

**CONGRESSO DA CIDADE:  
A Experiência de Porto Alegre**

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**Abstract**

This report approaches the methodology of civil society participation applied to local strategical plans, showing how these plans are made and their purpose. Afterwards, it shows how the process developed in the project “Porto Alegre Mais – Cidade Constituinte”, gained structure when Porto Alegre city’s government calls on civil society to share a new way of management, launching a global discussion about the city’s future.

A brief comparison between this specific project and strategical plans is presented at the end.

**Introduction**

This report focuses an analysis of participation mechanisms, which involves a co-management between local governments and the Civil Society, on decision-making processes either on city planning, or on the drawing of public policies.

The report is divided in four items: the first one, “Theoretical basis of participant democracy”, approaches some theoretical interpretations about the meaning of the participation process. The second one, called “Emergency for a new localism and return of the citizen”, articulates these participation mechanisms with the Reform of the State, by listing the antecedents that contributed to transform the cities into new political actors.

The third item, the “Local strategical plans” shows how the local management experiences originate, and their purpose, once they oppose the normative planning and incorporate the Civil Society participation on the processes of city planning.

The fourth item, “The Porto Alegre Mais – Cidade Constituinte” project shows how the participation process adopted on the urban planning of Porto Alegre city (Brazil) occurred.

### **1. Theoretical basis of the participative democracy**

Nowadays, it’s a consensus that the model of western representative democracy hardly fulfills simultaneously its three basic functions: political equality, majority’s non-tyranny and deliberation. In first place, the current electoral systems and the media control carried out by the parties or the politicians, hardly allow the political equality to happen. Secondly, the tyranny examples are uncountable and affect minority groups that have almost no rights. At last, the social participation happens basically during the elections period, fact that has caused apathy and lack of interest from the part of the citizens towards politics and politicians. (Fishkin,1995b).

In European countries these problems have conducted to electoral abstention and citizens’ discredit on politics and politicians. According to the Spanish institute of public opinion research, the citizens of that country feel they are not fully represented by the

democratic institutions and have little confidence on being able to influence, somehow, their country's institutional and political subjects (Subirats, 1998:36)

Informations obtained through other researches, accomplished in European and North American countries, have shown that the great majority of the population, tends to apathy, passivity and disinterest on political activities participation. Moreover, these data when revealing the existence of non-democratic or authoritarian behaviors in the low income sectors, have consolidated the argument that the popular participation would risk the democratic system stability (Pateman, 1992:11)

To solve the dichotomy between political equality and deliberation, Fishkin, (1995b), proposed to apply the "Deliberative Opinion Poll", which consists on choosing the citizens at random, to demonstrate that these were a microcosm of the society they

represented, according to age, sex, region, social-economic status and education level. The author believes that when the participation is not voluntary, all citizens have the same chances to be represented. <sup>1</sup>

About these instruments application, some concerns and questions have emerged: a) How can a real representation be guaranteed, and what to do, to assure that the "actors" involved behave as a faithful reproduction of the group that they represent? b) Which characteristics must the participation instruments have, to legitimate the government that implemented them?<sup>2</sup> c) These mechanisms really result on a democracy consolidation or are they ritual acts, in which a dialogue is arranged and develops without any connection with the real process of decisions reaching? (Font and Blanco, 2.001: 219).

Subirats (2.001: 33 -36) places a provocative question: "Why is the participation necessary if we already have democracy?". For the author, this question makes sense when an effectiveness deficit on the decisions mechanisms is evidenced, due to increasing

complexity of democracy problems, which can threaten its sustainability along fast pace changing period.

In face of this picture, there is an increasing recognition of the need for changes related to the representative system and improvements of the communication and information channels. The improvement of these channels can lead to democracy in administration and also solve the dilemma concerning effectiveness and participation. Effectiveness, which has always been identified with enterprise management, is understood nowadays, as modernization of the administrative structure, which becomes increasingly considered inseparable from a participative government.

The relation between effectiveness and participation has already been perceived by the participative democracy theoreticians; Almond and Verba (1965:140), have affirmed that this praxis results in confidence on people's ability to participate and also stimulates an intrinsic relation between participation and effectiveness or political competence. And John Stuart Mill (1951:207-208), in his "Representative Government" defends that people personally engaged on solving their own problems, liberate energies and increase the probabilities to create imaginative and strategical solutions.

For Subirats (1996:36), in the consensus on which the State of Social Welfare was built, effectiveness was emphasized and participation was forgotten. Today, it seems that without a real participation, effectiveness does not exist, and, in that case, the transparency and responsibility deficits produced are not worth it. Concludes the author about this subject:

Strategical planning, total quality management or new public administration, have been used as magical remedies to cure the evils suffered by public management. In all cases, efforts were made in

order to improve the capacity of answering the citizenship demands and also improve the communication channels between the administrations and society. (Subirats, op. cit: 37).

The implementation of participative mechanisms by local governments, where government opens spaces for the citizens to discuss city planning or deliberate on public policies, is understood as a complement to the representative system, as direct democracy means, and, mainly, as an open gate to citizen's deliberation.

On the traditional governments, the deliberation is not quite developed and the citizens are not seen as potential participants. For Stewart, (2.001: 78), the government systems:

... are based on the representative democracy, but this sort of democracy cannot be seen as something opposed to the participative democracy, in general, or to the deliberative democracy, in particular. If we assume that the representative democracy is reached exclusively through the elections, than we are talking about a very limited form of representative democracy... To re-present is something beyond being merely a delegate ... the representative democracy can be strengthened, through the deliberation between governments and citizens.

The new participation mechanisms can also be understood as an answer to the technical planning monopoly that is concentrated on the politicians and specialists' hands. This needs to be changed and replaced by a shared discussion on the cities future.

This model of planner and mediator State has found full resonance in the economic and political international context, both in real socialism countries, and in the post- New Deal capitalist countries. This model was implanted in Brazil by the military regimen, consolidating a " vision in which the *locus* in a urban policy, especially in its territorial

dimension, is the technical sphere of urban planning, implanted while sector of public management “(Rolnik, 1995:351 e 353).

These authority features, which have been values and references for the urbanism technicians, have been, increasingly discredited along the last years. This discredit led to a searching on the causes for the criticism of the traditional way of planning, as well as to the experimenting on new ways of urban management (Guerra, 2002:344).

Also the changes caused by the State Reform and the paradigms crisis, along the 90’s, increased the demand for negotiation or a negotiated construction of consensuses once:

... in great majority of public policies there is no right or wrong option, otherwise, just negotiation and commitments... And the experts should not be in charge of all decisions. The risks should be defined through a collective discussion (Delap, 2001:176).

Although, in our country, it is still strong among politicians and technicians, the increasing criticism operated changes, after our constituent process, showing that it is necessary to rescue and revitalize the auto-organization idea, doing away with the past ideology adopting it to the reality of the current days through a new inter-relationship between government institutions and social organizations. Settled on a complementation between the representative and participative instances, this relationship is the base of the negotiation model and makes possible the meeting between the State and civil society, where parts face each other, not as opponents anymore but as partners.

## **2. Emergency of a new localism and the return of the citizen**

The 90'ies were the citizen's decade (P. Ashdown, leader of the England Democratic Liberal Party, in a message at the end of 1989).

With the new agreement between the local governments and the economic and urban social actors, European and North American cities have acquired a new protagonism as, economic, social, cultural and political actors.

This new protagonism reached the eastern European cities when the rebellion movements from the Civil Society caused the collapse of the stalinist systems, rescued democracy and adopted a competitive economy in its great urban centers.

Finally, the Latin American cities, with the redemocratization and decentralization of their national States, also emerged as political and economic actors (Castells e Borja, 1996: 151-154).

Among the economic factors that have contributed for the new protagonism of the cities, there are the Social Welfare State exhaustion and the globalization. Along with the fiscal crisis of the Seventies, through a decentralization process the State has transferred attributions, abilities, features and, sometimes, power to the cities. From dependent and subordinate institutions, cities have become true local governments, responsible for their own economic and urban development and for the implementation of public policies.

The new localism and the return of the citizen have also had social and political reasons, such as the bankruptcy of the real socialism, and the reply from the Civil Society to the consequences of the market economy, which were: abolishment of labor laws, brutal increase of inequality between rich and poor, and sprouting of a new low class, different from the previous existing ones due to the raise of unemployment, and to structural poverty sectors.<sup>3</sup>

For Subirats, (1998:489) these phenomena mean the launching of a new localism and the re-politization in local level. The reply to these problems happened in different ways: in the United Kingdom and in the United States the return to citizenship was a reply to the reduction of the social rights of the Welfare State, accomplished by the New Right from the Thatcher and Bush eras.

In the United States, the concern with citizenship was also connected to the population apathy, and the consequent reduction on political participation in public activities and on the electoral level.<sup>4</sup>

In less affected by social rights cut off Continental Europe countries, this concern derived from two problems: the construction of an extra-national identity with European Union and the effects of increasing immigration, showing the need to organize policies to avoid immigrant exclusion, that is, the construction of a relationship between immigration and citizenship (Ledesma, 2.000: 2 - 5).

The new protagonism in Latin American cities was influenced by the social movements of the Seventies, by the loss of legitimacy of authoritarian regimens and by the consequent society redemocratization. Adjustment policies, decentralization and the substitution of the confrontation paradigm by negotiation were also other consequences from the State Reform effects. The serious infrastructure deficits produced from Welfare State social insufficient results, have delayed this process. However, they couldn't hinder that the social and economic dynamics would format conditions for the Latin American cities to emerge as important economic and political actors during the nineties.

(Borja and Castells, 1996: 155) believe that the consolidation of the process in this region will succeed if city's projects are constructed through the participation between their public and private agents aiming a public consensus.



### **3. Local strategical plans**

Citizenship rights have substantially been conquered through fight. (Anthony Giddens).

As the result depends on these fights and on the capacity of action ... the broadening of rights is a process, always opened to the possibility of regression and not to an inevitable evolution. (T.H. Marshall)

The first strategical plans have come up in industry, in the seventies, and they were answers to the needs of a larger workers participation, due to productive rearrangement and to the new organization of labor relations. The crisis in the management model compelled the companies to reformulate their strategy and to decentralize the decision circuits. A third factor that contributed to the participation was the rearrangement in information which demanded the workers participation on responsibilities that belonged only to the management beforehand. (Schürmann, 1998:367-368).

The first local strategical plans have been implemented in North American cities - San Francisco, Detroit, Seattle - in consequence of the excesses of the neoliberalism of Reagan and Bush (father) periods, which have caused the ruin of consolidated social rights. Through a public- private partnership, these cities launched strategical projects that mixed economic and urban development objectives and also prioritized answers to environmental problems, to public security and social inequalities.

Its diffusion on the European Union countries, on the second half of the eighties, was a reply to the ineffectiveness of normative planning, which began to show exhaustion signs since the fiscal crisis of the Nation-States, in the seventies. In Latin America, various cities - Cordoba, Rosario, Bogotá, Guatemala, and others – made the option of using the

European model, also adopted in Rio De Janeiro, during Paulo Conde's management (1997 - 2,000).

The strategical planning on cities has developed itself as an instrument to define future scenes (city models), recognizing our limitations when foreseeing and controlling (this future). And so, the rational projections and the urban technician monopoly made room for different understandings by social actors. Gaffikin and Morrisey (1999), consider that:

As the world became unpredictable, the effectiveness of rational planning based on present models projection, was seriously reduced ... What we need nowadays is a widely negotiated vision about what stage we want a city to be within two decades.

To debate on the cities' future, the Local Government calls on civil society to force it to assume responsibilities about their future. And so, the local strategical planning means to be an instrument to favour citizen's participation and organizations on cities planning. The articulation of replies to the two basic questions of strategical plans - "where are we? Where would we like to go? " – Is the epicenter of strategical methodology, which comprises two basic elements: the diagnosis which must emerge from an adequate knowledge about the reality on which the work will be based.

However, Brugué and Jarque (2002:2) warn that, "this knowledge does not have to be excessively detailed nor technically complex, because it could keep the information from being useful to such a diverse set of actors". When the information is transmitted on the most possible understandable way, it allows to catch the actors opinions and perceptions. And so, the interviews, debates and seminaries, can be more important than the handling of technician and statisticians data.

The second element is the consensus, the debate's final product about the desired future scenes. This is not only about a mechanic task of constructing consensuses, but finding spaces where the debate can legitimize the strategical objectives. On this partnership, the citizens contribution - participation - allied to the governor position - leadership - are key factors, but in European local strategical plans, government position, ended up being more important than that the civil society actors. (Brugué and Jarque, op.cit.:3)

On the second half of the Nineties, the importance of the Civil Society participation was reflected in debates and praxis concerning local strategical plans in European Union countries. It was part of the III Strategical Plan of Barcelona (2.001-2.005), which among its five objectives included "a participative city". The Fourth Strategical Line recommends participation spaces necessary to deepen the city's participative culture (Work Document, 1999, Associació Pla Estratègic, Barcelona).

Aiming to offer citizens associations and government representatives proposals that would allow advancement on new implantation processes and stimulate a new participative culture, a Technical Commission was established, and suggested some concrete proposals, such as: stimulate full and efficient participative processes (not limited to the referendum) in which the associations and the citizens had an effective decision capacity. And, in addition to that, also potentialize the dimension of the participation in management. However, according to the interviewed expert:

El Plan Estratégico de Barcelona está pensado desde un staff técnico que lo impulsa, y este staff está sometido al control político y a la participación política de pocas y grandes organizaciones, que suelen tener mucha relevancia des del punto de vista económico: Cámara de Comercio, Zona Franca, empresarios, etc...y um poco para salvar la

cara, incorporaron la dimensión social, com algun sindicato... (Pero) los socios corporativos más importantes junto al Ayuntamiento son el mundo empresarial. El Plan Estratégico de Barcelona está básicamente preocupado por las infraestructuras, la dinamización económica, la nueva economía, el aeropuerto, etc... Pero lo social, lo tienen ... cómo una cuestión de imagen...

This opinion is consistent with the analysis of Villasante's (1997a: 151) local strategical plans, when it says: these plan techniques were insufficient to be considered Integral strategic plans; it is important that the applications count on a real participation on the cities design and management. For the author, in some cases, the diagnosis itself and the objectives have prioritized the international competitiveness of the companies, instead of the ecological and social (re) balance. Even if participation is present during the accomplishment, only the entailing aspects with the international finances had been prioritized.

These opinions place a challenge on the strategical plans, that can also be applied to other participation instruments on local governments: How can these mechanisms be verified and analyzed whether they really contain a real participation, or have these experiences been nothing more than a marketing instrument or a speech apart from the praxis?

#### **4. Strategical planning in Porto Alegre? The project "Porto Alegre mais – cidade constituinte."**

The main economic activity of Rio Grande do Sul State, during the first half of XIX century, was cattle, developed on the south of the State, and its main urban center was the city of Pelotas. At this time, the state's capital, Porto Alegre, had a secondary position; but

from 1860, this scene starts to change, due to the commerce of the German and Italian settlement zone products, that have transformed Porto Alegre into the main industrial and financial center, of the country's south region, presenting an industrial park comprised by small and medium companies, different from the others from the rest of the country, (Alonso, 1996: 53).

On the last decades, its jobs sector, that, in 1939, used to participate with 28,54% of the of city's GNP, changed to 77% in 1990, fact that shows that this city is losing its industrial position and its transforming itself into a tertiary city. Actually, this is a phenomenon that happens in all Brazilian metropolises. Another change, also verified on other Brazilian metropolises, is the annual reduction of Porto Alegre and its metropolitan Region's geometric growth tax.

According to 1991 Census (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), Porto Alegre had 1.263.403 inhabitants, distributed in an area of 470, 25 km<sup>2</sup>, of which the first Urban Development Managing Plan (I UDMP) of 1979, established an urban area of 326, 17 km<sup>2</sup> and an agricultural area of 148,08 km<sup>2</sup>. The urban area was denominated Intensive Occupation Urban Area, adding up to 201,90 km<sup>2</sup>, where 70% of it, is comprised of priority urban functions, and the others 30% of urban emptinesses. There is also an Urban Area of Extensive Occupation, that is comprised by foreseen spaces for the urban expansion, also including the natural preservation areas of the city.

For fourteen years the city of Porto Alegre has been ruled by the Popular Front - a left parties coalition, led by the Labor Party (LB)<sup>5</sup>.

This city experience considered as a paradigmatic reference for management democratization - here in Brazil and overseas - has elected the Participative Budget (PB), as the main alternative to the democratization of the State with the society. This mechanism,

initiated on the first management, was conceived as a community intervention on decisions related to the investments to be applied on regions, reason why it's also known as the regional PB. Its results have represented an important advance on the aim of a social priorities reversion, and on a new political relation between government and society.

However these mechanisms have shown some limitations, because of the restrict coverage of their actions and for their emphasis in specific and local demands, raising difficulties in understanding the city as a totality. As an alternative to these limitations, the government has created thematic meetings, in which discussions about sectorial public politics are held, and the leading of discussions given to a Paritarian Coordination integrated by PB council members and government representatives (Pozzobom, 1998). To enlarge the social basis that did not join the PB, the following management made the Municipal Planning Secretariat in charge of elaborating the "Porto Alegre mais - cidade constituinte" project, also known as City Congress, presented to society in February 1993.

More than a forum to stimulate discussions about the main problems of the city and define lines of direction for its future, this project has also in target to launch a mobilization process of the society and improvement of citizenship, as a duty of the government:

"Not only to co-ordinate and direct the work, but while social actor with interests, responsibilities, and proposals related to this city's society, also try to approve its projects for the city aiming the majority of the population" (Internal Document no1, 1993)."

Another objective of this project, was to surpass the traditional relationship model between the public power and the city, characterized by the normative planning technicism, which would be substituted by a discussion on the city reform, with all organized sectors, "trying to invert the destructive logic of capital, which submits architecture and urbanism to

its own development not allowing a democratic and participative planning of society as a whole (Internal Document no2, Communication Project , 1993).

The *Constituent City* was not planned to be a Government Plan, but a process where the government and society actors place a global discussion about the city, guided by four subjects:

- a) the appropriation of the city by its inhabitants and users;
- b) the redistribution of the city's income;
- c) the prioritization of public policies in favour of the poor sectors;
- d) the democratization of relations - State and society. (Internal Document no1,1993).

Aiming to enlarge the city's importance in the South Cone- one of the government's strategies - the project was made public through an intense campaign in national and Latin American radios and periodicals, (Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay). To inform the non-intellectual public, folders were produced and distributed among the PB representatives and among popular movement people in general.

As an efficient way to catch the population's claims and desires about the city of the future, and also to stimulate the academic research and project production that would contribute to the improvement of the population's quality of life, the City hall signed an agreement with the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (FURS).

Besides universities, uncountable actors from the Civil Society have participated: class entities, PB members, Central Unions and inhabitants associations representatives. The project organization was in charge of an executive coordination comprised by employees directly involved on the project, and a General Coordination, composed of society representatives.<sup>6</sup>

At the first stage, from april to december 1993, government and society representatives, divided in four work groups (WGs), gathered weekly, to formulate the lines to guide the future of the city, debate and deliberate on the following subjects: 1) Reform and Urban Development; 2) Circulation and Transportation; 3) Economic Development; 4) City Financing.

Besides the WG ' s works, the Constituent City also promoted, during the year of 1993, more than twenty lectures and seminars on relevant issues, in which national and international experts were invited and brought their contributions on the new trends of the economy globalization, its effects on the cities, and Europeans experiences on planning democratization.<sup>7</sup>

The conclusions of the work groups were published on an integration seminary, held in November 1993, in which the main proposals for the city construction and development have been presented: a) stimulation to decentralization; b) social exclusion prevention; c) participative management; d) search for partnership with the private initiative; e) construction of an attractive, competitive and culturally diversified city.

Some inedited issues were also included as the need to discuss the Environment preservation and the city's adequate growth level (Internal Document no 05/A).

A Systematization Commission became in charge of organizing the process which had great adhesion from city employees, Participative Budget representatives and inhabitants Associations. However, it is important to mention the incipient contribution from corporative, enterprise and syndical representatives.

The proposals discussed at the WG ' s, presented and approved in the I Congress of the City, held on the 17th, 18th and 19th of December1993 drew Porto Alegre's lines of direction. Its 224 programs, projects and actions, had been grouped into nine strategical

axles for the development of the city of Porto Alegre, which reflected the type of city that the citizens want in the future (Alonso, 1997).

In this document, known as Porto Alegre's Letter, the city wants to place itself as a Democratic City, that is, with strong political representation institutions and expanded participation channels, in order to strengthen the social organizations autonomy and provide control by society. This axle, has approved 24 lines of directions and projects that recommended: a) reorganization of City councils, with new fiscalization and deliberation functions; b) society participation on the sectorial Strategical Plan for transportation and traffic; c) promotion of an administrative rearrangement, based on computing aid to guarantee transparency and information democratization; d) reevaluation of the old Managing Plan of 1979, including its subjects about natural and cultural heritage preservation.

On the second axle, "a Decentralized City", the government intends to promote a decentralization of the decisions and public actions. Among the ten lines of direction approved in this axle, the viability of the multi-centered administrating has been stressed through the establishment of a quarters center network, articulated among themselves and with the center of the city, allowing a proximity with the activities providing better communication conditions for the community.

The third axle, "a City that fights inequalities and Social Exclusion", has approved the largest number of programs, projects and actions (26), such as: a) to promote a priority inversion, aiming to guarantee that a significant part of the public investment is directed to the poor sectors; b) to implement an Economic Program of Resistance, aiming to generate minimum income for the poor sectors; c) to assure that the Social Function of Property is

fulfilled, trying to do away with urban emptinesses and the real estate speculation thus facilitating the land and housing access.

The fourth axle, “a City that Promotes Life and Environment Qualities”, centered its objectives on the environmental problems impact reversion and on the construction of a sustainable relation between the natural and constructed environment, including a (re) qualification of work environments.

The fifth axle, “a Diversified and Culturally Rich City”, intends to increase the cultural activity, to recover its historical center and rescue its quarter’s historical value.

The sixth axle, “An attractive and competitive City” searched for answers to the economy globalization, improving existing economic units and creating conditions for new investments to facilitate the integration between Porto Alegre and the Metropolitan Region, and also its insertion on Mercosul. The making of a competitive city also included the qualification of the labor force, stimulating the workers qualification, the work processes, and the construction of more democratic levels for the work relations at a moment of the fordist model exhaustion.

In the seventh axle, “A City that Articulates the Partnership between the Private and the Public”, the government abdicates of its neutrality, assuming the role of a negotiator on behalf of public interest. Thus, government assumes its role as a democratic hegemony construction agent.

The eighth axle, “a City with strategy to finance itself”, searched to diminish the investments deficit and the city dependence on the central power, through a fair tax reform, an improvement of the fiscal system and, mainly, through a search of new sources of financing.

And, the ninth and last axle, “A City Articulated to the Metropolitan Region”, set the discussion around the fact that urban problems demand relations with the bordering cities and the region.<sup>8</sup>

The lines approved during the Congress changed the 1994 Participative Budget’s structure and altered decision making processes; Thematic meetings have been called to debate about the sectorial public policies articulated with the regional PB. The City councils have also been reorganized and, since 1994, have also discussed about the sectorial policies.

Government has avoided an overlapping of function and attributions between the Thematic meetings and the City councils, however the fact that both discuss and deliberate on the same issues and subjects, have often caused the mixing of the two mechanisms.

Due to the great number of lines approved during the I Congress, government chose three ideas as priorities, in the following stage (1994 and 1995): the rearrangement of the I Managing Plan of Urban development (IMPUD), under the subject of the urban development; the Plan of Economic Development (PED), with the establishment of a Tecnopolis, under the subject of economic development; and, as a reply to the globalization, an International Relations Policy that would facilitate the interchange between the city economic actors and the international ones.

For the IMPUD reform, the government team adopted a methodological proposal to lead the discussions through the most possible democratic way, deciding that the future plan would be modernized and transformed into a democratic planning, in case it would guarantee:

the fulfillment of the city's social function, expressed on its capacity to guarantee conditions of access to its inhabitants concerning urban jobs and life quality; the democratic management, as a factor to guarantee the consolidation of a continuous process of participative planning... (Jardim, 1995)

The traditional Managing Plans were characterized by an extreme rigidity that made difficult the introduction of negotiation ideas and the Civil Society's effective participation. The effort of the executive on democratizing this planning instrument and preventing that it was changed into just one more regulating and normative plan, expresses a "critics on the experience of using the management plans as instruments of planning that, although perfect technically, nowadays, they are labeled as static, authoritarian and extremely dogmatic (Fortini, 1997:4).

The I MPUD reform process was initiated in May, 1995, when work groups were called to lead debates organized in four thematic axes: The first work group, WG 1 – Regional Plan group, used the space of the sixteen PB regions's first run of meetings and with the government technicians participation, together with the society, characterized the regions, through maps that identified its problems. As a result of this analysis some suggestions for changes on the Managing Plan. Taking advantage of the regions for planning purposes, the group believed on the community involvement for the making of regional plans.

The second group (GT 2), Management and Planning System group, in charge of guaranteeing a broad popular participation in the process of changing the Managing Plan expanded the functions of the City Plan Council (CMPDDU), which changed from advisory to deliberative.

Due to a great number of issues, the third group (GT 3), Urban Structuring group, was divided into other sub-groups, decentralizing the tasks of defining the zones that could be accumulated, defining the constructive indexes for the new constructions, and elaborating proposals about regional and metropolitan integration. These plans were linked to a job and housing politics, prioritizing the collective transportation to avoid great daily trips.

In October 1995 a Compatibilization Seminary, with non-deliberative nature was organized, to present the contents developed by the WG ' s for the debate and the presentation on the II the Congress of the City (Internal Document no18, Internal regulation, October 1995).

However, the critics from the Institute of Architects of Brazil and from the Engineers Association forced the government to withdraw, analyze again the new proposals and improve the text, before delivering the drafts to the Legislative chamber, in January 1996. The proposals have also come back to the Advice members of the MPUD, so that they could give suggestions.

Apart from this discussion process, the Space Model group developed studies on the city structure <sup>9</sup>. After this city's lines approval, this model, proposed by the Latin American College of Environmental Science (LACES), was adopted due to its experience on management plans in Latin America and European cities (Internal Document no 23, June, 1996).

The incorporation of the new model, allowed Porto Alegre's new Managing Plan to follow different profile other than the traditional format of a "regulating plan" and advance for a proposal of planning based on management, divided into seven strategies. The first one, established the Municipal System of Management and Planning and became a

reference responsible by the population programs of regionalization and participation on questions referring to city ordering.

The accomplishment of this strategy demanded a decentralization process, which divided the city into eight regions of planning and the community representatives participated through the Managing Plan new Advice. This new advice was transformed into a forum in which the city was a permanent guideline to discuss the proposed rearrangement (MPUD Inform, no 4, September, 1996).

The second strategy “Urban Structuring” promoted the strengthening of Social Interest Areas and centricities, articulating metropolitan region cities, and proposing open spaces - the centricities corridors – which could not only be traditional spaces as squares and parks, but any type of equipment that would attract the population, either public or private.

Aiming to reconquer the public space, the third strategy, Urban Mobility, was responsible for the continuous evaluation of the proposals concerning road circulation and collective transportation. The fourth strategy, Environment Qualification, embraced sanitation proposals as hydrographic basins handling projects, environmental risks prevention, conservation and recuperation of natural and cultural interest preservation areas.<sup>10</sup>

The fifth strategy, “economic promotion” comprised industrial rearrangement programs, technological innovation programs, primary activity promotion, income generation and basic supply for the city. This strategy was articulated to the administrative structure modernization, considered as a basic condition, not only for the of the city’s economic development but for the management democratization.<sup>11</sup> To soften the globalization effects, the government team concluded that the city would have to

incorporate its economic development. The Economic Development Plan (EDP) was launched, incorporating some proposals already implemented since 1994. The City hall, as the city's economy manager, acted in programs and projects intending to reduce the economy cooling down impacts, dynamize the city economy, generate new jobs and income alternatives and stimulate a growth where there is income distribution and quality of life for the poor sectors (Alonso, 1997); (Pozzobom, 1998:19).<sup>12</sup>

The II Congress of the City, held in 1995, with the participation of three thousand people, approved the lines for the 1o Managing Plan (I MPUD) rearrangement. However, the long debates, accomplished during the following management - Raul Pontt, (1997 - 2,000), resulted on a new Managing Plan: the II Managing Plan of Urban Environment Development (II MPUED), approved by Porto Alegre's City council in 1999.

## **5. (In) Conclusives reflections**

The Brazilian cities have emerged as true local governments, responsible for the city's economic development, the urban planning and the public policies deliberation. This process started with decentralization, which was one of the main components of the Brazilian State reform, when the federal government transferred attributions, abilities, features and power to the cities. At the same time, institutional participation mechanisms were created so that the civil society could deliberate on public policies and participate on cities planning decisions.

The project "Porto Alegre mais – cidade constituinte", has presented, under the government team evaluation, since the first year of discussions, some critical points that were revealed on the work groups and on the IMPUD rearrangement process. The conflict happened around two distinct approaches on how a participative planning must be

conceived: some valorized the proposals analyses technical accuracy - which could lead to exclusion of great part of the society - others have demonstrated an exclusive concern about everybody's participation on the process, - what could cause inconsistency and inaccuracy of the proposed lines.

One of the WG's explains that the participants heterogeneous constitution, related to knowledge levels, access to a language technique and experience, have resulted on a presentation at the II Congress of prompt proposals, where the group members didn't show a consensus about the subject. On the other hand, the group also remembers some positive results, as the construction of a mutual learning along the process.

These critics can be linked to the controversy that the first years of Porto Alegre's municipal government had been to. For some, this government could not be a workmanships government, but a citizenship and democracy radicalization government.

Against this position, there was the opinion that affirmed that this was a false controversy, once it launched an absolutely Metaphysical opposition. More than that, this opinion's conclusion was that the skip from a formal democracy to a participative democracy could only happen through a fight for the city's income. (Genro, 1995: 20)

A comparative analysis between the local strategical plans and the project "Porto Alegre Mais – Cidade Constituinte", evidences that both have adopted similar methodological formats. In first place, their similar objectives were: to facilitate the citizens and their organizations participation and also share with them the discussions on planning and cities future. Secondly, even though the two mechanisms did not use the same terminologies, both of them have gone through same stages: the diagnosis, where the reality knowledge is elaborated based on where the operation is intended, and the consensus, when the debates construction is materialized to legitimize the negotiated objectives. The third

similarity is manifested on the recommendation of transmitting the information on the most possible understandable way, organizing debate forums and seminars.

The fourth similarity comprises the future city models discussion results, the identification among the Axles and Programs of the Constituent City project with the Objectives and Strategical lines of the Local Strategical Plans.

The differences found between the local strategical plans and the Constituent City project, are: the long time spent on debates, mainly in the IMPUD rearrangement, which lasted two consecutive managements or eight years, in contrast to the time spent on local strategical plans elaboration, generating an extreme detailing of the desired scenes. However, the most important difference is on how the civil society participation was understood and practiced. On the local strategical plans, the theoretical works recommend, and the empirical examples prove, that the importance given to different actors in these plans must be differentiated. The fact that the government actors decisions are more important when compared to the civil society, is justified by the local governing leadership, since they are the only ones to have legitimacy to represent the collective interest.

In the Constituent City project, the government recognizes its paper of leadership, when it considers coordinating and directing this project's works, but opts for, in the debate's space, to fight for its projects and visions related to the society and the city set, with the importance of any social actor with interests, responsibilities and proposals.

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## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> In England and in the United States, the first experiences on opinion researches, applied under Fishkin coordination, have been praised by Europeans and North Americans academicians as Stewart and Subirats, 1996. Others as Ladd, Trigalli e Mitovsky, have considered this researches artificial experiments of democracy, due to the impossibility to generalize their participants opinions for all the country (Font, 2.001).

<sup>2</sup> The first concern appeared and developed within the academy, the second one, can be related to the political parties loss of legitimacy , once the participation praxis in the European Union countries express alternatives to their loss of legitimacy

<sup>3</sup> The recent massive movements in America and Europe - Seattle, Davos and Gênova - also considered “the return of the citizen” and “the society reply to the globalization effects”, will not be broached in this report

<sup>4</sup> Even though there was a participative explosion during the sixties, the electors percentage in this country have only doubled between 1890 and 1970.

<sup>5</sup> In 1988 elections, yet without the second turn system, the candidate Olívio Dutra, have won with more than the third part of the total votes. On the following elections, in 1992, Tarso Genro, vice-mayor of this political group, have got 48,5% of the first turn votes and won the second turn wit 60% . Raul Pont, Genro’s vice-mayor, gives continuity to this management proposal, winning on first turn, at the 1996 elections. And Tarso Genro, Popular Front’s candidade, adding up 50% of the votes intention, have won the 2000 first turn elections, summarizing sixteen years of Popular Front management in Porto Alegre.

<sup>6</sup> One thousand and five hundreds citizens have participated of the Constituent city project in its first year. Also two hundreds and ninety eight civil society entities, including the Architects Institute of Brazil (AIB), the Brazilian Bar (BB), the Industries Federation of Rio Grande do Sul State (IFRGSS), and the Commercial Associations Federation (CAF).

<sup>7</sup> This lectures were published by Porto Alegre’s city hall, in 1993, under the theme “the ideas that are going to change the cities in the next years”.

<sup>8</sup> The congress have approved new urbanistic instruments, as the Made Up Land Property, the progressive Tax on Property, that assures the property’s social function, and the land development new law, that made possible the accomplishment of popular land development. (Internal document n<sup>o</sup> 07. 1995)

<sup>9</sup> The Space Model is a city map that identifies the “macro -zoning”, bounding the “intensive occupation zone”, where the urban occupation is a priority, the “extensive zone”, reserved for the city’s future expansion and the rural zone. In this map, there is also the traffic system design, foreseeing future streets and avenues and preservation areas.

<sup>10</sup> The preservation areas have already been identified on IMPUD, however, many of them were taken irregularly by poor families. These areas belong to the informal city, and were recognized and inserted into the new plan, accomplishing, thus, the decisions on Porto Alegre’s natural and cultural patrimony, approved on the II Congress of the City.

<sup>11</sup> One example of this articulation was the behavior in the presence of the State Reform: they were opposed to the neo-liberal politics and refused to blame the functionalism for the crisis. The deliberation about this question was handed to a Tripartite commission, where governors representatives decided on contracting the new employees.

<sup>12</sup> In 1996 thirty projects were in development process, and one of the most important was the Community Credits Institution – Portosol, in a partnership between the state government, undertakers and two international entities.