



CDE Programme

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Eco-city and urban ecological experiments: between dynamics and logic of participatory practices. A comparative study in France and Catalonia

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Objectives: The study aims at documenting the increasing institutionalisation of dialogue procedures. We will investigate the case of ecological experimentation in an urban setting ('ecohousing', city parks development...). We will uncover the methods by which the environmental question is redefined and handled by public policies, and specifically how concertation procedures are included in these experimentations. Alternative initiatives also manage to avoid such institutional structures. We will explore these experiments that are conducted without any institutionally-enforced concertation framework.

Hypotheses: Regarding the concertation procedures, we assume that their increasing institutionalisation comes with the participants creating more complex tools and methodologies. Regarding the initiatives out of the institutional setting, they will allow us to support a meaning of concertation as allowing room for conflict and dissensus (rather than excluding them). These experiments avoid institutional structures, but also they don't take place on the outside. They are in a process of institutionalisation or in a dialogue (however conflicting) with these structures. We present the hypothesis that tension between institutional and infra-institutional structures is in part a consequence of the french model of citizenship. The comparison with spanish initiatives will allow us to test that point and, more widely, to reveal what, in the juridical, political, or social context, made the forms of concertation what they are now.

Methods: A qualitative method will be used, consisting of individual in-depth interviews with members of the different groups involved (associations, informal collectives, institutions...), of observations (workshops, public meetings...) and of a work of documentary analysis. Work groups will be organised on each site in order to test the possibility of circulation of tools and methodologies created by and for each of them.

Selected locations: Among the four locations we chose, two are in France : the 'ZAC Danube' project of the association 'Ecoquartier Strasbourg', and the squat 'Pavillons Sauvages (Toulouse)'. The other two are in Spain : the Parc Collserola, and the autonomous project of

Can Masdeu (Barcelona and its suburbs). Two are set into a concertation setting (Strasbourg and Parc Collserola), the other two are outside any institutional framework, although being in the process of institutionalisation (Pavillons Sauvages) or in a dialogue with them (Can Masdeu is based at Parc Collserola).

Expected results: This research will help to improve the readability of methodologies of concertation and reveal ways to ease their deployment. It will renew the perspectives of public offices by detailing how a public policy can always constitute a support for setting up original political undertakings, even if this setting up often leads to the expression of conflict toward the institution. Comparative dynamics will help the circulation of concertation tools between France and Spain. Finally, this study will allow the activation of international research networks.