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POST-PANDEMIC AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT: REFLECTIONS IN UNCERTAINTY TIMES

POSTPANDEMIA Y DESARROLLO LOCAL: REFLEXIONES EN TIEMPOS DE INCERTIDUMBRE

Josep Pont Vidal¹

Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted all social, community, social and subjective areas. In local development, this situation has had devastating effects on which it is still early to assess its long-term effects, although we can refer to a “before” and an “after”, in a “post-pandemic world”. For local urban development, inserted in a context of political polarization and profound transformations, it is presented as a period of conceptual rethinking, of acceleration of transformations, and also of risks. Contingency appears as a new description framework, in which local development, in its organizational and political aspect, should explore emerging concepts and rethink the hegemonic logics and theories.

Keywords: self-organization; self-orientation; contingency, public sphere.

Resumen

La pandemia de Covid-19 han impactado en todos los ámbitos sociales, comunitarios, sociales y subjetivos. En el desarrollo local, esta situación ha tenido unos efectos devastadores sobre los que todavía es temprano para evaluar sus efectos a largo plazo, aunque si nos podemos referir a un “antes” y un “después”, en un mundo postpandemia. Para el desarrollo local, inserido en un contexto de polarización política y profundas transformaciones, se presenta como un periodo de replanteamiento conceptual, de aceleración de transformaciones, y también de riesgos. La contingencia aparece como un nuevo marco de descripción, en la que el desarrollo local en su vertiente organizativa y política, deberá explorar conceptos emergentes y repensar las lógicas y teorías hegemónicas.

Palabras clave: autoorganización; autoorientación; contingencia, ámbito público.

¹ PhD in Division de Ciències Jurídiques, Econòmiques Social (Universitat de Barcelona, UB, Espanha), professor at the Federal University of Pará, Belém, PA, Brazil. E-mail: josevidal@ufpa.br

Local development in times of uncertainty

Each recent period has differently marked or influenced approaches and types of local development organization and the possibilities for participation by actors and citizens. The devastating effects from the current Covid-19 pandemic is causing impacts in all aspects of urban, social, community, and subjective life, as well as at the political, participatory, and organizational levels. It is early to assess its effects, although some latent trends are already emerging, in such a way that it is possible to refer to the local development as a “before” and an “after”. The just beginning post-pandemic period is opening up many questions for local development (LD) both in societies from the North and in societies from the Global South in all aspects, as economic, development models, sustainability strategies, climate changing, organizational models, participatory processes, among others.

The LD includes aspects of planning, innovation, local and regional competitiveness, organization and participation models, up to its systemic link with rural and regional development. Each of these aspects is composed of many theoretical and conceptual lines. In particular, in the municipalities and regions of Latin and Central America, the LD has had in the last two decades an immense quantity of publications under the form of manuals and normative guidelines of all kinds. In these publications, however, there is a paradox, that is, whereas LD is guided to a functional and structural way, under the aegis of strategic planning, the approaches to participation are inspired by the neo-Marxist theory. These theories have been oriented basically in participation models under the habermasian perspective of dialogic consensus, municipal strategy planning (PFEIFFER, 2002), in which structures of an integrated and sustainable local development have been outlined (FRANCO, 2000; COELHO, 2001; TRUSEN, 2002). More recently, publications oriented to achieving the construction of integral perspectives stand out. However, the current post-pandemic situation and the easing of restrictions on confinement, changing the world geopolitical scenario, has presented impacts comprising the same fundamentals of what have usually been understood as LD and its participatory, organizational, and planning extensions.

If we consider the LD based on the participatory processes, the current situation presents uncertainties, changes, trends, and questions already found in Brazil in recent years. Particularly in Brazil, three factors are convergent which can be analyzed according to causes-effects-causes logic, or circular logic (Anonymous, 2019): (a) the change in the trend in municipal voting by citizens; (b) changes and transformations in the logic of economic development and LD; and, (c) polarization in national politics. Explaining:

- a) municipalities with mayoralties managed by parties called left (observable in the municipalities that make up the ABC of São Paulo City), in which the experiences of participatory budgeting began, has bowed towards majority conservative and populist voting positions in the presidential elections of 2018 (Anonymous, 2019, p.12-26). This phenomenon is not a circumstantial fact, everything points to a change of choice by the electorate;
- b) the post-pandemic period, the end of social confinement, and the recovery of the economy and trade result in profound impacts on LD, in its aspects of development, in financing, and in economic orientation models. Whereas in the countries of the European Union, the economy is reorienting itself towards sustainability and new technologies (transformation towards a green economy), in Brazil, in addition to the scarce government receptivity to this type of ecological transition, the problem of high inequality quotas is added, which can range from 23.0% to 25.4%, depending on the scenario that develops (CEPAL, 2020)²; and
- c) polarization in national politics (reflection of world changes) simultaneously with an increase in cultural polarization and in conceptual approaches. This polarization not only re-reflects on the political plan between conservatives and progressives (or between right-wing populists and left-wing populists), but also among mutually excluding concepts, which are often formulated and disclosed in a superficial and demagogic way, in addition to processes of inclusion and exclusion not only economic but also social.

²CEPAL. The social challenge in times of COVID-19. Covid-19 Special Report No. 3, 2020. “[...] especially, of high inequality and vulnerability, in which there are growing trends in poverty and extreme poverty, a weakening of social cohesion and manifestations of popular [dissatisfaction](#)”.

The current post-pandemic scenario creates a totally unprecedented situation for LD. The conceptual outlines that we present are not new, they have already been predicted in the past decades and range since the “civilization of self-reference” (WILLKE, 1993) to the presentation of the “contingent society” (Anonymous, 2020) in an entry context in the Anthropocene epoch (Paul Crutzen). This contingent scenario opens a series of questions that go beyond traditional questions and that encompass others of greater depth and that go beyond the classic weberian definitions of State, the idealized habermasian communicative consensus, and the expectations of the rational action of the actors, according to the Elster and Axelrod’s models. Fundamental questions arise, such as: (a) “Are the State description concepts still valid?”; (b) “How is the local development shaping up in the field of innovation and citizen organization?”; and (c) “Do we have the right concepts to describe and analyze this new reality?”.

We will present an outline under hypothesis form, the possibility of a self-organized orientation of the LD. The expression self-organized orientation is composed of two central ideas, self-orientation and self-organization. These ideas have created rejection and criticism, as in the social sciences, among many LD lines, relegating it even to ostracism, even mistrust, among many scholars of this subject. Any reference to self-organization has been pejoratively linked to unrealizable, utopian, and even to chaos.

Contingency times

Concepts commonly used (institutions, social capital, the "diamond" of development) have made important contributions in the past decades, as well as the main theoretical lines (functionalist perspective, industrial cluster theory, theory of the *meilleur innovateur*, Marshallian theory district) have been effective. The post-development and “Good Living” approaches, designed to build the post-capitalist societies in the context of the Philosophy of Liberation and of the communicative consensus, have not been clear to whom should participate and how they should achieve this consensus facing conflicting interests and act in this idealized process. The proposals of The Brazilian Agenda 21 have been a valuable instrument for local and municipal development and the sustainable transformation of cities, but it is also limited in this new situation of uncertainty. The current accelerated climate change constitutes an essential factor in this present and in the future scenario.

There is no theory that seems like the only true theory nor there is a theory without showing blind spots and limitations, neither it is possible to expose or develop closed concepts unable for interdisciplinary dialogue. In this unprecedented scenario of uncertainties, it is possible to refer to contingency and complexity as a new description frame of action and societies, in which the LD theoretical and social concepts, as well as rural development should explore the emerging associated concepts, such as contingency, risk, danger, even chaos, and with this to initiate a rethinking about the local development formulations, theories, and their normative possibilities to be applied.

Local development under a systemic perspective

Each regional and LD theory must face today the fact that the traditional instrumental communicative logic of competitive advantages (economic and innovative under the precepts of effectiveness, efficiency, and the locality potentialities) has a high cost for future sustainability and for a development orientation that goes beyond traditional conceptual approaches.

It has basically started from the functional development perspective coinciding, in most cases, with the ‘top down’ logic, that prioritizes the role of the state, institutions and local governments, and with the ‘bottom up’ logic that intends to highlight the key role of organizations and civil society in the territory. In both approaches, the citizen participation has manifested itself in different ways and strategies.

The application of both logics has been carried out substantially through neo-Marxist approaches, in which the role of civil society and the social movements has stood out managed by leaders professionally and economically linked to associations and susceptible to political power institutionalized in agreement with progressive management (KLAGES, 2015). This is visible in many local contexts oriented at the political level by the “commons”, which propose that goods, such as the air, the land, or the health, be managed by community actors. However, they do not define fundamental questions regarding to, “Who will be these actors and how will they be chosen?”. On the other hand, proposals stand out aiming to increase the local development competitiveness by

prioritizing innovation, knowledge, installation of new (multinational) companies and industrial clusters.

The problem and the limits that LD theories have faced are not corresponding to these approaches, but to a type of conceptual problema, highlighting the contingency situation and the possibilities emerging from the uncertainty of the future, a highly complex context. This situation is linked to risk and to dynamic and changing situations far from equilibrium. The identification of systems "far from equilibrium" and of "dissipative structures" has already been diagnosed by Prigogine (1998), referring to the fact that fluctuations and deep abrupt changes can give rise to new space-time structures. In this situation, the LD can react, change, and eventually return to equilibrium. It is a dynamic process in which the macro and micro levels converge and can influence the debate and the participation forms in LD. The paradox has also been revealed in the limits of Hardin's 'commons' proposal, as has been showed in Elinor Ostrom's "tragedy of the commons" (1999), in which the actors with rational action focused on their own interests arrive at an asymmetric situation against the community interests.

The deployment of systemic intervention techniques and logics, including circular logic as an overcoming of linear logic as a way to make LD's plans, allow these limits and paradoxes to be surpassed. Rationing allows to overcome the phenomena explanatory logic based on the cause-effect for another broader circular logic, considering the relationship between causes, effects, and causes.

The logic of circular understanding in the analysis of participation

The LD can be approached from the position of an external observer or an observer who is part of it. At the level of systemic observation and description, in which the observer keeps on an external level, it is needed to overcome the cause-effect limited logic, to structure it in a circular logic. Simultaneously, the hierarchical organization and the state centric organization are undergoing changes oriented towards another type of polycentric organization, in which the State is in a non-hierarchical position with respect to other systems. In the usual seeks of the effect close to the cause, it can even lead the observer to false conclusions, so the important thing is to think about the pattern that appears between the cause and the effect, and not about the different explanations that are given every time.

In the presentation of the complexity in which LD is developed as an initial starting point, circular logic means seeking the possible multiple causes that favor and slow down LD, and, in turn, how these causes and their effects produce new causes, in other words, to place between parentheses the mechanistic logic causes, or independent variable, and effect, or dependent variable. Thus, the low rate of citizen participation in a municipality may be a consequence of the low social capital existence, but also of a set of factors, such as low institutionality, the existence of a local power that inhibits any type of organization of grassroots citizenship that calls into question their decisions, or the consequence of a single and autocratic mass party political system, in which the population is managed and controlled by an elite efficient in its decisions, but bureaucratic and opaque in its decision-making system, or it may even be a consequence of the population cultural components. These factors, in turn, are the cause of elitist, or undemocratic, or not very transparent local power making unilateral decisions.

On the other hand, more and more recurrent questions of a technical and instrumental nature are being made, such as: "Participation as a means or as an end?" and "Participation for what, if the fundamental decisions have already been made?". Questions are also raised when emerge the professional-citizen participating on the LD. This citizen action type has proposed other communication ways as in spontaneous collective action form, which go beyond the claim (based on the "no") and are oriented on the proposition with which the political system can react in an indicative way. This situation has had an impact on LD's proposals, in which the "ambivalences" of citizen participation have been highlighted, identifying a paradigm shift: "Citizens with courage instead of citizens with anger" (Claus Leggewie). Its effects have been minimal, as the paradigm shift goes to be based on the same logic that led to this situation.

Despite the validity in learning many participatory processes, paradoxes have also emerged in LD planning, when the participatory agendas proposed by the institutions have suppressed issues of priority interest to citizens that were in dissonance with the institutional strategies. These paradoxes have also emerged in participatory budgeting experiences.

Post-pandemic: times of uncertainty, although open to possibilities

From the perspective of this paper, we define LD as the set of standards, networks, processes, and communications in view of an open future that may be different. This description is composed of many concepts and ideas linked to each other in a contingent perspective, the existence of standards, processes, communications, in a framework of uncertainty. The current post-pandemic period can be described as contingent, since what happens could be different in all areas of collective and individual life. Uncertainty encompasses all spheres or areas of society, politics, science, health, education, security, environment, as well as development models and LD in particular. Uncertainty is linked to contingency, that is, something that is not necessary or impossible, something as it is, was, and will be, although it may be different.

From these two denials and an affirmation for the LD with the contingency concept, it is understood as something that happens unexpectedly that can always appear (economic crisis, conflicts, pandemic) but that there are always possibilities for action and experience, which can be reformulated, updated, and renewed. In LD, contingency outlines a horizon of possibilities and of other possibilities, still unknown or incipient, which may be different from what was originally expected and planned. Contingency in the context of LD is not reduced to a number of possible reactions of individuals and groups, but rather to their selectivity in a horizon of indeterminacy and uncertainty that involves since the LD objectives to the desired society model.

In today's societies characterized by high complexity, a type of awareness is still predominant in action and decision with contingent consequences. The outlines of a LD and of ecological and human sustainability (see here TERRA ECOLOGIA PRACTICA, 2016) have already been described from conceptual assumptions, in which they identified the emergence of inconsistencies in the situations derived from the contingency and not from a supposed and idealized communicative action in the search for a hypothetical consensus or a pre-existing rationality among the actors. Game theory by statistical simulations has showed these limits.

The contingency has manifested itself in all areas of the LD, as planning, territorial governance, endogenous development, and in citizen participation. In the post-pandemic scenario, this situation has expanded in the politics with the emergence of limited democracy models ("illiberal" or "alocracy"), in the emergence of extremist populist movements – especially of the extreme right -, and in the social conflict, phenomena whose beginnings go back a few years ago. Every process and decision-making to regulate participation in the municipal political-legislative sphere present risks, therefore, is contingent.

The convergence of LD projects, including competitiveness, innovation, economy, questioning of mass tourism, or large real estate investments generate risks at different levels and areas, once decisions are made, in most cases, without the inherent risks generated in all areas having been calculated, which can result in opposite effects to those desired. Approving a determination or measure, such as some type of confinement (radical, selective, intelligent), on which the impacts are unknown, initiating participatory budgeting processes, investing in public transportation, and restricting traffic polluting, or creating (or suppressing) a specialized body of the municipal guard, has effects and risks for stability set, citizen coexistence, and economy in the present and in the future time. The set of these decision-making processes taken by a municipal government keeps complexity with high risk and high contingency.

The risks derived from these decisions, in relation to administrative, organizational, or decentralization-oriented reforms, are projected into the future, since their effects, impacts, and risks are not yet known in detail at the time of the decision. This current situation happens in the government of the territory or in the local economic development resulting from the economic decisions taken. A public policy or municipal action includes and takes a certain risk, which may involve the majority of the population, even more problematic, when the decision was made by a small group of politicians or non-experts people, not knowledgeable about the subject and the impacts. In a situation of this type, the applied policy is not risk-free and the opposite could happen with effects and application that can generate new risks. The clearest situation has been experienced during the pandemic, the confinement, and the gradual ease confinement measures established by the local governments. Schools reopening supervised by the municipality, social-health centers for the elderly, reopening of certain businesses and sectors at agreed hours, reopening of parks and gardens, restaurants, or cultural, or leisure activities involving risk were measures taken by politicians or advisers, often with little experience and knowledge about the subject rather than infectologists or epidemiologists.

Observation and analysis of the interpretation effects of the information sent and received on the autonomous areas and systems of municipal life such as transport, trade, and education showed direct impacts on these systems and their structures. With them, the high complexity is further amplified. The existence of risk factors in a system can be a danger to the economy or employment. Each system or area has its own communicative codes from its program. Whereas the fundamental code for the political system is the power/not power, the law code for the legal system is the applicability of the law. The commercial closure or the economic activity in a municipality is the result of a decision made by the mayor, through legal decisions.

Local development as a type of communication

From sociology and political science, it is recognized that society is based on communications. Communication is not understood here as a type of ontological and anthropological linguistic action, nor it is a simple information exchange but rather it is a symbolic process in which communication creates its own structures. Thus, communication must be assumed as a result of three choices that are information, make it known, and understand it. As it is a type of decision facing multiple possibilities and uncertain results, it is a type of contingent event. Communications are configurators of social reality, since they create their own communicative codes, replacing social theories of action, which are based on the communicative consensus among the members.

DL is a type of communication, that is, it operates with its own codes. These codes are the local democracy, the constitutional provisions, the accountability, the response capacity; they are understood here as a type of ecological communications, that is, communications produced by the system that we call the "local development system" with its ecological environment and with other systems. Each system operates by codes, which is used to simplify complexity. Whereas the economic system acts by the code of payment/no payment, the political system acts by power/not power. In this line of argument, LD constitutes a type of communication among society and other areas (political, economic, legal, cultural, etc.). Corruption would appear here as a type of perverse communication among the communications of the economic and political systems, not as a moral or ethical failure of the linked subjects.

Given the high number of interactions among the variables, processes, codes, and communications from different fields (political, social, environmental, economic, etc.), a selection is needed. Citizens, specifically, initiatives, different interaction models (discussion and planning groups, *ad hoc* groups) are, in addition to the subjects, the external observers of this type of communication among the power, its ecological environment, and with other subsystems or social areas. In the hypercomplexity context of today's societies, a "holistic" vision is limited once it operates only from the sum of the components. The self-referential systemic perspective operates from the analysis of the communication logic produced and its understanding codes, issued by each subsystem or area. As it is not a system but a type of symbolic communication, the questions are: (a) "Who produces it, or who issues it?"; (b) "What is the medium?"; and (c) "Who is it addressed to?". The issuer here is society, but it is also the interactions, whether they are limited or temporarily indeterminate, and also to the politics, the legal system, and the economic development.

The different areas or subsystems establish interaction under a functional way by communications and information in such a way that their internal operations depend in part on this flow of external information and communications. Their link with their environment or ecological environment occurs in many ways: (a) by reciprocal communications, the so-called "structural coupling" with the various systems or areas (Luhmann); (b) by transformation, based on external impulses with the capacity to be assumed by the system, "contextual orientation" (Willke), the case of proactive citizen movements; and, (c) by self-created citizen interaction and action groups or that emerge from a spontaneity motivated by an abrupt phenomenon with a certain structure and temporality, "unlimited interaction systems" (Anonymous). Thus, we consider that LD is not a system itself, but a type of communication composed of "development" in the territorial sphere and that implies a type of codes.

The program that makes up this type of communication (as a system) includes the local government policy understood in a global way and that includes aspects of administrative decentralization, self-organization, citizen participation, security, spatial planning, creation of services and policies, common infrastructures, among other aspects. These aspects or variables require a communicative convergence between the requirements and interactions coming from citizen participation and directed to local governments and institutions.

The territory as a socio-ecological environment

The "local" term is linked to territory. The theoretical perspective of the action assigns to territory the place in which the "will" of the political and economic actors interpose actively in the development processes produced in their territories and in the economic sphere to "manage the conversion" towards another economy. Under the perspective of this paper, we define the territory as the place where interactions and communications that enable development take place.

The territory acquires a new dimension in this perspective of functional differentiation (BOISIER, 1999, 2000; LAGENDIJK *et al.*, 2009). There are many convergent endogenous and exogenous factors that have contributed so that local governments as a whole have their attention and interests leading towards to assume more responsibilities directly linked to social phenomena related to the territory. Proposals against forced displacement, construction of subsidized housing for low-income population sectors, and policies to combat exclusion are increasingly common. In addition to citizen participation, local powers are embodied in innovative aspects such as the political-administrative order of the municipality, economic development policies, policies to overcome the economic crisis, in addition to education and basic health centers and hospitals, business incubators, among other measures and objectives.

On the other hand, the proposal has been to manage the impacts of the economic-financial crisis of 2008, and the new requirements arising from the territory. In recent years, a new type of demands identified with the territory in the cultural and historical spheres has been emerging, which go beyond the strict scope of economic development, directly linked to requirement of local and regional identity, extrapolated to populists and nationalists movements of territory defense. If in the seventies and eighties the cultural and historical aspects were limited to a few regions in the states, today, they have acquired such a dimension, having spread to practically all western countries.

The overwhelming decision of governments to paralyze all economic and commercial activity during confinement and the devastating effects that the pandemic has had on all aspects of social life forces us to rethink and conceptualize the terms of economic, regional, and local development. Regarding its success or failure, business activity (economic sector) cannot be held responsible, forgetting, or relegating the responsibilities over other systems: (a) political (parliamentary and government decisions); (b) local political system (interest in attracting a type of term investments to the municipality); (c) administrative (failures in responsibilities due to the multiplicity of the managements linked); (d) technical (limited and defective inspections); and (e) scientific (lack of research on the underlying dangers of new techniques or even new vaccines against Covid-19). The political system must assume the operation by another way, in which the responsibilities of the dangers and risks caused in the immediate future and also in the present are added.

This perspective refers to the ability of the term to describe at the local level the other regional, national, and international levels, in which the territory and administration are linked. However, this description is not enough to clarify the relationship of political governance, as to the capacity to self-organize the citizenship and the territory in practical possibilities to include the actors that are part of this relationship. Dynamic circularity offers a possibility to solve this dilemma, by linking the public, the administration, and the politics by limits, priorities, and electoral and participatory decision-making processes of diverse types and depth, which give legitimacy and power of influence to self-organized citizens.

Under this line of argument, citizen participation can be limited to taking a non-binding position in an urban project on the destination of the projects presented by the entities of a city or on a broader level by introducing a participatory budget or broad participatory consultation. The scope, commitment, and methodology of each of these may vary, as well as the way or the initial mechanism, by which a citizen initiative can arise or emerge, since in its initial phase it can emerge in an institutionalized way by technical and economic incentives from the municipal government or by abrupt or disruptive impulses, which triggers citizen self-organization (Anonymous). In this situation, the citizen forwards his requirements, complaints, and protest action against the municipal government (local political system), often relegating the link with other systems - the national laws on the subject and regulations (legal system) and administrative procedures (public administration).

Citizen self-organization as a process

The idea of self-organization is not new since it has been treated for a few decades, although it has become a part of the interdisciplinary discourse of science and organization theories over the last few years. However, it is considered utopian and unreal, whereas others defend its social possibilities. In the systemic perspective of thought, it is a system in which the operations allow constant production and reproduction of the elements, being that the self-organization is prior to the constitution of its structure.

Relating to the citizen participation level, every type of citizen's initiative has its moment of creation based on an abrupt impulse in the urban ecological environment, such as: (a) new urban project; (b) lack of social facilities; (c) demand for improvements; and (d) reaction to problems created by the local power or by the urban environment, which can be ecological, caused by domestic violence, number of refugees, deficiencies in public services, etc. However, this process is not free of paradoxes. The idea that self-organization processes have a specificity is in contradiction with the initial assumption of physical nature, according to which the notion of self-organization is closely related to the idea of an open and indeterminate future. On the other hand, under the criterion of the existence of a hypothetical initial "spontaneity", it is possible to accept its capacity and self-organizing possibility, although it does not always happen by this way when transferring this principle to a type of organization or of citizen initiative created *ad hoc* due to a community problem. The attempts to answer the question with the proposal to establish a link between the "spontaneous" and the "fast" of the process, in the sense of a predetermined time scale, is a possibility, although the problem of the constitution of time itself keeps to appear as a theoretical problem of the (interaction) system.

The self-organizing capacity of citizen initiatives cannot be linked only to the speed of their organizational process, but must be linked to the fulfillment of certain requirements at the time they occur, such as the decisions made by the participants, the type of communication issued, and the way in which communications from other systems are interpreted, whether political, legal, or economic. For our objective of analysis, the fundamental thing is that the internal processing and the corresponding communication process in this citizen initiative are recognized in time to be taken over by members in their initiative and not after a while.

LD operations and citizen self-orientation

The assumption of the self-organizing capacity of citizen initiatives also involves accepting the capacity for self-orientation on a larger plane that includes the LD or even society. If on a theoretical level this capacity seems clear, in practice it is more complex, also due to the different political-cultural contexts of each country or cultural sphere (HAUS; SWEETING, 2006). In the Spanish-speaking domain areas and in Latin American sphere, the self-orientation of society has been approached, mainly under a perspective of governance capacity or management with the normative definition of "good governance", which includes the principles of transparency, participation, accountability, effectiveness, and coherence in its link with strategic planning, all of them basic components of LD.

In the new post-pandemic scenario, LD and citizen action continually reveal their contingencies. It is not surprising the emergence of the current political polarization, deniers versus scientists, unionists versus secessionists, or supporters of politician X versus supporters of politician Y, etc. Thus, it is not impossible that the emergence of authoritarian governments in liberal democracies goes to spread. Under the governance perspective and the LD orientation, the concepts used still remains out of date and are manifested with operational aspects in the extension of the State and local governments regarding the description of the way of governing, so they must be treated in depth. In the endogenous perspective, politics is represented by the the existing conceptual inaccuracy, which is manifested in the diagnosis of ungovernability of current societies and in the uncertainty in LD.

Table 1: Paradigmatic transition in LD

| | Pre-covid-19 paradigms Local development | Emerging post-pandemic paradigms |
|--|---|---|
| Context description | Great Recession 2008 Political societies | Great Confinement 2020 Contingent societies - of uncertainty |
| Global challenges | Globalization | Climate change Anthropocene era National globalization |
| Models of emerging political-social organization | "Commons" in a sense oriented to the progressive government | "Commons" in a sense of self-management |
| LD basic concepts | Participatory planning Endogenous-exogenous development "Diamond of development" Strategic planning Integration Municipal networks Social capital | Participatory planning (new actors) Endogenous development Self-organization Self-management "Increased humanness" |
| Reigning State Model | Centric State Democracy; Emerging "illiberal" democracy | Polycentric Multicentric (Latin America) "Illiberal" democracy established |
| Economic dimension | Market Co-production services | Market-Democracy-Sustainable Human Development Emphasis on Co-production services |
| Participatory dimension (Political movements) | Feminism, environmentalism, Proposition-oriented Participatory budgets | Post-feminism Mutually excluding populisms: "X versus Y" Unknowns about its future populist orientation: conservative-progressive-nationalist-mutually excluding |
| Political dimension | Right-left axis Decentralization | New emerging axes: LGBT Strengthening citizenship Unknowns about its future populist orientation: conservative-progressive-nationalist-mutually excluding |
| | Extreme poverty reduction | Increase extreme poverty Sustainable Development Goals 2030 - |
| Analysis concepts | Sustainable development Balance | High complexity Chaos; uncertainty Dissipative structures Systems far from equilibrium Sustainable Human Development Anthropocene |

Source: prepared by the autor (2020).

Contextual guidance

Social movements and citizen participation may influence measures of proposed actions in the respective systems or areas. These systems cannot be 'autistic or immobilists', but must react by directing themselves to their context or environment.

The intervention proposals coming from the environment and the actors must be operative for the system. The guidance offered by the system refers to the framework of general conditions by which coordination and strategies to answer the asked questions will be established. The reference to external actors to a type of communication that we call LD means taking over a set of important premises. On the one hand, the idea of allopoiesis, that is, external orientation of the system, can negatively influence its orientation. The economic and political system can react in a hierarchical way, starting from the selection of a pattern not in contradiction with the high complexity, but, on the contrary, being appropriate for its processing, which will later be reflected in its internal structures.

Otherwise, paradoxically, the system external orientation can decrease the society integration capacity in a context of increasing differentiation, so it is needed to rethink the role of

leadership to keep the integration. For that, in terms of means and ends in LD, the existence of a type of orientation is needed, even if it results in a contradiction with the heterarchy principle. The alternative to this paradox comes from the idea about a type of "decentralized external control", indicating that the context conditions require recognition of needing a higher orientation degree, questioning the State, at the same time, as the only entity historically responsible to guide the society. The existence of the polycentric presentation of society is indicated, taking into account the functional differentiation of the different areas or subsystems on consensus and not on conflict. In this sense, society is not understood as a system of domination (Marx, Marcuse) nor as a system oriented to the consensus of values (Parsons and structural functionalism), but as a communication system in which the development is a type of communication.

The LD must therefore have a type of orientation that goes beyond the internal and external operations of the respective systems. One central type of orientation corresponds to a low internal and a high external complexity, whereas the system self-control is suitable for high internal and low external complexity. The context control arises as an appropriate control form with high internal and external complexity. Does this theoretical possibility allow actors to influence a system? In what way, if it is effective? The possibility to influence must be given in a framework in which the actors must establish the contextual conditions so that the system can choose its options with greater environmental sustainability.

Self-organization only as hypothesis?

At this point, the question inevitably arises if it is possible to keep self-organization. Recent political phenomena, such as the increase in extremism and populism, have shown the capacity absence for political governance by the State and of the political-administrative system in its relationship with society. This deficiency in governance - or ungovernability - calls into question the State power and capacity to act as director of the society management. As a consequence, the paradox of the dilemma appears in western democracies in an extreme zero-sum plan, in which the greater the governmental political determination (intervention), the less the possibility to determine another type (in the form of social self-organization). This paradox acquires different manifestations in each society due to its supposed conditioning factors.

Social self-organization can also mean the emergence of power groups (of coercion and violence) that can try to apply its rules outside the respective subsystems. This situation is not uncommon in the Amazon region or in the Latin American mega-metropolises. When Management Capacity of State Governments fails for different reasons, the self-organization and operational self-reference of the many subsystems emerge as assumptions - or key ideas - in the possibility of a new form of social organization to acquire relevance.

In Latin American societies, the assumptions of the self-organized citizen participation acquire other manifestations that must be empirically analyzed (BIEHLER, 2011). In these societies, one of the central problems is revealed as not only the inability of the State or its "indeterminacy" to manage society, but even its absence or weakness for exercising the governance and applying the public tasks. To this fact, the relative immaturity of democratic regimes and their weak consolidation in the public sphere must be added. The respective subsystems keep many diffuse functions and operations, developing a capacity for self-organization and autonomy with codes that do not correspond to their primary functions, and, consequently, on numerous occasions with perverse or negative effects, such as ambivalence and normative insecurity in the face of the imposition capacity of the economic system, in which an orientation by the political-administrative and legal system is very costly.

Final considerations

It is needed to have new concepts to describe society, and with it more precise and appropriate presentations to describe the current uncertainty situation.

A communicative effort is required that has to overcome the conceptual and hypothetical principle, the situation of contingency and risk, and the danger that is self-generated. Institutional rationality is no longer enough, but it is rather the acceptance of the contingency and of the hyper complexity. This fact means the introduction of selection processes (which for many people appear to be unapproachable), either by an external observer or by the actors and agents involved. Only the ability to approach them from some communications, and to give them a meaning produced not only

by self-referential operations, can open the possibility that the LD may be different. Research experiments are outlining creative incipient productions that allow to experiment styles of community development and LD as already taking place with innovative experiences (HABEGGER *et al.*, 2019).

In this argumentative context and contingent scenario, questions arise: (a) “How to build a strategy for participation in local development?”; (b) “In what direction will citizen participation and organization be oriented?”; and (c) “How can it be linked to rural development?”. In the specific field of rural areas, it is about the “improvement of governance and mobilization of endogenous potential” with the exploitation of local knowledge and awareness resources and involvement of local people. It remains to be seen what will be the impact of the new directives given by the Union for the exit of the post-pandemic situation and the reconstruction of societies.

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