

AREA DYNAMICS AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION: FROM THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION TO THE *OBSERVATORI DEL PAISATGE DE CATALUNYA*

DINÂMICAS ESPACIAIS E PARTICIPAÇÃO SOCIAL: DO EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION PARA O OBSERVATORI DEL PAISATGE DE CATALUNYA

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ABSTRACT

The role of the European Landscape Convention has helped fuel a new inclusive idea of landscape whichought to take shape above all through a process of participation of the inhabitants, favouring landscape sustainability to improve the quality of life of the population. This article presents a case study of the Spanish region of Catalonia, where the cardinal principles of the European Landscape Convention have been transposed and translated into a highly effective landscape protection, management and planning law: the Llei 8/2005. One of the most innovative provisions of the law is the setting up of an organization – the *Observatori del Paisatgede Catalunya*– to support and cooperate with the regional government of Catalonia (*Generalitat de Catalunya*) with respect to area planning. The Observatory is not only a landscape reference centre and think tank, but also a consortium for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention. Finally, the *Generalitat de Catalunya* has entrusted the *Observatori* to draw up landscape catalogues, documents of a technical nature, these too provided by Llei 8/2005, conceived as a landscape planning and management support tool. The main aim of the catalogues is to help incorporate landscape quality measures, criteria and objectives into the area plans, especially the *Planes territorialesparciales* (PTP) adopting participatory processes.

Keywords: European Landscape Convention, urban planning, public participation, Catalonia, Landscape Observatory.

RESUMO

O papel da Convenção Europeia da Paisagem ajudou a alimentar uma nova ideia abrangente da paisagem que deve tomar forma, acima de tudo, através de um processo de participação dos habitantes, favorecendo a sustentabilidade da paisagem no sentido de melhorar a qualidade de vida da população. Este artigo apresenta um estudo de caso da região espanhola da Catalunha, em que os princípios fundamentais da Convenção Europeia da Paisagem foram transpostos e traduzidos para ideias de paisagem, gerenciamento de proteção altamente eficaz e lei de planejamento: a Llei 8/2005. Uma das disposições mais inovadoras da lei reside na criação de uma organização – o *Observatori del Paisatge de Catalunya* –que pretende apoiar e cooperar com o governo regional da Catalunha (*Generalitat de Catalunya*) com respeito ao ordenamento do território. O Observatório não é apenas um centro de referência da paisagem e de reflexão, mas também um consórcio para a implementação da Convenção Europeia da Paisagem. Finalmente, o *Generalitat de Catalunya* confiou ao *Observatori* a tarefa de elaborar catálogos da paisagem, documentos de natureza técnica, providos pela Llei 8/2005, concebido como uma

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ferramenta para o planejamento da paisagem e apoio à gestão. O objetivo principal dos catálogos é ajudar a incorporar medidas de qualidade da paisagem, critérios e objetivos para os planos de área, especialmente os *Planos territoriais parciais* (PTP) que devem adotar processos participativos.

Palavras-chave: Convenção Europeia da Paisagem. Planejamento Urbano. Participação Pública. Catalunha, Observatório da Paisagem.

1. THE LANDSCAPE AND THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION

In addressing the complex landscape topic from a European viewpoint, we cannot but take into account a document drawn up by the European Union in Florence in 2000, called European Landscape Convention (EUROPE, 2000a). In August 2012, the Convention was signed by 40 European countries, 37 of which ratified it and put it into effect². The drawing up of the European Landscape Convention (hereinafter ELC) is not only a challenge to traditional ways of conceiving the landscape, but also an attempt to tidy things up at European level in a field which, over the past fifty years, has undergone a radical change and evolution in both scientific terms and as regards the delicate relationship between population and inhabited areas, creating a sort of cleavage and detachment (BUCHECKER, HUNZIKER, KIENAST, 2003). If to this we add the need to recognise in the term landscape an increasingly more articulated number of meanings, as Lionella Scazzosi so effectively analyzed, “The meaning of the term ‘landscape’ has become broader than that of a view or panorama of natural scenery, which characterized many national protection laws and policies until the mid 20th century, and that of environment or nature, to which it has often been limited during the recent years of environmentalist battles.” (SCAZZOSI, 2004, page 337) Then we obtain a renewed attitude which has favoured the formation, within the ELC, of a landscape concept no longer based only on the material and objective data making up individual areas, but of landscape considered as “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors” (EUROPE, 2000a, chap. 1, art. 1).

But why a different concept of the landscape? What are the circumstances which have made necessary an agreement on the subject of landscape between the different European countries? The answer to the first question in point of fact also contains that to the second: the changes, which have always affected the landscape, have become unsustainable above all due to their speed and intensity, which have altered ways of experiencing, perceiving and inhabiting

² Source: European Landscape Convention website
(<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ChercheSig>).

areas. It would however be reductive to assign to the modernization of European societies, starting in the mid-20th century, the major responsibility for the intensification of land consumption, the conversion of large agricultural tracts, the aesthetic degradation and loss of biodiversity which have distinguished and worsened the problematic relationship between inhabitants and surrounding areas (MAGNAGHI, 2000). Other factors must in fact be taken into account which have helped intensify this environment degradation process as in the case of the extensive consequences on traditional area development procedures of homogenizing and poorly-governed globalization processes (ANTROP, 2005). In the preamble, the ELC itself points out how “Noting that developments in agriculture, forestry, industrial and mineral production techniques and in regional planning, town planning, transport, infrastructure, tourism and recreation and, at a more general level, changes in the world economy are in many cases accelerating the transformation of landscapes” and because of this, through it a number of goals have been identified such as “Wishing to respond to the public’s wish to enjoy high quality landscapes and to play an active part in the development of landscapes”(EUROPE, 2000a, preamble). The idea behind the ELC - and this must be stressed - came from the Council of Europe, which represents the moral and non-legislative power of the European Community (within the European Parliament) and as such has no decisional power but rather the role and purpose of facilitating agreements and conventions between the different member states (OLWIG, 2007). Very likely, because of this, the Convention is not primarily dedicated to experts in the sector or to decision-makers/administrators, but to people who live, modify and sculpt the physical and social landscape. In fact, in the supplementary report, the comment is made that “Official landscape activities can no longer be allowed to be an exclusive field of study or action monopolized by specialist scientific and technical bodies” (EUROPE, 2000b, chap. 2, art. 22). This means that the landscape is recognised as being an integral, active and fundamental factor for the quality of people’s lives, outlining an inclusive concept of the word, not only from the point of view of the physical belonging of the area as a common asset (SETTIS, 2010) but also at decisional level and bringing to the fore the crucial role of the population and also facilitating procedures of participation in the dynamics of area management, conservation and planning.

2. QUESTIONS OF GOVERNANCE: PARTICIPATION IN THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION

When mention is made in the ELC of the landscape as an area of competence “as perceived by people” this implies that all points of view, all social groups and all inspirations ought to be included to work in favour of landscape protection, management and planning (JONES, 2007) (Table 1). To do this and respect or collect up most of the “voices” or “glances”, a model of governance should be devised made up of rules, processes and behaviours based on aperture and joint-responsibility, as prescribed by the White Paper on governance which identifies five basic principles: aperture, participation, responsibility, effectiveness and coherence (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2001a). In this respect, in the preamble, the ELC recalls, among the various juridical texts to be referred to, the Aarhus Convention of June 1998 (REID, 2004; HARTLEY, WOOD, 2004), which became effective in 2001, relating to access to information, public participation and the possibility of taking legal action with regard to environment matters, in turn based on principle 10 of the Rio de Janeiro declaration of 1992. Consequently, the basis on which the Council of Europe, in 2006, drew up and compiled an important text entitled “Landscape and sustainable development: the challenges of the European Landscape Convention” (EUROPE, 2006) has solid foundations, built up on a series of international documents and conferences which have shown how public participation and the spreading of a new culture of governance are of vital importance. In the document, both landscape policies and landscape quality objectives have to be identified, assessed and selected, including through the active involvement of public opinion (GITTINS, 2009).

In this situation, it can be highlighted how the participatory process, which until just a few years ago was among the good practices, without any rules and standards to define its field of action, is, on a par with information and justice, a pre-requisite to start out along a path of horizontal democratization for policies concerning the environmental and social landscape dimension (DE MARCHI, 2009). Probably, this principle can already be found in Rousseau, one of the fathers of modern democracy, in his work entitled “The Social Contract”, in chapter 15, dedicated to “Deputies or Representatives”, which specifies how “Sovereignty, for the same reason as makes it inalienable, cannot be represented...every law the people has not ratified in person is null and void. It is, in fact, not a law”. (ROUSSEAU, 2002, page 148). In this sentence, we can trace one of the fundamental values on which is based the perspective proposed by the Convention and by its various supporting documents, according to which participation is not the means or the starting point for governance, because it is not a substitute for administrations or

official bodies, but rather a complement, a sort of opportunity available to different local players to be legitimated at all levels (ROCCA, 2010).

In point of fact, the question of landscape can represent a fascinating challenge for participatory democracy because the main question to be concentrated on is at what area level participation can be effectively implemented, and involves many of the problems affecting the political and social dimension of the European Union. Many people believe that such level cannot go beyond the local dimension and for this very reason, much greater care ought to be given to assessing the multiscale incidence of the participatory approach, which places society and individuals in relation with one another in the landscape context like the result of a process of dynamic exchange between people and the environment (BUCHECKER, HUNZIKER, KIENAST, 2003). Hence, to achieve satisfactory governance, participatory democracy could show itself to be a big opportunity within which to develop a strong area democracy control and planning system, where interaction and cooperation between the various levels of the players can blend and strengthen (BARBER, 2004). Adopting a new form of landscape governance therefore means transiting towards more inclusive forms of control, planning and conservation of the landscape, placing greater focus on the role of discussion and sharing of decisions, to leave behind the usual and often not very profitable procedures which widen a worrying gap between inhabitants and everyday landscapes.

In order to try to followup on what has been said above and provide an empirical answer to how participation has been implemented within the European community, in the context of the ELC, the case study will be presented of the Spanish region of Catalonia and of the *Observatori del Paisatge* promoted by the same autonomous region, as a virtuous example recognized throughout Europe.

Tabela 1: **Public participation according to the European Landscape Convention**

<p>Article 1—Definitions</p> <p>Art.1 a) “Landscape” means an area, <u>as perceived by people...</u></p> <p>Art.1 c) “Landscape quality objective” means, for a specific landscape, the formulation by the competent public authorities of the <u>aspirations of the public</u> with regard to the landscape features of their surroundings.</p>
<p>Article 5—General measures</p> <p>Art.5 c) to establish procedures for the <u>participation of the general public</u>, local and regional authorities, and other parties with an interest in the definition and implementation of...landscape policies....</p>
<p>Article 6—Specific measures</p> <p>C Identification and assessment</p> <p>Art.6 C 1) With the <u>active participation of the interested parties</u>, as stipulated in Article 5.c, and with a view to improving knowledge of its landscapes, each Party undertakes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) i to identify its own landscapes throughout its territory; ii to analyse their characteristics and the forces and pressures transforming them; iii to take note of changes; b) to assess the landscapes thus identified, taking into account <u>the particular values assigned to them by the interested parties and the population concerned.</u> <p>D Landscape quality objectives</p> <p>Art.6 D) Each party undertakes to define landscape quality objectives for the landscapes identified and assessed, <u>after public consultation</u> in accordance with Article 5.c.</p>

Note: Provisions of the European Landscape Convention relating to public participation are underlined.
Source: European Landscape Convention website
(<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/176.htm>). (JONES 2007, p. 616)

3. FROM THE ELC TO THE *OBSERVATORI DEL PAISATGE* OF THE CATALONIA REGION

3.1. *The Llei 8/2005 de protecció, gestió i ordenació del paisatge de Catalunya*

The region of Catalonia is located in the extreme north-east of the Iberian peninsula between the Pyrenees mountain chain and the Mediterranean Sea and enjoys ample legislative autonomy with respect to the Spanish state (figure 1). Thanks to this special administration, in December 2000, it joined the ELC, just two months after this had been formulated. The most significant element however as regards the landscape is law 8/2005 for the protection, management and planning of the landscape (*Llei 8/2005 de protecció, gestió i ordenació del paisatge de Catalunya*) passed by the parliament of Catalonia on 8 June 2005 (GENERALITAT DE CATALUNYA, 2006). The passing of this law is extremely interesting as it transposes the indications expressed by the ELC and transforms them into specific regulations. The law and decree 343/2006 dated September, 2006 attempt to organise economic development and town-planning along lines compatible with the quality of the environment, taking however into due account the cultural value and specific economic traits of Catalonia's territorial heritage. The law

considers the landscape a priority for Catalonia's government and society and, in general, presents itself as a great opportunity to reflect on the area model and on the economic development of the country (SALA, 2009). The Llei 8/2005 thus becomes the basic and reference regulation on which the landscape policies of Catalonia's government are based.

It is very interesting to see how the process which has led the Catalonia region to develop this law is consistent with an article of the European Landscape Convention, in which reference is made to the fact that: "Each Party shall implement this Convention...according to its own division of powers, in conformity with its constitutional principles and administrative arrangements, and respecting the principle of subsidiarity, taking into account the European Charter of Local Self-government. Without derogating from the provisions of this Convention, each Party shall harmonize the implementation of this Convention with its own policies" (EUROPE, 2000a, chap. 2, art. 4). According to Pere Sala, technical coordinator of the *Observatori del Paisatge de Catalunya*, there are five aspects of law 8/2005 which explicitly favour participation of and cooperation between inhabitants and authorities. "Firstly, the law is clear and very easy to understand for citizens, associations and institutions alike. Secondly, the law is pragmatic and tangible, and its results are very easy to see. Thirdly, the spirit of the law is positive, rather than limiting or penalising, making it acceptable to all parties. In the fourth place, the Act has a transverse character: although it is from town planning policies that the Act is developed, it also opens the door to a progressive adaptation to the full integration of landscape into all areas of government action. Finally, the Act guarantees public and social participation and co-operation" (SALA, 2012, p. 57).



Fig.1 / The region of Catalonia in Europe. This region has a very varied landscape in a relatively small area covering 32,106sq km, with a shoreline about 580 km long. It has a population of about 7 and a half million, 70% of whom live in one of the 45 municipalities exceeding 20,000 inhabitants, most of which are located along the coast, above all in the metropolitan area of Barcelona. (Source: Wikipedia, adapted by the autor).

3.2. *From the Llei 8/2005 to the Observatori del Paisatge de Catalunya*

In chapter III of Llei 8/2005, in article 13, explicit reference is made to the institution of the *Observatori del Paisatge* which represents a supporting body cooperating with the government administration of Catalonia on all matters concerning development and the implementation and management of landscape policies. But what specifically is a Landscape Observatory and what are its functions? The Observatory is a meeting place for administrations at all levels, universities in the area, the professional sectors and all the social players (NOGUÉ, 2010). The aim is to create a board of experts made up of the scientific and technical world, able to share, together with public representatives, a new awareness and consciousness of landscape protection, management and planning strategies. It must be pointed out that, as a body, the Landscape Observatory is not a peculiar intuition created by law 8/2005 but transposes the indications contained in the ELC. We could say that the formulation and realization of this tool is a sort of adequate implementation of the Convention which the Catalonia region has interpreted in a very successful way, passing from the proactive stage to area practice.

In fact, we have to wait for the ELC application guidelines of 2008 (COUNCIL OF EUROPE, 2008) to find an explicit reference to the Landscape Observatories. The landscape Observatory thus presents itself as an opportunity for environmental analysis on the basis of which to take specific operating decisions dedicated to the landscape. Among the main objectives is its description, starting with a geo-historical analysis able to uncover the development stages of the environmental frameworks, with special focus on archive research and on the determination of geomorphologic traits and handwork. Another aim is to draw up a series of quantitative and qualitative indicators to aid processes of area management by the relevant authorities (*awareness*), and subsequently exchange with other bodies information and experiences acquired in planning, managing and protecting the landscape, beginning participatory processes at various levels (*awareness and sharing*) and finally, providing data able to help understand future trends and establish long-term landscape quality goals (*knowledge, awareness and sharing*). In particular, the Observatory of Catalonia began operating in 2005 and, by means of the statute (available on www.catpaisatge.net) published in the *Diari Oficial de la Generalitat de Catalunya*, in resolution PTO/3386/2004 it was assigned specific functions which retrace those previously presented, but which are listed and defined by points:

1. To establish criteria for the adoption of measures for landscape protection, management and planning;
2. To fix criteria for establishing the landscape quality objectives and the measures and actions necessary in order to achieve these targets;

3. To establish mechanisms for the observation of evolution and change in the landscape;
4. To propose actions aimed at the improvement, restoration or creation of landscape;
5. To prepare landscape catalogues in Catalonia in order to identify, classify and qualify the various existing landscapes;
6. To promote social sensitisation campaigns with respect to the landscape, its evolution, functions and change;
7. To divulge studies and reports and establishing working methodologies in matters of landscape;
8. To stimulate scientific and academic collaboration in matters of landscape, and the interchange of work and experiences among specialists and experts from universities and other academic and cultural institutions;
9. To follow-up European initiatives in landscape matters;
10. To prepare seminars, courses, exhibitions and conferences, as well as publications and specific information and training programmes on landscape policies;
11. To create a documentation centre open to everyone.³

The *Observatori* is organized along the lines of a public consortium incorporating both public and private institutions interested in landscape themes. Among these is the Regional Government of Catalonia (*Generalitat de Catalunya*), the four provinces (Barcelona, Girona, Lleida and Tarragona), all the universities of Catalonia, the professional boards tied to town-planning schemes, and the *Caixa de Catalunya* Foundation. It also has an advisory council made up of various economic, commercial and social groups, as well as scholars and enthusiasts of the subject. The consortium, which has its own legal status, provides the Observatory with an open and flexible dimension, lean operating agility and absolute permeability which enables it to perform its functions in a simple way (NOGUÉ, 2010, pages 105 – 107). In these seven years of activity, the Observatory has developed into a sort of consortium for the implementation of the ELC, and has tried to promote a new landscape culture to trigger a change of mentality in the population and begin environment awareness processes. Besides the duties contemplated by the statute, other strong points are education and training, as in the case of the educational project “Ciudad, territorio, paisaje” (NOGUÉ, PUIGBERT, BRETCHA, 2011), created in conjunction with the department of Education of the *Generalitat de Catalunya* and dedicated to secondary schools, with the organization of seminars and update courses subsequently published and made available both in paper form and on the web. The aspect which has however characterised and

³ Source: Landscape Observatory of Catalonia website (www.catpaisatge.net/eng/observatori_funcions)

catalysed the work of the *Observatori* in recent years is that relating to the compilation of the Landscape Catalogues.

4. THE LANDSCAPE CATALOGUES: PLANNING THROUGH A NEW MODEL OF GOVERNANCE

The landscape Catalogues are documents of a technical nature which law 8/2005, at Chapter II article 10 (GENERALITAT DE CATALUNYA, 2006) has conceived as landscape planning and management tools, with a view to area planning. In this respect, the Territorial Policy and Public Works Department of the *Generalitat de Catalunya* has appointed the *Observatori* to compile and publish the catalogues. The main aim of the Catalogues is to identify landscape-quality measures, criteria and goals in the area plans, especially in the *Planes territorial esparcials* (PTP) which is split into seven territorial areas/ambits within the general area plan – the *Plan Territorial General de Catalunya*. The landscape catalogues are also a completely new tool at international level. For this reason, no universally recognised method exists to study, identify and assess landscapes and their diversity, even though, in Europe, a number of experiences are worthy of mention, such as the *Landscape Character* (COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY/SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE, 2002), or the *Atlas du paysage* (BRUNET-VINCK, 2004). In view of the innovative nature and importance for purposes of area planning, the *Observatori* has prepared a catalogue prototype (NOGUÉ, SALA, 2006) establishing a common method whereby to reach the common objectives by following a consistent and coordinated form in the seven different catalogues, which are split up by areas of interest and coincide with the different regional PTPs: Alt Pireneu i Aran, Camp de Tarragona, Comarques Centrals, Comarques Gironines, Regió Metropolitana de Barcelona, Terres de l'Ebre and Terres de Lleida (see figure 2).



Figura 2: **The Catalonia region is shown split into the four provinces of Barcelona, Girona, Lleida and Tarragona** (Red borders). By means of different colours, the seven areas are shown into which the Catalonia PTP is split. These are consequently the seven areas forming the subject of the catalogues. (Own redraft)

The landscape catalogues start with an integrated view of the landscape, conceived and assessed both in terms of its physical and its cultural components. Hence, besides the analysis of the most significant natural and anthropic features, immaterial elements are also taken into consideration, which make up the psychological reactions and emotions of those who perceive the individual landscapes. A fundamental role is played by participation in the assessment of landscape values and to do this, the methodological choice fell on qualitative investigation using procedures deriving from the evolution of landscape perception (GOLD, 1985; GALLINO, 2007).

Article 11 of law 8/2005 precisely indicates what minimum content the catalogues must have to pursue the landscape quality goals and to do this catalogue compilation has been split into five stages:

1. Identification and characterisation of the landscape;
2. Evaluation of the landscape;
3. Definition of the landscape quality objectives;
4. Establishment of directives, measures and proposals for action;
5. Establishment of follow-up indicators. (NOGUÉ, SALA, 2006, p.18)

For the first stage, for example, territorial areas have been identified which have natural and cultural traits in common and similar views, quite apart from administrative borders, called "landscape units" (ZONNEVELD, 1989; ZERBI, 1993; CLARK, DARLINGTON, FAIRCLOUGH, 2004). Each of these units has been mapped and its characteristics described; its development

sequence has been studied, identifying in the most exhaustive way possible its landscape values and also outlining the general dynamics of the landscape, both natural and social-economical which have caused its most significant evolution. Finally, the possible future developments of the landscape unit have been analyzed, taking into account local innovations, current legislation, and implementation of policies in the area and urban sector; all this conditioned by the effects of globalization. At this stage therefore, it is most important to understand and interpret the change of public policies and collective or individual attitudes towards land areas to reduce pressure and improve landscape quality.

Defining landscape quality goals is a crucial moment; one in which public authorities encounter the aspirations of communities with respect to their land areas. After assessing conditions, values, opportunities and risks, through participation mechanisms, for each landscape unit goals are defined which favour area conservation, promotion, recovery and management. Furthermore, these goals do not only represent the expectations of the inhabitants, but are also aimed at area planning (forming part of area plans as provided by law 8/2005) or sector policies which have repercussions and an immediate impact on the future evolution of the landscape.

Once the landscape quality goals have been formulated, for each unit criteria (guidelines) were drawn up, measures defined and, finally, a number of specific proposals made, able to achieve such goals, and which must adapt to the regulations established in the *Planes territorials espacials* (PTP). The criteria, measures and proposals must then consider and be split up into the three categories identified by the PTP (www.gencat.cat) to describe the area and which are: the urban settlement system, the mobility infrastructure system and the open-spaces system. It follows that the landscape catalogues provide adequate recommendations for area and urban planning. This is a major innovation, because it means that the PTP recognizes the catalogue and perceives its planning indications, transforming these into applications and therefore into rules; a big step forward. Furthermore, as last stage, a grid has been made of environmental, cultural and social landscape indicators, easy for everyone to understand, from managers to politicians, citizen and administrative technicians (NOGUÉ, PUIGBERT, BRETCHA, 2009). The aim was to make it possible to monitor the state of the landscape in Catalonia and understand whether its evolution, following the identified directives, fell within the context of better area sustainability. Always in this stage, of fundamental importance was the disclosure of the results achieved and the placing of all the collected data on the web, at the disposal of everyone. (NOGUÉ, SALA, 2006)

Finally, to make the participation role more effective, an attempt has been made to increase cooperation between the various parties which took part in drawing up the Catalogues, i.e., the scientific, technical and administrative personnel and the citizens of the areas involved by the Catalogue in question. Accepting the differences, interests and motivations of each (as much as possible) is crucial for drawing up the catalogues. For this reason, it is essential that the development of the Catalogues is able to combine scientific severity with easy-to-understand contents and practical proposals, all aspects which affect the success of the work and, in particular, the local population, which represents the end recipient. But how is the population involved in the drawing up of the catalogues? Which are the participatory mechanisms put in place by the Observatory to ensure such involvement?

5. THE PARTICIPATED CONSTRUCTION OF THE CATALOGUES FOR AN INCLUSIVE LANDSCAPE

From the very beginning, the *Obervatori del Paisatge* fully realized the importance of the participatory process in order to facilitate the drawing up of the landscape Catalogues. Public participation was seen as a tool for involving and fostering the responsibility of the public in managing and planning its landscape. The population became an active element, necessary for the *governance* of the area and its sustainable development. In the past, area analysis and planning had normally been performed by specialists, but as the ELC points out, citizens and economic operators must play a central role and take part in the planning process from the very start and not only in the final informative part. The participation of the population is therefore essential for identifying those values which are not perceivable by analysing maps and from conventional documents, and this goes in particular for immaterial landscape values, so essential for any integrated analysis of the complex perception elements which distinguish all areas and make each one so unique (NOGUÉ, PUIGBERT, BRETCHA, 2009). Both participation and the compilation of Catalogues are relatively new processes as regards landscape planning, despite the fact that fairly consolidated and deep-rooted experience exists regarding participation in environmental and urban policies such as, for example, the strategies promoted by Agenda 21 (SPANGENBERG, PFAH, DELLER, 2002; SANCASSIANI, 2007).

Despite this, the failure of many participation processes has caused a certain amount of diffidence in the population with respect to its applicability, but the challenge nevertheless remains fundamental because this is the path traced by the ELC and represents the “sharing of

power and responsibilities among the various users of public and local resources” (ZACHRISSON, 2004, page 12), besides playing a major symbolic role, the importance of which should not be underestimated.

According to Joan Nogué (NOGUÉ, 2009, p. 26), the challenges faced in the catalogues through participation are:

- The involvement of the population in participation processes on a supra-local work scale. The work scale is a variable which determines participation processes. As we gradually move away from the human scale, the phenomenon becomes more abstract and, therefore, harder to understand by society in general.
- Having enough resources at disposal to achieve participation. The lack of tradition in planning mechanisms makes it hard to have enough resources at disposal to adequately complete them.
- Recognising intangible values.
- Obtaining results able to correctly represent the reality of the study area.
- Applying a valid methodology.

During the participation process, account had necessarily to be taken of the particularities of the various areas, which presented characteristics completely different the one from the other. Think for instance of the *Regió Metropolitana de Barcelona* with about 5 million inhabitants, most of whom living along the coast, compared to about 75 thousand in Alt Pireneu Aran, a mountainous region close to the Pyrenees mountain chain. What is more, economic resources have not always been consistent with needs, and the process has therefore had to be adapted to the context. Consequently, the same tools have not always been used in each of the catalogues relating to the seven areas of interest. Altogether, eight different types of survey were made, each of which with a different incidence on the study phase contemplated for the realization of the catalogue, as illustrated in the previous paragraph. The different combinations of tools have produced participation processes which are different for each catalogue, though an attempt has been made to ensure a general uniformity as regards the incidence of the collected data. The following table (Table 2) summarises the different tools used and the contribution provided for each stage.

Tabela 2: The table shows the participation tools used in the catalogues and their respective incidence in the different processing stages.

Tool \ Stage	Characterisation of the landscape	Landscape assessment	Landscape quality objectives	Criteria and actions
Telephone survey	••	•	–	–
Opinion poll	••	•	–	–
Consultation via the web	•••	••	••	•
Discussion groups	•••	••	•	–
Interviews with agents	•••	••	•	•
Workshops with agents	–	•	•••	••
Workshops with individuals	•	••	••	••
Open workshops	••	••	•	–

– not relevant; • small contribution;

•• average contribution; ••• significant contribution

Source: NOGUÉ J., PUIGBERT L., BRETCHA G. (eds.), (2009), *Paisatge i participació ciutadana*, Barcelona, Olot: Observatori del Paisatge de Catalunya. p. 72

Public consultation, through the different tools, has been achieved throughout the catalogue realization process and the information obtained (see www.catpaisatge.net/eng/cataleg_participacio) has influenced the final document, even though some contributions are more easily identifiable than others in the text. All this collected data has therefore had its specific influence quite apart from its representational level. Below is a table showing the participation figures catalogue by catalogue, and with the various tools used for each (Table 3). As was previously said, it can be seen that a disparity exists between the tools used, but that some of them, such as the web survey (7 out of 7) or the interview with the area agents (6 out of 7) were the most used because of their effectiveness and ease of use.

Tab.3 /The participation tools used for each specific catalogue complete with number of participants.

Catalogue and tools	Participans
Alt Pirineu i Aran	
Interviews with agents	21
Workshops with individuals	9
Public consultation via the web	152 (243 contributions)
TOTAL	182 participants
Camp de Tarragona	
Interviews with agents	24
Public consultation via the web	566 (849 contributions)
TOTAL	590 participants
Comarques Centrals	
Open workshops	32
Interviews with agents	38
Workshops with agents	52
Public consultation via the web	176 (211 contributions)
TOTAL	375 participants
Comarques Gironines	
Interviews with agents	32
Workshops with individuals	7
Public consultation via the web	551 (827 contributions)
TOTAL	590 participants
Regió Metropolitana de Barcelona	
Open workshops	32
Opinion poll	1050
Workshops with agents	62
Public consultation via the web	577 (737 contributions)
TOTAL	1721 participants
Terres de l'Ebre	
Telephone survey	811
Public consultation via the web	251 (376 contributions)
Interviews with agents	22
Discussion groups	33
Workshops with agents	45
Open workshops	21
TOTAL	1183 participants
Terres de Lleida	
Interviews with agents	22
Public consultation via the web	313 (470 contributions)
TOTAL	335 participants
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS AT THE PROCESS OF PARTICIPATION	4976

Source: NoguéJ., Puigbert L., Bretcha G. (eds.), (2009), *Paisatge i participacióciutadana*, Barcelona, Olot: Observatori del Paisatge de Catalunya. p. 36.

Numerically, it could be objected that participation is relatively low – about one per thousand of the population. The average is however very misleading because if we consider that the *Regió Metropolitana de Barcelona* accounts for more than half the population (about 70%), the number of participants in that same catalogue is not so high (about 30% of the participants belong to this area). Generally speaking, the choice of the supra-local scale does not allow substantial numerical results. Overall, the contribution of the participation in the catalogues is satisfactory, above all as regards the identification of the values, which we could define as imperceptible and not detectable by scrutinizing the map or by in-field analysis (safe, wild,

abandoned landscapes or the symbolic values). Furthermore, the interviews have made it possible to validate or question many of the results obtained by the technicians, favouring the different ways of looking at the territory. Finally, the web survey (with its limits) was above all useful to foster a greater awareness for the landscape in a part of the population.

CONCLUSIONS

Going back to the questions we asked ourselves at the beginning of the article, i.e., why do we have “a different conception of the landscape?” and “What are the circumstances which have made necessary an agreement between the different European countries with regard to the landscape?”, we could answer by starting with the idea that the landscape is, at the same time, “the thing and the image of the thing” (FARINELLI, 1993). In the article, we have attempted to outline and present the importance an organization (the *Observatori del Paisatge de la Catalunya*) can have in a specific landscape which avails itself of a number of tools (the landscape Catalogues) using a method (participation) to build up a new way of looking at the landscape (the image) and at the same time a new way of managing it (the thing). According to the European Convention “If people are given an active role in landscape decision-making, they are more likely to identify with the areas and towns where they spend their working and leisure time. If they have more influence on their surroundings, they will be able to reinforce local and regional identity and distinctiveness and this will bring rewards in terms of individual, social and cultural fulfilment.” (EUROPE, 2000b, chap. 2, art. 24). Here we are back again with the image of the thing, which unfortunately over recent decades has all too often provided us with landscapes characterised by homogeneity and banality, leaving us to inherit areas incapable of narration and landscapes devoid of the imaginary. To avoid this, it is crucial to develop a social sensitivity towards the environment and a renewed landscape consciousness (NOGUÉ, 2009). Another element which has become evident from the case presented is how, from the ELC, which does not consist of a series of laws, but rather of indications (OLWIG, 2007), it has been possible to pass, on a regional scale, onto the transposition of these indications and their transformation into a law (GENERALITAT DE CATALUNYA, 2006). From this law (law 8/2005), which makes explicit reference to the Landscape Convention, the Observatory was set up, which is not only an organization created to reflect on the landscape but a consortium for the implementation of the Convention itself. Finally, one thing must be pointed out: to date, the Observatory has delivered to the *Generalitat de Catalunya* 6 catalogues out of 7 and the last one is due to be delivered soon

(Comarques Centrals). Of these, five have already been presented to the population and the results made known (excepting Comarques Centrals and the Regió Metropolitana de Barcelona). But the most important aspect is that in four different cases, the PTP has incorporated the directives and landscape quality objectives contained in the catalogues. Camp de Tarragona, Terres de Lleida, Comarques Gironine and Terres de l'Ebre have translated the directives provided by the Observatory into regulatory applications. In short, we could end by emphasising how the population (a part of it) has taken a direct part in the project of protection, management and planning of its area. A big achievement that can still be improved on.

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