Decentralisation and New Governance:
A Comparison between Barcelona and Birmingham

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INTRODUCTION

This paper explores the transformations which occurred in Barcelona and Birmingham during the eighties, and provides a methodology to asses the change of the local governance. In brief, both local authorities decided to voluntarily decentralise their organizational structures and, meanwhile, defined the notion of citizen participation by institutionalizing some consultative mechanisms.

The striking feature is the convergence of the final result in spite of being two cities from different models of local government: in both cases, I suggest that these transformation processes can be understood as an effort of making bureaucracy (by moving away from the Weberian model of bureaucracy towards a hypothetic 'post-bureaucratic model') and citizen participation compatible (by moving its definition from a political device towards a consultative or negotiative device). Hence, these transformation processes can be seen as two examples of the changing process from government to governance at local level in Western Europe.

The paper is organized around seven main sections: after the introduction, I present some basic ideas about changes in local government structures in the light of the governance literature. Then, I move onto explaining what I understand by decentralisation and operationalyze the processes by using the ideas of objectives to be achieved and strategies used. Once I have presented the decentralisation process of Barcelona and Birmingham, I assess which strategies were predominantly used and which objectives can be considered as achieved. Finally I interpret such findings as an example of the movement from government to governance, as a change towards local governance.

THE QUESTION OF TableOVERNANCE

For the last ten years, one can notice an increasing concern for the need to change government or the methods of governing. Often, the discussion refers to considering that governing methods are under stress or challenged as far they appear to be inadequate for the complexities of the contemporary life -'social, technological, economic and all other kinds of 'partial worlds change towards more dynamics, towards higher complexity and towards greater diversity' (Kooiman 1993:149). So that, the assumptions, methods of organizing and management seems to be changing, 'but our fundamental problem today is not too much government or too little government (...). Our fundamental problem is

that we have the wrong kind of government. We do not need more government or less government, we need better government. To be more precise, we need better governance'. (Osborne and Tableaebler 1993: 23-24). In brief this pace of change can be reflected in the epitomizing metaphor 'steering rather than rowing' (Osborne and Tableaebler 1993). However, if change is now taking place, we are still waiting for the final scenario or scenarios.

Inspired on different authors (Flynn 1990, Johnson 1987, Tableyford 1991, Stewart, 1988), I would suggest that these changes can be summarized with the idea of a movement away from a monopolistic provision of public services based on regulatory powers of public authority (a typical feature of the Keynesian welfare state) towards a more pluralistic provision of services based on private (market) or public-private mechanism authority.

Table 1 shows this idea of this basic movement from left to right. However, one can observe how two basic scenarios can appear: on the top left we have scenario 1, which would be characterized by a leading -but not necessarily exclusive- role of public authority in a plural environment. And another scenario on the lower right, which would be characterized by a predominant market or private authority and in a pluralistic context.

The key difference between scenarios is the kind of authority or social governor in a broad sense (public or private one) legitimated to regulate society, and depending on which scenario we do locate the debate the role of citizens, government and institutions will be definitively different. In this sense it is possible to underline one striking feature of the multiple debates around the building up of the new governance: the lack of ideological debate or the presence of the ideological variable as an explanatory device. Seldom is this movement away from the top left quadrant presented as being only a technical matter (Brugué, Amorós and Tableomà 1994).

Following Kooiman (1994:2) government would be 'all those activities of social, political and administrative actors that can be seen as purposeful efforts to guide, steer, control or manage (sectors or facets of) societies'. But seemingly this working definition of government is useful for any time, but a particular feature of modern (nowadays to be precise) government is 'social-political forms of governing in which public or private actors do no act separately but in conjunction' (Kooiman 1994:2), so that, we are in the realm of the co-arrangements co-production, or collibration in Dunsire's terms (Dunsire, A: 1993). In other words and referring to Table 1, this working definition acknowledges this movement from 'past' forms of government to new forms of government- from

right to left in Table 1. However, it is not clear which will be the final result because of the very fact that we are still in the middle of the change.

Tableovernance would be the emerging patterns from the governing activities, in other words, once government has changed it is possible to talk of governance as an artifact to modelise the new situation. So that, governance would be built upon one of the two scenarios.

This paper attempts to deal with the challenges of changing government at local level in two particular cities (Barcelona and Birmingham). This paper studies the change towards scenario 1 in both cases as far as decentralisation does not mean privatization. Once I would have explained such changes and their common directions, I would hypothesize about the new local governance.

THE NOTION OF DECENTRALISATION

Following Lowndes 1991, 1994, Hambleton 1992, Hambleton and Hoggett, 1987 or Burns, Hambleton and Hoggett 1994 I define decentralisation as the creation of submunicipal outlets which deliver -or intend to- more than one service and are based on geographical criteria and are the outcome of a voluntary decision of the local authorities.

Any decentralized structure should be understood as the output of a process of change. Understanding decentralisation as a process to achieve certain objectives through a set of strategies would be a useful device to understand the insights of such a process of change.

However, I believe that it is also important to be aware in which context (locus of the research) do I study decentralisation (focus of the research) as far as the characteristics of such context can influence the dynamics of the decentralisation.

Local government is not the only context in which the word decentralisation has been used, neither is decentralisation the only word used to describe changes within local government.

In the last decade, the notion of decentralisation has been placed at least in three general contexts. The first context is the changing management in the private sector where, in brief, decentralisation was a management tool to

guarantee the survival of private enterprises when facing the need for specialization and flexibility (Hoggett, 1987, Waterman and Peters, 1982, Peters, 1988, Waterman, 1990). The second context is closely linked to these ideas - decentralisation can be a useful managerial tool for the public sector as well. In this context, decentralisation would be a characteristic of the new emerging organizational paradigm in private and public sectors: the postbureaucratic. If the bureaucratic paradigm was characterized by clear hierarchical structures with formalized and standardized procedures in order to avoid any freedom, the post bureaucratic paradigm would be a substitute in order to cope with the new requirements of the context (Hoggett 1987, 1991).

Finally, the third context is local government. Decentralisation has been detected to be a signal of the changing organizational paradigm, and as far as local government is a part of the public sector, it is reasonable to expect to find it as a means of challenging traditional local government. This article fits in this last context.

But local government is an organization characterized by being simultaneously a political forum where local community exercises democracy and it is represented; and an administrative organization that provides services to the local community.

Hence, decentralisation within local government has been understood as a managerial tool to improve the service delivery or as a political tool to enhance democracy at a submunicipal level. In other words, the idea of decentralisation was present in the political and managerial agenda for reform during the last decade. So that, decentralisation has been understood as an expression of the reshaping process of local government during the eighties (Stoker, 1987, Hambleton, Hoggett, 1987) and as a particular means for achieving political managerial change (Hambleton, 1992, Lowndes, 1991).

OBJECTIVES AND STRATETableIES

Objectives

Following Hambleton (1992) it seems worth considering which objectives were intended to be achieved and which strategies were used to reach the objectives within the decentralisation process. In terms of the paper I understand objectives as more or less stated ideal images that would describe a solution to a

present problem. For instance, an objective could be achieving distributional aims, then it should be interpreted as a stated desire to reduce the imbalances among citizens or areas present in the city. In contrast, the notion of strategy implies which means are going to be used to achieve the stated objectives. For example, the creation of neighbourhood forums with decision making powers can be understood as a means for reducing the imbalances present in the city as far as it would mean a closer control of resources.

However, I would emphasize that the ideas of objectives and strategies are useful guidelines to analyze a decentralisation process, and the appropriate distinction between objectives and strategies must be made case by case, rather than taking for granted an universal distinction.

But this list of objectives and strategies to be used by a particular local authority when decentralizing, should be classified in the context of local government. In other words, our focus -the objectives and strategies- would acquire relevance when put into the framework of local government.

I approach local government by considering two basic points: it comprises two dimensions (Hampton, 1987) and that it cannot be derived from any normative theory (Mackenzie, 1961). Local government is an organization characterized by two distinctive but interrelated dimensions: an administrative or managerial one and a political one. The first refers to the internal organization and management of the institution; in other words, how the non elected staff deals with the resources in order to deliver services. The second relates to the role of the councillors and the local institution in relation to the citizens; in broad terms which objectives and services are going to be implemented. But these two analytically distinct dimensions of local government are in the real world closely interwoven.

Hambleton (1992) and Hambleton, Hogget and Burns (1994) have identified six possible objectives for decentralising:
- Improving services
- Strengthening local accountability
- Achieving distributional aims
- Encouraging political awareness
- Developing staff
- Controlling costs

However, in order to operationalize this framework I classify these objectives according to the two basic dimensions of local government: the administrative one and the political one. The criterion used to classify the objectives in one or other dimension is the primary focus for change -which kind of elements are going to be 'moved' or are going to be affected in the first instance to achieve a particular objective. Nevertheless, it does not imply that the consequences of achieving the objectives of a particular dimension are restricted to it; as I said above, both dimensions are closely interrelated in reality, hence the consequences will spread throughout the whole institution. Hence, all the objectives placed in the administrative dimension would indicate that, to be achieved, the internal organization and management would be affected in the first instance. Conversely, the objectives placed in the political dimension would mean that the role of the councillors is to be firstly challenged.

In the case of Barcelona the objectives stated by the local authorities were (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1983b):
-Improve and increase services
-Introduce new technology and rationalize municipal administration
-Promote citizen participation
-Bring the management closer to the citizens
-Fight imbalances and inequalities among different groups and areas present in the city.

In the case of Birmingham, although it was not possible to find one document in which the objectives were clearly stated, the objectives can be partially deduced from different sources. Hence, the objectives were:
-Provide information.
-Set up mechanism to enable effectively complaints.
-Creation of one-stop-shops.
-Promote and introduce a new breed of local government staff.
-The regeneration of the neighbourhood.
-Tableive a greater say to local communities.

These objectives classified according to our two-dimension approach to local government and according to the criterion explained above, is reflected in Table 2.

As it is clear in Table 2, in the case of Barcelona three objectives have been classified in the administrative dimension and two in the political dimension

and one in both -promoting citizen participation. Conversely, in the case of Birmingham four objectives are classified as administrative and two as political.

In the case of Barcelona, the reason for the double classification of citizen participation is that depending on what is understood by citizen participation (how it is regulated and how the consequences of participating are going to affect the decision making process), citizen participation would fit best in one or other dimension. For instance, if by promoting citizen participation it is meant that the citizens will have the control over which services are going to be provided at a District level and how, then it would be better located in the political dimension, as the role of councillors would be challenged. On the other hand, if citizen participation is structured as a consultative or advisory exercise, whose results would not legally determine the decisions of the local authorities, then, it appears to be better located in the administrative dimension.

The other three objectives (improve and increase services; introduce new technology and rationalize municipal administration; and bring management closer to the citizens) aim at managerial improvements and the quality of the services delivered by the Council, and consequently, the major focus for change is the internal organization and working procedures of the staff.

With regard to the political dimension, apart from promoting citizen participation, I place fighting imbalances and inequalities among different groups and areas present in the city. In this case, the objectives point at a first magnitude political decision which would enable the councillors and the Ajuntament to play a redistributional role.

In the case of Birmingham, it is worth mentioning that since the beginning it seems to be an imbalance in favor of the administrative dimension (Neighbourhood Offices) rather than of the political dimension (Area Committees and the Neighbourhood Forums): in the first dimension there are twice as many objectives as in the second one[1].

To provide information effectively, to set up effective complaint mechanisms and the creation of one-stop-shops, will decisively affect the internal managerial organization of the City Council: to inform citizens in order to enable them to eventually complain are features done in the first instance by non-elected members of the City Council. The creation of one-stop-shops would be the submunicipal device that would allow such developments, hence, it seems correct to classify it in the administrative dimension.

In the political dimension I locate the regeneration of neighbourhood and give a greater say to local communities. Both of them imply a change of the role of councillors as far as they would clearly impact on the role of local politicians (i.e. by becoming much more enabling and active in front of the citizen's problems). In brief, the achievement of both objectives would at least imply a greater implication on the well being of the communities, and more active and frequent contact with the local communities.

Possible strategies

In the last section I was concerned about objectives to follow in a decentralisation process and I listed them into a dual classification. However, I suggest that as far I understand decentralisation as a process, to study the strategies followed would enliven its comprehension as well.

Table 3 shows the list of possible strategies which can be followed in decentralisation provided by Hambleton (1992) and classified according to the two dimensions of local government.

Following the same methodology as in the case of the objectives, I placed four strategies in the administrative dimension and in the political three, though two are present in both dimensions. Localization means the physical relocation of services in a neighbourhood level, so that services would be delivered closer to the public. Integration of services refers to integrating the different services by breaking up the specialisms and differences among the diverse departments, so that a more general view of needs and problems is envisaged (Hambleton, 1992).

In the political dimension it is possible to find the strategy democratizing local government, which might imply the extension of representative democracy into new areas, or its replacement by a direct or participatory model of democracy or a combination of both models (Hambleton, Hoggett and Tolan 1989 and Hambleton, 1992).

Delegation of management authority and changing the organizational culture are placed in both dimensions. Delegation of management authority means to transfer the responsibilities for service delivery to more peripheral managers or councillors. If authority is delegated towards neighbourhood councillors, then the strategy would be better placed in the political dimension. On the other hand, if decentralisation means to empower officers as responsible for

the delivery of services, then, the strategy would be better located in the administrative dimension.

Changing the organizational culture means the capacity to introduce new values that would orientate the activities of the staff -putting the notion of public as a key issue in local government service delivery (LTableMB, 1988, 1989) would be an example. Since local government is comprised of two kind of elements, those who are elected (councillors) and those who are not (officers), when changing the values of them it would be necessary to identify whose assumptions are intended to be modified: i.e. the councillors' assumptions about their role as representatives of the local community, or the officers' convictions about their expertise in delivering services.

THE PROCESSES OF DECENTRALISATION

The strategies followed in Barcelona and Birmingham can only be found through analyzing the decentralisation process that took place in both cases because the were not explicitly stated in either case. In as much as decentralisation is a long ongoing process it is worth analyzing it as going through different phases. Each phase would be defined by the main actors involved, the arenas of their interaction and the outcomes achieved, in brief, which municipal department controlled the process.

Table 4 shows how the process in Barcelona can be understood as going through three analytical phases.

The first phase lasted approximately from 1979 until 1985 -so that, seven years. It represented the building up of the basis of decentralisation: the territorial division of the city into ten Districts, the dual character of these new submunicipal outlets, and the role of citizen participation.

This first phase is characterized by a high degree of consensus. First of all among political parties: the creation of the ten Districts, that would be one stop shops and devices to represent the diversity of that particular area, and where citizen participation as an advisory mechanism would mainly take place, were approved by unanimity of the City Council in 1984 (the division of the city in ten units) and 1986 (the Regulatory Norms of the Organization of the Districts and Citizen Participation).

Secondly, there was consensus with the citizenry. A Citizen Commission was set up in 1983 to group members of other levels of administration affected by decentralisation -namely the regional government-, relevant citizens and representatives of different groups or associations[2]; this commission advised local authorities on the decentralisation process.

Third, a series of informative and consultative meetings (Public Hearings) were held before the City Council which definitely approved the division of the City and the character of the Districts. In those Public Hearings, citizens and staff were actively involved in the discussions. Concerning the division of the city, the consultation process lasted two months (December 1983 and January 1984), and for the citizen participation issue, it lasted 4 months, (from June, 1986 until November 1986).

Finally it is worth noting that the arena in which the discussion took place was a political one: the City Council. This would suggest a higher degree of politicisation of the process, a feature that did not last.

The second phase represented the implementation of the agreements achieved in the first phase: the transfer of functions towards the Districts. This phase lasted from 1985 till 1987. Although it is true that the decentralisation process was not considered completely over and 8 transfer proceedings were approved since 1988, the volume of services acquired by the end of 1987 allows us to consider Districts as an independent unit. The functioning of the Districts would be placed in the third phase, as I explain later.

The main actor in the second phase was the MCDCP (Municipal Commission for Decentralisation and Citizen Participation) which was the controller and gatekeeper of the transfer of functions to the Districts, as I explained above. If the basis of decentralisation were set in political arenas such as the City Council, the implementation was carried out through the technical arenas: namely a Technical Commission attached to the MCDCP.

The main features of this second phase were the cautious and rational way of transferring services, functions and competences to the submunicipal level. This peculiar transfer procedure aimed at foreseeing and avoiding eventual problems.

The outcome of the transfers was the creation of a polarized organization: a central and strategic apex in which remained the services that allow an strategic

view of the city and its needs, and a lower level where services of secondary importance are delivered and where citizen participation -defined as an advisory mechanism- took place.

The third phase is when the Districts finally began to function. Therefore, the main actors in this phase would be the Districts themselves.

In this phase the effective connection between citizen participation and decentralisation takes place. As I described in the first section, at the District level managerial innovations were encouraged: Organic Nucleus were created and a generalist model of staff were promoted. The aims of these changes were a more responsive and flexible way of services delivery.

The administration of the Districts are under the command of a President who is assessed by a Service Coordinator. He is responsible for the management of services and for assuring their quality. In every District there are three Divisions: Division of Tableeneral Services (Divisió de Serveis Tableenerals) which is in charge of the internal bureaucracy and procedures of the District and of providing general information; Division of Personal Services (Divisió de Serveis Personals) which specializes in welfare, social and recreation services; and Division of Technical Services (Divisió de Serveis Tècnics), which specializes in licensing and controlling public works and planning. Every Division is composed of different Organic Nucleus. An Organic Nucleus (Nuclis Orgànics) represents the grouping of staff from different departments acting upon the same target. In spite of the fact that a minimum standard was set by establishing common Organic Nucleii[3], every District is entitled to establish as many as wanted. So that, an homogeneous approach to the service delivery was rejected in Barcelona. Besides the introduction of Organic Nucleus as an innovation in the management, the Districts encouraged and recognized the need for a generic skilled staff. The staff who are working in the Districts do not have a complete and strict job description, in other words, specified duties do not cover the whole working day; so that, some time left that must be used in other activities.

Districts were set up to deliver some services but to promote citizen participation as well, to apply egalitarian municipal policies focussed to redress the imbalances and to represent the interests of the diverse areas and neighbourhoods of the municipality. Hence, they are means to enhance democracy as well.

The Districts are based on a Council of District which comprises 15 partisan members distributed according to the electoral results of the particular District, and not according to the overall City. So that, three of the ten Districts are controlled by the opposition.

The Councils are entitled to approve their internal organization; propose issues to the municipal central bodies; to compulsorily inform the executive bodies when some policies, such as general city planning, could affect the District, to control their internal functioning and organization; and to propose a budget to the central budgetary units, and a President of the District to the Mayor.

The Council of the District establishes an executive body (Tableovernmental Commission), and it proposes to the Mayor two Vice Presidents, one of them will chair the Consultative Forum of District Associations and Organizations.

Besides, it is allowed to create Working Commissions which can comprise relevant people outside the local authority and they will be responsible for working upon some specific issues affecting the District.

Finally, it is worth considering that a set of participatory devices are established by the Regulatory Norms of Citizen Participation: Public Audience (which allows citizens to receive information from the governmental bodies and to propose to them the need for some agreements), Citizen Initiative (which allows citizens to propose to the municipal bodies to carry out some activities, but the resources needed will be provided by the citizens); Public Information (which enables citizens to receive information from the authorities in those matters in which they are not obliged to by law); Referenda (a mechanism of consulting the opinion of the citizens); and, finally, Petition Right (which allows citizens to ask the authorities to carry out a particular activity). However, none of them means a transfer of relevant decision making powers to the citizens or community groups.

If the Council of the District has a representative role, the Consultative Forum of District Associations and Organizations and the Working Commission has a participatory role, though these participatory mechanisms are in fact, consultative in character and not concerned with decision making.

Table 5 summarizes the character of the District as a means of enhancing democracy.

Decentralisation in Birmingham offers a different panorama. In contrast to Barcelona, phases are defined by which Committee were in charge of the process rather than on which problem was supposed to be faced in a particular stage. The reason for this is the mixture of strategies and the need for a high implementing speed. The process is illustrated in Table 6.

The Birmingham experience of decentralisation began explicitly after May 1984 when Labour got into office again. They were committed to implement two basic initiative that were explicit in their manifesto:

> 'Labour will seek a partnership with residents of Birmingham by providing greater accessibility to the services of the City Council and by giving residents a greater say in the planing and management of the services'.

This commitment was expressed through two different initiatives though controlled by the same Council Committee. One was the creation of Neighbourhood Offices for managerial purposes, and the other was the setting up of Area Committees and the Neighbourhood Forums, later. First, I will move onto briefly describe the process concerning the creation of Neighbourhood Offices, and, secondly, the creation of Area Committees and Neighbourhood Forums.

Neighbourhood offices. First phase

According to the Labour Manifesto of May 1984 a set of neighbourhood offices were set up where people would be able to raise queries on a whole range of council services including housing, education and social services.

Organizationally, a Performance Review Committee was revived, this Committee will on the one hand control the functioning of the internal structure of the Council and, on the other, will specifically report to the Council on 'methods of providing services by way of neighbourhood offices and area committees to whom decision making functions of the Council can be devolved; decentralisation of Council services generally, methods of ensuring that local residents, tenants and community groups have the facilities for full participation in the decision making process of the Council and its Committees'.(Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council of 15th May 1984). The Chief Executive reported directly to this Committee and was chaired by the Leader of the Council. Hence organizatively speaking, this Committee was at the center of the policies of the City Council, and, consequently, neighbourhood offices initiative, as well[4].

In this first phase, the decentralisation initiative was placed under the Performance Review Committee as a Decentralisation subcommittee chair. The fact of being in this Committee gave to the initiative an important political and managerial protection: the Leader of the Council chaired the Performance Review Committee and some left wing labour councillors with explicit commitments to decentralisation, were there as well.

A characteristic feature of the implementation in Birmingham was that definition of the catchment areas of the Neighbourhood Offices. They were defined once the specific locations for the Neighbourhood Offices were established. This peculiar way of defining them implied that the boundaries were not strictly or rigorously defined.

All the new posts related to Neighbourhood Offices were in the Chief Executive department: a new Community Relations Division of the Chief Executive Department was created, which consisted of four Principal Neighbourhood Officers (who 'oversee' the work of groups of neighbourhood offices) to whom Neighbourhoods Coordinators will report, four assistant neighbourhood officers, a community Information Officer and secretarial support.

In July 1985 the Neighbourhood initiative was in pace just one year after Labour took control of the City Council in May 1984, although it was not complete yet. It also meant that Neighbourhood Offices as defined one year later, were a permanent achievement. The speed of the process was really striking (Hoggett, Hambleton 1985).

Initially, the impossibility of the citizens to clearly recognize Neighbourhood Offices as new outlets was one of the problems that Neighbourhood Offices had to deal with. This initial confusion was mainly due to the fact that the majority of them opened in already existing Housing premises, so that the public thought that they were in Housing services. Jointly with the fact that the Housing department of Birmingham is the largest one in England, is the reason why at the beginning the majority of enquiries were related to Housing in overall, about the 90% of enquiries referred to Housing services.

At the end of this period, 24 Neighbourhood Offices were already opened, dealing with between 30 and 80 queries per day and the average staff per office is of seven people: 1 office manager, five interviewers, up to 3 members of Housing services, 1 social service adviser, 1 environmental services adviser and a clerk.

Second phase

In the Annual Meeting of the Council after the elections of May 1987, the City Council accorded not to re-appoint the Performance Review Committee and rearrange their functions among the others Committees. Referring to decentralisation, the initiative was derived as a Sub-Committee of the Tableeneral Purposes Committee by a delegation of powers of the Tableeneral Purposes Committee (meeting of the 27th May 1987).

The Tableeneral Purposes Committee is essentially the Committee in charge of all those matters that are not essentially delegated to a specific Committee and can be considered as a 'melting-pot'. In comparison with the previous placement, it is a way of down grading the initiative because this Committee was not chaired by the leader of the Council, nor did the Chief Executive report to it.

This period is characterized by a contradictory situation. On one hand there was a decline in the support of the Labour group to the initiative (the decentralisation initiative is under the roof of the Tableeneral Purposes Committee and it suffered the consequences of being associated as a policy directly linked to the leftist faction of the Birmingham Labour Tableroup: leftist members were removed from the chairs of some important Committees in the Annual Tableeneral Meeting of 1988 because of internal political struggles, among them the Councillor leader for decentralisation.

On the other hand, the Neighbourhood Offices proved to be successful in the sense that people came to them for information. In this phase, paradoxically when the political support was at its lowest level, the initiative is consolidated by extending the network and equipping it with a new computerized technology: an integrated system of finding and providing information about Council services, of keeping instant records of each visit and its results, and of electronic mail which allows an immediate communication with Council Departments and with any other Neighbourhood Office.

Mainly the success and consolidation of the Neighbourhood Offices was due to the discovery that they were devices perfectly adequate to avoid a collapse of the central services when the needs of local population must be fulfilled quickly and responsively. When central government changes took effect

in March 1988 in the social services rules, and consequently changes in the allocation of social benefits, and when the Poll Tax was effectively introduced, Neighbourhood Offices absorbed all the demands and avoided people going to the City Council for information and help[5].

Third phase

In this phase, Neighbourhood Offices became under the protection of the of Community Affairs Committee. This Committee was in charge of promoting the equality of opportunity and working towards the elimination of any discrimination on grounds of gender, sex, colour, disability, nationality, religion, etc; to promote and support activities that contribute to improving the position of minority ethnic people, prepare a city-wide antipoverty strategy, coordinate and initiate council activities in relation to crime prevention, apart from being responsible for decentralisation matters (Extract of Council Minutes, Annual Tableeneral Council Meeting, 14th, May, 1991).

Now, the problems to be faced turn and tend to be referred to the extension and eventual improvement of the network, but not about its survival. All in all, apparently a new pattern was emerging: the network of Neighbourhood Offices would be an institutional device for implementing those egalitarian or ethnic minority oriented policies set up by the Council or the Community Affairs Community.

Hence, in order to be effective with this new role a new method of recording cases in all Neighbourhood Offices was introduced: Neighbourhood Offices' Statistical System (NOSS). This new technology intended not only to improve administration and analysis within the network but, importantly, to enable Neighbourhood Offices to provide a more efficient service to their callers. In brief, this change supposed a qualitative leap.

This technological support encouraged proposals for extending service delivery. In particular it was planned to decentralize the public consultation with regard to planning, the Community Charge Benefit work, and Urban Renewal Tablerant applications. It was also considered the availability of home visits by Neighbourhood Office staff to persons unable to visit the Offices.

The Community Relations Committee was also concerned with the possibility of learning from the service users. Information from suggestion boxes

provided in every Neighbourhood Office, from the annual MORI surveys and from some specific surveys carried out by specific Neighbourhood Offices was regularly reviewed at the Neighbourhood Offices' team meetings.

Area sub-committees. First phase

The Area based Committees were the second leg of the general decentralisation initiative of the Birmingham Labour party. Apparently, Neighbourhood offices and area committees initially might be conceived as complementary, but in practice both policies were not related neither followed a common evolving pattern. Area Committees, seems not to be so successful as the Neighbourhood Offices initiative.

Initially, the Area Committees were under the clout of the Performance Review Committee. This Committee represented the reintroduction of a centralizing management device, but it had to particularly report on 'methods of ensuring that local residents, tenants and community groups have the facilities for full participation in the decision making process of the Council and its Committees, and on the introduction of urban parish councils' (Extracts from the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on the 15th May 1984). The leader of the Council was very keen on the idea of having participatory structures parish sized, but will become clear later, the Council policy was not in this direction. Nevertheless, the issue of the urban parish councils only definitively disappeared from 1991 onwards.

The Performance Review Committee proposed that Area Committee structures could be based on the twelve Parliamentary Constituencies composed of the ward members (three or four members per unit) plus the Member of Parliament, and the County Councillors who have an interest in the Area. All these members would have full voting rights. Nevertheless, generally speaking, the Area Committees would mainly have an advisory and watchdog roles:
'In essence the Area Sub-Committees will be monitoring the performance of the Council's services and advising on gaps in provision or duplication in these early days' (Extract of the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 3rd of July of 1984).

However, the possibility of delegating some duties in order to enable the Council Committees to concentrate on overall priorities and forward planning was not denied. In fact an initial list of functions that could be delegated from the

Committees were established such as regulating and letting sites and buildings for carnivals, fetes, entertainment and special events; or provision of litter bins, consideration of grants to local organizations, information services, etc.(Extract of the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 3rd of July of 1984).

The initial option was to set up the area committees following the Constituency pattern, but although some of them proved fairly successful their success was uneven and in general considered as poor. The most normal feature was a poor public attendance: it was not unusual to find that more staff and councillors attended Area Committees than citizens.

As I explained above, the Performance Review was not reappointed from 1987 onwards, and their functions were mainly transferred to the Tableeneral Purposes Committee. Among the functions transferred were those related to the Area Committees.

In early 1988, a report of Tableeneral Purposes Committee where a device for presenting a new initiative -a Neighbourhood Forum. This fact can be interpreted as an indicator of a certain crisis of the Constituency based Area Committees. Residents felt that the mechanisms already set up to ensure full participation of people in the decision making of the City Council -the Area Committees- were not effective enough. Therefore they created a Board which was an umbrella organization to include representatives from established groups from the area covered and tenants associations.

All in all, this initiative could have been considered as isolated or a deviant case, but just two years later, and due to the lack of public participation, the Area Committees constituency based were revised. In this sense it is worth mentioning that from 1990 till 1992 Area Committees scarcely met.

Second phase

In July 1989, the Constituency based Area Committees began to recognize that they didn't work as expected because of the low public attendance, and the lack of political support and enthusiasm. A smaller size was proposed though the philosophy behind them was not in doubt. A feeling of ineffectiveness was behind the Area experiment of encouraging people to get involved in decision making affecting their neighbourhood: 'They provided a conduit for channelling information, (...) to allow discussion within Parliamentary Constituencies(...). The

use of Parliamentary Constituencies has provided a useful organizational unit for the officer management and co-ordination of City Council services'. (Extract of Council Minutes City Council, 2nd October, 1990). But some shortcomings were as well identified: 'All too often there have been too many City Council officers present, re-creating the formality of Service Committees and possibly reducing the opportunity for local Service Committees'. (Extract of Council Minutes City Council, 2nd October, 1990).

To redress this situation, two new structures were established: Ward Subcommittees and Neighbourhood Forums.

Ward Subcommittee were set to provide a much more local mechanisms in which members of the public can play a full role in local issues. They followed the same pattern as the Constituency based sub committees: they were as well sub committees of all Committees of the Council -except Appeals, Contract Services and Joint Consultancy Committees-, membership would comprise the 3 City Councillors, but Members of Parliament were invited but without voting rights; and they would discuss matters only of concern within the Ward boundaries. But, a possibility of discussing matters that cut cross more than one Ward is allowed, in this case it is required a majority agreement of the members of all Wards involved.

The agenda will consist of items requested by Neighbourhood Forums, by members of the Sub-committees, by Council Committees or Sub-Committees, and members of the public.

The other change established to redress the lack of citizen participation was an attempt to introduce a bottom up and informal strategy with a minimum involvement of staff -'The encouragement of Neighbourhood Forums aims to involve the public in Birmingham in taking an interest and stake in matters affecting them where they live'. (Extract of Council Minutes City Council, 2nd October, 1990).

Summing up, nowadays, in Birmingham there are 45 Neighbourhood Offices distributed, in general terms, on a ward basis: there are 38 wards in total, and in 6 there are not any Neighbourhood Office, and in 9 two and in one 3.

Neighbourhood Offices are defined as 'a building through which direct and indirect access can be gained to all Council and other services. In such a building a people-centred, responsive, inter-departmental service to its local community

and enquirers is developed'(Birmingham City Council, 1992), in other words they are a one-stop-shop. To fulfill this role they are 'custom designed to deal under one roof with a whole range of queries, problems and other matters that affect citizens' every-day lives'(Birmingham City Council, 1992).

In order to deliver some services Neighbourhoods Office are staffed by a team of generalist staff who have backgrounds in a wide range of City Council Departments. Through Neighbourhood Offices some services are provided: general information, advice for benefits, social services, environmental services and housing.

Today, Ward Committees are Sub-Committees of all Committees of the City Council except Appeals, Contract Services and Joint Consultancy Committees and it is controlled by the Community Affairs Committee of the City Council. There are 39 as far as they are Ward based, though initially they were twelve because they were Constituency based.

Tableenerally speaking, since the beginning these Area Committees had an advisory and watchdog role: In essence the Area Sub-Committees will be monitoring the performance of the Council's services and advising on gaps in provision or duplication'. (Extract of the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 3rd of July of 1984).

Membership comprise the 3 or 4 City Councillors per Ward, but Members of Parliament were invited but without voting rights; but they would discuss matters only of concern within the Ward boundaries. However, the possibility of discussing matters that cut across more than one Ward is allowed, in this case it a majority agreement of the members of all Wards involved is required.

The agenda will consist of items requested by Neighbourhood Forums, by members of the Sub-committees, by Council Committees or Sub-Committees, and members of the public.

Neighbourhood forums are a community group which enables people to discuss and influence issues concerning their local community, although everybody can attend their meetings and speak, it is necessary to be registered as a member of the Forum to have voting rights. Any Neighbourhood Forum can discuss any matter which, afterwards, can also be derived to the relevant Ward Sub-Committee where local Councillors sit beside the public.

A basic idea behind Neighbourhood Forums is to encourage local groups to develop their activities through them because they would receive clerical support and money from City Council. Furthermore, some already existing groups can try to broaden their activities through Neighbourhood Forums. In spite of being a very young initiative, in July 1994 there were over twenty Neighbourhood Forums operating in Birmingham.

STRATETableIES FOLLOWED

Tables 7 and 8 summarize the classification of the strategies of both local authorities in the two dimensions of local government. These tables should be read in terms of dominance rather than of terms of exclusivity: the tables reflect the dominance of strategy A or B in a particular stage, but they do not mean that other strategies are not present.

In the administrative dimension, the strategies used by the Barcelonian local authorities were as follows: Localization was present in the first phase when the City Council was discussing how many units and which as service delivery units were needed to be created, in other words where to locate the decentralised services. Integration of services was present in the third phase when the Organic Nucleus and the idea of general skilled staff were encouraged; these two managerial innovations would mean a way of integrating different services in new units. Delegation of managerial authority can be found in phase II; indeed the cautious and rational process of transferring functions and competences towards the Districts was a clear movement of responsibilities towards the Presidents of the Districts, the Coordinators of services and the heads of Divisions.

Changing the organizational culture cut across the different phases. The implementation of the Citizen Attention Points (CAP) (Punts d'Atenció al Ciutadà) as a mechanism not only just for providing information to the citizens, but for acknowledging the need to keep citizens informed as a central value of the municipal policy making. If well-informed citizens was not a central value to promote, then CAP would not have been necessary to create, and the usual ways of informing citizens used under the dictatorship regime would have been carried on: namely using a general notice board within the premises of the City Council or through the Municipal Tableazette (Tableaseta Municipal).

In respect of the strategies placed in the political dimension it should be mentioned that, in general, respondents were less assertive in identifying and evaluating them.

Delegation of responsibilities was used in the first and second phases when municipal organs agreed on the dual character of the Districts -phase I-, and when Presidents of the Districts and Service Coordinators acquired responsibilities through the transfer of functions and services in the second phase. Democratization of local government implies an attempt to improve or change local democracy. This aim was clearly expressed in the first phase when it was considered that Districts had not to be only service delivery outlets but political organs as well. The Article 1 of the Regulatory Norms of the Organization of the Districts and Citizen Participation expresses this political strategy:

> 'The Districts are the **representative organs** in which the municipality is territorially divided in order to decentralize and deconcentrate the government and administration of the City, to **promote citizen participation**, to apply egalitarian municipal policies focussed to redress the imbalances, and to **represent the interests of the diverse areas and neighbourhoods of the municipality**' (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 1987, page 21, my emphasis).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that a strategy seems not to be used in any phase: changing the organizational culture. This strategy in the political dimension points towards a change of the assumptions and values upon which councillors carry out their duties -namely, to challenge the model of representative democracy. For instance, a possibility would have been to allow citizens and groups to decide about the use and management of certain municipal facilities, and the elected representatives would be subsidiary agents to support the community. These kind of ideas do not seem to be strongly present in the conceptual framework of those involved in the decentralisation process. For example, when dealing with citizen participation issues the final result was to define it as advisory or consultative and the decision making powers remaining in the hands of the councillors. It is true that the local councillors have some power to take decisions, but, as I explained above, they only can decide mainly upon matters of secondary importance. All in all, a suitable occasion to develop a strategy to change the role of the councillors was missed.

Therefore, I would suggest that in the case of Barcelona the strategies used to decentralize changed over time. According to Table 8, the political strategies (delegation of management authority and democratization of local government) were mainly present in the first phases, but the administrative ones were present in the latter phases. Apparently, in the case of Barcelona there has

been a movement towards the managerial 'route' of decentralisation. However, this statement would be reinforced if the objectives considered to have been accomplished were managerial rather than political.

Referring to Birmingham case, the situation is rather different: contrary to what happened in Barcelona, in general terms it is not possible to identify a change of strategies over phases, furthermore, it seems that those strategies used were used altogether throughout all phases.

Concerning the deployment of Neighbourhood Offices -administrative dimension- localization, namely where to locate neighbourhood offices and their catchment areas, was present since the first one was opened in 1985; but as long as they have continuously been opened (from 1985 to 1987 24 were opened, from 1987 to 1990, 17 and from 1990 to 1994 the last 10), and there still are some wards without one, it appears to be a permanent strategy.

As I explained above, in some Neighbourhood Offices there are located some services from different council departments such as Social Services, Housing or Environmental Services; but, formally, each team deployed in a Neighbourhood Office is accountable to their original departments. So that, the Coordinator of each Neighbourhood Office can not directly influence the work of such teams. However, as some Neighbourhood Coordinators admitted, it does not mean that some horizontal programs are not implemented -there can be an informal integration of services depending on the abilities, and will of the Neighbourhood Coordinators and the teams working at the local level.

Tableiven the fact that the process of opening Neighbourhood Offices was a gradual one since 1984, and given that the idea of decentralisation means a change in the ideas of how services ought to be provided, it seems reasonable to consider that changing the organizational culture as being present in the three phases.

There is a strategy that it has not been used by the Birmingham local authorities: delegation of managerial authority. Although at the early stages of the process it seemed that some services were going to be delivered through the submunicipal outlets in a new way (i.e. the deployment of a new breed of local government staff who was supposed to be able to manage the delivery of some services), nowadays, as I explained above, neighbourhood offices' staff can not control the delivery of service. Consequently, they have become advocates of the citizenry in front of the municipal administration.

Concerning the political dimension (the Area Committees initiative and the Neighbourhood Forums) the panorama is not buoyant: two of the three possible strategies were not used and the other (democratization of local government) can be considered as weakly present.

In Birmingham there has not been a formal delegation of management authority to local councillors responsible of the Area Committees. As I explained above, Area Committees were the second tier of the generic commitment of the Labour party when it got into office again in 1984, but they are just consultative mechanisms: hence, no managerial authority was delegated.

However, I would suggest that the setting up of Area Committees and Neighbourhood Forums might be interpreted in a positive sense, in spite of the fact that they had to be redefined as a result of the low public attendance when constituency based. Area Committees mean the condition of possibility to extend local democracy. Whether they really developed this role or to what extend is a matter that can be redress once they have been institutionalized, not before[6]. So that, there have been progress towards democratization, but just a weak one.

Summing up, it seems that in Barcelona and Birmingham the administrative strategies are more used than the political ones. However, it is worth noting that, seemingly, in the case of Barcelona there was a change over time in the sense that in the early stages there was a greater presence of political strategies which diminishes meanwhile the decentralisation process evolved. Presumably this is due to the fact that decentralisation and transition from dictatorship towards democracy coincided in time.

These conclusions leads towards a rather managerial conception of the process, although these conclusions should be confirmed with which objectives of those initially stated were achieved or not.

OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED IN BARCELONA

Table 9 illustrates which objectives of those stated in 1979 by the Barcelonian local authority are considered achieved and which not.

The answers provided by the interviewees[7] shed some light on this question, when the interviewees were asked their opinion about which objectives

where at present accomplished and which not, their answers were surprisingly unanimous: the managerial ones were undoubtedly attained, whilst there was no agreement on the political ones. Although there were slight differences, staff, councillors and representatives of the voluntary sector seemed to agree on this point.

It seems clear enough that bringing the management closer to the citizens has been achieved to a high degree. All the respondents assertively agreed on the fact that Districts represented a break with the psychological and physical barriers of the traditional municipal administration: in the words of one person, 'Districts can be considered a success as far as citizens use them a lot'. However, some people identified the opposite effect as well, due to decentralisation some parts of the municipal administration have become more remote' because citizens are used to going mainly to the Districts for the day to day needs, and the other services are moved away from their sight'.

Decentralisation has acted as a catalyst in the process of improving and increasing services and of introducing new technology and rationalized municipal administration; for instance, one of the first places where personal computers were placed was precisely the Districts[8].

Bringing the management closer to the citizens and introducing new technology and rationalized municipal administration allowed an increased in the quantity and quality of services provided by local authorities. The transition from dictatorship to democracy meant, among other things, the incorporation of Welfare State ideals into the local institutional network. Cities, and precisely those large ones which were controlled by left-wing parties in the early years of democracy (such as Barcelona), began to deliver some services -like social services or health- though they were not fully entitled to.

Rationalizing municipal management -which in the case of Barcelona meant a regularization of the timetables, reduction of the staff who worked in the Francoist administration, clarifying and redefining the job description of the staff- in order to be more adequate to the new demands, was one way of building up the Welfare State at municipal level.

A special commitment of the Districts staff -and particularly those working in the Division of Tableeneral Services- was a more speedy and flexible way of operating in order to reduce to a minimum the delay between when a demand

was formulated and when an institutional answer is given. This was stated as an example of improved quality by some respondents who worked at District level.

With regard to fighting imbalances and inequalities among different groups and areas present in the city, it seems that this has only been partially achieved through decentralisation. The respondents generally said that redistribution policies were centrally designed and expressed mainly through different infrastructure policies, which were not under the control of the Districts. In any case, most of them said that, somehow, decentralisation helped[9].

Finally, promoting citizen participation requires special attention because it can be considered a good example of the change which seems to have happened in Barcelona.

In Barcelona decentralisation and the transition to democracy were two processes analytically distinct, but closely interwoven in practice. All party manifestos, though with some differences, cited citizen participation as the main value that any political party should bring with it to the new political context; and consequently impregnate and saturate the new democracy. In this sense, I would suggest that, at the beginning, citizen participation was a value placed in the politics- it was a central political value.

If at the beginning citizen participation was a motive, jointly with others, for creating a synergetic process for political change, once the first results at a local level began to materialize (new local institutions, new legal framework and new policies), then, citizen participation was redefined as an important device to improve the local policy-making: citizens would be consulted on some matters in order to be able to elaborate 'better' policies.

In the case of Birmingham the respondents agreed in general terms that the administrative objectives are more achieved than the political ones after 10 years of decentralisation. Table 10 illustrates which objectives can be considered as achieved or not.

Referring to providing information effectively and setting up effective complaint mechanisms, the fact that staff who worked in Neighbourhood Offices could not deliver directly services because there was not a delegation of managerial authority towards them, made them to adopt an advocate role. In other words, staff who began to work into submunicipal outlets could not provide services, first began to provide information and, then, to encourage people to

claim what they were entitled to. So that, they became citizen's advocates in order to facilitate that everybody enjoying those social benefits that they were entitled to.

In 1984 it was intended to replace the uncaring, distant and over powerful staff with a new breed of local government officers much more committed to citizen's needs and with other attitudes towards service delivery. However, ten years later, it seems that it only can be appreciated with the staff who work in the Neighourhood Offices, when developing their informing and encouraging activities.

Referring to the last administrative objective, the creation of one-stop-shops, respondents considered that it was partially achieved because Neighbourhood Offices only provide information but not services, so that, they can be considered rather first-stop-shops than one-stop-shops[10].

Finally and similarly to the case of Barcelona, respondents were less assertive when considering whether the political objectives were achieved or not. Only to give a greater say to local communities can be considered as achieved through the Area Committees. Although their catchment areas had to be redefined or diminished (from Constituency to Ward) and they did not work for two years (from 1990 to 1992), they fulfilled their consultative job. However, it must be mentioned that labour interviewees seemed to be for encouraging and improving their use.

Regeneration of neighbourhood aimed at allowing the own communities to be actively involved in the matters that can affect their lives or the regeneration of their areas, but only the creation of Neighbourhood Forums points at this idea. Unfortunately, this is only an emerging and partial experience and still it is not clear whether it will be successful or not.

Summing up the discussion on objectives, it appears that, generally speaking, those placed in the administrative dimensions have been achieved in both cities. Conversely, the political objectives seem to be only partially achieved.

INTERPRETINTable THE CONVERTableENCE:
FROM TableOVERNMENT TO TableOVERNANCE

So far I have described the decentralisation processes that occurred in Barcelona and Birmingham during the eighties and I have analyzed them in terms of the strategies followed and the objectives achieved.

In general terms, although both cities followed different dynamics in terms of the evolution processes there are striking similarities: it seems that the managerial objectives can be considered as predominantly more achieved than the political ones. Nevertheless, the latter can be epitomized under the idea of the institutionalization of the citizen participation issue.

In the case of Barcelona, the strategies used by local authorities and the achievement of objectives, suggest a significant change over time. At the beginning political and administrative objectives were stated in a context characterized by a synergetic process of transition from dictatorship, but as the process was developing, the administrative objectives and strategies began to come more and more to the front stage. In the case of Birmingham apparently since the beginning there was an imbalance in favor of the administrative strategies: only one political strategy (democratization of local government) was weakly used.

Therefore, although both cities followed different dynamics when decentralising, I would suggest an overall convergence: in both cases, in spite of being cities belonging to different models of local government, the administrative objectives seem to be much more achieved then the political ones. Besides, in both cities citizen participation is institutionally defined as consultative, i.e. as being a complement of the policy making. Table 11 reflects this striking convergence.

The dynamics of the processes are different in the sense that decentralisation process in Barcelona were always an unitary and progressive initiative, placed at the center of the political agenda with the explicit support of the Mayor, although a change of the strategies used can be appreciated. In contrast, in Birmingham, decentralisation process was divided into two initiatives which were not really interwoven frequently downgraded and the strategies used were the same since the beginning, with the administrative ones dominating.

As I explained at the beginning of the paper, the question of governance can be understood as a generic movement from a monopolistic provision of services under a public authority towards two possible and alternative scenarios.

Both scenarios mean a more plural way of acting, but one under a predominant public authority and the other under a private one.

In both cities there seems to be a clear movement away from the bureaucratic monopolism. In fact all the administrative objectives which are considered achieved point to a flatter, open and flexible organization in order to be more sensible in responding to the demands from outside. In other words, both cities appear to pursue a breaking of the bureaucratic model of organization.

It is not clear yet whether this can mean a replacement of the bureaucratic for a 'post-bureaucratic' one in terms of Heckhsher (1994:24-37) or Barzelay (1992). They are only partial evidence of such a movement, nevertheless, I suggest that this is sufficiently symptomatic as far as such changes are taking place in two cities from two different models of local government.

A movement away from the bureaucratic way would mean, among other things, a possibility for establishing citizen participation as consultative devices. In a bureaucratic model participation from members outside can not be allowed because, bureaucrats were experts in defining problems and providing solutions - they were professionals. So that, citizen participation was understood as a defiant case.

The idea of a ladder of participation of Sherry Arnstein (1969)[11] shed light on this point. In Table 12 it is possible to see how the degree of citizen power increases along the ladder, and consequently, for each rung or groups of rungs an institutional device can be found. In other words, there are other alternatives to institutionally define citizen participation.

However, the metaphor of a ladder can be misleading as far as it leads us to think that we have to climb up, that at the top there is the best or the good thing to achieve. In this sense it is worth noting that this device was invented during the seventies based on experiences of the sixties. At that time the model of provision services was mainly bureaucratic under a system of representative democracy (i.e. under a public governor). Therefore, it is not surprising that the advocates for citizen participation argued for it in a highly political and even revolutionary language. The objective was to propose a political alternative to that system that reinforced bureaucracy.

But as far as the bureaucratic model of organization is being dismantled (i.e. decentralising for managerial concerns), new opportunities for citizen

participation appear. A challenge to the bureaucratic and monopolisitic provision of services is not inherent in the concept of citizen participation.

It seems that such features occurred in Barcelona and Birmingham during the eighties; I suggest, then, that in both cases decentralisation and citizen participation have to be interpreted as belonging to the same process: from government to governance.
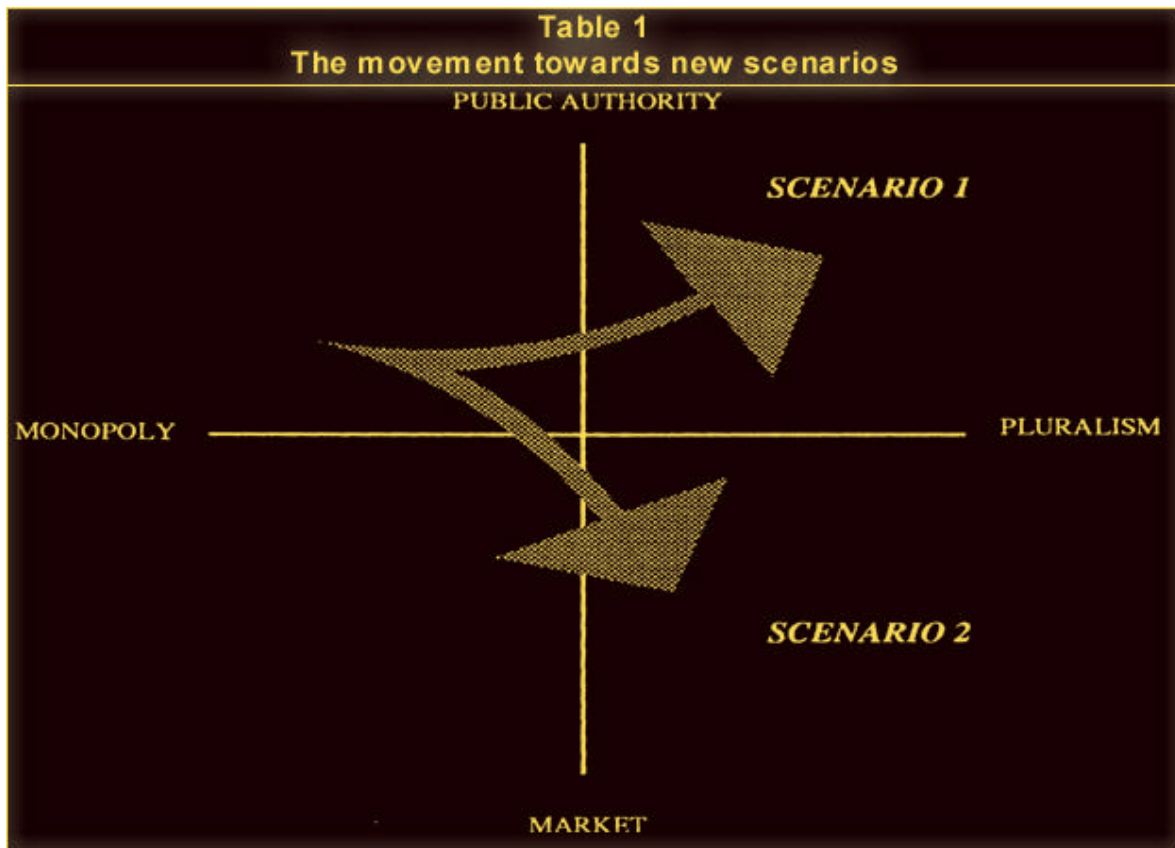
Table1

Table 1
The movement towards new scenarios

Table2

Table 2 The objectives of Barcelona and Birmingham		
POSSIBLE OBJECTIVES	**BARCELONA**	**BIRMINGHAM**
ADMINISTRATIVE DIMENSION Improving services Strengthening local accountability Encouraging local awareness Developing staff Controlling cost	Improve and increase services Introduce new technology and rationalize municipal administration Promote citizen participation Bring the management closer to the citizens	Provide information effectively Set up effective complaints mechanisms Promote and introduce a new breed of local government staff Creation of one-stop--shops
POLITICAL DIMENSION Strengthening local accountability Achieving distributional aims Encouraging political awareness	Promote citizen participation Fight the imbalances and inequalities among different groups and areas in the city	Regeneration of neigh-borhood Give a geater say to local communities

Table3

Table 3 Strategies and the two dimensions of local government	
ADMINISTRATIVE DIMENSION	Localitzation Integration of services Delegation of management authority Changing the organizational culture
POLITICAL DIMENSION	Delegation of management authority Democratization of local government Changing the organizational culture

Table4

TABLE 4	
Number of political offices in Spanish autonomous communities[a]	
Andalusia	82
Aragon	37
Asturias	56
Balearic Islands	52
Basque country	160
Canary Islands	63
Cantabria	38
Castile and León	38
Castile- La Mancha	45
Catalonia	94
Extremadura	46
Galicia	65
La Rioja	39
Madrid	53
Murcia	54
Navarre	23
Valencia	56

a. The number include the ministers in each autonomous community.

Table5

Table 5 The representative character of the district		
EXECUTIVE	**REPRESENTATIVE**	**PARTICIPATORY**
President of the district	Council of the District	Consultative forum of District associations and organizations
Governmental commission		Working commissions
Vicepresidents		Other participatory devices: public audience, citizen initiative, public informnation, referenda, petition right

Table6

Table 6 Decentralisation process in Birmingham				
	NEIGHBORHOOD OFFICES			**AREA COMITTEES AND NEIGHBOUR FORUMS**	
	PHASE I 84-87	**PHASE II** 87-91	**PHASE III** 91-94	**PHASE I** 85-90	**PHASE II** 90-94
PROBLEM	Initiation Definition	Maintenance	Give a new push	Initiation Definition	Redefinition
MAIN ACTORS	PRC	GP	CA	PRC/GP	GP/CA
FEATURES	Center agenda Initialise	Downgrading Public acceptance	New Role	Consultative	Consultative
OUTCOMES	Rapid implementation 24 NO	Crisis 35 NO	Aiming at connecting to groups: 45 NO	Constituency based	Ward based/ neighbourhood forums

Table7

	STRATEGIES	PHASES
ADMINISTRATIVE DIMENSION	Localitzation Integration of services Delegation of management authority Changing the organizational culture	I III II I, II, III
POLITICAL DIMENSION	Delegation of management authority Democratization of local government Changing the organizational culture	I, II I NOT PRESENT

Table 7
Dominant strategies and phases where they appear in Barcelona

Table8

	STRATEGIES	PHASES
Table 8 **Dominant strategies and phases where they appear in Birmingham**		
ADMINISTRATIVE DIMENSION **(NEIGHBORHOOD FORUMS)**	Localitzation Integration of services Delegation of management authority Changing the organizational culture	I, II, III I, II, III (INFORMALLY) NOT PRESENT I, II, III
POLITICAL DIMENSION **(AREA COMMITEES, NEIGHBORHOOD FORUMS)**	Delegation of management authority Democratization of local government Changing the organizational culture	NOT PRESENT I, II (WEAK) NOT PRESENT

Table9

	OBJECTIVES STATED	ACHIEVEMENT
Table 9 **Objectives achieved and not achieved in Barcelona**		
ADMINISTRATIVE DIMENSION	Improve and increase services	YES
	Introduce new technology and rationalize municipal administration	YES
	Promote citizen participation	PARTIALLY (redefinition)
	Bring the management closer to the citizen	YES
POLITICAL DIMENSION	Promote citizen participation	PARTIALLY (redefinition)
	Fight the imbalances and inequalities among different groups and areas in the city	PARTIALLY (redefinition)

Table10

Table 10 Objectives achieved and not achieved in Birmingham		
	OBJECTIVES STATED	**ACHIEVEMENT**
ADMINISTRATIVE DIMENSION **(NEIGHBORHOOD OFFICES)**	Provide information effectively	YES
	Set up effective complaint mechanisms	YES
	Promote and introduce a new breed of local government staff	YES (at a local level)
	Creation of one-stop-shops	PARTIALLY
POLITICAL DIMENSION **(AREA COMMITEES, NEIGHBORHOOD FORUMS)**	Regeneration of neighborhood	NO
	Give a greater say to local communities	YES (but only consultative)

Table11

Table 11			
The process of convergence			
MUNICIPAL ORGANISATION			
	CENTRALISED	DECENTRALISED	
		Administrative	Political
DEMOCRACY	Birmingham 1984	90es	
DICTATORSHIP	Barcelona 1979		

POLITICAL REGIME

Table12

Table 12
The ladder of citizen participation
(source: Arnstein: 1969)
7   Citizen Control
6   Partnership
5   Placation
4   Consultation
3   Informing
2   Therapy
1   Manipulation

NOTES

1. The decentralisation initiative in the admistrative dimension were the Neighborhood Offices, and in the political dimension the area Subcommittees and the Neighborhood Forums.

2. This citizen commission comprised about sixty people, some of them were representative of important associations such as the Federation of Neighborhood Associations of Barcelona.

3. Common Organic Nucleus concern for example administration and clerail work, economy, information, public relations in the Division of General Sevices; use of streets, public buildings and cleansing, control of industrial, commercial and service premises in the Division of Tecchnical Sevices; and public health, social services, cultural activities and community centers in the Division of Personal Sevices.

4. It is surprising how an instrument for a centralized management was in charge of decentralizing the Council. The Performance Review Committee was created during the 1974-76 Labour mandate as a means to carry out the ideas of the corporate management. The Performarce Review Committee was an attempt to overcome the powers of the different Council departament in order to elaborate comprehensive policies.

5. The MORI Polls for September / October 1991 showed that 72% of users were satisfied with the Neighborhood Office at some time.

6. Seldom there is a temptation to evaluate such structures in a quite simplistic way, I mean that people often think that tha factof a very low attendance is a sympton of a wrong functioning. Nevertheless, I would suggest that as far as they mean to be democratic, and given that in democracy even participation is somthing voluntarily, evaluation just in terms of attendance can be misleading.

7. For Barcelona, the interviewees were representatives of the Federation of Neighborhood Associations of Barcelona, a President of a District who is a member of a party in the oppositon to the City Council, two ex-members of the Municipal Commssion for Decentralisation and Citizen Participation, a Service Coordinator of a Dsitrict controlled by the majority party in Barcelona, the senior officer in charge of Citizen Participation at the central units, the *Tinent d'Alcalde* in charge of decentralisation and citizen relation ships who is, at the same time, President of a District, the senior manager of the *Ambit* in charge of decentralisation and citizen relationships the officer in charge of staff policies in the who was ex head of the Division of Prsonal Services, the head of General Services of District controlled by the majoritarian party of Barcelona, the ex *Tinent d'Alcalde* in charge of setting up the decentralisation, and a sociologist expert in the voluntary sector in Barcelona.
In the case of Birmingham the interviewees were the leader of the leaders of the Labour group, Liberal-Democrast and Conservative of the Birmingham City Council, the Head of the Neighborhood Office Central Unit, the Mayor and ex-Labour Leader of the Council from 1984 until 1992, two District Neighborhood Offices

Managers, two Neighborhood Offices Coordinators, the Labours leader of the decentralisation initiative, a Labours Councillor and the responsible for a City Challenge project.

8. Moreover, the experiences acquired at District level, were taken into consideration when changing the general managerial structure of the City Council. In 1991, the internal organization of the City Council was reorganized in *ambit* wich represented a breakthrough of the classical organization based on functional Areas. Each *Ambit* was commanded by a *Tinent d'Alcalde* (the political responsible) and a manager (the administrative responsible), this dual structure followed the pattern tested in the Districts since 1986.

9. As an example I can take into consideration the urban renewal of *Poble Nou* —a part of the District of *Sant Martí* in front of the sea-, where accommodation for the Olimpyc athletes was built. A policy of clearance of old and abandoned firms was centrally designed in order to build new accomodation for the athletes and allowed to have a stock of free flats that were sold out at market prizes when the athletes left Barcelona. Thugh the District was consulted, it is reasonable to doubt the capability of controlling such a process.

10. It is worth mentioning that scholars still do not completely agree on what denotes' one-stop-shop': if they are only outlets to provide information or services as well; an if they are only local in terms of the initiative of setting them up, or they are supre local as well. This is one of the points that was raised as concluding remarks in the meeting at Bristo (18-20 July) of the 'Nordic network on one-stop-shops'.

11. This idea of a ladder of citizen participation has been adoptedand adapted and use by some scholars such as Burns, D 1991 in 'Ladders of participation' in <u>Going Local</u> nº 18. Saus. Bristol, Burns, Hambleton and Hogget (1994) <u>The politics of decentralisation</u>. Macmillan. London, or Wilco, D (1994) <u>The guide to effective participation</u>. Partnership books. Brighton.

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