Redefining governance in the city:
new urban activisms and public space in Madrid

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Cover Image: photo collage by Rosa de la Fuente. *'Urban activism´s landscapes in Madrid'.*

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TRANSGOB: Transformations of urban governance in the context of the crisis. Evolution and prospects for participative governance in Spain and the UK

The TRANSGOB project addresses the impact of the economic crisis on forms of urban governance in Spain, contrasting the Spanish experience with that of the United Kingdom. It aims to analyse how practices of participative governance are evolving and their future prospects in a context marked by budget austerity, social conflict and political crisis. In more general terms, we want to explore the implications of such dynamics of change for the relations between state and non-state actors at the local level.
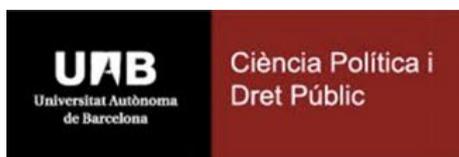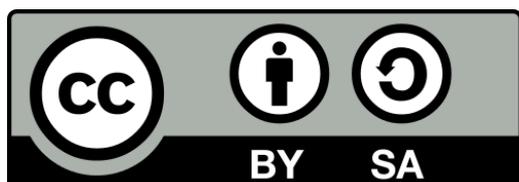
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This report examines change and continuity within urban governance in Madrid since the crisis. It demonstrates how austerity policies, developed in reaction to the multi-dimensional crisis, have affected the dynamics of urban governance. In Madrid, there was not only an economic but also a political crisis, and a myriad of new social and political actors appeared, modifying demands, attitudes and subjectivities about how to produce urban space and interact with municipal authorities.   The retrenchment of urban governance in the context of crisis can be explained due to the high levels of polarization after the austerity measures and the hollowing out of traditional participatory mechanisms. The subsequent appearance of new actors, with new practices and discourses, implies the reconfiguration of traditional positions of institutional and civil society concerning urban governance.

1.   Introduction

Since 2009, and dramatically in 2012, the economic and social crisis in Spain has illustrated the weakness of the Spanish economy in resisting down-turns in market performance. The crisis has highlighted not only the dependence of the rating agencies and international monetary institutions on rescheduling Spanish debt on the condition of cuts and structural reforms, but also the incoherent model of growth and the absence of a long-term solution to the collapse of the Spanish real estate bubble (Burriel, 2013).

In Madrid[1], the consequences of the general crisis coupled with the highest municipal debt (6.000 million euros) implied cuts in social services for public employers, and a deterioration in the quality of public services (urban city street-cleaning, household waste disposal service, lighting of streets, avenues, parks and public plazas). At the same time local taxes and transport fees have been increased. In March 2012, the Mayor of Madrid, Ana Botella, presented an 'Adjustment Plan' for Madrid City to satisfy Ministry of Finance conditions to receive public funds and pay suppliers' debts. The main objective was to save 160 million euros, in 2012, and 394, in 2013. Further changes included the sale of municipal assets, the dissolution of the Local Housing Corporation of Madrid and the sale of 1860 public housing units to private investors (representing 'vulture funds'). This unparalleled economic adjustment process carried out by Madrid municipal government increased urban social protests, particularly against evictions, but also interlinked with demonstrations against

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[1] Madrid City is the capital of Spain. There are 55 councillors, elected through a system of closed lists, and the municipal territory is divided administratively into 21 districts. The district level of government has responsibilities for cultural facilities, sports, parks and gardens, some public works, transport, security, mobility, and programmes including elderly care, services for disadvantaged groups, children, and women. Most of these responsibilities are also shared with upper government levels, mostly municipal and regional. The municipal government has centralised some competencies including territorial coordination, employment, taxes, and environment.

unemployment[2] and other cuts in social policy, implemented by national and regional governments. Since 2009, the logic of adjustment and the "necessity" of structural reforms were implemented by politicians of the same right wing party, (the Popular Party) at national level, regional level, in the Autonomous Community of Madrid, and at local (municipal) level.

Therefore, we consider this case as relevant to the main objectives of the TRANSGOB comparative research project. The current research was developed between 2013 and 2015. During three phases we undertook 33 interviews. In the first phase, the exploratory phase, we interviewed 13 people. The second phase had ten interviews, and in our Q Methodology fieldwork we did ten interviews, out of which, five interviewees had been interviewed before. For the whole fieldwork we interviewed eight officials of different ranks (HO1-8); HO6 was interviewed twice (HO6a and HO6b); eight members of new urban activisms (NUA 1-8); NUA6, NUA7 and NUA8 had two interviews that were each labelled (a) and (b) to indicate this. Finally, four technical experts (TE1-4); and six representatives of the social movements (SM1-6), of which one was interviewed twice (SM4a and b).

During the exploratory phase (2013), our research aimed to discover how this new context had impacted in Madrid, especially in relation to actors' demands, and the politicization[3] around urban decisions. Therefore, we interviewed social actors, experts and politicians involved in the social and political tissue, using semi-structured questionnaires and carrying out interviews with different collectives and experts invited to participatory roundtables to discuss the Urban Master Plan of Madrid.

This first exploratory phase helped us to understand that Madrid, during this period, was in the middle of a changing context, affecting the relations between civil society and municipal institutions. New activisms and demands had appeared, breaking and exceeding the previous institutional frames of relationship between all layers of the political hierarchy and civil society. We consider, then, that the crisis was being defined not only as economic but also as social and political. In order to develop a deep understanding of the crisis in urban governance in Madrid, it was important to examine how the appearance of new social actors, demands and attitudes correlated with new ways of thinking and acting, transforming public space and its meaning.

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[2] The demographic and social characteristic of the population is also an indicator of the effect of the crisis. In that sense, at the beginning of 2010, Madrid city started losing population and just in three years the city lost 68.290 inhabitants, 2.1% of the population Also there was a decreased of birth rate and of the number of migrants. In January 2009, there were 571.913 inhabitants of foreign origin, while in January 2013 there were 463.242, a 19% less. Also, Madrid city unemployment figures rocketed, while in January 2009 the unemployment rate was 171.634, in August 2013 reached 253.101, an increase of 47.5%.

[3] We understand politicization as the process through which claims are expressed in a contentious and antagonistic way, not only challenging but condemning those who are generating privation.

In Phase 2, we interviewed a further politician, officials, voluntary organizations and activists. During the second phase of interviews and participatory observation (2014) we decided to analyze actors who were deeply engaged in political and social activity, observing that through new practices in the public space, they were also becoming more powerful as political subjects. Consequently, we also wanted to discover how those new and old actors were interacting with local institutions and amongst themselves.

Therefore, during the last methodological phase, just a few months before municipal elections, we tried to understand disparities and similarities about urban governance and perceptions about participatory practices using Q-methodology (2015). Relevant experts, politicians, and technical staffs from public and private entities were interviewed on their perceptions of urban governance, participatory mechanisms, and new legitimating narratives. In the following sections, we will explain the main results of these research phases.

2.   The construction of the urban governance model in Madrid (urban governance traditions)

The shift from government to governance has been a popular topic in social sciences in recent years. It is useful to understand that there are two main differences in the way governance systems exercise power, compared to traditional centralized government, and that these can generate tension and some confusion.

First, power at local level has shifted from hierarchical power associated with authority to a more persuasive power than an authority power, except in some critical circumstances. Second, more players are involved in decisions, but not always in a formal way. 'Governance (…) typically refers to new modes of steering and regulating society that have arisen over the last few decades, (…) usually identified with the emergence of (often informal or semi-institutionalized) networks of public and private actors that are involved in tackling concrete problems, but lack coercive power' (Offe 2009, Rhodes 1996, quoted in Lievens 2015:2).   In this context participative mechanisms are therefore a means to formalize some of the ways private and public actors can interact, in order to decide priorities and actions, and follow the decisions taken.

At urban level, regime theory and urban governance perspectives have focused on analyzing processes of new governance alliances, paying special attention to how interactions are created and their underpinning aims. They underline how 'it is precisely in order to increase "their capacity to act" that the urban political leadership forges alliances with resourceful societal actors, primarily the corporate sector' (Stone 1989, Pierre and Peters 2012: 73). They also correlated the appearance of urban governance to neoliberal hegemonic tactics, 'the partnerships that emerged at the local government level during the 1980s to 1990s were primarily set in place to help boost economic development. They were also meant to signal, in the spirit of Thatcherism, the idea that the role of politics was not to regulate and

control business but instead to promote economic development' (Pierre and Peters 2012: 76).

Between 2003 and 2009, the government of Madrid shifted into an urban governance model. This transformation was guided by the strong leadership of the Mayor Alberto Ruiz Gallardón (supported by a strong civic consensus) who sought to make Madrid into an international and global capital city, which was attractive to the investments and tourism, and welcoming and participative.[4] In support of the first of these objectives, he attempted to improve the city through large urban planning operations. Initiatives included the M-30 "big dig", four tower-blocks built on the old Real Madrid training facilities, radial toll highways, the acquisition and redesign of the Communication Palace as the new headquarters for the Mayor, 12 'Programs of Urban Action' (PAUs) allowing land reclassification in order to build 200,000 new houses, a new Airport terminal and so on. Many of those operations were related to three failed attempts to host the Olympic games (Alguacil et al. 2012, de la Fuente y Velasco 2012).

Also, in order to fulfill his aims, the Mayor developed a hegemonic narrative to assist in re-shaping the city and sustaining support (Velasco y De la Fuente 2013). Most public and private actors were invited to be part of this vision and associated political processes. In that sense, the neoliberal and international urban turn was accompanied also by the incremental inclusion of participatory discourse and formal mechanisms of participation, in order to build rhetorically a more efficient and transparent environment for citizenship.

These institutional changes, also brought fresh discourses about the role of the citizenship and social actors in this new way of governing. In the introductory text of the Participatory Statute of Madrid (2004), local government was described as having three facilitative roles:

> 1) to 'achieve better communication between local administration and citizens, providing improved information about municipal actions and plans, and enhancing local authorities' awareness of the needs and demands of citizens. In this way, citizens and local authorities could create a dialogue about the city's problems and their solutions'.

> 2) To create spaces of joint discussion, instruments and processes of participation in order to allow all citizens to participate. These might include 'new forms and spaces for consensus, negotiation and consultation among citizens, and between citizens and government, in order to build policies and urban development programs'.

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[4] During three consecutive municipal elections (2003, 2009, 2011) Gallardon achieved an absolute majority. However, he resigned from the Mayor´s office at the end of 2011, leaving Ana Botella as the new Mayor, although not directly elected as she was the second candidate in the list of the Popular Party. In 2015, for the first time since 1989, the Popular Party was not able to form government, and a new political party, Ahora Madrid, was able to govern with the support of the Socialist Party.

3) To foster citizenship associations and 'develop new forms of social organization, fostering urban social capital" and contributing to generating a participative culture among citizens'.

These ideas indicate that a new "collaborative governance" model was being implemented, which resonated with Ansell and Gash's (2008:544) description of a:

> governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-governmental actors in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets.

This definition underlines two main ideas demonstrated in Madrid´s model of urban governance. First, public actors lead participative processes in order to reach political consensus; and, second, collaborative governance involves the establishment of formal and deliberative processes related to decision-making on public policy programs. In that sense, Madrid's approach at this time was clearly a top-down process, with a predominant public role in the design of collaboration mechanisms, in the promotion of the civic participative culture and the strengthening of capacities of social organizations. This could eventually lead to institutionalization of participatory mechanisms and demobilisation of social struggle (Bonet, 2015).

2.1 Developing formal and institutionalized participation in Madrid (2004-2014)

In 2004, with Ruiz-Gallardón as Mayor of Madrid, citizen participation was pushed up the agenda under the 'Council of Economy and Participation', and at the beginning this raised some expectations among social organizations about the possibilities of this new context. For the first time, the municipality wanted to be informed of citizens' problems and possible solutions, institutions were going to be more open, and the City Council was creating a set of institutional spaces to enable closer dialogue with citizens.

At this point there were two main mechanisms for interacting with local institutions. On one hand, at district level, citizens and social organizations could join territorial Councils; and on the other, the possibility of expert participation at thematic 'sectorial' Councils (youth, co-operation, policy, education, and cultural…) was created. Furthermore, an over-arching 'Council of the city' was constituted with the participation of 50 members, among others former local and regional politicians, sectorial experts, etc.

Consultations about different concrete topics, at district levels, and the implementation of 'Local Agenda 21' (although with low levels of participation), were followed by other thematic initiatives. In 2006, an ambitious programme to improve community cohesion in neighbourhoods between previous local residents and new migrants was launched – Mesas de Convivencia (Cohesion Roundtables). The objective was to develop participative fora in which locals and immigrants would tackle conflict and decision-making in a monitored and

consensual context. Residents would elect representatives of civil society at neighbourhood level.

In 2006, a new magazine, 'Take part' ('Participa') was launched to publish news about participatory initiatives between citizens and the local government, as well as the autonomous initiatives of social organizations. Reading its issues, we have observed that the Municipality wanted to underline three main ideas: their interest in the strength of the social fabric of each district: the importance they attached to negotiations with the neighbourhood associations [5] regarding investments and social facilities; and finally encouragement for individual participation through consultations and other semi-institutionalized mechanisms.

Different district consultations were developed about different topics, and they were publicized as a way of gathering information about the "real" problems of citizens. People elder than 16, were consulted through virtual or face-to-face mechanisms[6]. Since 2011, almost two million Madrileños have participated in those consultations (Take part: 21). According to a Madrid City Hall report, (2015) those mechanisms were also used to collect individual perceptions of the quality of public services, and to obtain data to take decisions[7].

The relationship between the City Hall and neighbourhoods of different districts was developed through the FRAVM (Federation of Neighbourhood Associations) the main umbrella body for participation from 2004 until 2015. 'Special Investment Plans' and later 'Neighbourhood Plans' were developed using a participative approach. During the first phase, 2004-2008, five Special Investment Plans (Take part: 15) were implemented, in Carabanchel, Tetuán, San Blas, Vicalvaro and Latina. These investments tried to correct social inequalities, contributing to the creation of six centres for older people, seven schools, two libraries, four big sports centres, and the improvement of existing infrastructure and the street-scape. After those policies, there were other plans in Villaverde (2006-2011), Puente de Vallecas y Villa de Vallecas (2008-2012) and Usera (2009-2013). All of the plans were followed by Citizens' Monitoring Committees.

Following those Special Investment Plans, since 2009, the City Council also contractually agreed with the FRAVM other types of participative plans. These basically consisted of local development programs funded by the city, and managed by FRAVM in sixteen disadvantaged neighbourhoods. (Take Part: 13). Those 'Neighbourhood Plans' were also evaluated annually by a monitoring committee including citizens, technical staff from

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[5] Since 2005 until 2015, the number of associations increased, from 878 to 1229, among which Parents Associations are more than 20%, and those related to neighbourhoods 10%. (Ayuntamiento de Madrid 2015)

[6] There were some child consultations, from 12 to 16, with the aim of fostering participatory culture (Take Part: 21)

[7] Reading the data included in the Open Government Strategy (2015), it is interesting to underline that most of the surveys were paper-based, and less than 25% of them were done via web. Only one of the consultations in Barajas District got participation from more than 5% of inhabitants (2358).

different municipal areas, and a consultant team from the University (Take part: 17). For the period 2009-2012, 16 Neighbourhood Plans were signed, another five plans for the period, 2012-2015, and again nine Neighbourhood Plans for the period 2013-2016, despite the context of austerity.

In 2012, *Take part*, the municipality review of participation, described them as follows: 'Neighbourhood plans are designed with participative and strategic methodologies, are based on territorial solidarity, management co-responsibility, (…) are also based on participative diagnosis, and the articulation with other policies and programmes developed by the municipality' (Take part: 23). Also, when the process of participation was being outlined, the publication emphasised that 'once all the proposals are analysed by the City Council, different projects are defined for each plan, being more significant than those implemented by the neighbourhood or district associations on their own, designing and developing projects, relevant for their own community' (Take Part: 25).

For the HO4, and his consulting team, these plans could even be called 'participatory budgeting', and on this basis they were presented in 2014 to a 'best practice' competition in Dubai by the Spanish Habitat Committee (2014). They were successful in gaining international acclaim in July 2012, when the International Observatory of Participatory Democracy held in Porto Alegre (Brazil) granted the Neighbourhood Plans the 'VI Distinction of Good Practice'. Later, in the 2014 Dubai competition, Madrid's participatory processes in disadvantaged neighbourhoods were commended.

Since 2008, there have also been other experiences of consultative participation related to public policies, in which experts, users, and corporatist sectors of the city were invited to participate. 'Round-tables' had been taking place to plan cycling mobility in the City since 2006, and participation in the development of the plan continued until finally the General Plan of Cycling Mobility was, with a high level of consensus, approved in 2008 (Ayuntamiento de Madrid 2008).

Another process of participative round-tables (mesas de participation) started in 2011 to inform the evolution of the new General Urban Planning of the city. During the design process and before the communication phase, neighbours, experts and different social actors (ecologists, professional associations, sociologists, architects and interest groups) were summoned to inform of the phases of the plan. However, in this case the plan did not obtain sufficient support in time to be approved before the election of 2015.

One of the last initiatives of participative planning to take place was the PECAM (Culture Strategic Plan for Madrid), which in 2013 gathered over several months a forum of experts to discuss cultural policies in the city. The outcomes are still to be seen. Also, in 2014, the Strategic Plan for Basic Sport was presented at the Territorial Councils; this plan was also considered to be participative, since 92% of the participative proposals were accepted.

3. Distrust, crisis and the gradual emptying of participatory mechanisms

Since this urban governance model was designed, we believe a post-political condition (Swyngedouw 2007) was starting to spread. The institutions of the City Council were trying to develop mechanisms, institutions and initiatives to channel civil society in their own projects, using them to decide upon concrete and neutral issues, such as the design of an (already existing) square.

> 'there are more technical issues and others which are more political, but participation implies complexity. There are many easy decisions, like deciding about a square, but if the decisions are more complex, such as defining a city model, then a forum or a sectoral roundtable is not the mechanism. It should engage more global and political participation' (O2, 2013).

However, this post-political and neutral condition was never totally closed, since at the same time as FRAVM became the main interlocutor to develop Investment Plans, it was able to introduce some criticisms of the model, to try to improve the system. In that sense, the relationship between those institutions was useful to improve the urban governance model, not in a contentious way but rather through a collaborative approach.

Yet although social monitoring of the investment plans in the districts was satisfactory, with the high accomplishment of objectives, the FRAVM showed increasing distrust of this type of participation. The organizations included in the federation showed their discontent with these mechanisms of participation: first in 2005, with a survey; later in 2006, publishing their Manifesto against 'Mesas de Convivencia'; and finally in 2010, with a document about participatory instruments.

Also they showed their disapproval with some practical actions, for example, in 2006, most of associations at Villaverde District deserted the Mesas de Convivencia (Cohesion Roundtables), and most of them did not participate in the elections to decide the participants. They considered those new instruments to be tokenistic when compared to mechanisms included in the Participation Statute, (that had not yet been passed), such as public referenda, citizens' initiatives and public hearings. They also showed apathy towards the functioning of District Councils, "futile instruments of participation, due, (to a large extent) to the indifference, or even malevolence of the President Councillor" (NUA1).

Against the urban governance model, the Federation of Neighbourhood Associations considered that a radical democratic system of citizen participation should develop real instruments of engagement, to inform both debate and decision-making (NUA1). Those criticisms were listened to, and at that point, the General Director of Participation agreed with FRAVM to improve the functioning of Territorial District Councils (2007). Under this agreement new areas were opened up for debate, including municipal budgets. It was also confirmed that all the debates and agreements would be elevated to the District Plenary

Meeting, and the Presidency of the Council should be systematically chaired by the President Councillor, instead of by the District Manager, as it used to be.

Later on, in a document published in 2010, after the financial crisis had begun, the criticisms became more radical, arguing that the Participatory Statute was interpreted in a 'restrictive and bureaucratic way', and that the main problem was the 'absence of political will'. FRAVM considered the District Councils not as a participative space, nor for common deliberation and proposals, but as a source of frustration and struggles among political and social forces. For them: 'relevant issues such as the analysis and the proposals around municipal budgeting were excluded from the Councils' (FRAVM 2010).

Moreover, further democratic demands began appearing on stage, with FRAVM asking for more participatory democracy, the implementation of participatory budgeting, greater decentralization and competencies for the districts and the design of new co-management and participative mechanisms for public facilities. Those demands were amplified thanks to the 15 May social and political movement[8], which grew out of the empowerment of urban activism and networks, in the context of hard social conditions of unemployment, housing and poverty, mainly concentrated at outlying districts and disadvantaged areas of the city centre.

3.1 The political moment: 15M, the Adjustment Plan, and the progressive uprising of new social urban actors

The evolution of civil society in Madrid in the last few years has been undoubtedly affected by the current economic crises, among other factors like the role of new information and communication technologies, as well as socio- demographic changes in Spanish society.

In our interviews we reached a common perception about the appearance of new actors after May 15, 2011. At the beginning, these mobilizations revolved around 'national democracy problems', such as basic issues of accountability and the mechanisms of financial and political regulation control in relation to corruption, as well as the causes and responsibilities of the economic crisis. But the main effect was to open and reinvent the social and political tissue in Madrid city. For example, HO1 underlined: "the crisis is fostering new actors among the social tissue and therefore it is getting more representative (…) new citizens have been mobilized. New people, 15M are engaged with a more active citizenship" (Former technician of Municipal Housing Enterprise, HO1). In a similar way, a member of the anti-eviction Platform (PAH) in Madrid, considered:

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[8] 15M was a movement of "indignados", who camped in the Puerta del Sol, in Madrid, from the 15th May 2011. During 28 days, the people involved highlighted the democratic deficit, the effects of the crisis and arguments for new social, democratic and economic solutions. This movement was similar to other 'occupy' movements in many other cities in the world.

'there is much more social tissue, since the beginning of 15 May assemblies, particularly around housing rights. The FRAVM is being reactivated, new associations are growing up, and this federation has been one of the main advocates for the anti-eviction movement. The neighbourhood association INCOLORA in Villaverde is supporting this new social activism' (NUA1, 2013).

In that sense, some actors existed prior to the protests but others were the outcome of the movement, or were strongly influenced by it. Prior to the movement and afterwards, urban actions of different kinds and mobilizations have been taking place, mostly in the city of Madrid. What was extremely interesting was the change of perspective. Institutional and traditional mechanisms were overwhelmed, and in our interviews the idea of a changing attitude was underlined. People were acting to foster bottom-up political change: (SM5), "Not needing to expect that someone will decide on our behalf how we use the space of the neighbourhood square. In this sense there has been an improvement since the crisis: with the excuse that there is no budget, we do it by ourselves." (SM5)

Some actions involved the appropriation of public space in different ways: from short ephemeral appropriations of a few hours (i.e. to do a neighbourhood breakfast in a square) to larger projects such as community gardens, and open air social centres in public plots, among others. 15M not only brought new forms of participation around specific issues, but the emergence of a process that was widespread, spontaneous and deliberative following the call of a platform called Democracia Real Ya! (Real democracy, right now!) (Alonso and Ardoz, 2011).

NUA2, considered that virtual platforms were useful instruments not only to launch 15M, but also to sustain activity. In that sense, he remarked "Cyber-militancy through twitter and other virtual spaces were after 15M really important, when the militancy was not so dynamic at street-level" (July 2013). So, the protagonist of new technologies and virtual networks was crucial to enhance not just mobilizations but also new ways of reflection and collective thinking. But face-to-face practices, such as the Water and Health Consultations, remained relevant: "this is an innovative action, more action than process". Through these initiatives, and other practices including Street and Square Assemblies, communitarian actions, and so on, Madrid was becoming a battle-zone, "the area where all the demonstrations and activities are concentrated" (July, 2013).

Accordingly it is hard to establish a typology of the new urban activisms[9] since they tackled different issues with different strategies, albeit with some common values and a left wing

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[9] Walliser (2013: 342) defines New Urban Activisms. Their main features are: 1) A loose organizational structure, often defined more by a digital identity that by a formalized structure, although this is sometimes a prerequisite to consolidate their projects and become stakeholders. 2) Blurry lines between political action, mobilization and professionalization in a landscape of a young generation of skilled and politically committed individuals that share values but also strive to escape unemployment or a precarious job market. 3) Weak

ideology with a general motto that citizens possessed the 'right to the city'. But, we can identify different periods according to the type of actions taking place. Therefore, it can be divided into a first wave of NUA actions in the year after 15M, which focus on transformative actions challenging the status quo, like the anti-eviction movement (PAH) which conducted a very successful campaign of mobilization and legal counselling that managed to stop and renegotiate thousands of evictions with banks. In terms of public space, some innovative actions have taken place, among them the lease of public land to develop open space (and virtual) social centers. Some of them have become national and international references like "el Campo de la Cebada" or "Esto es una Plaza", at Madrid city centre.

At the beginning, the idea was to occupy empty public spaces and re-signify them, transforming into not public, nor private spaces, but common. This translation from public (denoting top-down institutionalized) to common (denoting collective and collaboratively constructed) is one of the main shifts in the discourses of those collectives (E3, 2015). This was the main contribution of the Foundation of the Common, another collective of thinkers what also launched the Municipality Platform in 2014.

A more mature wave of actions followed, developed by some of these movements, which often took the form of collectives with a professional or semi-professional structure. Collectives such as Basurama, Zuloark, VIC or Todo por la Praxis[10] searched for redefined

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formal links or identification with established political organizations beyond the individual opinions of the activists as a reaction to traditional mechanisms of political participation (Forbrig, 2005). 4) Social innovation such as the consolidation of open source communities that produce collective knowledge. (…) 5) ICTs are a crucial tool to build identity, debate and mobilize online, but also to ´de-virtualise´ the digital community by encouraging real, offline interaction. 6) Activists can be identified more on generational and political traits than strictly on social class. Often highly educated, activists are the outcome of three decades of welfare state and social investment in education in Spain. With a rate of youth unemployment over around 50% these activists are redesigning life careers, political participation and their eventual (yet almost impossible) access to the labor market. 7) NUA are often promoting and networking as a reaction to public administration initiatives, but mainly with a proactive bottom-up strategy. In terms of public space, their main aim is to transform the city and develop new innovative projects. Sometimes the dialogue with the authorities is a tactical need to achieve their purposes. 8) New Urban Activists through the use of ICTs and locally based projects, have the agency to place political debate at the same level that mainstream social media achieve and to even gain visibility and influence public opinion. A good example is how a new political party (not a NUA) emanated from 15M mobilizations. Podemos (We Can) has launched a message that has been magnified in only four months. The visibility of their message has been transmitted in the last two years through online TV Channels and different talk shows to which some of the leaders were invited.

[10] The collectives mentioned above, Basurama, Zuloark, VIC or Todo por la Praxis, are good examples of new urban activisms. In particular, these are groups of architects and urban designers that have been developing projects of different sorts oriented to transforming public space from a bottom-up perspective. The more consolidated and well-known their work becomes, the more public administrations will hire them both at the local level and in other cities and countries. These collectives often start their projects with residents or local associations and develop them both with public funding and without it. "We decide to do a project. If we find funding, great; if we don´t find funding, we do it anyway" (NUA 7a).

relations with institutions, and collaborative forms of approaching urban problems. City Kitchen or Urban Cooks, jointly with the Mesa Ciudadana (the Citizen´s Table) gathered in an open-format activism experts from different realms and municipal officers from different professional backgrounds, who often took part in meetings and discussions as engaged citizens, not as representatives of their organizations.

Interestingly enough public support has been apparent through cultural institutions (Matadero Madrid, Medialab, Intermediate, etc.), but there has not been an open political attitude towards collaborative forms of governance. Collaborative governance happens in specific cases, often proposed from a bottom up perspective, rather than as part of a political strategy of the City Hall.

However, in fact, participatory instruments were overwhelmed by this new urban activism, re-politicizing urban life in a context of austerity. NUA1 showed the difference: 'people are just asking to live under a roof, it is an act of active citizenship, (…) as a citizen you have the obligation of guaranteeing yourself those rights, we are doing the State role. (…) Participatory plans are just paper, experts do not know what to do, ask elderly residents in the street, there are no experts to save your life' (NUA1, 2013). With the same considerations, one of the main leaders of the Community Garden movement, Pablo Llobera told us:

> 'I do not know the participation policy of the City Council, so that makes me think it is just a tidy shop window. There is a train crash since 15M, because the old participatory policy is, after two years, obsolete. There is no way for the compartmentalized management structure to understand what is happening' (NUA3 2013).

This was also the perception of some officers, for example, the Director of Cultural Heritage and Urban Landscape, HO3, agreed with the incapacity of the traditional mechanisms to answer new citizens´ demands.

> 'Institutions are lost. Constantly, new petitions are arriving and the municipal technicians cannot solve them, mainly because they do not know who is behind them. Previously, there were institutions, but now petitions came from different collectives and persons. So they had to search in the web to discover who is approaching to government' (2013).

4. New perspectives from all the actors about urban governance

Urban governance has two main features since the beginning of the crisis in Madrid. On one side there is the retrenchment and hollowing out of the often weak, traditional institutional mechanisms of participation; and on the other side there is the increase and densification of citizens' initiatives aimed at participation in the management of urban policies.

Among the social actors there is a new group of activists who are starting to participate in public issues in the city, in a different way. The appearance of these new collective actors, new urban activists, under austerity implies the reconfiguration of the traditional ones. Therefore, we consider that the appearance of new urban activisms has forced the traditional actors, the City Council and FRAVM, to redefine their own positions about how to participate and be part of the urban governance model. In this section we will examine how the different actors redesigned their own discourses, practices and institutional approaches towards urban governance between the crisis and the local elections in 2015, which were dominated by a new coalition of citizen and political parties.

First, in the discursive sphere, amongst politicians and officials the idea of transparency was becoming more commonly used, suggesting that it was not possible to talk about participation without transparency (HO3), "without transparency, information and publicity the citizens are not able to be involved" (HO4). Additionally, just before the elections, the conceptualization of participation as the "information interexchange that technologies allow us to develop" (HO4), was gaining presence in the discourses of senior politicians. However, budgeting cuts meant that participative opportunities were reduced to "just a few concrete and small possibilities" (HO5).

Moreover, under austerity policies, traditional institutions were re-evaluated, "the disbelief of our mechanisms and institutions is not good (…) because those are with some nuances the best guarantee of public answers to the crisis" (HO4). So, therefore, the idea of stability and strength of public institutions is "the only possibility of developing processes" and therefore they considered "associations must be in the institutions" (HO5). Therefore participative institutions were still considered to be umbrellas for social actors.

Actions followed from discourses. Principles of transparency, open government, participation and open data were addressed in public consultations "we have changed formatting typologies, in order to avoid looking like just like a survey,…the idea is to be able to do it by internet, and create more consultations about different projects" (HO5).

Secondly, traditional associations, as well as neighbourhood ones, recovered a much more critical discourse. The most significant negotiating partner with the City Council before 15M was the FRAVM, and although they highlighted for a long time the political hollowing-out of traditional mechanisms of participation, after 15M they also considered the need for

mediation structures, widespread platforms and to reinforce their critical approach about participatory instruments. At the same time, although they still considered themselves as the main interlocutors with institutions, they defined themselves as autonomous structures and mediators, representing civil society interests but also with a more radical approach to achieving them.

Since, austerity measures forced "the death of many associations which were working in the social sector" (SM3), they considered the appearance of the new actors as a very relevant and important process. For them, the appearance of new urban activisms was valuable because of their creativity "new people, without previous experience in social movements. Most of us, we have our own political tradition or even legated from our families due to transition to democracy struggles or party militancy. They bring new ways of doing things" (SM3). Therefore, they considered that "the reinvention of social practices appeared to enrich those that already existed" (SM1) with a deep impact "which is improving the city from the neighborhood scale, with no aggressive measures" (FRAMV).

Those traditional associations considered that, during the crisis, the City Hall institutions were hiding themselves behind representative democracy and their global vision of the problems (SM3) as an excuse, because "'politicians have their own responsibility, but they could delegate it, open it, they could accept decisions taken in other places as their own decisions" (SM1).

Lastly, new urban activisms are distinguished by their professional approach, which allowed them to create a new repertoire of action changing the perspective and possibilities of political participation. Their demands are postmodern, and their initiatives are fragmented, searching to generate a multiplier effect, developing new narratives that are not necessarily related to democracy, power or class, but about cultural and post material demands. In that sense, they do not confront institutions, but interact with them. They aspire to modify spaces through interventions, and not merely participate, instead looking for a symbolic and spread effect, since they believe they generate dissent through urban actions (VIC NUA7NUA8a 2014). This is key to understanding how traditional actors have rearranged their own positions. "There are new innovative actions, which may have limited impact but qualitative value in terms of response. If open permeability was found at institutions…this could be interesting" (NUA2b).

For them, urban governance or participatory process are empty expressions (NUA8b). The starting point is erroneous, since they create an opposition between citizens and public officials, and "there are always citizens those who attend other citizens' necessities". Another question is governance from where: "communitarian, public or private"? (NUA2b). For them, the key issue is to think about the new role of administration, and they consider "it will depend on the service, its complexity, sustainability …". (NUA2b). In that sense, this empowerment of new social actors is relevant to understand this reconfiguration, "it is not only about participation, it is also about doing things" (NUA6b). This capacity for overwhelming the leadership role of the administration from outside is what has given them power. In their own opinion, without this pressure internal institutional change would not

been possible (NUA6b). So, they conceive of themselves as those who are able "to generate urban dissent through actions" (NUA6b).

This position is the opposite side of the coin, since they also assert the professional character of NUA initiative through cooperatives intervening in public space, and consider "it is necessary to start citizen´s learning processes, in order to overcome the grievance attitude" (NUA8b). They describe their own actions as "city pedagogy" (HO4).

In terms of the neighbourhoods, these practices have expanded from an initial focus on the central district to a myriad of initiatives in the peripheral areas, which are often hit severely by the crisis and austerity measures. One of the most relevant impacts of new technologies is the interconnection of social networks, beyond the spatial dimension. As O3 noticed, for new actors, "physical neighbourhoods are over now, and therefore the work should be done over networked neighborhoods." (HO4 2014). With a similar perspective, Basurama, also considered that "the interests in the territory are opened, we are interested in what is happening in many places. ICTs allow this proximity" (NUA8a).

A key aspect of the consolidation of new networks and the production of urban knowledge, both applied and theoretical, has to do with the cultural policy of the city. As in other cases such as Berlin (Colomb, 2004) pro-growth city models often develop city-wide branding strategies using culture in a broad sense that will attract attention from the media and cultivate an image of modernity and progressiveness (Kratke, 2004). Two flagship public cultural facilities, Matadero and Intermedia, led by independent experts, managed to generate a sphere of Exchange, dialogue and innovation around urban issues from a broad perspective, not an urbanistic one and clearly not through bureaucratic mechanisms of participation.

New urban activisms have generated – within the new political consciousness of 15M - a widespread feeling of autonomy and the perspective that change - to create a new urban model, social justice, a city for the citizens - is possible and feasible. This vision contrasts with the perception of traditional urban social movements in previous years. The view that "Public administration always claimed to have a global perspective, that we as associations don´t have" (NA2,SM3) denied the real participation of social actors in broader debates about the city model, strategies for the future or even urban policy at the neighbourhood level, except for very specific spaces of influence such as the neighbourhood plans, which were severely cut at a point when there was greater need for them in vulnerable areas.

The perceived role of new urban activists in governance stresses their 'autonomous DNA'. The genesis of innovative projects and their implementation, even when they have been accepted and regulated is not regarded as an outcome of institutional change, but rather as the capacity of social actors to operate efficiently at the margins of the institution, as "ex-titutions" (as one activist urban planner suggested). Another activist says about institutions: "If we are talking about a new institutional model, there isn´t any change. If we are talking about public/community actions, there is change" (NUA8 2015).

Although new urban activists' projects and actions had different reactions from the local government, the main novelty in governance terms was the narratives of social actors in

their interaction with the institution. As an urban planner activist puts it: "We don´t ask permission to do. We tell them (the city government): we are going to do, if you want you can join us" (NUA8a).

The reaction of local government to new urban activists´ actions has been diverse, ranging from rejection (for squatted social centres), tolerance and acceptance, the latter-two often affecting projects in different stages. Probably the most important impact has been the bottom-up introduction of new participatory devices, pushed by the need to regulate or institutionalise the innovative practices. This has enhanced new normative frameworks that give formal solutions to new situations, especially around public space (urban gardens, new community spaces, etc.). Within these contexts the traditional urban social movements have incorporated these practices and collaborated with new urban activism in two ways: either engaging once the project was being developed on the margins of the institutions, or taking part as a result of conditions set by the local authorities that allow it to take form.

In conclusion, we consider that according to Pierre's models of urban governance (1999), after analyzing discursive and institutional changes, we could classify the previous Gallardon's model of urban governance as a managerial and pro-growth model, with efficiency and growth policy objectives, developing competitive and interactive relation of public-private exchange, through contracts and partnerships, and with apolitical aim of consensus. However, we could also find some elements of other models, mainly from the corporatist, due to the inclusive attitude in the relation with citizens, and the presence of participation as a key instrument.

After the crisis and during the adjustment period, we found a more active role being taken by social activists; not only challenging, as before the crisis, but also acting and working through different complex and volatile networks. In that sense, old and new social actors were also changing their attitudes to institutional mechanisms, abandoning the consensual approach for a more radical democratic one (Mouffe 2005). At the same time, municipal authorities were also including some nuances about their own position related to participative mechanisms in this context of high polarization.

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