Structural Conditions for Citizen Deliberation

A Conceptual Scheme for the Assessment of “New” Parties

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“New Politics?”

- Recent social movements (15M, Occupy Wallstreet)
- Technopolitics (Lebkowsky, 1997)

“New Parties?”

- Transforming institutions from the inside
- Online deliberation platforms
- Official Party

Effective citizen deliberation as instrument
Deliberative Democracy

form of communication based on normative values (equality, inclusion, fairness) to come to consensus-based decision that serve the public good (Dahl, 1989; Habermas, 1989; Cohen, 1996; etc.)

“discursive and participatory process that manifests itself in the codetermination or shared decision-making among equals” (Gould, 1988: 85)
A Basic Empirical Frame

• Who?
  Assessment of number of participants

• About what?
  Assessment of number of issues

• How?
  Qualitative Assessment on process, spaces and outcome
"Disculpe, señora alcaldesa. Yo la ayudo a levantarse."
Organigram

Case Study: Barcelona en Comú

Source: https://barcelonaencomu.cat/ca/com-ens-organitzem
Research Design

Questions:
• How are the deliberative spaces within Bcomú designed?
• What opportunities have the citizens to participate?
• What are the challenges these spaces are facing?

Sample: Neighbourhood Group

Qualitative Design:
• Three-month period: Participant Observation
• Interviews
• Secondary Sources: Internal Documents and Debates in Mailing Lists
## Structure & Functionality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Modes of Participation</th>
<th>Allocation of Deliberation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Assembly</td>
<td>Partisan deliberative conference; problem-oriented forum</td>
<td>Agenda; Issue</td>
<td>Direct; Delegate; Consultative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plenary</td>
<td>Partisan deliberative network</td>
<td>Agenda; Issue</td>
<td>Delegate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination Team</td>
<td>Partisan deliberative network</td>
<td>Agenda</td>
<td>Consultative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissions</td>
<td>problem-oriented forum</td>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal District Group</td>
<td>Problem-oriented forum</td>
<td>Agenda; Issue</td>
<td>Representative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accessibility & Transparency

• Inclusion in assemblies?
• Blurring concepts: party member & citizen
• Dissemination of sensitive information
• Privacy versus transparency
• Digital divide: ICTs and elderly citizens
Hybridity & Coordination

- Coordination of online & offline channels
- Synchronization of online tools
- Offline spaces: Topic vs. Territory?
Outcome & Accountability

• Assembly as highest decision-making body?

• Consensus versus Majority?

• Accountability: Transparency about decisions made?
Conclusion

Experiment of a “new party” in “new politics”:

- Bridging technopolitical movements and traditional hierarchical institutions
- Stable and punctual spaces for citizen deliberation
- Tensions in:
  - Structure & Functionality
  - Accessibility & Transparency
  - Coordination & Hybridity
  - Outcome & Accountability
Further Research

- Comparison between other parties
- Scalability
- Criteria for Success and Failure
Krems, May 18th, 2016. CeDEM2016

To cite this work:

http://ictlogy.net/presentations/20160518_maria_haberer_ismael_pena-lopez_-_structural_conditions_citizen_deliberation.pdf

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