GOVERNANCE AS THE FOCUS OF STUDY IN LATIN AMERICA CITIES

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Carmona, R. (2012). *Debate about New Government Styles in Argentinian Cities* Buenos Aires: Ediciones CICCUS- Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento.

The governance idea arose as an answer to the identification of new configurations in State-society relations. The concept has detractors and promoters, its introduction to the social science areas is far from accomplishing the acceptance that public policies have, however, some authors have done acute readings of the emerge of new ways of governance, taking advantage on the wealth of explanatory theoretical framework of governance category.

Rodrigo Carmona, rescues the analytic potential of governance through the study of new governance styles of two Argentinian cities, Autonoma City of Buenos Aires (ACBA), and Rosario city. He understands governance "as an analytical instrument to investigate how different interaction multiactoral processes are developed in decision making, at the same time, as a perspective to understand changes in a sociopolitical level and deployment of new instances of participation (p.211).

Carmona's reflection sets the debate on the investigator side, not consultant, the question posed by the new complexities rather than side dictation action formulas; it is a proposal that weakens some critics' arguments to the approach, because contemplates that government dispute the administration of resources of all kinds (including symbolic, material and power) based on the quality of the instruments of multiactor action, which does not exclude of conflict, friction or ineffectiveness.

The author presents his master piece at the Metropolitan Collection Issues of the UNGS, which focuses particularly in the Metropolitan Region of Buenos Aires. When it was published the author had secondment at the Institute of Conurbano (ICO). Recently has published works about theory and methodology for the study of local governments paying

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attention to state-society related issues (Carmona, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c).

1. CONCEPTUAL PROPOSAL

The analytical question in the book resolves around the description of three kinds of multiactoral articulation: the strategic plan, decentralization and participatory budget; and the explanations of the forms of articulation that emerge in the gestation process of Buenos Aires and Rosario policies.

Before that a long chapter is devoted to the conceptual debate of governance identifying the characteristics and conditions on the arising of new government styles, as well as tensions and new conflicts attached to governance processes. The author offers an extensive analysis of the influential works on governance, could not miss the contribution of Luis F. Aguilar (2006), who lowers his existence from a shift of government to governance process, aimed to increase the capabilities and efficiency in problem resolution scenarios of greater inclusion and participation, which Carmona translates as multiactoral articulation policies.

The exhaustion of centralized government, hierarchic pretensions to omniscience, it is patented by major complexity and diversity, of public problems in times of globalization and densification of access channels and dissemination of information and knowledge.

The previously mentioned makes it necessary momentum to new styles and public management tools as an answer of the state to this complexity, inspired dynamic collaboration that integrates multiple social and political actors, foreshadowing a governance scenario (p.13).

However, these new management styles are not conflict free, proposals that contrast with the governance idea, associated with order and stability aspirations, differs from the governance concept that implies political and institutional conduction. Governance is attached to ideas like co-direction, integra-

tion, cooperation and collective goals achievements in a participative and plural way.

Governance systems are not the panacea, as follows from Carmona's analysis of different authors, in principle because they can interact logic, interests and different abilities. But, on top of that there is the risk of declining responsibilities, among other complications (p.23).

1.1. CONDITIONS THAT EXPLAIN THE RISE OF NEW STYLES

The challenges of context lead to governments to seek adjustments and/or transformations to face these processes effectively. There are known and successful elsewhere that adapting to new contexts are incorporated responses, but generally have to do with increasing the capacity in addressing public issues through inclusion and multiple actors coordination.

Rodrigo Carmona enriches the reflection about governance through the idea of public in Arendt and Habermas, and concludes inviting to think "public" as "non-excusive attribute of instituted powers, but rather as a responsibility to be developed collectively" (pp.30-31).

This goes hand in hand to track interest to literature about transformations of State-society relations in two ways: the role that non-governmental actors earn, and State crisis as center of representation, planning and driving. These phenomena are observable in the emerge of multiplicity of actors influencing in political processes, the setting of new public spheres characterized by supranational multicentric structures, increased levels of supranational integration and moved by individualistic interests, ways of struggle and mobilizing more autonomous and the crisis of the idea of modern State political representation.

Such scenario demands vertical forms of public intervention, to integrate public action schema that contemplate interactions of greater complexity through dialogue and collaboration that shapes new

public management styles, capable of a flexible performance facing highly changing scenarios.

This demands increasing legitimization mechanisms through direct citizenship participation and implicate more actors in the debate and deliberation on collective projects (pp.30-35), let us not forget that is the change and not stability that provides relevance in governance (p.18), because the levels of success of new instruments will vary depending on historical and contextual aspects,[1] as is shown by Carmona's studies.

1.2. PATHS BETWEEN OLD AND NEW STYLES: NEW TENSIONS SCENARIO

Before we start with the empiric study, Carmona makes two pauses, first devoted a large section of the first chapter analyzing the condition about exhaustion of old management styles and the necessity of new tendencies.

The analysis of the metropolitan phenomenon goes from recognizing that the economical, politics and cultural activities are structured with greater wealth in conurbations, but they both involve jurisdictional fragmentation problems and the necessity to establish metropolitan management schema "managing a city or metropolitan reality involves considering various territorial areas" (p.40).

This reality includes recognition on new conflicts and challenges that come into play in the urban sphere. Assuming governance is that such challenges share the participation of multiple actors in interaction networks to deal with "in situ" objectives. Our author understands the articulation as a challenge that supposes "collective responsibilities deployment in the territory" (p.52).

The strategic planning is the contrast of traditional urban planning and centralized technocratic character. The first seeks to generate fundamental decisions oriented to a future vision defined by economic and social agents of the city. The approach contemplates looking for projects setting city that articulate actions and policies encouraging citizen participation.

1. To rescue the relevance of these aspects, I suggest consulting the theoretical proposal of M. Bevir (2013).

The decentralization topic is considered as a *democratizing* aspect, it is understood as a complex and multidimensional process, planting reformulations in the state-society relations (p.58) and contemplates "tensions which are produced against new set conditions" (p.61).

Carmona is interested in a type of citizen participation where state-civil society interacts and these delve into the first. So focus his study to participatory budget, taking as reference the Porto Alegre case, characterized by a participative of previous civil society history to the participatory budget promoted by the Workers political Party.

2. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUE AND SCOPE OF WORK

In a second pause before the empirical study, reading reflects on the possibilities of the case study method. The book is modest in its aspirations, seeks to better understand the problem investigating to offer new and better questions, and this is possible attending multiactoral articulation policies.

The reality of Argentinian municipality is that it placed in a second place, due to limited powers and competences, public works and supplying of basic urban services. In this way, Argentinian federalism[2] gives primacy to the provincial level of the municipality, an issue that has central representation on financial dependency: the metropolitan cities are presented as political-institutional fragmented realities where decisions are subject to reached municipal governments and, essentially, to provincial governments" (p.76).

The explanations presented by Carmona are exploratory by systemizing observations. He analyses three sets of variables:

> *a) Multiactoral articulation types, through identification background, institutional settings, content-objectives, integrated perspectives and deployed resources.*

2. For an analysis of metropolitan management in cities of federal countries consult Arellano (Arellano Ríos, 2014).

b) Articulation ways of actors and attention to the process, identifying actions, working modalities and articulation scope; deliberation mechanisms, tensions in the process, level of social intervention, as effects of politics in the state system.

c) Politics results.

3. AUTONOMA CITY OF BUENOS AIRES, A REMARKABLE CONTRAST WITH ROSARIO CITY

So far the book has covered conceptual aspects. It is often underestimated the importance to incorporate in these types of texts a theoretical and conceptual reflection, however, in this case it turns out transparent the connection between the conceptual and empirical system, so studious on that area could replicate the study elsewhere, paying attention to the method and conceptual system, opportunity that in very little occasions is missed in the literature on metropolitan governance.

3.1. THE AUTONOMA CITY OF BUENOS AIRES CASE

3.1.1. STRATEGIC PLAN

The book describes in detail backgrounds and the strategic plan evolution. As significant background of strategic planning, in 1993 the University of Buenos Aires and the Secretary of Public Function stablished a working commission inspired in the case of Barcelona city made in 1992.

In 1996 constitutional status was carried out with the creation of the Strategic Planning Council (SPC),

consultative and autonomous body that was intended to make recommendations through consensus Strategic Plans. As it is familiar to other similar processes, delays were suffered. It was until 2000 that the Coordination of the Strategic Plan of the City Government was instituted. The work of the same would begin to reflect in 2001, in a complex context of economic crisis that placed Buenos Aires as the epicenter of a national protest. Towards 2002, the Plan was conceived officially as a reference framework for public policies of the city with a short and long term vision.

The idea did not contemplate direct citizen participation but by organizations representing the city. The process to reach this Plan was carried out by phases, starts with a study of other experiences; concludes with organization meetings in order to identify problems, and instances of discussion in neighborhood advisory councils, discussion forums and workshops.

In the process methodological corrections were made, even the addition of instruments as SPC internal regulations. The main ideas were defined as familiar clichés, phrases that begin with Buenos Aires over the main idea: decentralization, equitable economic, habitat of excellence, driving city of the Region, etcetera.

By the end of 2004 the 2010 Strategic Plan of Buenos Aires was approved. The vision of the city was defined highlighting concepts or ideas as participatory democracy, equality, diversity, and metropolitan integration, multicultural, creativity, for and by people. In 2005 was seeking specific action through thematic working groups that were concentrated in specific projects.

The framework worked out to sum the amendment for Urban Planning Code and the law on land use. In 2006 friction surfaced: the Council was leaderless in a context of limited capacity to influence real city policies, solidify problems in the poor coordination with the new government. At the end the main criticism to the process was the lack of integration of social organizations at territorial and neighborhood level.

As a result highlights "the tension between political-governmental logic […] and the more extensive logic of Plan Council (focused on consensual work consolidated civil society in the development of different recommendations institutions and actions for the city) He made manifest and hinted a level of fragile link between state and social actors" (p.99) with which remained distant strategic quality management and a good multi-stakeholder coordination.

3.1.2. DECENTRALIZATION

Decentralization processes in the nineties found as a role model again the case of Barcelona. The City of Buenos Aires obtained autonomous rank with the reform

of the National Constitution of 1994, and two years later the City Charter was enacted. By decree was delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive Administrative Decentralization Program, which began the process of organizing sixteen Management Centers and Participation (MCP) as prior to its formation deconcentrated as Communes.

It was until 2005 that the Law of Communes was approved, bringing a new map of the city was created, and contemplating fifteen Communes composed of between one and six original neighborhoods and a minimum population of 156 thousand and a maximum of 228 thousand inhabitants. However, the path of decentralization was immersed in political and institutional vicissitudes of the city.

With the new law, in 2006 the CGP were dissolved to give rise to the Centers Management and Community Participation (CMCP), in an atmosphere of widespread ignorance of the new organization by the population.

The results reached can be summarized in one sentence: "[…] fewer innovating tendencies, predominance in the decisions of centralized bodies, strong presence of reactive positions and intervention forms little articulated and stretched networks with little regards to other governmental levels and social actors" (p.123).

3.1.3. PARTICIPATIVE BUDGET (PB)

The PB was set in motion in june 2002 from the Decentralization Secretariat and Citizen Participation of the City Government, consisted multistage: 1) a cycle of neighborhood assemblies, 2) regional forum, 3) the interaction of actors in the Consul PB along the process, 4) the formalization of agreements through a Memorandum of Agreement.

In 2006 the PB went to be operated by the just born Ministry of Public Management and Decentralization, in which stages were redefined of PB, 1) first Promotion forums were organized in the fifteen CGPC, 2) assemblies would carry out in the 69 neighborhoods, 3) representative Community Consuls would settle, 4) each Consul would integrate technically feasible projects and last but not least, 5) projects would be considered by citizenship in the span of a week. The most voted projects would be incorporated to the Preliminary Draft Budget (p.127).

The process had ups and downs along the study period in: participation levels, number of plenary projects, defined priorities and execution level that, in the first year, 2002, reached 80% and by the end of the period, 2006, just reached 20% of the projects contemplated.

Partisan dynamics were not absent, a link between

neighborhood consultants and party actions was observed in many cases (p.133), besides, belonging to neighborhood organizations placed its members in a privileged position from the rest of the citizenship (p.134). In articulation terms the PB, highlights that it was conceived in the context of an institutional crisis, which placed the PB as a governance instrument (p.128).

Carmona's research allow us to observe that the PB in CABA lacked political direction that would allow an appropriate intervention of governance agencies, this affected the allocation of resources. According to the author, some factors behind the poor performance of the PB are the lack of regulation in a law level, its implementation by agencies without autonomy to expand citizenship participation, diversity in both issues such as socio-economic actors, difficulties to articulate demands were linked.

Some participants considered as problematic the community rootlessness, or works bias towards wealthier areas. Long story short, the conditions were not given to neighbors to take ownership of the instrument, reinforced by the poor compliance towards defined priorities. All of this is summarized in a single idea: poor PB institutionalization and problematic articulation between State and society.

3.2. ROSARIO CASE

Perhaps being less complex, the author devotes considerably less space to Rosario. Otherwise, if the joint multiactoral contrast Rosario is Buenos Aires. Rosario is the third largest conurbation in Argentina, with a population of 1,200,000 inhabitants. A crucial fact is that since 1989 Rosario had been ruled by socialist parties.

3.2.1. STRATEGIC PLAN

The first tests of the Strategic city Plan took place in 1995, having Barcelona as a determinate reference. The Plan was conceived as a product, but especially as a process. It did not intent to replace the government plan a contraire to supplement it seeking influence beyond periods of governance.

The distinctive features and Rosario's historical backgrounds intertwine with the results of the Rosario Strategic Plan: it was an innovative tool, mobilization of important government leadership, achieving 80% of promoted projects.

Stands out that the "success" of the Plan did not require any regulatory or legal mechanism, the support of different socialist governments was accompanied by the support of main institutional actors. Among the innovative practices monitoring and

following trough urban indicators were mentioned. The success of the Rosario Strategic Plan, led to replicate it into a Metropolitan Strategic Plan, but "difficulties in a political and institutional level were found" (p.161).

3.2.2. DECENTRALIZATION

Rosario's decentralization process started in 1996, officially defined as progressive, focused, agreed and systematic (p.163). The key aspects to take into consideration were the administrative, functional or operational reorganization, a public policy articulation between the Urban and Strategic plan, and a renewed management model, consisting of transparency and accountability (p.165).

While the process was routed upside down, a deconcentrating profile, generated areas of articulation between State and society, but with an integration of gradualist participation. Excels the promotion of a closer Municipal Council to the citizen, through what was called the "Municipal Council in the Hoods".

The very own difficulties of the Argentinean State involve however hinders to the multiactoral articulation processes, it is mentioned the lack of autonomy and dependence of the provincial government.

3.2.3. PARTICIPATIVE BUDGETING

The participative budgeting in Rosario started to develop in 2002. In this case the model followed is the Porto Alegre. The PB was established at Bylaw level, in which it is defined as a citizen participative process on debates about budgeting priorities on thematic areas. Again the gradual, dynamic and collective character was highlighted, with the intention to democratize relations between state and society.

The route the PB followed was to approach citizen, going from districts to neighborhoods, and from the discussion of "priorities", to a discussion of "projects" to increase the involvement of government agencies. Also new participative modalities were included, as the Youth Participatory Budget and Participatory Budget and Active Citizenship Women.

Carmona concludes that the PB in Rosario expressed an open political game; new leaderships emerged and spread across partisan logical channels PB. More effective articulation levels to those achieved CABA. However, I was not devoid of dissension, some participants felt that the PP was tightly controlled by the authorities with little democratic opening. On the other hand, an instance of coordination inter-district lacking an overview of the city did not develop.

4. LESSONS AND OPPORTUNITIES CREATED BY THE EMPIRICAL AND CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

The work suggests an urban context immerse in the complexity and greater levels of uncertainty demands broader visions that integrate multiple actors. These policies reflect in practice varying degrees of openness, and types of actors including density and quality of developed networks. The identification of these rules allows Carmona to contrast the cases of Buenos Aires and Rosario.

The author concludes that the CABA reached hardly transforming levels (p. 206) meanwhile Rosario showed greater innovation and in the management and coordination of policies, building new State-Society links. Both cases are similar because policies were conducted from authority and participation was predominantly consultative (p. 207).

If rule today is to act in the complexity and articulate networks, this entails a rethinking of State-society relations, and thus the deployment of a "non-state" public sphere with varying degrees of coordination and efficiency, as this complex relationship between old management styles and the emergence of innovative styles. Thus, the results in different cities vary depending on their contexts and values internalized the emerging new instruments. The shapes of the mixture between old and new, involve differences in their coexistence, types and levels of stress.

A major contribution of the book is the result of selected methods: the study of several cases, which in turns provides other cases or (embedded) subcases including different variables and data sources, which involves a plexus of information of widely magnitude. The result is a kind of thick description (Geertz, 1997) but there is lack of information the reader might miss, for example, the systemized results are not presented about the financial participatory budgeting and neither about the major impact of the projects.

The interested in studies of New Public Management (NPM) and Governance reader will miss a debate and distinction between the two. Throughout the text is concern about whether the State's responses are not primarily type NPM, it can be inferred from the text of Carmona initiatives top-down promoted by governments in turn have limited the framework of NPM aspirations, but pressures from below looking to access new governance, the book shows that the results are variable depending on the case.

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