

Citizenship practices and democratic governance: 'Barcelona en Comú' as an urban citizenship confluence promoting a new policy agenda.

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Abstract:

Spanish cities have suffered increasing social inequality after the 2008 economic crisis and austerity policies. However, harshening social conditions have also led to 'acts of citizenship' (Isin and Nielsen, 2008). Against the background of Marshallian and Tocquevillian takes on citizenship and civil society this paper analyses the emergence of the political confluence that gained office in the municipal elections of May 2015 in Barcelona incorporating citizens' organizations and advocacy groups. *Barcelona en Comú* claims a radical change in policy orientation with a renewed citizenship agenda. We argue that this is an example of Urban Citizenship that requires historical contextualization. We see continuities and discontinuities between the current local governance model and agenda and the democratic local governance model established during the 1980s when civil society provided significant input. However, it is a challenge to implement an urban citizenship agenda in a globalised city with resources controlled elsewhere.

Key words: urban citizenship, social rights, political rights, local governance, social movements, advocacy groups, *Indignados*

Introduction

In this article we show how in cities diverse citizenship practices can yield a combination of two citizenship agendas, one belonging to the sphere of social rights and the other to the sphere of political participation and democratic values. The article joins previous debates published in this Journal concerning the conceptualization of citizenship beyond the nation state. More specifically, this is a contribution to a body of research into urban citizenship and aims to provide nuances to general propositions concerning citizenship beyond the nation state.

A substantive body of studies on citizenship and the welfare state follow the legacy of Marshallian citizenship with its focus on social rights (Esping Andersen, 1990; Korpi, 1989; Taylor-Gooby, 2009; Revi, 2014). However, with the transformation of the welfare state (reducing its redistributive capacity) the conditionalization of claims is challenging the principle of equal rights for all citizens (Faist, 2013; Somers, 2008). The resilience of the welfare state in supporting social citizenship has been uneven with the relative triumph of neo-

liberal ideas over social democratic models (Taylor-Gooby, 2002). Moreover, in recent years under the pressure of fiscal austerity the reduction and privatization of public services have left new or inadequately met social needs in their wake.

In a different vein, studies have signalled the need to re-think the main assumptions behind citizenship in contemporary and globalized societies, where transnational social flows and state re-shaping are leading to new social, cultural and political loyalties. This raises the question what it means to be a member of a polity (Bauböck & Guiraudon, 2009; Kivisto and Faist, 2007). At the same time it shows that the quality of citizenship is mediated by cultural differences and by fragmentation of formal incorporation in a polity (Isin & Turner, 2002; Lister, 2007; Morris, 2009; Soysal, 2012). This rich literature takes us beyond of the scope of this article, but confirms the significance of citizenship as a body of rights that not only protects against need but also provides meaning to holders of those rights.

It is our aim to focus on citizenship, as a method of inclusion at the local scale and as an expression of social and political participation involving the formulation of new claims as well as the defence of existing rights (Beauregard & Bounds, 2000; Isin, 2000). Our concern is with the contribution to citizenship by social movements that claim 'the right to the city' in the particular governance context of Barcelona and in the economic environment of fiscal austerity. We have observed that those citizens who claim more transparent political participation also claim substantive social rights. Our analysis draws attention to the limitation of seeing citizenship *only* as a body of rights granted by the state, and sees the city as a powerful public sphere where new definitions of citizenship emerge. (Boudreau, 2000; Blokland et al.; 2015; Garcia, 2006; Holston, 1999; Isin, 2007; Mayer, 2009; Purcell, 2003). We contextualise a social and political rights discourse as articulated by a political movement, *Barcelona en Comu*, sprung from earlier civic movements in Barcelona in the aftermath of the 2008 financial and economic crisis.

Citizenship is also 'essential for cultivating civic virtues and democratic values' (Isin & Turner, 2007, 5). Although T.H. Marshall's evolutionary account of the expansion of citizenship (civic, social and political rights) recognized the civic dimension he emphasised the redistributive capacity of citizenship within capitalism. For him citizenship enhanced 'a growing interest in equality as a principle of social justice' (1950, 40). Alexis de Tocqueville observed in the United States a distinctive way of citizen participation and their sense of membership in civil society. In his legacy Isin & Turner see a historical path that has characterised the national identity and incorporation of immigrants in the United States and has given prominence to civic (and human) rights over social

rights (Isin & Turner, 2007). The citizens that Tocqueville observed in *Democracy in America* exercise civil responsibility and their voluntary and community organizations in towns and villages all contribute to local democracy. His emphasis on that capacity to organise autonomously (outside the orbit of the state) has prompted a wealth of interpretations and debates.

If Tocqueville saw America 'as a nation of joiners' (Kivisto and Faist, 2007, 84), Robert Putnam took a more pessimist view in his *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital*. Putnam's contribution is relevant to our argument since he offers an institutional analysis of degrees of civic engagement and incorporates social capital as part of the explanation of the cooperation and trust that develops with such engagement (Kivisto and Faist, 2007, 85). The conditions and characteristics of such civic engagement may also help to 'shape' the social action of advocacy groups. In this context the 'civic' assumes a contestatory function (Edwards and Foley, 2001, 6). Taking our cue from this expanded role of civil society we can see how active participation at grass-root level within and at the margins of the public sphere can strengthen democracy (Mayer, 2009; Eizaguirre et al., 2012, 2010). The case we present illustrates the value of cooperation and trust among members of advocacy groups and social movements (bottom-up organizations) that have worked their way into local governance in a particular institutional environment. Our argument is that the ways in which the local public sphere and governance dynamics have evolved in Barcelona partially explains the achievements of the social movements.

The specific case of Barcelona supports the argument that Marshall's emphasis on welfare and social rights is compatible with the neo-Tocqueville tradition that stresses civic-society participation. Civic engagement was welcomed and promoted, in the recent democratic history of Barcelona, by the local governance coalition that long influenced urban citizenship in the city (Blackeley, 2005; Degen & Garcia, 2012). Engaging civic groups in the policies of the governing coalition of the 1980s and 1990s also encouraged practices that we call 'bottom-linked' social action. This served not only to provide services and mechanisms of participation to citizens and immigrants but also to organize contestation and struggle against perceived social injustices.

Citizenship is then a process (democracy) and a target (social justice). We take the city (Barcelona) as the political territory with a public sphere in which political and social rights claims historically gave rise to socio-economic redistributive programmes implemented by the city council in the period 1979-2011. From 2011 this governance model was abandoned by a conservative local government. Barcelona is a contemporary example of a city obliged to deal with

the consequences of the 2008 financial and economic crisis and in particular with the consequences of national top-down imposition of new modes of regulation affecting life chances (employment) and life conditions (housing and services).

The historical combination of austerity programmes -involving cuts in public services - with the loss of employment, given a market-oriented local government (2011-2015), has fuelled renewed interest in urban politics and social involvement especially among the young, just when many studies were presenting the young generation as passive. This has created a new interest in political participation, illustrated by the emergence of a 'new political culture' from the meetings on May 15, 2011 in central squares throughout the country to discuss how to change the social and political environment of the city and the nation. '*Barcelona en Comú*' (Barcelona in common) shows the transformation of a locally based social movement in defence of social rights and of participatory democracy into a governing coalition. This new local government is the result of political confluence among social movements and parties. Similar coalitions have emerged in several cities in Spain.

The economic crisis and local responses: civil society & anti-austerity urban social movements in Spain (2008-2014)

Between 2008 and 2011 among the effects of the bursting of the housing bubble were a dramatic increase in unemployment and a worsening of social conditions for both working and middle classes. One of the consequences was the rise in housing evictions of families unable to meet their mortgage payments. The Spanish housing system is based on wide-spread ownership strongly related to the familistic conservative Southern European welfare culture in which family solidarity is paramount in promoting intergenerational economic support (Ferrera, 2005). This model has encouraged 'privatised Keynesianism' (Crouch, 2011) for the working class and large sectors of the middle class. It has interacted well with the incremental welfare state expansion that occurred until the 2008 crisis. Family solidarity has grown stronger since then to cope with unemployment and housing needs resulting from the bursting of the housing bubble and from the austerity programmes implemented since 2010. Social housing was never widely extended in Spain, especially if compared with Northern European countries (Pareja-Eastaway & Varo, 2002; Leal, 2010). This helps to understand the social response to the housing evictions after 2008 (De Weerd & Garcia, 2015).

Young families evicted from their homes have returned to their parents' homes, as the young unemployed have also done. Community solidarity has re-emerged at the family and neighbourhood levels with the support of civic society and church NGOs such as Caritas. This family and community response could have been predicted. Less predictable, however, was the emergence of a wide social movement capable of organizing the evicted and of engineering socially innovative practices in order to defend the right to a decent home. The Platform of Mortgage Victims (*PAH*)¹ movement emerged in 2009 in Barcelona, and spread gradually to other cities of the Barcelona region and the rest of Spain.

The *PAH* movement had wide impact.. By reframing the issue of housing as a collective instead of an individual debt problem its innovative actions contributed to new ways of conceptualizing and approaching policy problems. While governments used an 'individual approach' the *PAH* focused on collective responses to social problems (Pradel *et al.*, 2013). Secondly, the political actions of the *PAH* influenced governance by pushing for the creation of new mechanisms for collectively negotiating housing debts with financial institutions. It also politically influenced new local and regional regulations for access to housing for mortgage victims (De Weerd and Garcia, 2015). Thirdly, the methods of organization of this movement were instrumental for the *Barcelona en Comú* platform we analyse in this article.

The *Indignados* movement that started in 2011 was a catalyst for different initiatives against the welfare cuts. The movement, initiated in a gathering in central public spaces of Spanish cities on May 15 of that year demanded 'a real democracy' after the imposition of the national budget cuts by supranational institutions coinciding with the disclosure of corruption among economic and political elites. The initial demonstration developed into a permanent concentration in the main cities of Spain, including Madrid and Barcelona, where people deliberated on political reform and the ways to ensure social rights. In this framework, movements like *PAH* could explain their actions and proposals for social change, solicit support and become more visible. The movement organised thematic commissions made up of citizens and proposed a political

¹ In Spanish: *Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca* was created in 2009 as a self-organisation mechanism grouping owners unable to pay their mortgage and being evicted from their dwelling and renters with low income in danger of being evicted. Platform main actions have been collective actions to stop evictions, negotiation with banks and city councils to find allocation for people being evicted and the promotion of laws against housing evictions and energy poverty. , see: <http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/>

program. Moreover, the *Indignados* undertook political actions to stop what they considered anti-social policies. Some of the first, more striking mobilisations were actions to surround the parliaments in Madrid and Barcelona with the aim of obstructing parliamentary meetings and stopping the adoption of new austerity laws.

The *Indignados* movement and the *PAH* movement have, in sum, formulated specific alternative citizenship agendas. These citizenship agendas defined membership beyond formal and legal citizenship status (De Koning *et al.*, 2015), and gave a strong role to non-state actors in the definition of priorities concerning the defence of social rights. In this regard, the *Indignados'* new citizenship agenda included a particular claim for more democratic control over decisions that have an impact on citizens' lives. The *Indignados* and *PAH* movements insisted that governing institutions should respect and enforce formal citizenship rights already recognised but implemented only partially or put on hold by the austerity programmes. These movements attest to the resilience of the welfare state by coming to its defence and supporting the precedence of social rights over the needs of the market. Social action also happened around specific welfare services and in working places. For example, the public health sector organized in their hospitals and manifested their strength by demonstrating in the streets. From these actions it can be argued that the defence of social citizenship was very much an urban phenomenon.

In electoral terms, the rise of these movements signified a weakening of public support for ruling parties. Even so, a new conservative local government was elected in Barcelona, and in the national elections in November 2011 the conservative party (Popular Party) won an absolute majority. Both results facilitated the implementation of austerity measures against the opposition of the parliamentary minority. The social movement's political discourses and political actions were strongly criticised by the governing political class on the grounds of not being representative and of the naivety of their ideas. There was even an attempt to repress the movement by the introduction of norms which prevented massive social gatherings in public squares for political purposes while also limiting the right to demonstrate near parliaments.

While the *Indignados* presence in the public sphere and in the central squares waned and its members moved their actions to the neighbourhoods, the *PAH* movement gained prominence in the media as the numbers of home evictions increased yearly. By 2013 this movement covered all 17 regions of

Spain and enjoyed the support of 81% of the Spaniards² whereas only 10%³ of the population reported trusting the government. The presence of members of the *PAH* in the public sphere became more conspicuous particularly with specific actions such as the People's Legislative Initiative (ILP, a mobilisation effort that collected almost triple the officially required number of signatures - a total of 1,402,854- to propose legislation to ease housing debt repayment (De Weerd & Garcia, 2015).

During the 2011-2015 period new political platforms emerged in Spanish cities or networked within and between regions incorporating the citizenship agendas articulated by the *Indignados* movement and using the new forms of organisation of the *Indignados* and the *PAH* movements. These new political platforms are very rooted in their localities and their networking capacity has stimulated cooperation and trust among movement members. In the elections in May 2015 these platforms had considerable success at local level but less impact at regional level. In Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia, Zaragoza, and other large Spanish cities these new political formations gained office being the first or second political force, whereas no region was governed thereafter by new electoral platforms and coalitions. It is in this wider political context that the case of Barcelona becomes particularly significant. By examining *Barcelona en Comú* we want highlight its organizing capacity as civic movement and its defence of a citizenship agenda as key elements for their political success in the local elections in May 2015.

Barcelona: a tradition of civil society engagement in local governance and local welfare

There are continuities and differences between the governance model of Barcelona that emerged from 1979 onwards and the current governance situation under *BeC*. In 1979 local elections brought considerable collaboration between the city council and social movements linked to neighbourhood associations. During the dictatorship's last period these associations had articulated demands for improving neighbourhoods with claims for social and political rights (Andreu, 2015) . The new city council, formed by a left-wing coalition led by the Socialist

² <http://www.metroscopia.org/datos-recientes/tag/metroscopia-dinamico/PAH>, consulted in march 2013

³ CIS, Centre of Sociological research,
http://www.cis.es/cis/opencms/EN/11_barometros/Indicadores_PI/documentos/serGobOpo1.html

Party, combined redistributive urban programmes (including local infrastructures and services) in which citizens participated in urban and social planning with the incorporation of local private actors in strategies for economic growth. This approach combined aims of economic growth and social cohesion using the instruments of strategic planning. This so-called 'Barcelona Model' relied to largely on the creation of mechanisms for intervention by different local actors in decision-making processes but with strong leadership of the public sector in a consensus building environment (Capel, 2007). Through this model the city council promoted local welfare with the involvement of civil society in the provision of services, such as active advocacy groups and third sector organizations. There is another interpretation of why the city government integrated civil society groups into governance: this refers to the limited financial resources the municipality had for implementing an ambitious social programme (Blackeley, 2005; Wollmann, & Iglesias, 2011). In any case, the development of this governance model, combining participation of civil society and redistributive policies, strengthened forms of urban citizenship and a Barcelona identity

This model enabled urban civil society groups and social movements to influence the policy agenda in order to implement previous political demands, but in over time it led to the co-optation of some of their leaders and their transformation into members of the political elite, eventually 'abandoning' their loyalties to their grass-roots. The influence by grass-roots movements was, however, strong during the eighties, with important interventions in working class neighbourhoods and in the inner-city: New public spaces were opened substituting old factories or new facilities were provided such as cultural centres, libraries, health centres and primary and secondary schools. The opportunity to host the Olympic Games in 1992 brought massive private and public investments, the latter coming from national and regional levels of government. The Olympic mega-project gathered a wide consensus amongst city actors as it brought major investments in large infrastructures and public spaces that were seen as necessary for the city. Nevertheless the decision-making processes related to the development of such infrastructures diminished the role of citizens and weakened the capacity of neighbourhood associations and other social groups to negotiate new demands with the city council with some exceptions (Degen & Garcia, 2012).

During the second half of the nineties, in a context of an economic crisis and higher unemployment (1994-1997), the city council changed its governance style towards managerialism. The shift was meant to give Barcelona the capacity to compete in the global arena and to ensure efficiency in a context of integration

of the city into the global markets. With the internationalisation of Barcelona private actors got more influence on the council while weakening the capacity of neighbourhood associations to monitor political decisions. The outcome was a widening of the council's distance from many citizens' groups and social movements, which disagreed increasingly with the competitive model of urban growth. Many were disappointed about losing their right to decide the future of the city. The dissent of civic organizations was evident with the celebration of another mega-project, the 2004 Forum of Cultures which - although a UNESCO event with the theme of cultural diversity and global peace - aimed mainly at the urban redevelopment of the east side of the city.

To reverse citizens' discontent the city council started to implement new policies at neighbourhood level after the 2007 elections, but citizen disaffection with the local government continued to grow for a number of reasons: the increase in housing prices; frequent conflicts between some councillors and the counter-hegemonic movements in the city; the enforcement of laws that regulated public space to the detriment of the poor and of marginal groups (Galdon-Clavell, 2015). The 2008 economic crisis resulted in higher unemployment and brought the disclosure of local cases of corruption. Finally, in the context of the 15M mobilisations, the local elections in 2011 brought into power a minority local government led by conservative nationalists, bringing to an end 31 years of socialist governments in the city⁴. This spelled the end of a governance model that had allowed grass-roots organizations to dialogue with the city council.

***Barcelona en Comú* as an urban citizenship platform that incorporates proposals of civil society and social movements**

The political platform *Barcelona en Comú* (BeC) was one of the political responses of the *Indignados* movement to a local political class whose legitimacy had been eroded by their management of the economic crisis and by its aloofness towards citizens. The proposal to launch this platform emerged from a small group of activists who were especially active in the anti-eviction movement (*PAH*) during the period 2009-2013 and who were involved with the Observatory of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (DESC), a non-profit organisation that collaborates with social movements and gives legal advice and training in the

⁴ Between 1979 and 2011 the Socialist party (PSC) ruled the city, without absolute majority, except for the period 2001-2004. The party always found support from the postcommunist party ICV, which was in charge of welfare policies. Later, ICV would be one of the participants in the new electoral platform BeC.

defence of social rights⁵. Members of DESC are well-connected with social movements and advocacy groups and have played an important role as facilitators for networking . The small group of DESC, led by the charismatic spokeswoman of *PAH* until 2013, Ada Colau, launched the *BeC* political platform in June 2014. They wanted to be different from traditional parties and adopted practices from the *Indignados* movement. The platform was a proposal for a confluence of social and political movements rather than a consolidated political project. During the summer of 2014 the platform petitioned for support and in one month and a half collected the signatures of some 30.000 citizens. It was nurtured by people from the social movements at neighbourhood level and from traditional left-wing political parties. Academics, technical staff of the city council and people that had mobilized during the 15M protests also started to collaborate with the initiative⁶. As for the number of people involved, there is no proper census of militants in the platform and the talk is of ‘collaborators’, which makes tallying difficult. Nevertheless, thousands of citizens did participate at different stages in the creation of the platform.

The *BeC* platform was not organised as a traditional political party but created horizontal mechanisms of decision making inspired by the 15M movement, especially regarding the elaboration of a program for the local government. The basic organisation of the platform was based on two kinds of commissions where citizens gather and discuss the needs of the city and the development of a political program. One kind followed the model of debates in the central *Plaça Catalunya* during the 15M; these are thematic commissions dealing with different issues such as gender, urbanism, participation and democracy, environment, or health and were created to stimulate political debate and to propose specific measures in the election campaign. The second kind of commission followed a decentralisation logic, being territorially-based. Neighbourhood commissions acted following the tradition of the neighbourhood movements of the city collected neighbourhoods claims and ensured the

⁵ DESC is a think tank on the issue of citizenship led by a senior ex- city councillor, and social scientist who has published articles and books on social rights and urban citizenship.

⁶ A deep empirical analysis of the social background of those participating in the movement is still pending. Nevertheless, observation of different commissions shows the strong role that academics, most of them young researchers in precarious job situations played in the thematic debates during the elaboration of the program. The role of the technical staff is relevant as it provided inside information, especially on issues linked to transparency. Finally, people, already involved in debates during the 15M movement, were also involved with the platform to different degrees, from simple participation in commissions to being part of the coordination committees.

territorial implantation of the platform. One of the features of this form of organization is that, despite being clearly open to program demands of social movements, it was based on individual participation and not on party or group affiliation. This means no formal representation of social movements, political parties, trade unions or other organisations is accepted: members are called to participate on an individual basis at neighbourhood level or/and in thematic discussions, together with non-affiliated citizens. Debates and proposals in thematic and neighbourhood commissions were partially carried over from debates initiated during the 15M movement, with some of the participants having been part of the 15M commissions in 2011.

In sum, the *BeC* organization uses horizontal tools of decision-making (based on thematic and territorial logics) but without formal involvement of social movements in the electoral program. In this way, members of old and new social movements as well as advocacy groups could participate in setting the political program of the platform together with unaffiliated citizens. This 'open' mechanism allowed to incorporate in the electoral program proposals from advocacy groups and social movements. Following Diani (2001: 209) we see the political impact of these groups on policy design and on the activities at all stages of 'the political'. We also see a cultural impact on the processes of production and reproduction of moral standards, information, knowledge and life practices. The objective of political impact was not only to attain power at the local level but to propose the transformation of policy processes. In terms of cultural impact, the platform tried to frame policy debates proposing different moral standards and hoping to carry these over into policy implementation. These objectives recall debates already occurring during the eighties, when the previous redistributive model was developed by the socialist-left coalition. In both historical instances a 'bottom-linked' articulation between civil society, social movements and institutions developed in Barcelona.

Table 1 shows some initiatives included in the electoral program of *BeC* and the specific advocacy groups that were active before the political project was articulated to win the local elections. The strength of the connection between *BeC* and these groups and social movements varies. In some cases, such as the activists claiming democratic regeneration, there was a strong involvement in the political program of *BeC*, whereas only a few members of other networks were involved (although their claims were also included in the final program).

Table 1 – Initiatives in the BeC program and relation with advocacy groups	
<i>Initiative in the BeC program</i>	<i>Advocacy groups & networks with similar claims and proposals</i>
Housing policies -Creation of social housing -Penalising banks that keep empty houses in stock	Anti-eviction social movement (PAH)
Energy and basic resources provision - Energy and water for all families -Re-municipalisation of water companies	Network of associations against energy poverty (neighbourhood associations, unemployed associations, social movements for alternative models of energy and renationalisation of energy companies)
Special investments for deprived neighbourhoods	Neighbourhood associations of deprived neighbourhoods
Granting human rights to refugees and non-legal migrants	Association against 'internment centres for migrants'
Promoting social economy and 'cooperativism' as a motor for growth	Cooperatives associations, social and solidarity-based economy movement
Fostering transparency and new forms of democratic participation	Organizations claiming democratic regeneration and participative experimentation emerging from the 15M

Source: authors' own elaboration

The internal organization and political decisions concerning who was going to participate directly in the election of the council were more complex. Groups and commissions in *BeC* were headed by a coordination committee (formed by the leaders of the platform) and an executive committee that deals with internal issues (also formed by the leaders). Members of both committees were elected and their decisions endorsed by a plenary assembly, but they had a high degree of autonomy. The coordination committee had the freedom to manage all proposals, giving coherence to the program by accepting or modifying certain measures. They had autonomy to negotiate the integration of traditional political parties in the platform. The initial aim of the platform leaders was to integrate party members into the structure of the platform without formal negotiation with the party apparatus. Even though this was possible in terms of developing the program, with militants from different parties participating individually in the thematic and territorial commissions, this was not possible for the negotiation of the list and order of candidates. Finally, a more traditional process of negotiating to form the coalition took shape, and the electoral list of candidates was agreed with left-wing political parties (*Podemos, Procés Constituent, Iniciativa per Catalunya-Verds, Esquerra Unida I Alternativa and*

Equo)⁷. This negotiation occasioned tensions because of the democratic organisation of the platform and the openness of decision-making, with some participants feeling that the schemes of traditional political parties were being reproduced which could lead to co-optation and weakening influence of advocacy groups and social movements in the political movement. Nevertheless the final electoral list was validated through primaries conducted via electronic poll.

Towards a new citizenship agenda?

BeC finished first in the elections of May 2015 with a simple majority and a redistributive and participatory program. The new left-wing governing coalition has followed a path similar to that of the governing coalition of the years 1980-1990s, with some differences. One is of political culture and program, the other concerns the capacity to govern. As to political culture, the current political agenda involves renewing participation and transparency in policy-making to strengthen political rights and promoting changes in the hegemonic economic model to minimize the effects of economic growth on such rights. The idea is to defend social rights through the implementation of an emergency plan (25 out of a total of 35 policy measures) to ameliorate the situation of vulnerability of hundreds of families: redistribution is back on Barcelona's government agenda. As for political capacity, *BeC* does not have a stable majority to implement measures and the government needs to establish alliances with other groups⁸. The following table gives some idea of the electoral base supporting *BeC* and why there is such a strong emphasis on vulnerable citizens.

Table 2: Voting for *BeC* in municipal elections by district, household income index, and percentages of participation

⁷ The left-wing party *Iniciativa per Catalunya-Verds* had continuously supported socialist governments between 1979 and 2011. The participation of this party in the coalition brought greater knowledge of the organisation of the city council and financial resources, but the collaboration generated reservations as the party was seen as an 'old politics' organisation by some members of *BeC*.

⁸ The Elections in Barcelona brought a very fragmented scenario. *Barcelona en Comú* obtained 25% of votes and 11 seats. The conservative party *CiU* obtained 23% and 10 seats. Five other parties obtained representation in the city council, ranging from 7 to 11% with the 21 remaining seats unevenly distributed.

District	Household income index (2014)	% vote for BeC (2014)	Participation municipal elections 2014	Participation municipal elections 2011	Difference in participation 2014-2011
Nou Barris	53,7	33,6	55,5	47,6	7,9
Sant Andreu	73	29,2	61,8	52,8	9
Sants-Montjuïc	75,8	28,2	58,2	49,6	8,6
Horta Guinardó	77,7	28,4	58,7	50,7	8
Ciutat Vella	79,7	35,1	47,6	41,8	5,8
Sant Martí	85,6	29,3	60,7	52	8,7
Gràcia	108,5	23,8	64,2	55,8	8,4
Eixample	115,9	21,2	63,1	56,3	6,8
Les Corts	139,7	14,8	65,5	59	6,5
Sarrià-Sant Gervasi	184,3	10,5	66,2	61,6	4,6
TOTAL	100	25,2	60,6	53	7,6

Source: authors' own elaboration based on

<http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/eleccionsmunicipals2015/ca/resultats.html>

With 25% of the electoral vote and with those votes concentrated in the lower income districts *BeC* does not have the city-wide support of the government that transformed Barcelona in the 1980s and early 1990s. The social base of the *BeC* vote partly explains the concentration of planned measures linked to employment, expenditure on food, energy and water, housing, and the improvement of public transport.

Planned actions aim not only to make the city more socially just but also to change the relations between public and private actors in decision making. As regards housing, for instance, the city council has sought such measures as already proposed by the anti-eviction movement. They include the creation of a negotiating table with banks in order to find alternative solutions to mortgage executions and to use non-occupied housing stock owned by banks for social housing provision. In parallel, the local government is increasing the stock of public social housing through more public investment. Likewise, as regards water provision, the city council foresees the re-municipalisation of the local water company.

Despite this, the outcomes of efforts towards creating more social justice have been uneven. Private actors have manifested open disagreement with that part of the *BeC* program. And there is lack of institutional support at other levels

of government to implement them. This is the case of ensuring the right to adequate food, the right to health, to mobility, to a basic supply of water, gas and electricity, or to a municipal and complementary basic-income, all of them included in the Action plan of *BeC* that depends on financial resources from the regional or the national government.

The new local government also wants to reinforce political citizenship in the sense of strengthening transparency and greater involvement of citizens in decision-making processes. This includes making public all the meetings of the mayor with different actors and offering better information on public spending and auditing agencies that depend on the city council (such as the planning public-private company *Barcelona Regional*). They aim is to prevent corruption. Concerning participation, the city council is putting into practice the Municipal Action Plan and District Action Plans in order to establish priorities at city and district levels. These new instruments for participation combine the use of new technologies and social media with more traditional meetings and thematic meetings in neighbourhoods or with associations working on specific issues. This political orientation is in line with what Benoit Levesque defines as a shift to a public-value orientation on innovation in public management systems (Levesque, 2013). It is also interesting to note that the idea of ‘auditing’ previously settled contracts goes in the same semantic direction of the general claim, especially present in many Southern European radical progressive circles, of ‘revising’ or ‘auditing’ the public debt assumed by the national governments as a result of the 2008 financial and economic crisis.

Another area of friction between the new city government and private actors results from the aim to promote a new ‘economic model’ giving a more prominent role to the social economy. The Mayor has announced her disposition to revise the participation of the municipality in specific private business-projects or to renegotiate enterprise concessions and privatisations, for example in the case of adding big shopping malls. In relation to the booming tourism sector the new government envisages an alternative tourism model which might be more sustainable and redistributive. So far there is a temporary moratorium on the concession of tourist licenses and certifications. – One innovative strategy is to use part of the benefits of the economically successful tourism sector to facilitate public facilities for small commerce, or the support for non-precarious jobs through investing in strategic sectors. These lines of action have been inspired by some of the existing social cooperatives in the city.

In sum, from the 35 urgent measures included in the original program, 11 were implemented after four months in power (most of them related to social needs) and 10 were under study or early development⁹. The strong political fragmentation in the city council, with *Barcelona en Comú* having only 11 out of 41 seats, has forced the city government to negotiate and to limit some of the original proposals. In spite of that *BeC* is firm in defending its citizenship agenda wanting to prioritize the ‘common good’ over private interests. In this regard, *BeC* has strengthened the discourse based on social and political rights and the ‘right to the city’ renovating and recapturing the original model of urban citizenship shaped during the eighties, when local forms of welfare were developed with strong support of civil society.

Conclusions

Citizenship has become in the new century a meaningful horizon for political imagination (Hansen, 2015). Despite limitations and critical appraisals the centrality of the nation-state in the expansion and implementation of citizenship rights during the twenty century cannot be disputed. Welfare and social rights were extended to new sectors of the population incorporating issues such as the recognition of diversity. However, social and political rights are being threatened by the forces behind globalisation. Since the 1980s globalisation and neo-liberal ideas have created serious challenges to welfare institutions and social redistributive policies. Mainly in cities, the development of new forms of governance has made it easier for non-state actors to resist and fight against the loss of social and political rights and to engage in co-defining new citizenship agendas. On these new agendas one item among many is establishing ‘moral grounds’ for an inclusive citizenship.

We have here described how, in this framework, social movements and advocacy groups develop social action and strategies to advance a ‘new political culture’ with a renovated citizenship agenda in Barcelona, part of a wider political trend in Spain. We have indicated the close link between this political turn and the hardship experienced by sectors of the Spanish population – as in other Southern European countries- with the 2008 economic crisis and consequent

fiscal austerity. The ideas and forms of such an 'urban citizenship' agenda give priority to citizens' participation and democracy at the local level while aiming to strengthen social rights through redistributive policies.

We have offered this case by way of illustration of the creation of an electoral platform able to gain local power, to advance a political program based on reshaping social redistributive policies, and to create new participation mechanisms. Departing from the initiatives of the *Indignados* and other social movements and advocacy groups, this political platform proposed a new citizenship agenda. We have argued that this was possible because the actors involved developed networks of trust and shared ideas and objectives. We also meant to show that the case of Barcelona indicates the importance of taking into account specific local historical contexts and institutional frameworks. In Barcelona, there was a prior democratic governance model since the 1980s of close involvement of civil society in order to ensure social cohesion. This governance model included a redistributive program and certain forms of involvement of neighbourhood associations in decision-making. But this model declined when leaders gave priority to a competitive strategy of the city in the global arena. After a new conservative coalition arrived in power in the midst of the economic crisis, some civil society actors and social movements moved to prepare and configure a new coalition able to build a new redistributive and participatory model.

BeC is a product of the protests against welfare cuts and their negative effects on large sectors of the population and against the distant attitude of economic and political elites. Barcelona, as many other cities, has witnessed many episodes of corruption and nepotism that lately, in the light of the crisis, have become a deep source of citizens' indignation. The success of the *BeC* platform derives from the social movements related to the 15M movement that emerged in 2011, in part of that global wave of mobilisation after the 2008 financial crisis known as 'occupy movements' in many cities around the globe. When in 2011 the conservative nationalist party (*CiU*) won City Council in the local elections despite social movements taking the *plazas* and streets, part of the activists and organisations participating in the 15M decided to develop a political movement able to reach the institutions.

The successful development of the political movement was due in part to networks between different social movements and activists developed, not only during the wave of protests linked to the *Indignados* movement, but present long before in the city. The civic density of the associations and social movements directly or indirectly engaged in the construction of the political confluence explains its openness to participation. In fact the construction of a counter-hegemonic action-plan has attracted people and innovative ideas already operating in the city during the last decade.

Nevertheless, once in power the political movement has suffered from different limitations. Firstly, obtaining a limited victory in a very fragmented political landscape, the new Mayor has been forced to negotiate with other political parties and to adapt the political agenda. Secondly, despite the discourse on citizenship rights and participation, not all citizens feel engaged in the political project of the coalition. This is specially the case among the middle classes that look at the new political project with scepticism. Thirdly, the governing coalition faces strong opposition from private actors in most of the measures proposed that challenge private interests.

Finally, the new local government has suffered limitations imposed by multi-level governance. The local scale allows the alliance between different movements and organizations to formulate a local political agenda, but the possibility to implement redistributive policies at the local level is constrained by a lack of competenc and resources. The capacity of these movements to scale up to other levels of government is limited as the construction of alliances and confluences is strongly rooted mainly or only at the local level. This is, probably, one of the most salient limitations of urban citizenship. In this regard, the case of Barcelona indicate that it is easier for these new political movements to have a cultural impact as they put forward new citizenship agendas than to make a clear political impact. This has yet to be assessed by history.

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