

The Right to the City and the Participative Director Plan of Florianópolis: thoughts on training for the exercise in participative democracy

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The NESSOP (Center of Studies and Research in Social Service Popular Organization/UFSC) in partnership with the UFECO (Community Entities Union of Florianópolis), developed five training seminars on the “Right to the city and the Participative Director Plan of Florianópolis” for

leaderships of the socio-community movement in 2007.

Objectives: To train the socio-community leaderships for the effective and critic participation in the construction of the Director Plan; to fortify public spaces of articulation, knowledge and the exchange of experiences among the socio-community organizations.

There were approached in four seminars the following subjects: a) Environmental sanitation, b) Spatial Ability in the City, c) Land Settlement and Special Zones of Social Interest, d) Democratic Management of the City. In order to introduce the proposals of right to the city, a synthesis seminar was accomplished and systematized to subsidize UFECO’s interventions in the instances of decision of the PDIPF. Mobilization and awareness activities were offered to the attendees (visits to community meetings, promotion in the media, telephone contact).

There were 260 people in the seminars, from 59 social entities and 26 resident associations. Finally, an evaluation event was performed among the organizers. The article reflects on the formation in its conceptual and political and conceptual dimensions, in view of the exercise of democracy.

1 Introduction

Nowadays, from the institution of the City Constitution new perspectives have been placed for a more democratic, participative and qualified insertion of all citizens in the city where they live. The possibility of participation of the civil society in the instances of decision as the Nucleus of the City Managers, has started debates and discussions about a fairer city, to ensure a qualified life to all citizens, including transportation, health, education, leisure, among others.

On the other hand, the city is a space of conflict, where contradictory and antagonistic interests are manifested, disputing the hegemony of different projects. Then, to actualize a qualified and effective participation, in order to enable the defense of interests of the popular segments, a question of fomenting the access to information, reflection and participation of those citizens is raised.

Therefore, the NESSOP (Center of Studies and Research in Social Service Popular Organization/UFSC), that has been acting in the advice and community training since 1992, developed in 2007, in partnership with UFECO (Community Entities Union of Florianópolis), five seminars approaching the “Right to the City and the Participative Director Plan of Florianópolis”. Among the objectives of this seminar, the ones which stand out: to train the socio-community leaderships for the effective and critic participation in the construction of the Integrated and Participative Director Plan of Florianópolis (PDIPF); to strengthen the

public spaces of articulation, knowledge and the exchange of experiences among the socio-community organizations, consolidating the Citizen Right to the City.

Hereafter, the guiding concepts of the work perspective, methodology, results and glimpsed perspectives are going to be presented, both to NESSOP and to UFECO, from that type of proposal of training and advice.

2 Conceptual Design

Formation means to elucidate, to clarify, to instruct, to cultivate. Through formation, instruction, clarification, the social individual is instrumentalized to withdraw the difficulties or impossibilities of understanding of what is processed in the world. Formation enables the acquisition of opinions and morally desirable attitude through the appropriation of knowledge; so that one can choose, value, define and decide about its historical and social world, gain orientation to live and to act, as well as self-development, in other words, to create an identity (KOSSLER, 1989). According to Bieri (2005) formation aims at guiding, clarifying and developing historical conscience, as well as enabling people to articulate, relate and understand acquired and accumulated knowledge. Also, it aims the individual self knowledge and self determination, amplifying its ethical sensibility and political, aesthetic and poetic experience.

In addition, Freire draughts that “teaching is not transferring knowledge, but creating the possibilities for your own production and construction. (...) Learning is constructing, reconstructing, finding to change, which cannot be done without being open to risks and to the adventure of the spirit”. (2007, p. 47 and 69)

Therefore, the formation and training developed by the NESSOP, pointed in this view, are imbued of purposes where taught contents can be learned, becoming contents of active political action in one’s context of life, then bringing new meanings to the world.

In this perspective, a question stands out: formation for what? In NESSOP’s proposal, for the exercise of the participative democracy and of the qualified participation in the instances of decision and spaces of deliberation, as the counsels of political rights, for instance, the counsels of the elder, of the child and the adolescent, of health, of habitation, of transportation and security, of the environment and of the city. The preparation for the exercise of the participative democracy is justified by the fact that the counsels of rights are the major instances of decision about planning, implementation and social control of the public policies.

In general, participation has been understood as “‘making part’, ‘taking part’, ‘being part’, of an act or process, a public activity, common actions”. (TEIXEIRA, 2002, p. 27) Inasmuch as to participate, as an action, has an individual dimension, because it implies the personal decisions, subjective engagement of something. However, as social individuals, it implies the reflections upon the experienced context, both in localized and restricted insertion within the family, work/employment or church, and in broader contexts, as in political parties, social movements, deliberative counsels of citizens rights (health, education, elders, child and adolescent, social assistance, habitation, city, among others).

In the current context, the citizen participation can be understood as a complex process or relations among the State, the civil society and the market, in which there is a redefinition and fortification of the civil society’s role from the organized actions of individuals, groups and organizations (TEIXEIRA, 2002, p. 30). Even understanding that the civil society is independent before the State, they establish relations between themselves. Then, far beyond the representation (in the general ordinary elections for the legislative and executive and for counsels of rights of policies), it demands (a) the political and legal accountability of representatives and rulers of institutional actions and (b) the transparency in decisions. Still, the citizen participation goes beyond the relation as Stat, it demands public debate, negotiation between different agents, monitoring of decisions arising from the debate and the

negotiation. It maintains itself in the civil society, but not by being reduced to the current institutional mechanisms and exercise of power patterns. This very author also highlights that:

The citizen participation is the social process in construction nowadays, with specific demands of social groups, expressed and debated in the public spaces and not claimed in the offices of power, articulating with collective and general claims, combining the use of institutional mechanisms with the social ones, invented in the daily fights, and overcoming the already classic dichotomy between representation and participation (TEIXEIRA, 2002, p. 32)

Participation is also politically exercised, i.e., it aims a direct relation with democracy. Participation and democracy are politically inseparable terms, once the participative democracy presents itself as a possibility of exercise of political power in society (DURIGUETTO, 2007)

Nevertheless, as Ugarte (2004) has analyzed, participation and democracy cannot be neither theoretically nor empirically mistaken, though both scales imply in investigating and reflecting upon the social inclusion of individuals, the exercise of citizenship and the social participation arrangements. In this sense, liberty to participate becomes the main question, besides the insurance of social rights, i.e., the possibility of reflecting and living democracy and citizen participation. According to this author, the conditions of liberty and the ensured social rights enable democracy to exist:

The objective is to achieve the beginning of political autonomy in which the notion of democracy is maintained and is translated in the duty of the citizen of being involved in the community decisions. (...) It is about amplifying, in all levels of the social organization, spaces or spheres of democracy. (UGARTE, 2004, p. 103)

Therefore, is in the perspective of training and formation for the exercise of citizenship in the deliberative instances and concerning the right to the city, mainly in hat refers to effective the Director Plan, that the Regional Seminars ere developed, in which its achievement is going to be exposed in the next item.

3 Regional Seminars Development

The elaboration and the implementation of the Director Plan in Florianópolis county happens in a scenario favorable to the amplification of the public sphere and the social control, requiring, therefore, a qualified popular qualification. Thereby, seeking to train the involved individuals in the socio-community problem, NESSOP and UFECO staff started, in March of 2007, the planning of “Regional Seminars: The Right to the City and the Integrated and Participative Director Plan of Florianópolis”.

In the occasion, NESSOP counted on the service of five trainees of the Social Service Course, meeting their required period of compulsory traineeship in the Center, under the supervision of two Professors/Social Assistants.

The Seminars were planned with the target audience the bases of UFECO – Association of Residents and Community Counsels and other associative groups of socio-community bases – although it has always been open to the community.

3.1 Operative Procedures

The project was accomplished through a socio-pedagogical dynamic, configured as follows: four regional seminars were achieved, distributed in the north, south, downtown and continent regions of the city of Florianópolis. In each meeting the following thematic were approached: (a) democratic management of the city; (b) capacity of the city spatial occupation; (c) agrarian regularization/ZEIS (Special Zones of Social Interest) and (d) environmental sanitation. Each theme was approached by a special panel for about forty minutes. Then, there were group debates to nurture and ensure everyone’s participation, counting with the aid of facilitators and rapporteurs. The Seminars occurred in June and July of 2007, on Saturdays, with eight

hours each, in pre-defined locations. Finally, still in July, a synthesis seminar was planned and accomplished, in order to discuss the resulting proposals of the four previous regional seminars, aiming to elaborate a document to subsidize the interventions of UFECO in the Management Center of the City. One last internal seminar among the organizers was made in 09/22/07 in order to evaluate the whole achievement process of the seminars.

During the planning there were done meetings among the NESSOP members and UFECO directory, to edge the progress of the organization and methodological propose of the seminars, besides personal and electronic contact with the panelists to guarantee their participation.

In the process of social mobilization phone calls were attained, contact by e-mails, and participation in community meetings. All those activities aimed at the disclosure of the seminars and invitation to participate. It is worth highlighting that this intervention has the objective of motivating, spreading and clarifying the bases in UFECO about the importance of the event and the possibility of socio-political qualification.

Social mobilization means that it is made by an activity that crosses the social assistant's professional action in the construction of its intervention next to the socio-community movement and the user in general. In this sense, the actions done are based on the following conception:

Every mobilization is a mobilization for something, to conquer a pre-defined objective, a common purpose, so it is a rational act. It presupposes a collective conviction of the relevance, a common sense, of what suits everyone. In order to be useful for society, it has to be oriented for the construction of a future project. If its purpose is temporary, it is converted into an event, a campaign and not into a mobilization process. Mobilization requires a continuous dedication and produces results everyday (TORO e VERNECK, 1996, p. 11).

Therewith, mobilization refers to the permanent process of being disposed on thematic referring to citizens' lives to qualify the social and public policies of which they are target individuals. Finally, it is the continuous provision to the mobility, change and political actions.

The contact with the press was performed through phone calls and/or e-mails, requesting spaces to promote the seminars. It was possible to effect the promotion in radios, local news, and in the website of Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. Besides that, there was promotion in the University's Campus as well: a) promotion through the Data Processing Center, which has sent e-mails to the registered addresses at the University system containing promotional material, thus reaching all the University community, about 21.600 people; b) promotion at the Department of Social Service, through e-mail and distribution of brochures in the professor's bins.

The mobilization for the Synthesis Seminar began in the first seminar (South Region), through invitation to event attendees, and distribution of promotional brochures of the other seminars. During the previous fortnight of the completion of the Synthesis Seminar the mobilization was intensified through phone calls and e-mails to the previous attendees.

Over the seminars, a participative methodology was chosen, what valued the community experience and the associative life of the participants, fomenting their active inclusion and contribution in the discussion in small groups, during their free tie and the sessions.

The organization of the Seminar for Final Evaluation was directed by the NESSOP staff. This meeting, which happened in the subsequent month after the Regional Seminars, aimed to evaluate them by confrontation between what was projected and what was performed, considering the material, human and financial conditions of their achievement, as well as the accomplishment or not of the proposed objectives, aiming to qualify future projects.

4 Results

The seminars intended to amplify the participation of the regional representatives (bases of UFECO) in the public, regional and general hearings for the elaboration of the Integrated and Participative Director Plan of Florianópolis, as well as the posterior exercise of social control. Also, it was intended to ensure the participation of the residents in the regional meetings of UFECO.

The estimated participation was 300 people in this project's proposed events, where each regional meeting there should be involved at least 50 people, and in the last one 100 people. The table of participation exposes that in quantitative terms this target was not accomplished:

| | Number of participants | Number of representatives (bases) | Number of Residents Associations and Communities |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Workshop (2007) | 26 | 26 | 26 |
| General Hearing (2007) | 38 | 38 | 38 |
| Public Hearing (2007) | 38 | 38 | 38 |
| Public Hearing (2007) | 27 | 27 | 27 |
| Public Hearing (2007) | 31 | 31 | 31 |
| Total | 160 | 160 | 160 |
| Estimated (300) | 300 | 300 | 300 |

The event did not have a massive participation of UFECO bases, what becomes clear according to the last column at the right. Considering that UFECO has about 120 affiliates (resident associations and community counsels), 26 represents only 21%. However, both the process performed and the approached contents contributed to the social political training of the attendees, because they provided elements for a more qualified inclusion in the discussions about the Integrated and Participative Director Plan of Florianópolis. This qualitative aspect was raised for the participants in the end of each meeting and in the Seminar for Final Evaluation of the project.

About the mobilization, a finding in this case was that the better strategy of mobilization when one is working with popular organizations is the personal contact, through home visits and participation in meetings. It was not reached the same level of mobilization with the ones contacted by e-mail or phone calls, being the latter more indicated than the electronic one, what does not mean that with other audiences the electronic means cannot be more appropriate.

Concerning the financing of the event, it has to be said that there were many difficulties, being necessary many times individual contributions of the organizers. All speakers worked on a voluntary way. UFECO paid all the lunches of the speakers, support teams, and participants in all the events. To the performing of the mobilization process, there were not resources to make posters, films, special cars to promote events, and tickets of bus. The brochures were copied in part by UFECO and other part by UFSC/NESSOP. Just a formal sponsorship was achieved, through the Banco do Estado de Santa Catarina – BESC, which was not enough to cover all costs. Also, it is important to note that this sponsorship, although requested well in advance, in the planning process, was ensured just at the end of the cycle of seminars.

The development of the program did not follow strictly what was planned. Flexibility and adaptation to the reality of each meeting were needed several times along the program. There were not discussions in small groups as it had been planned, once there were only discussions in large groups after each exposition. All the proposed themes were approached by the panelist and there was an intense and qualified participation of the attendees, confirming their commitment with the questions regarding the improvement of life quality in Florianópolis.

In the seminar done in the continental region, it showed a way in which society organizes itself in order to seek for improvement in the quality of life and environmental protection, through Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO). The roles played by the NGO in particular communities of Florianópolis and their surroundings. It is true that sometimes they can conflict with other forms of social organization, however, in the union of forces for a common

project can amplify the ways of participation and social control before the proposed public policies and the ones proposed by the individual social agents.

In the last seminar toward population, denominated synthesis, the proposed goals were achieved, which were: to find proposals and suggestions in the meeting for a qualified intervention of UFECO with the Management Center of the City. The proposals emerged from the debates in the previous regional seminars. The interventions were profitable and qualified, being possible to take from this event a document with proposals, suggestions and motions, both of support and repudiation. Regarding the last ones, it can be reproduced what they are: a) against the authoritarian, disrespectful, prejudiced, and violent methods used in operations of the Military and Civil Police in the communities; b) against the criminalization of the social movements.

The accomplishment of these events confirmed Dagnino's analysis (2006) about the heterogeneity of civil society, as well as the diversity of interests and of its socio-political projects. The seminars had elements announcing the extrapolation of the isolated practice of each group, towards a wider movement for the right to the city. This plural movement, which contemplates differences, and at the same time joins into the common problems and reflection upon social reality of Florianopolis, i.e.:

(...) the civil society is not a collective and homogeneous actor (...) it is a heterogeneous set of multiple social actors, often opposed to each other, which act in different public spaces and that have their own articulation channels with the political and economic system (DAGNINO, OLVERA, PANFICHI, 2006, p.23).

During the events there was witnessed the existence of this diversity of social individuals and their views of the world, critics, opinions and expectations for the society where they live. This heterogeneity was pointed when the interests of the social classes were compared, while the vulnerable social individuals express their needs of social respect by the public power and society itself, aiming to have access to social rights, such as the right to habitation. Other social individuals understood that this poverty condition was not related to the public power and its functions, but related with personal choices citing, for instance, option for work and study, streamlining today to have the tomorrow.

However, without questioning themselves as citizens who do not have conditions for ensured work, study and habitation, they can choose between today and tomorrow.

The seminars were developed inside this dichotomy of thoughts, where conflicting opinions raised all the time, linked many times to the conditions of social classes, gender and ethnicity of each participant. The visions and opinions of each participant were respected, trying to turn that space into an open place for discussion and participation of several people involved in this continuous process of the construction of society.

With the performing of the seminar, it engaged in the construction of a new citizenship that based on Dagnino (1994) it is new because it overcame a liberal vision of the citizenship. It is an amplified understanding that overcomes the formal and legal conquest of the rights, constituting a new propose of sociability, built bottom-up, being a strategy of non-citizens, of the excluded. According to the author, the amplification of the concept implies, equally, an intellectual and moral reform, aiming the construction of a new sociability.

In the Internal Seminar of Evaluation, the group concluded all the objectives. I was understood that the intervention of the participants was very qualified, though reduced. The lack of participation was understood as a matter of mobilization which is very old, being necessary to strengthen relation between UFECO and its bases. In the suggestions, were mentioned, among others, the need of working in the continuing training bases, the importance of being considered when elaborating of projects of this size, the necessity of having more time to elaborate and to perform, besides taking care of financial questions.

Regarding the participation stands out being a process of construction. It is permeated for the inherent contradictions of society, more specifically, among utilitarian, immediate, punctual and selfish motivations and altruistic and solidarity interests of the construction of autonomy and emancipation. Discernment is necessary between both, based on criterions and rational arguments. In this sense, the learning about participative democracy is procedural and experiential.

Finally, it is considered that even in the process lived as approached subjects contributed to the socio-political training of the attendees, giving the participants elements to an inclusion more qualified in the discussion and possibilities of decision about the Participative Director Plan of Florianópolis.

5 Conclusion: Perspectives

The performing of the Regional Seminars, exposed previously, showed itself as an important space of learning about the professional duties of the Social Assistant. The NESSOP and the activities developed there aims to give chances the exercise of the professional process of the Social Service profession. In this sense, the presented project contributed to the professional formation in the undergraduate program of Social Service at UFSC. The continuity of this process demands constant evaluation, in the sense of its validity is associated to the propose of professional formation of the mentioned undergraduate program.

This project deepened specially the relation with UFECO directory. This entity, which aims to represent and act in the perspective of democratize the participation of its bases in the instances of “city decision” showed its commitment with the social-political training of its bases through the effect of the Seminars.

For NESSOP, the performing of those seminars demonstrate the necessity of continuity of training and formation related to the dimensions of participation and the socio-community movement democracy, as well as the possibilities of advice. Acting in the perspective of knowledge socialization, NESSOP effects its social commitment with the University extension, reaffirming and exposing the importance of continuity of this kind of project.

Finally, the accomplishment of the Regional Seminars demonstrated that the participative democracy is not consolidated yet, but it's in process, in which the objectives guide and motivate people's acts. Besides that, reaffirming the perspective that the participative democracy consolidates itself in its own participative and democratic experience. This aspect pointed, particularly to the social service, about community entities, in the sense of guiding and preparing them to the qualified interventions in the instances of decision and the exercise of deliberative and participative democracy.

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