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Abstract

In this article we focus our attention on the progressively prominence of the citizen participation into the networks of governance oriented toward urban regeneration. We expound the main results of our recent research carried out in 10 deprived neighborhoods in Catalonia (Spain), going in depth into three central issues: (1) the weight of citizen participation in the governance networks, (2) the substantive effects of this participation, and (3) the factors that influence the variety of experiences of participation in urban regeneration. We conclude that the development of participatory governance networks is dialectically related to policy outcomes and to prior structural elements like the position of the neighborhoods within the urban system or the availability and characteristics of the local social capital.

Keywords

urban governance, participation, urban regeneration, urban policy, network governance

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In recent years, we have witnessed profound and accelerated changes in the realm of urban policies in many European countries, and more specifically in what concerns urban regeneration policies carried out in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The agenda of transformation for this kind of neighborhoods has come to include more and more innovative vantage points, including environmental sustainability, multiculturalism, and social inclusion. In turn, principles linked to network governance, like multilevel coordination, joined-up governance, public–private cooperation, and citizen participation, are increasingly serving as the inspiration for the management of this kind of policy.

After examining the main changes occurred recently in urban regeneration policies, especially in what concerns their more integrated approach and their use of governance networks, this article analyzes the relationship between networks of governance, citizen participation, and urban regeneration. Through 10 case studies carried out in Catalonia (Spain),¹ the article investigates the following research questions: (1) what is the weight of citizen participation in governance networks, (2) what are the substantive effects of this participation, and (3) what are the factors that influence the variety of experiences of participation in urban regeneration and that make them different.

Debates on the so-called social innovation and governance in urban regeneration policies are not new in the literature (Moulaert et al. 2007; Hillier, Moulaert, and Vicari 2009) and some in-depth case studies have been developed, especially in Europe (Christiaens, Moulaert, and Bosmans 2007; De Muro, Di Martino, and Cavola 2007; Novy and Hammer 2007; Membretti 2007; Blakeley 2010). Several contributions have been made on comparative urban governance (DiGaetano and Strom 2003; Pierre 2005; Cento and Jones 2006) in general, and more specifically on the role of “citizens participation” in these new forms of governance (Mathur and Skelcher 2007; Blakeley 2010; Denters and Klok 2010; Guarneros-Meza and Geddes 2010; Parés 2011). In this article, we take up some of these debates and further develop the relationship between different models of governance (Pierre 1999; Governa 2002; DiGaetano and Strom 2003; Kooiman 2003; Poppelaars 2007; Provan and Kenis 2007; Subirats, Parés, and Blanco 2009)—focusing our attention on the role played by citizen participation—and different forms of urban regeneration policies. Most of the literature concentrates upon the role networks play in the development and implementation of public policies (Marsh 1998), considering policy networks as a potentially useful explanatory variable. In this article, though, we will use a dialectical approach (Marsh and Smith 2000) in which networks of governance—and the role of participation on these networks—do not appear as a explanatory variable but as a

variable in an interactive relationship with the broader structural context and with the policy outcome.

Exploring the relationship between models of governance and urban regeneration policies, the article makes the following contributions: First, we found that historically citizen participation has revealed itself to be a key factor in the design and implementation of urban policies. However, its role has evolved according to social, historical, and geographical changes. Second, we defend that there is a dialectical relationship between models of governance and models of urban regeneration and we found that those cases with the most citizen participation tend to be the same ones with more comprehensive approaches and greater orientation toward social and community development. Nevertheless, we have also uncovered that nowadays strengthening local community networks is not a priority in urban regeneration processes. And last, but not least, our investigation shows that the development of participatory governance networks is related to prior structural elements, which explains the high diversity of experiences that we find in our case studies. The kind of neighborhood, its local history of participation, the kind of social capital in the area, the presence of prior conflicts, and the municipal government's political will are the factors that we identify to explain this diversity.

Innovation and Change in Urban Regeneration Policies: Do the New Urban Governance Networks Contribute to Improve Our Democracies?

During the past few decades, the regeneration of so-called disadvantaged neighborhoods has gotten closer to the top of the urban public policy agendas of the different European countries (see, e.g., OECD 1998). We sustain that this development can be put down to two distinct factors. First, the different transformations that have taken place in the economic-productive, social-community, and political-institutional spheres have led to a magnification of urban sociospatial inequalities, which are variable according to the countries but nonetheless obviously occur all around Europe's urban geography. The upshot of this is that there has been a gradual lengthening of the list of "neighborhoods with a bad reputation," urban areas that do not just geographically express the increasing gap between the lifestyles in mainstream society and the groups with rising rates of social vulnerability (Musterd, Murie, and Kesteloot 2006) but that in themselves raise the vul-

nerability of anyone living in them (Smith, Lepine, and Taylor 2007). Area-based policies on this kind of neighborhood, therefore, respond in part to a strategy aimed at improving the urban social cohesion, fed further by the fear of the potential destabilizing effects of the geographic concentration of social problems (Wacquant 2005).

On the other hand, structural factors equally related to globalization place the local economic competitiveness strategies at the top of the urban policy agendas (Cochrane 2007). Interurban competition to attract capital flows has led to a reassessment of urban areas that had experienced intense processes of deterioration in the past few decades and are now perceived as key areas for the growth and competitiveness strategies of the local and creative economy (Jessop 1998, 2002; Gibbs and Krueger 2005). One clear example of this is what happens on the old towns of large- and medium-sized cities, which have been reassessed as areas that attract tourists, spur retail, and develop the real-estate industry. Another clear example is the old industrial neighborhoods, and efforts are now underway to turn them into incubators of new financial and technological activities; they are perceived as keys in the new “postindustrial” economy.

Even though these goals may coexist in many regeneration programs, the fact of stressing either social cohesion or creating new areas of economic centrality leads to significant differences in the conception of the regeneration, and probably also in the way it is put into practice, as seen below. However, beyond these differences, we can identify a series of elements that are common to the majority of programs, elements that in turn reflect the highly innovative and dynamic nature of this realm of public policy. The high complexity of the problems affecting this kind of urban area seems to reject bureaucratic responses based on uniformity and the strict segmentation of responsibilities and duties among organizational levels and operative units. To the contrary, urban regeneration policies tend to rely on several axes of innovation (OECD 1998; Andersen 2001; Couch, Fraser, and Percy 2003).

First, these policies are primarily area-based, geographically specialized in the neighborhoods or urban areas where the problems are clustered or where the transformation challenges are posed. The regeneration programs thus aim to adapt to the sociospatial specificities of the areas to be “regenerated.” For example, the majority of regeneration programs developed on a macro scale (European, statewide, or regional) are aimed at financing micro projects (neighborhood level), which will be formulated by the local stakeholders themselves.

Second, these policies aim for a certain degree of comprehensiveness. In their diagnosis, they start by acknowledging the multidimensional nature of

the problems and challenges affecting urban areas. When designing the actions, they tend to assume the need to take part on these problems and challenges using holistic approaches. The very nomenclature commonly used in this kind of projects (Comprehensive Project, Areas of Comprehensive Rehabilitation, etc.) reflects this aim at comprehensiveness, although in practice the programs can be very diverse because of both the number of thematic dimensions they include and the relative importance attached to each of them.

Finally, these policies are designed around the principles of governance (Governa 2002), meant as the articulation of a network of plural stakeholders who acknowledge their mutual interdependence (Blanco and Gomà 2006). These governance networks tend to include stakeholders belonging to different geographical scales (such as from the European scale down to the specific neighborhood scale), different thematic areas (urban planning, economics, social welfare, environment, etc.), and different actors (public institutions, private corporations, social service-providing organizations, neighborhood organizations, etc.).

Therefore, urban regeneration, as an emerging and innovative area within urban planning policy, can be defined as “a comprehensive, integrated vision that leads to the resolution of urban problems and aims to achieve improvements in the economic, physical, social and environmental conditions of the area that is being transformed” (Roberts and Sykes 2006, 17). In coherence with the principles of network governance, this action tends to be driven through cooperative relationships among a wide variety of stakeholders.

The Debate on Governance and Participation in Regeneration Policies

To what extent do the new urban governance networks contribute to improve our democracies? More specifically, do they necessarily offer greater chances for citizens to participate in the formulation of urban policies? As Lowndes and Sullivan (2004) suggested, the relationship between network governance as a model for drawing up urban regeneration policies and citizen participation cannot just be taken for granted. In the literature, in fact, we can see two major opposing approaches in terms of the assessment of the democratic and participatory performance of network governance.

On the more optimistic side, a series of authors have backed the model of network governance as an opportunity to deepen democracy precisely because of its potential to develop new forms of community participation in the affairs that directly concern the community (Coaffe and Healy 2003; Newman 2005). Raco (2003, 79), for example, upholds that “neighbourhood-level governance

can be seen as a way of re-legitimising the state,” allowing public interventions to adapt more to the needs as perceived by the citizenry. Taylor (2007, 311) also concludes that “even though the new spaces of governance that have emerged in recent years are clearly marked by state power, there are still opportunities for communities to become ‘active subjects’ within them and therefore influence and help to shape government practice.”

On the more pessimistic side, other authors have stressed the democratic risks of network governance. Despite the pluralistic rhetoric on which the paradigm is sustained, these authors uphold that reality shows us that the governance networks tend to be captured by the stakeholders with the most cognitive resources (public technocracies) and economic resources (private corporations). The governance networks entail an erosion of representative political power and democratic accountability to the benefit of the technocracies and private business powers (Swyngedouw 2000, 2005, 2007, 2009). In contrast, there tend to be scant opportunities for community participation. According to this point of view, when the community stakeholders come to form part of the institutional spaces where networks are articulated (councils, commissions, tables, etc.), they tend to be co-opted, losing their critical autonomy and capacity for motivation so that the community elites tend to distance themselves from the social bases that they are supposed to represent (Davies 2007).

In reality, as Sorensen and Torfing (2005) claim, the debate on the democratic quality of network governance as an emerging model for developing public policies has tended to ignore the fact that some governance networks are more democratic than others, as well as the fact that certain networks might be democratic in certain respects but not so democratic in others. In the specific field of urban regeneration, we are aware of cases of governance networks in which access is highly restrictive; they are elite in their composition and opaque in their dynamics. Yet there are other networks that are more permeable, plural, and transparent to the general public (see among others Sorensen 2002; Sorensen and Torfing 2005; Blanco 2009; Subirats, Parés, and Blanco 2009). Following this rationale, our main working hypothesis has been that opportunities for citizen participation can be highly variable according to each specific case and, moreover, this variability makes substantive differences on urban policies.

The degree and quality of citizen participation in governance networks thus becomes a fact to be empirically explored more than an element that is consubstantial with this paradigm. This exploration should aim to provide answers to three kinds of questions:

- What specific weight does citizen participation have in different governance networks for urban regeneration? What kind of participation takes place and what is the quality of this participation?
- What consequences does citizen participation have? Does it make any substantive difference? Are different kinds of networks, according to the kind and quality of citizen participation, associated with different approaches to regeneration?
- What kinds of factors explain the variability in the patterns and in the quality of citizen participation? In what conditions can we predict more intense and higher quality participation, and in what conditions are the spaces for participation likely to be more restrictive?

Methodology: A Proposal for a Model to Analyze the Relationship between Network Governance, Citizen Participation, and Urban Regeneration

The research that we present here is based on 10 case studies: 7 regeneration projects² financed by the Neighborhoods Plan in different municipalities around Catalonia and the regeneration processes carried out in 3 neighborhoods³ in the historic center of Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia. These cases were selected to examine differences on urban governance and urban regeneration models through the combination of three fundamental features: the size of the municipality, the typology of the neighborhood (distinguishing between central and peripheral neighborhoods), and the social characteristics of its population (see Table 1). The field research was carried out using in-depth interviews of 7 to 10 key stakeholders (policy makers, neighborhood associations, NGOs, scholars, and practitioners) for each locality and by the analysis of documents (regeneration projects, reports, newspapers, pamphlets, etc.).

An empirical analysis of the relationship between network governance, citizen participation, and urban regeneration immediately raises the need to define what we mean by each of these concepts and how we can harness them in the design of our investigation.

The concept of urban regeneration was already defined before as a process aimed at the comprehensive transformation of a place. However, a multiplicity of policies formulated by different scales of government coexists in any area and affects the dynamics of change in this urban area (such as educational,

Table 1. Sociodemographic Indicators of the Case Studies

City, Neighborhood	Population	Neighborhood Typology	% Foreign Population	% Unemployed	Vulnerable Minority
Barcelona, Santa Caterina	15,008	Central	27%	12.7%	Immigrants Elderly
Barcelona, Barceloneta	15,598	Central	28.9%	14.5%	Immigrants Elderly
Barcelona, el Raval	49,315	Central	48.9%	34%	Immigrants
Lleida, La Mariola	10,008	Peripheral	7.9%	15%	Romany people Elderly
Manlleu, Barri de l'Erm	3,324	Peripheral	42.7%	16%	Immigrants
Olot, old town	1,832	Central	28.9%	15.3%	Immigrants
Ripoll, old town	1,335	Central	9%	8.4%	Elderly
Tarragona, Camp Clar	8,550	Peripheral	23.16%	12.7%	Romany people
Terrassa, Districte II	19,798	Peripheral	30%	12.8%	Immigrants Romany people
Santa Perpètua de la Mogoda, Can Folguera	6,900	Peripheral	21%	23.1%	Immigrants Romany people

Source: Own elaboration.

social, health, economic, and urban planning policies). Are they all “regeneration policies”? Although they are all important for understanding the dynamics of change in the area, not all these policies have been thought and designed together to produce a comprehensive transformation of the area. It is for that reason that we prefer a more restrictive definition of regeneration that includes the actions that are explicitly aimed at a comprehensive and qualitative transformation of the area in question, often taking on the guise of “comprehensive plans,” “special programs,” and the like.

The concept of networks of urban governance is extremely complex to harness. Because of their nature, governance networks tend to be fluid, diverse, and of varying geometries. Generally speaking, we can define governance networks based on the notions of pluralism, the interdependence of the stakeholders, and the formalization of relations among them (Kickert, Klijn, and Koppenjan 1997). Sorensen and Torfing (2005, 197) define a governance network as a relative stable horizontal articulation of interdependent but autonomous actors that interact through negotiations, which take place

within a relatively institutionalized framework that is self-regulating within limits set by external agencies and which contribute to the production of public purpose. In the specific field of urban regeneration, governance networks are formally articulated through mechanisms such as regional councils, management or monitoring committees, the management bodies of agencies or autonomous organizations and through specific realms of participation such as forums, workshops, and assemblies. However, along with this kind of formal spaces of participation, the interactions among stakeholders often take place in informal spaces. In practice, stakeholders frequently use channels of policy influence beyond formal structures of the governance network (bilateral meetings, contacts, calls, official requests, etc.). These are institutional channels and relationships and, consequently, are part of the governance network. Moreover, these informal channels and relationships should be taken into account to understand how citizens and stakeholders take part into and have influence on the policy-making process. Therefore, our operative approach to governance networks is focused on both the formal and informal relations that take place among the stakeholders who are institutionally acknowledged as active parties in the design and/or implementation of the regeneration programs. However, this does not mean that we ignore the actions by those stakeholders who remain outside any institutionalized realm of network articulation, as oftentimes these stakeholders can come to exert a significant influence on the decisions that the governance network takes.

Finally, citizen participation also includes a wide variety of stakeholders and processes. The community stakeholders can be, for example, organized stakeholders (such as neighborhood associations, third-sector organizations, and social movements) or stakeholders that are not formally organized (residents on their own behalf). They can include organizations led by residents of the neighborhood (such as the neighborhood associations themselves or groups of women, youths, or immigrants who live in the neighborhood) or organizations that operate in the area even though they are not exclusively linked to it (such as NGOs and other service-providing organizations). In turn, the constituent actions of citizen participation can take place through a wide range of channels, including involvement in the formal realms of participation (councils, forums, workshops, etc.), activism through “extra-institutional” means, or even informal encounters with institutional representatives. Our analytical focus shall center on the citizen participation that takes place within the (formal and informal) framework of governance networks, although once again this does not mean that our analysis ignores other kinds of participatory patterns that fall outside these networks.

These three concepts are at the core of our approach to studying urban regeneration programs. More specifically, we have categorized them within

two groups of variables related to the “model of governance” and the “model of regeneration,” and our aim is to explore the relationship between them:

The “model of governance” refers to network structures and relationships that determine how urban policies are produced. Each model of governance is defined according to the following variables: who belongs to these governance networks, what role networks assign to the different stakeholders, how the relationships among them are formalized, and what power relations are established among stakeholders—which we can assume are diverse and unequal. Our attention is focused on citizen participation within the framework of these governance networks: which community stakeholders participate, in what roles, through what kind of channels, and with what capacity to influence policy outputs.

The “model of regeneration” refers to the content and the approach of urban policies. Each model of regeneration is defined according to the following variables: how the local problems on which the regeneration programs are based are defined, how the agenda is shaped, which alternatives are viewed as “rational,” which kind of interventions are designed and ultimately executed, and which resources are earmarked for the different kinds of actions.

The basic idea that we sustain in this article is that there is a dialectical relationship between models of governance and models of regeneration, as we have defined them above. Specifically, we start with the hypothesis that governance networks that attach more importance to citizen participation tend to produce urban regeneration policies whose conception is more comprehensive and to stress the facets of social and community development. To the contrary, in networks in which citizen participation is residual, regeneration policies tend to focus more on the physical and economic aspects of regeneration, triggering gentrifying effects. Following with this working hypothesis, we sustain that urban regeneration policies can be highly variable according to the contexts (political, institutional, geographical, related to social capital, etc.), in both their model of governance and the substantive options on which these policies are supported. In the following sections of the article we explore all these relationships through several case studies carried out in Catalonia (Spain).

A Contextual Analysis of Urban Regeneration Policies in Catalonia

The comprehensive urban regeneration policies focused on disadvantaged areas did not begin to develop until the consolidation of the democratic town halls. Prior to that, the Franco administration had been characterized by driving

development-oriented, expansive urban planning that accentuated social segregation and marginalized poverty, which resulted in new neighborhoods with a clear lack of facilities and services and the urban deterioration of the historic city centers.

In 1979, the situation in the working-class neighborhoods in the large cities of Spain was explosive. The new municipal representatives had to take over highly bureaucratized institutions with neither resources nor participatory experience in a situation of institutional paralysis caused by the fact that the Franco-era municipal boards still existed in a newly democratic setting (1977-1979). In turn, the institutional dysfunction clashed with a strong neighborhood movement with a high degree of radicalization locally, which demanded political responses to the degree of urban and social deterioration that the neighborhoods in the historic city centers and outskirts had reached.

During the first mandate of the democratic town halls, vast efforts were made to meet the needs detected in these neighborhoods with a profound revision of the inherited criteria of urban planning. The first urban planning instruments used for regeneration were the PERIs (Special Internal Reform Plans), negotiated between the municipal administration and the neighborhood movement, which played a key role in channeling the urban planning claims.

In the early 1980s, despite the municipal efforts to embark on comprehensive urban regeneration policies, the social needs of the working-class neighborhoods were still far from being met, and they had been aggravated even further by other factors, such as the rise in unemployment and the expansion of drug consumption. The challenges that urban regeneration posed in a situation of social and urban crisis exceeded the city administration's ability to handle them, making it necessary to get other administrations involved through coresponsibility.

In 1983, the PSOE (socialist) central government approved Royal Decree 2329/83 protecting the rehabilitation of residential and urban assets, which was the state administration's first major step toward earmarking funds specifically for the development of comprehensive rehabilitation areas (ARIs). Despite the fact that the concept of regeneration underlying Decree 2329 is primarily aimed at rehabilitating homes and public spaces (i.e., it viewed regeneration from a more urban planning than social vantage point), its approval permitted a huge influx of funds to be mobilized by municipalities to develop more comprehensive local regeneration programs, such as the ones conducted in the regeneration program of Ciutat Vella in Barcelona, the Plan Riva in Valencia, and the Special Protection and Internal Reform Plans for the old quarters of Pamplona and Vitoria in Basque Country.

Another of the factors that decisively marked the orientation of the urban renewal policies were the initiatives that the European Union began to develop in this field starting in the 1990s, which led to the adoption of new criteria and principles to handle the regeneration of disadvantaged neighborhoods, as well as the possibility of accessing the different European funds, namely the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) and the Cohesion Funds, as well as participation in the European programs specifically oriented toward urban regeneration: the pilot programs (1990-1993), Urban I (1994-1999), Urban II (2000-2006), and the Urban Initiative program (2007-2013).

European cities' participation in the Urban programs meant a transfer of knowledge and tools in urban regeneration policies, while they also fostered the job of multilevel coordination by teaming the municipal administration with the state and European administrations. The Urban I and Urban II programs were especially crucial to the dissemination of the new concepts of comprehensiveness (by including the social dimension in urban regeneration) and governance (by holding the different nonstate stakeholders coresponsible for regeneration policies). One of the most important initiatives aimed at the transfer of knowledge was the creation of the European Urbact program in 2002, which is a bank of good practices and knowledge exchange in regeneration policies and sustainable urban development.

The introduction of the European scale has helped different cities like Girona, Barcelona, and Bilbao combine access to different funds and participation in different programs in order to increase the comprehensiveness of the interventions designed and make their implementation possible. Although the budget dimension of the Urban programs has been somewhat modest, their impact should be assessed in the qualitative realm in that they have made it possible to promote comprehensive intervention in urban problems, coordinate the local stakeholders and hold them coresponsible, and foster and exchange innovative practices in this field (Guitierrez 2008).

On the other hand, as the regional governments have gradually taken on the competences in urban planning and housing, their role in urban renewal policies has become more prominent (Royal Decree 2329/83 itself fostered the involvement of the autonomous community administrations in zones that had been declared an ARI). However, despite the fact that the regional governments have a vast potential for supporting this kind of policy because of their greater proximity to the regions than the central government, there have been few experiences, and only in certain regions have specific programs been developed. We can highlight the cases of Madrid, Andalusia, and Catalonia in terms of their support for the municipalities in urban planning

matters (Bruquetas, Moreno, and Walliser 2005). In the case of Catalonia, a northeastern region of Spain, also worth noting is the Community Development Dynamization Plan launched during the 1990s by the Department of Social Welfare of the regional government, which gave rise to several emblematic experiences such as the Community Development Plan of Trinitat Nova in Barcelona (Blanco and Rebollo 2002). However, unquestionably the most prominent experience is Catalonia's Neighborhood Law, 2/2004, which is implemented through the so-called Pla de Barris (Neighborhood Plan), the first one in Spain that is comparable to the urban renewal programs driven in recent years in other European countries, such as England's New Deal for Communities, France's Grands Projets de Ville, and Denmark's Kvarterloft (Atkinson and Carmichael 2007).

Since the approval of the Neighborhood Plan by the Parliament of Catalonia in 2004, six annual editions of the program have been held, which have mobilized a budget endowed with 99 million euros for each of them, which meant that a total of 117 neighborhoods housing more than 900,000 people in 100 municipalities benefited. The total investment forecast in the programs already underway is between 25 and 75 percent of the investment in each of the projects. To have a comparative figure on the magnitude of the investment, from 2001 to 2006 the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) invested 726 million euros as part of the Urban II program, which benefited 2.2 million people in 70 different programs. These figures show the regional government's priority and effort in this kind of policy, although part of the financing also came from the ERDF. Despite the fact that this kind of regeneration policy had already been undertaken occasionally in Catalonia since the start of democracy with support from the central government and the European Union and the efforts of the leading municipalities, the Catalan Neighborhood Law meant first the geographic spread of these programs not just to the big cities but also to smaller towns with a lower financial capacity to develop regeneration programs (such as Manlleu and Olot) and secondly a rise in the importance of the regional government in this kind of intervention, even though it kept up shared leadership with the town halls in this kind of intervention. Finally, the law underscores and articulates the mechanisms to ensure the multidimensionality of the actions and to include citizen participation in the monitoring of the projects (Martí-Costa and Parés 2009).

Also worth noting is the key role played by the town halls in both Catalonia and the rest of Spain. They spearheaded many of the action initiatives in the disadvantaged neighborhoods. Despite the fact that the municipal capacity to activate this kind of process has been curtailed because of a lack internal resources and the absence of a suitable legal framework (Arias 2000), the

local administrations' leadership in urban regeneration programs in Spain has stemmed from their knowledge of the local reality, direct pressure to meet citizen requests, proximity to people, and the fact that they directly manage a great number of the services in the neighborhoods. Their capacity to deploy the regeneration policies has depended on their ability to find resources and technical and financial support at larger scales of government.

Analyzing Citizen Participation in Urban Regeneration Policies in Catalonia

The evolution in urban regeneration policies in Europe and particularly in Spain points to the fact that citizens are playing an increasingly crucial role. There is no doubt that although we are far from including participatory processes in the design of the macro programs formulated by the European Union, the states, or regions, participatory forums are indeed common in the regeneration projects undertaken at the neighborhood scale. On the basis of our 10 case studies, below we shall outline a series of responses to the three questions we asked above on the role of citizen participation in urban regeneration, its substantive impact and its explanatory factors.

What Role Has Citizen Participation Played?

The role of citizen participation in urban regeneration policies in Catalonia has evolved over the past few decades, and the main evolutionary trends are the following.

The diversification of the participants. During the 1970s, the neighborhood associations came to play a key role in channeling citizen participation in the realm of urban regeneration policies. Excluded from the spheres of institutional decision making, the neighborhood movement spearheaded multiple activities to protest against the municipal urban development plans, which they interpreted as being based on purely speculative interests. The neighborhood claims thus joined the protest activities being conducted by the trade unions, student organizations, anti-Franco political organizations and grassroots ecclesiastic movements, and they forged ideological and organizational alliances with these entities. In terms of the elements proposed, the neighborhood movement, supported in this context by professionals from a variety of fields (lawyers, urban planners, economists, etc.), was capable of formulating alternative urban regeneration plans, such as the people's plans of the Casc Antic (old quarter), Barceloneta, and Barcelona's many outlying neighborhoods (Borja 2010).

These plans run by the people (neighborhood organizations with the expertise support of several professionals) inspired the reorientation of the regeneration policies in the democratic period. Plus, during the first few years of democracy, the neighborhood associations became the main interlocutor of the municipal administrations, and at least at first this dialogue took place mainly through informal relationships.

As the first democratic mandate was on, the neighborhood movement gradually lost its capacity for representation and social mobilization. This is partly due to the fact that many of the leaders of the neighborhood movement in the 1970s came to be part of the party apparatuses, and the new municipal administration and many professionals (architects, economists, etc.) continued their career in their own firms and in the public administration (Borja 2010). These two factors led to a major “brain drain” within the neighborhood movement. It can also partly be interpreted as the result of the acceptance of many of the urban movements demands by the local government or a more or less conscious option by the leftist parties to deactivate the neighborhood movement, convinced that this movement’s traditional claims could now be shouldered by the new democratic local governments. Since then, the municipal governments’ relationship with the neighborhood associations has displayed an ambivalence: with mutual recognition and interlocution in increasingly formalized venues of participation, on one hand, and mistrust and reciprocal questioning of each other’s legitimacy, on the other.

The neighborhood associations have never stopped being a key interlocutor in the processes of urban regeneration, as shown in Barcelona for example with their leading role as the only neighborhood representatives in the ARI Management Commission of Ciutat Vella during the 1990s. However, internal changes in the local network of civil society organizations and the regeneration plans and projects themselves have modified the structures and forums of participation, making them increasingly plural.

First, the network of civil society organizations in the neighborhoods has become increasingly rich and complex. We have clearly observed it in our case studies, as in most of them we found many different kinds of neighborhood associations in the same neighborhood with very different—and even opposing—policy positions articulated on a wide variety of realms of local action (streets, small areas, neighborhoods) and mobilized around an also diverse range of specific issues (opposition to a plan or a project, claims regarding specific problems, etc.).

Second, in the past few years the third sector involved in social assistance has developed enormously, especially in the realms of children, the elderly, immigrants, the homeless, etc., driven in part by the practice of outsourcing

public services toward this kind of organization. This has led to the creation of new entities, cooperatives, foundations, and the like, which are spatially concentrated in the disadvantaged neighborhoods. We observed it, for example, in the Raval case study, where these new organizations are playing an important role for the community. But we have also found it in many other case studies, such as those of Barceloneta and Camp Clar.

Finally, the phenomenon of immigration has gradually changed the sociodemographic maps of the cities and neighborhoods, with the consequent appearance of new groups and forms of association linked to their needs and cultural realities, which do not always correspond with traditional forms of association. In all of our case studies, immigration is higher than the Catalan average. This phenomenon, however, is being really important in the three Barcelona case studies, Manlleu, Olot, Terrassa, where immigrants represent more than 20 percent of the neighborhood residents.

All of these patterns of change mean that the concept of “community” describes a much more complex and fragmented network of civil society organizations than in the 1980s, a reality that the realms of participation in urban regeneration have tried to include.

On the other hand, the very evolution in the urban regeneration plans, which have shifted from a more urban-planning stance (focused on housing and public areas) to a more comprehensive vision, has fostered the inclusion in the regeneration plan of more social stakeholders linked to different thematic areas like cultural, educational, retailers’, ecologists’, or social workers’ organizations. The Catalan Neighborhood Law itself sets forth eight top-priority fields of action, which include everything: from building improvements and the creation of facilities to environmental and gender factors or improvements in the social, economic, and cultural realms (Martí-Costa and Parés 2009).

As they include actions in a variety of thematic areas, the urban regeneration plans make it possible to include—even if just in the one of the phases of the regeneration process (diagnostic, monitoring, and/or implementation)—different social, cultural, and economic stakeholders. In some case studies, most of these stakeholders have been highly engaged in the governance network. This is the case of Manlleu, Terrassa, or Santa Perpètua de la Mogoda. In other cases, like in Olot, even when the neighborhood had some organizations that could improve the regeneration process (women’s organizations, elders’ associations, associations of immigrants, associations of mothers and fathers, etc.), these stakeholders have not been taken into account.

The institutionalization of participation and the increasing methodological innovation. This evolution toward a greater plurality of participants has run

parallel to the gradual institutionalization of citizen participation. While in the early 1980s, informal relations between representatives of neighborhood associations and municipal political representatives abounded, since the middle of the same decade we have been able to witness—albeit unequally among the municipalities—the gradual development of participatory structures, bodies and mechanisms such as councils and participation services, rules or regulations for participation, regional or thematic councils, and the like (Pindado 1999; Font 2001; Parés 2009).

In the field of urban regeneration policies, citizen participation has been articulated through four kinds of mechanisms: formal mechanisms of thematic or territorial participation (social welfare councils, district councils, etc.); ad hoc participatory bodies linked to specific regeneration programs (like the Management Committee of an ARI); informal forums of interaction between institutional and administrative representatives, which are not highly institutionalized (like meetings, telephone conversations, encounters on the street, etc.); and finally, participatory processes using more or less innovative methodologies linked to more or less specific issues (such as holding popular votes or citizen juries to take more or less specific decisions related to neighborhood regeneration).

All of these participatory forms have played a key role in the historical development of local regeneration policies in neighborhoods in Catalonia. For example, even today the informal venues of interaction and negotiation between institutional representatives and leaders of civil society organizations are still an extremely important factor outside the formal mechanisms of participation. Oftentimes, some members of the social organizations even express doubts as to the rationality of participation in this kind of mechanism, aware that their ability to exert an influence might be even higher than via the more formal channels. The new regeneration plans, such as the Community Development Plans and the Comprehensive Intervention Projects as part of the Neighborhood Law, have also generated plural bodies for formulating and/or monitoring the actions, where neighborhood associations and often other kinds of social entities as well are rather influential. For example, the Catalan Neighborhood Law states that the main participatory body in an Evaluation and Monitoring Committee should be made up of people on behalf of the local, regional, and state administration as well as “two members representing the most representative neighbourhood entities, two representing the largest citizen entities and two representing the economic and social stakeholders” (Regulation of Law 2/2004), primarily to monitor and track the regeneration actions. In some of our case studies, these opportunities for participation that the Regulation sets forth as basic have been

expanded, such as in the regeneration plan for District II in Terrassa, which set up a much more extensive plenary council than the monitoring committee and where they are also 12 mixed working groups, made up of city technicians and representatives of a wide range of civil society organizations.

In evolutionary terms, worth highlighting is the rising use of innovative participatory methodologies linked to more or less specific decision-making processes. For example, along with the more or less stable participatory structures, in recent years it is quite common to also find specific participatory processes for urban remodeling projects of places like squares and parks or for the creation of new facilities. These processes are articulated through newly minted participatory processes such as participatory workshops or popular votes. In Barcelona, for instance, participatory processes have recently been developed linked to urban plans and projects as the redesign of the Castella Square, El Pla de la Gardunya in El Raval neighborhood, El Pou de la Figuera in Santa Caterina, or the discussions on the Lift Plan in the Barceloneta neighborhood.

The overall assessment of this entire range of processes and mechanisms admits a wide spectrum of interpretation, judging from the opinions expressed by the people we have interviewed in our studies. First, we can highlight opportunities such as the greater institutional recognition of participation, and as a result, citizens' greater capacity to exert an influence in those institutional spaces where decisions on regeneration plans are taken. The risks, weaknesses, and challenges of this kind of participatory forum, however, are major: The representatives of the civil society organizations may lose their critical independence and end up being co-opted by the institutions; the format and contents of participation tend to be unilaterally imposed by the institutions; the participation agendas are often quite restrictive; the most critical voices are excluded from this kind of forum or do not feel encouraged to participate; the impact of the participation is varied and often uncertain; and the stakeholders who participate may not be very representative.

What Substantive Effects Does Participation Have?

The increasingly important role of citizen participation in governance networks dovetails with the development of an increasingly comprehensive view of the processes of neighborhood regeneration. Furthermore, we can witness how the cases with the most citizen participation tend to be the same ones with more comprehensive approaches and more oriented toward social and community development. To the contrary, the regeneration policies that

are aimed mostly at the physical and economic aspects, as happens in many city centers, have tended to grant citizen participation a more residual role.

However, and according to Marsh and Smith's (2000) approach on policy networks and policy outcomes, the relationships between the "model of governance" and the "model of regeneration" are more dialectical than causal and deterministic. As shown later, in our case studies we found that not only the model of governance affects the model of regeneration but also policy outcomes affect the shape of the governance network.

First, we observe that the forums of citizen participation do indeed contribute to the comprehensiveness of the policies inasmuch as citizens tend to express more holistic visions of the area than those that the bureaucratic administration is capable of formulating. Furthermore, citizen pressure through this kind of participatory forum may make a decisive contribution to halting actions that lead to aggressive gentrification of the area. Yet on the contrary, we should consider the possibility that the comprehensive approach to regeneration itself is what fosters citizen participation, not the opposite. That is, when the public decision maker chooses a more comprehensive policy aimed at community development, participation becomes a basic instrument for achieving the goals. To the contrary, intense, plural participation can become "dysfunctional" for institutions if they aim to drive less comprehensive urban regeneration processes aimed more at the gentrification of the urban areas.

Analyzing the programs of the 10 case studies, we can observe how some of them, like Ripoll, Olot, or la Barceloneta, basically aim to act in urbanism (physical aspects): improve streets, improve building conditions, etc. The cases of Santa Caterina and Lleida are also focused on physical transformations, but some of these improvements are social-oriented as are based on local facilities for the community. Finally, other cases like El Raval in Barcelona or neighborhoods analyzed in Terrassa, Manlleu, and Tarragona, not only pursue to improve the built environment but also aim to develop social and community programs (Table 2).

We observe that many of the social-oriented case studies are of those in which the role of citizen's participation in the network of governance has been more important (Manlleu, Santa Perpètua de la Mogoda or Terrassa). Nevertheless, our interviews have shown us that the higher comprehensiveness of these cases is not directly explained by the impact of citizen's participation, as the design of these programs was made before this participation took place. At the same time, however, almost all of the respondents of these cases argue that citizen's participation has been generally social-oriented and has improved the comprehensiveness of the program.

Table 2. Participation and Program Features in Our Case Studies

City, Neighborhood	Participation			Program Features		
	In Program Design	In Program Execution	Impact on Regeneration Program	Year Started	Previous Urban Regeneration Programs	Main Fields of Intervention
Barcelona, Santa Caterina	Medium	High	Low	2004	Yes	Urbanism, Local facilities
Barcelona, Barceloneta	High	Medium	Medium	2008	Yes	Urbanism, Housing
Barcelona, el Raval	Low	Medium	In progress	2010	Yes	Urbanism Social and Community Programs
Lleida, La Mariola	Low	Low	Medium	2004	No	Urbanism, Local facilities
Manlleu, Barri de l'Erm	Medium	High	High	2004	No	Urbanism, Housing, Social and Community programs
Olot, old town	Low	Low	Low	2004	Yes	Urbanism, Housing
Ripoll, old town	Low	Low	Low	2005	No	Urbanism, Housing
Tarragona, Camp Clar	Low	High	Medium	2005	Yes	Urbanism, Local facilities, Social and Community programs
Terrassa, Districte II	Medium	Low	High	2004	No	Urbanism Social and Community programs
Santa Perpètua de la Mogoda, Can Folguera	Medium	High	Medium	2005	Yes	Urbanism, Social and Community programs

Source: Own elaboration.

An especial mention is required for Santa Caterina and Barceloneta case studies. In the first one, a high social mobilization in a previous conflict has achieved significant impacts on the program, basically oriented to local facilities for the community. In the second case, an important conflict was generated around a program that aimed to introduce lifts in old buildings of the neighborhood, which is clearly a topic of the built environment.

In any event, the substantive impacts of citizen participation in urban regeneration policies are conditioned by a series of factors. We can see how citizen participation tends to be scant in the diagnosis and strategic planning phases of urban regeneration, while conversely it is more intense in specific decisions and the implementation and monitoring of these decisions (Table 2). This situation is clear, for example, in the cases financed by the Catalan Neighborhood Plan where none of the municipalities in the first editions of the program (2004 and 2005) had included participatory mechanisms in either the diagnosis or the prioritization of the actions. Even though it is a trend that has gradually and partially been rectified in the latest editions of the program, such as in Barceloneta, almost all policy makers interviewed argued that the main reason that explains this fact is the urgency with which the town halls tend to prepare the urban regeneration projects, for which they request financing in the different convocations. The projects have been drawn up mainly using technical and political criteria as well as by referring to previous plans that might exist in the area. Once this financing has been approved, the leeway for decision making that remains for citizen participation is quite scant.

Other factors that condition the impact of community stakeholders on urban regeneration policies are related to the composition, dynamics, and functions attributed to the bodies charged with monitoring and tracking these policies, such as the Assessment and Monitoring Committee of the Comprehensive Intervention Projects. Even though the main social stakeholders of the intervention area tend to be members of these committees, which means their formal recognition as important stakeholders, the purpose of committees is merely informative. We have seen it in our interviews with the main stakeholders attending these committees and also in the interviews with the managers of the regeneration projects. For the managers of the regeneration projects, this is a space to show their accountability to the higher authorities of the regional administration, while the representatives of the civil society organizations perceive that they attend the committee as spectators. Despite being important as an occasional forum for information on the assessment of the Comprehensive Intervention Project, their deliberative dimension and decision-making capacity is quite low.

The overlaps and lack of coordination among participatory forums also negatively affects the substantive impacts of citizen participation. Particularly in disadvantaged neighborhoods, a variety of different bodies and participatory processes linked to different actions plans (Comprehensive Projects, Community Plans, Neighborhood Educational Projects, Social Inclusion Projects, etc.) tend to overlap with very little coordination among each other. The problem in many of the urban areas that we have studied is not the lack of opportunities for participation; rather it is the inflation in the number of participatory forums without proper coordination among them. This tends to generate fragmentation, superimposition, and in short, a certain “participatory inefficiency.” Worse than that, it tends to exhaust or demotivate the most dynamic stakeholders from the community from getting involved, as they become affected by what some have termed “participatory fatigue.”

Another of the major critiques that our respondents from civil society made was about the production of participatory structures that respond to the functional logics of the administration more than to the capacities, interests, and dynamics of the local network of civil society organizations. We have seen it in those cases where social organizations were more active before the regeneration process (Barcelona, Santa Perpètua de la Mogoda, Terrassa) and also in those cases where there was a previous conflict, like in Santa Caterina or Barceloneta. The case of Santa Caterina is really interesting because social organizations were very active in a previous conflict about the use of an empty space of the neighborhood and, as a consequence, the regeneration process was forced to take into account some of their demands.

The capacity for “community empowerment” in the participatory forums associated with urban regeneration programs has also been limited by the scarce integration of this kind of program and the actions that might exist in the area aimed at reinforcing community ties. Therefore, for example, the situation in which the Comprehensive Intervention Programs conducted as part of the Catalan Neighborhood Law take place on the margins of the Community Development Plans should come as no surprise. Generally speaking, the scant attention paid by the regeneration plans to the issue of community empowerment means that citizens are expected to deploy participatory skills that they do not have. Hence, the participants in the monitoring and tracking bodies are often not very representative of the local community, and their capacity to liaise with the economic, technical, and political representatives is really slight.

In short, even though there are significant differences from one case study to another, we have seen that, generally speaking, strengthening the local community networks is not a priority in urban regeneration processes. They, thus squander an opportunity to give the participatory forums even more

Table 3. Factors Explaining Diversity in Our Case Studies

City, Neighborhood	Neighborhood Typology	Predominant Social Capital	Political Will for Participation	Previous Conflicts
Barcelona, Santa Caterina	Central	Linking	High	Yes
Barcelona, Barceloneta	Central	Bridging	High	Yes
Barcelona, el Raval	Central	Linking	Low	Yes
Lleida, La Mariola	Peripheral	Bonding	Low	No
Manlleu, Barri de l'Erm	Peripheral	Bridging	High	Yes
Olot, old town	Central	Bonding	Low	No
Ripoll, old town	Central	Bonding	Low	No
Tarragona, Camp Clar	Peripheral	Linking	Medium	No
Terrassa, Districte II	Peripheral	Bridging	High	Yes
Santa Perpètua de la Mogoda, Can Folguera	Peripheral	Bridging	Medium	No

Source: Own elaboration.

content and capacity to influence, as well as to complement the urban regeneration strategy with effective processes of community development.

How Can We Explain Such Variety of Experiences of Participation in Urban Regeneration?

Despite the fact that they are within the regulatory umbrella of the same intervention programs—a Comprehensive Rehabilitation Area, an Urban program, or a comprehensive intervention program within Catalonia's Neighborhood Law—there is a vast variety of experiences of participation in urban regeneration in terms of both intensity (the degree to which citizens and community stakeholders are involved) and influence (the degree to which the policies and programmed actions are affected). As we will see, the factors explaining this diversity include the differences between central and outlying neighborhoods and their local history of participation, the kind of social capital in the area, the presence of prior conflicts, and the municipal government's political will (see Table 3).

The first factor to examine, then, is the difference between the urban regeneration policies that are conducted in central and outlying neighborhoods. In the centrally located neighborhoods that we analyzed (Olot, Ripoll,

and the three neighborhoods of Barcelona), the regeneration policies tend to be oriented at recovering the economic and symbolic centrality of the old urban districts. In contrast, in the outlying neighborhoods, the policies tend to aim at improving social cohesion. In this sense, the social and community orientation tend to be more important in the regeneration agenda of the outlying neighborhoods than in the centrally located ones, which show a more urban planning orientation.

Furthermore, the history and characteristics of the network of civil society organizations in these two kinds of neighborhoods are vastly divergent. In the central neighborhoods, the network of civil society organizations tends to be denser and more complex, especially in case of Barcelona. However, it also tends to be segmented and aged. A considerable number of organizations in this network have no area-based orientation, and their intervention in the local sphere focuses on providing services. Another segment is made up of the traditional civil society organizations, which find it difficult or are reluctant to include new social groups (young people, immigrants, etc.). Neighborhood, cultural, and religious organizations represent this traditional network of civil society organizations. Finally, it should be noted that in some centrally located neighborhoods in large cities, groups of young people and immigrants have appeared, which entails a chance of reviving the network of civil society organizations, although they also tend to remain on the sidelines of the debate on urban regeneration and governance. Exceptions to this segmentation are the three Barcelona neighborhoods, where the social movements' participation in the debate on urban regeneration policies has stimulated the formation of hybrid networks with a major ability to influence the urban regeneration agenda. In contrast, in the outlying neighborhoods, the network of civil society organizations tends to be less dense, although they do tend to develop deeper roots in the area, fostering cooperation among stakeholders. Therefore, certain community plans in these outlying neighborhoods have encouraged higher development of citizen participation in urban regeneration, making it possible for the leadership among different sorts of entities to be shared.

All of these elements help to contextualize the differences between the patterns of participation in both kinds of neighborhoods. In the more central neighborhoods, this participation tends to be less intense and organized more informally than in the outlying neighborhoods, where participation is more prominent as it is perceived itself as a measure for fostering social cohesion.

Another factor to bear in mind when evaluating the impact of participation is the social capital present in the area. Starting with Putnam's original definition, "social capital refers to the combination of the social trust, the rules and the networks for resolving common problems. . . . The denser these networks

are, the higher the chances that the members of a given community will cooperate for the common good” (Putnam 1993). Therefore, according to this perspective and in spite of the strong criticisms (DeFilippis 2001), we can predict that in those areas with a higher presence of civil society organizations, shared rules, and trust among the stakeholders, social cooperation will prosper and public policies will tend to be more effective and legitimized than in those areas where civil society organizations and citizen cooperation are lower. Citizen participation in urban regeneration policies not only makes it possible to take advantage of the social capital already in the area but it also fosters it by giving a new impetus to actions that are supposed to promote the connections among networks of stakeholders and rise in civic engagement.

However, as the literature has stressed (Coleman 1988; Lin 2001), there is no single variety of social capital; indeed, certain forms of social capital might even negatively affect the democratic quality of citizen participation by fostering clientelism or community segmentation (Kearns and Forest 2001). In order to conduct a more refined analysis of how social capital operates in territorial matters, Woolcock (2001) distinguishes between three different kinds of social capital: bonding, based on dense networks with a system of shared rules and beliefs; bridging, which is generated in heterogeneous networks with primarily weak ties (Granovetter 1973); and linking, which takes place in networks that link stakeholders with different levels of status and power. A virtuous policy will require the right articulation of all three kinds of social capital in order to offset their shortcomings and take advantage of their potentialities (Woolcock & Sweetser 2002).

Our case studies have enabled us to observe that those areas where bonding forms of social capital predominate tend to be somewhat impermeable to change and innovation, as the shared rules are perceived as functional and changing them, such as by creating participatory processes, is viewed as an unnecessary risk. In turn, mistrust and even opposition might be expressed toward new forms of association of unrepresented groups, for example, those of young people and immigrants. We observed it in Olot and Ripoll, where there is a predominance of traditional and homogeneous civil society organizations of neighbors and retail traders, but we also found it in Lleida, with a very closed and identity-based Romany community.

In contrast, in areas where bridging forms of social capital are the most common, there is a tendency toward the atomization of the network of civil society organizations, paving the way for stakeholders like the public administrations or large third-sector entities to leverage their structural advantage in order to achieve a predominant position. We found this kind of social capital in the cases of Terrassa, Manlleu, Santa Perpètua de la Mogoda, and

Barceloneta. Neighborhoods with a significant percentage of immigrants and with some degree of conflict on this topic, like the cases of Terrassa and Manlleu, tend to produce this kind of social capital. At the same time, in order to manage such conflict in these neighborhoods, participation tends to be more structured and significant.

Finally, in those areas where linking social capital prevails, the risk is that the power differences among networks might give rise to structures characterized by clientelism that favor a given group of stakeholders at the expense of others. In Santa Caterina and El Raval in Barcelona, and also in Tarragona, we found this kind of social capital and we could also observe these unequal relationships between public administration and several stakeholders.

Another explanatory factor we have identified to shed light on the centrality and influence of citizen participation in urban regeneration policies is the presence of prior conflicts. Indeed, the existence of community conflicts between immigrants and locals such as the one experienced in the L'Erm neighborhood in Manlleu or Ca n'Anglada in Terrassa have pushed the municipal administration to promote bodies and processes of citizen participation as a strategy in favor of social cohesion and mediation for channeling community demands. Another kind of conflict that has fostered the development of mechanisms of citizen participation are urban design conflicts, where the introduction of specific participatory processes has served to unblock urban planning controversies, such as the ones that arose in the area known as El Forat de la Vergonya in Barcelona's Santa Caterina neighborhood.

Finally, the last factor worth bearing in mind is the political orientation of the local government, and more specifically, its political will in terms of prioritizing citizen participation in public policies. Policy-maker respondents from several case studies show that this political will can be the outcome of a prior history of commitment to participatory experiences, such as in the Terrassa local government, or it can be the outcome of a recent steadfast determination to include participation as a strategic part of municipal policy. One example of this latter situation is the Manlleu local government, which until the start of the comprehensive intervention project in the L'Erm neighborhood, financed through the Catalan Neighborhood Plan, had not been characterized by conducting participatory experiences. At the other extreme, we can find municipal governments that perceive participation as an instrument to legitimize their urban planning schemes, investing more in propaganda and press conferences than in developing structured and open processes with real chances of influencing urban policies; or town halls that view citizen participation from a strictly regulatory standpoint, limiting

themselves to complying with the legally minimum requirements (public exposure, gathering opinions, etc.). This is what we found in our interviews in Olot, Ripoll, or Lleida.

Summarizing Our Findings

This article has examined the role of citizen participation in urban regeneration programs, wondering if participation does really matter in these policies. Focusing our attention on the developments of citizen participation, we have analyzed governance networks on 10 case studies from different municipalities in Catalonia (Spain), trying to identify the relationship between different models of governance and different models of regeneration. By doing that, the following conclusions were drawn.

First, citizen participation has revealed itself to be a key factor in the design and implementation of urban regeneration policies, which is not a new phenomenon. The experience in Catalonia shows us that participation in regeneration policies has a long history, dating back to the role that the neighborhood movement played in the formulation of the first regeneration strategies for disadvantaged neighborhoods back in the early 1980s. Through our diachronic analysis, we have seen how during this entire period major changes have taken place. Institutionally there has been an increasing acknowledgement of the need to create participatory mechanisms where citizens can take part in the diagnosis, design, monitoring, and implementation of the regeneration programs. Despite the fact that informal relations continue to play a key role, the opportunities for participation have become more and more institutionalized and along with the more or less classical coordination bodies such as councils, tables, or committees, the municipalities are increasingly experimenting with innovative participatory methodologies. Furthermore, generally speaking, the participatory forums and processes have gradually opened up to new stakeholders and groups in an effort to include a greater plurality and diversity of interests and social and community identities. This is good news, which is also joined by the development of an increasingly comprehensive approach to urban regeneration.

Second, we found that the “model of governance” and the “model of regeneration” are evolving together in a more inclusive and comprehensive direction. A more participatory governance network contributes to the comprehensiveness of the regeneration policy, as citizens tend to express a more holistic vision of the problem. At the same time, though, conceiving urban regeneration policies in a more comprehensive way implies that citizens

should be taken into account to achieve policy goals. The relationship between networks and policy outcomes, thus, is not unidirectional at all but is dialectical and interactive.

Nevertheless, as we have observed through the different case studies in Catalonia, the capacity for this participation to exert a substantive impact on the regeneration programs is somewhat low. Restricting participation to the least strategic aspects of decision making, coupled with the existing asymmetries between the community stakeholders and other kinds of stakeholders, such as political-technical ones, are two clear examples of the kind of factors that constrain this capacity. Urban regeneration governance networks not only tend to be clearly asymmetrical, but also tend to reproduce any kind of inequality of given power relationships. In other words, in these networks of governance the community stakeholders tend to lose out.

As we have previously mentioned, and taking into account the dialectical relationship described above, we are convinced that the possibilities of strengthening this kind of impact will be enhanced only if the regeneration projects include the vantage point of community empowerment. Facilitating early citizen involvement in defining the plan; supporting the community networks with training, forums and resources; stimulating and contributing to the articulation of the networked community work; and continuously and transparently sharing the information on the development of this plan are just some strategies that should not only strengthen participation but also may contribute themselves to local regeneration, meant in its most comprehensive sense.

And finally, but not less important, the article has also stated that the development of participatory governance networks is related to the broader context. Prior structural elements like the position of the neighborhoods within the urban system, the availability and characteristics of the local social capital, or the existence of previous social conflict in the area. Nevertheless, the diversity of urban regeneration experiences in Catalonia has shown us that there is always broad leeway to promote citizen participation in governance networks and that local governments, with their ability to influence this realm of urban policy, are the ones that can play the decisive role.

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Notes

1. The case studies are the following: District II in Terrassa, L'Erm neighborhood in Manlleu, Mariola neighborhood in Lleida, the old towns of Ripoll and Olot, Camp Clar neighborhood in Tarragona, Can Folguera neighborhood in Santa Perpètua de la Mogoda, and El Raval, Santa Caterina, and Barceloneta neighborhoods in Barcelona.
2. District II in Terrassa, l'Erm in Manlleu, Mariola in Lleida, Camp Clar in Tarragona, Can Folguera in Santa Perpètua de la Mogoda, and the old towns of Ripoll and Olot. All these neighborhoods got funds from the Neighborhood Plan in 2004-2005 for a five-year regeneration projects.
3. Santa Caterina, Barceloneta, and el Raval neighborhoods, in Barcelona. In these neighborhoods the regeneration process begun before the Neighborhood Plan, but all of them also got funds from this Plan: Sta Caterina in 2004, Barceloneta in 2008, and El Raval in 2010.

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