

European Conference
Cities and Urban Spaces: Chances for Cultural and Citizenship Education

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Input

Workshop IV:
Good Governance and Politics in the City: Cultural and Citizenship Education accompanying New Models of Participation

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Citizenship Education, Participation and Administrative Adaptations

My professional activity is centred on local and regional development issues. Working with both, territorial authorities and communities, I am encountering a wide range of problems (economics, urbanism, civil society activities, citizenship, etc.). Being rarely involved in citizenship education, I am betting on the citizens' role – both: as potential (capital) for development and as an end addressee of development outcomes.

In my paper I mainly refer to the territories of my professional experiences – regarding countries of so-called Central and Eastern Europe.

1. Among many different definitions, important for us is the way the EU concept of governance.

The White Paper on Governance approaches governance as “(...) framework¹ for public management and procedures in order to produce efficient, democratic government and balanced and sustainable development. (...) [T]he goal is to open up policy-making to make it more inclusive and accountable”. In the end, a better use of powers should connect the EU more closely to its citizens and lead to more effective policies. Five key principles of governance are: openness, involvement, accountability, effectiveness and coherence.

Thus, governance:

- invites and encourages people to speak, to express their needs, to share their concerns (most often) regarding urban space as place of living a personal or community life;
- shares, distributes, makes accessible the kind of information concerning the spheres of citizen's interest;
- helps administrations in learning how to organise forms of debate and to listen to the voice of inhabitants;

¹http://ec.europa.eu/governance/contrib_cendon_summary_en.pdf

There is a load of encouraging support from EU programmes for this. Still, it is not obvious if governance speaks for active participation/ partnership or for consulting/ informing serving as a component of the New Public Management.

2. Old slogan: “governing goes governance” calls for massive changes in public administration.

According to L. Salamon² it might embrace:

- Fundamental transformation (not scope/ scale, but basic forms of government);
- Tailoring public action to the nature of public problems;
- Wide assortment of actors – governmental and NGO – in meeting public needs;
- Collaborative nature – reliance on a wide array of third parties to address public problems and pursue public purposes.

The Deakin’s and Taylor’s matrix³ shows the different citizen’s roles, changing with the changes in public administration operation (as shown in consecutive lines). However, while citizen’s consulting and involving in a wider range of issues, progresses and administration reform are often delayed, if not forgotten. “Governance” and “Public Administration” are searchable on the different library shelves.

	State	Citizen	VCS role in Service delivery	VCS role in Governance <i>From a third sector point of view</i>	Challenges for third sector
State bureaucracy	Dominant player; guarantor of universal rights	Service recipient; Bearer of rights	Complementary, gap-filling	Junior partner Watchdog	Recognition
Privatisation	Minimal and inefficient; Preserving individual rights to security and liberty	Customer, Volunteer Charitable donor	Compensating for market failure Niche markets Competing in the market	Strangling serpents Critic	Competition; Underinvestment and sustainability
Decentralisation	Remote and insensitive	Participants	Local and more sensitive provider	Vehicle for citizen participation	Capacity: skills, organisational capacity institutional capacity Legitimacy
New institutionalism	Ineffective but can be reformed	Voter Stakeholder	Appendage	Irrelevant? Watchdog <i>Critic</i>	Finding a role
New Public Management	Agent for delivery through contracting	Unclear – customer, volunteer	Provider under contract, tightly controlled	Consulted as a provider or as a channel to users	Finding space to operate Losing distinctiveness
Partnership	Lead partner	Partner Individual contributor	Co-producer	Partner	Co-option

L. Salamon argues that the changes in the public administration operation make for the need of new administrative procedures and new skills for the employees. Among others, Salamon underlines a shift from the internal workings of public organisations to the working through networks of actors.

² **The new governance** “Third-party government” and the tools of public action [Lester M. Salamon, Civicus]

³ *Citizenship, civil society, governance*, Nicholas Deakin, Marilyn Taylor, Draft Paper, 2000 (Deakin, Taylor 2002)

Those networks are characterised by:

- Pluriformity;
- Self-referentiality – each actor has its own interests and frame of reference;
- Asymmetric interdependencies – actors depend on each other;
- Features change over time as the network carries out its mission.

It requires, according to Salamon changes in the internal principles of public administration operations: a) from Command and Control to Negotiation and Persuasion, and b) from management skills to enablement skills.

3. Who is – who should be the target of Citizenship Education?

Discourse of governance refers to citizens. “Participatory planners” often refer to vaguely characterised “communities”. Evoked are images of neighbourhoods inhabitants – with their easy-to-express-once-given-a-voice needs. What strikes is sharp simplification of a territorial “community” in traditional, sociological sense. It becomes rather “community of inhabitants”.

Any observation shows that even though consulted, inhabitants cannot read plans nor analyse the regulatory documents. Management and organisational issues are difficult for them to judge. Finally, they understand their “place” (location, unit, settlement) as collection of basic services. This reinforces famous NIMBY attitude.

Should (or not) public administration be the target of citizenship education? In my professional life I have never witnessed presentation from territorial administration arguing that traffic, shops, bus stops, market places are not just noise generators, rather they produce something, bring incomes and create jobs; the city is not only a green park, demanding green, quiet places with no car, no traffic, nor sounds increasing everybody’s cost of living. And remove ‘raison d’être’ in this place. Outcomes of such “consultations” are frustration, disappointment. At its best, the result can be assessed as “skin deep”. Hyper-professional language often applied, does not serve communication. Rather it is used and abused to stop the dialogue at all. Often it is perceived as risk by the administrations. Moreover, genuine participation is costly and time-consuming.

For the discussion about citizenship, participation and governance, the concept of civil society as target of education would be more appropriate than as individual citizens (or clusters of them). Civil society structures interlace with structures of administrations, economy, and other activities. It combines interests, actors, partners and opponents. It also builds structural frame reinforcing inhabitant’s readiness to cooperate or participate in resolving conflicts of interest. However, emerging from the “long waves” in the history, civil society appears to be a difficult target for training programmes.

4. Spaces – territories as a frame for citizenship

The conference background paper pointed out the importance of space and resources in cities. “Some new and innovative expressions of cultural activism are: guerrilla gardening, carrot mobs, interventions in public spaces and so forth”. Modern societies weaken structures of social and physical spaces and pass some roles to the supra-territorial or global networks.

Surprisingly, while discussing public (community) participation, we often overlook the relation (interdependence) between social and physical (spatial) structures of a given territory. Following the urban sociology principle, societies are shaping their space⁴ and the space shapes human relations and structures. Space provides structures and symbols, establishes limits, and channels flows.

⁴See “Social production of space,” Bohdan Jalowiecki, Scholar, Warszawa 2010 – based on H. Lefebvre’s concept

Probably, the most recent period when correspondence between social and spatial structures became self-evident, was under the Athens Charter regency, which in some cases governed urban planning till the end of the 1970s. Since then questioned was the tree-like structure of the urban spaces, sense of neighbourhood as “small home” territory and “social ownership” – community governance over territories⁵.

Socio-spatial structures are replaceable with developer’s force fields; cities look like assemblages, where any element may be detached and plugged into another assemblage⁶. Parts of the city are connected not as much with its core as with the economic and cultural global spaces. Similarly people, from living in neighbourhoods change for acting in the networks and spaces of flows.

Sometimes conflicts over territories appear much stronger in (so-called) emerging democracies. Characteristic for contemporary urban development is:

- a) Supremacy of the plot’s legal owner (incl. public body) opened to:
 - Simplified “return on investment” reasoning;
 - Planner’s creationism, not influenced by spatial coherence principles (“planning order”);
 - Space (physical and social) is translated as the right to occupy a “square meter”;
- b) Suppression of inhabitants’ / community rights as a sovereign of the area. Rights to live in a community are not safeguarded by law or otherwise.

“Sovereignty” over space appears something to learn. It embraces:

- Limits to legal ownership, lease;
- Community governance of a public or “semi-public” space (like “yard” or “commons”);
- Importance of heritage, symbolic value, religious, traditional activities-based uses (parades, holidays, etc.);
- Spontaneity, “organic” base of development.

Numerous efforts are undertaken to stop this trend. New Urbanism accentuates the necessity of altering mechanism of social disintegration and delocalisation in metropolitan areas. Worth of mentioning are urban villages, The Clone Town Project (New Economics Foundation) and Public Places Project (J. Jacobs’ inspiration). So, to me, territoriality opens one more area of activity for civic education.

5. Concluding remarks – Education

There are plenty of reasons for debate over the necessary content of citizens’ education. Who is responsible here and who should be? At the moment a gap/ cleavage exists between change – fostering training courses and institutional structures of national education. Building links between the systems is a challenge in many cases. It might be integrated curricula, mutual use of available resources, etc.

Despite of all changes, school remains traditional, knowledge oriented. PISA assessments are not helpful regarding the improvement of competitive human capital; not even speaking about so called “social” one. Surprisingly, we are back to the mid 1970s when the Committee of National Education Reform, led by Professor Jan Szczepanski, worked in Poland. One of the key observations on the current situation was that a citizen leaving the school with the certificate of adolescence (Baccalaureate) does not know what authority can resolve (his) given problem, how to apply for

⁵“Societal ownership” possession of community and used by its members, which still sounds in such words as “commons”, vs division between private and public spaces (places) both having an owner (in the case of public there is an administration acting alike to the private owner – so they become quasi-public (JE))

⁶Manuel DeLanda concept. I am grateful for this to Joanna Erbek

something, what are her/his rights. This is also an important component of “qualified-enlightened-citizen”. The situation did not change so far.

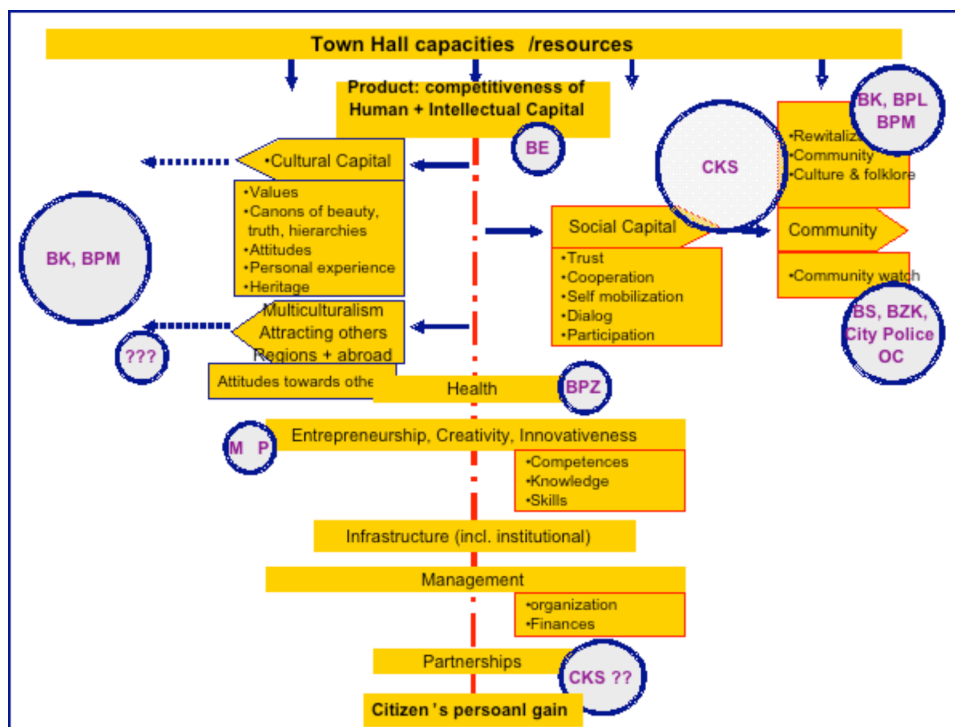
Promising seems the idea of a joint professionalisation of councilors, local administration cadres⁷ together with social partners – citizens and organisations.

Training curricula should refer to territoriality (in the above mentioned sense) as the basic platform of civil society and citizens’ activities.

An interesting discussion on the capacity limits in education was conducted in connection with the Warsaw Social Strategy. The document adopted in December 2008, called for improving competitiveness of Human Capital and reinforcing Social Capital of the Metropolis. During the discussion participants agreed that actual limitation emerges from understanding education as vertical, single administrative activity – conducted by the Education Department. In order to widen the educational horizon, we have to integrate capacities of art, culture, science, tourism and other “branches”. A proposed approach is illustrated below:



⁷ It seems equally important to the appearance of “creative bureaucrats” as suggested during the 1st day of the conference by Charles Landry.



Abbreviated names of the City Hall units (blue circles):

- BE – Office of Education
- CKS – Center for Social Communication,
- BK – Office of Culture,
- BPM – Office of City Promotion,
- BS – Office of Sport,
- BZK – Office of Crisis Management
- BPL – Office for housing policy
- OC- Civil Defense,
- MŚP – SME

Only part of the units involved are shown for better clarity of the diagram