes model has not met its quantitative targets and qualitative coverage regarding the quality of participation offered and received. Also, there is a lack of involvement / participation of members, understood as rational formulation of proposals and initiatives on social issues public that these are addressed.

The politics of citizen participation, through the Councils and Institutes, do not due to a deepening democratic project of the municipal social services policy in the sense of a transfer of power to the people in the management of social public affairs, but an option purely distributive, by enhancing the CRM strategy that increases the effectiveness of government action and professional. Mechanisms that strengthen the more formal aspects, representative and symbolic of participation over others as deliberation, conflict, equity, social change and collegial decision-making and to suggest real force of communicative action of the actors.

Underlying the consideration of the role of citizens as users, consumers, customers, recipients or recipients of services rather than citizens, as political actors able to intervene and influence the management of public affairs and public policy (empowerment or training). Participation is limited to a choice about certain options, policies and criteria previously defined and limited. There is no real possibility to define needs or ways of meeting and, therefore, we see a limited ability to intervene effectively in management decisions. Thus, as noted by Pindado (2008), we lose the opportunity to harness the power of citizens to help transform the reality and achieve higher levels of welfare and happiness. In the same sense of innovation and social capital generated from these areas of organizational interaction. However, there is agreement among respondents to indicate a low participation of members of the Councils, understood as the rational formulation of proposals on the issues discussed. This apparent contradiction is motivated by the functioning and organization of the mechanisms (how) - Habermas communicative conditions as noted - but also by the different and conflicting expectations of stakeholders regarding the participation in them.

Consistent with the findings of studies on associative democracy, the municipal politics of participation in municipal social services constitutes a democratic model that might be called a „democracy of access”, it is beyond the addition of citizenship to the formulation of policies, without favoring the possibility of an exercise of effective power, not in the activation of the agenda, but in the discussion of the problems it should or should not include. There is a division “between all the important things, on the one hand, the accessories things, on the other” (Gutiérrez, 2005: 180). Meanwhile, the discourse of institutional participation relates to deliberation and discussion of public affairs, the reality is that councils deal with secondary issues. Participation promoted by local governments in social services is formal, forms become the best example of rights without losing a character instrumental in the sense that it serves to legitimize policies and institutions at times of professionals, social service centers.

Councils and Institutes are socializing, education, promote awareness and social responsibility, they create supportive attitudes and behaviors. But these values require the perception of transparency in the management of participation and substantive consideration. The actors fail to take these principles cooperative when they feel “to be used” to comply with a rule or serve as a “public display” to say that there is citizen participation. In this way no longer participating cooperative and supportive participation and it turns, legitimately, to “interested” in particular issues of the private interest to the group or association they represent, substantive from being “egocentric” and therefore, disabled to generate collective processes. This will detract from the potential of these mechanisms to be innovative and generate social capital, in the sense of fostering a learning process in introducing new knowledge or combining existing ones to create new achievements. Thus social capital is difficult to transfer among agents.

Councils and Institutes encourage the processes of interaction between the actors but do not guarantee by themselves, and automatically, democratization in the construction of social policies at the local level and vice versa. They do not favor the possibility of an exercise of effective power, not in the activation of the agenda, but in the discussion of the problems it should be or not should be included. Hence, beyond its precise regulation of design, organization and operation that enables real conditions and opportunities to access and influence decision-making processes regarding social policies. The effective management of social issues should not stop in the background design of these mechanisms as instruments of democratization.

Citizen participation requires, as noted Aranguren (2008), new anchors and a renewed performance methodology. Transparency (Herranz, 2007) real innovation and effective citizen participation in the design, management and evaluation of social services policy as an essential element is configured to generate / reinforce / rebuild social capital and the quality of democracy in territorial and organizational level closest. Her addition will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public policies and the provision of social services and significant and binding decisions for stakeholders and users of facilities and services, causing a progressive social capital revitalization of municipalities and social organizations in which we work from transaction synergies.

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