

Strengthening the territory, building the metropolis: the case of Barcelona and its metropolitan area.

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When we speak of Barcelona we refer, like in many other places elsewhere, to a territorial denomination which includes both the city, the capital of Catalonia, and a territorial space of a metropolis in which a powerful urban conglomerate is articulated.

This reality is made of 164 municipalities which in our particular country's language (Catalonia) we call "Regió Metropolitana" (Metropolitan Region). However, what strictly constitutes the institution of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area is the municipality of Barcelona and 35 other municipalities that share services and projects in matters of mobility, environment, urban planning and economic development, and which comprises 3,300,000 inhabitants in an area of 640 square kilometres. This institutional framework of 36 municipalities is relatively recent, but it has a long history led to the Catalan Parliament passing the law for the constitution of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area on 3rd August, 2010, according to the Autonomy Statute of 2006, concluding a complex period of plans and projects.

This allowed granting full institutional recognition to a process that had begun to take legal form in 1953, when the Urban Planning and Common Services Commission for Barcelona and other municipalities was created, bringing together the Catalan capital and 23 other surrounding towns. The Regional Plan was also adopted and it attempted to regulate urban aspects, common services and transport for the municipality of Barcelona and those in its immediate surroundings.

In 1968 the Metropolitan Area Master Plan was approved and in 1974 the Barcelona Metropolitan Municipal Entity was created, governed by the Barcelona Metropolitan Corporation with responsibilities in matters of town planning, transport and services, in force until 1987.

That year, within the framework of the adoption of the Law for Territorial Planning by the Government of Catalonia, the former institution was dissolved by the Catalan Parliament¹ and replaced by the Metropolitan Transport Entity

¹ The context of the dissolution of the "Metropolitan Corporation" was determined by the re-centralizing tendency as between 1980 and 1990 nothing less than 10 metropolitan governments were dissolved. Some of the most important were the Greater London Council or the Rijnmond Public Body in Rotterdam in 1986, as well as Valencia (1986), Bilbao (1980), and Madrid (1983).

As Ramon de Miguel Gonzalez points out "the case of Spain allows you to point to one of the reasons why metropolitan governance was losing legitimacy, which was none other than the loss of roles by the central government. It must not be forgotten that the four metropolitan bodies created in Spain during Franco's time were ministerial instruments, first the Ministry of Governance and then the Ministry of Housing, with the exception of Barcelona, which from 1974 was converted into a local entity. On the other hand, the British case, and especially that of London, should be placed in the

and the Metropolitan Environment Entity. In parallel, the Association of Municipalities in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area was created on the voluntary initiative of 27 councils that did not agree with the dissolution of the “Metropolitan Corporation”. They considered it necessary to continue applying common policies in certain areas which allowed them to develop an important joint action in the field of town planning, as it was key in the years following as a central piece in ensuring social and territorial cohesion.

The developments in metropolitan realities have led to their new institutional reconsideration and from the mid-nineties new structures of governance began to be consolidated everywhere, and the creation process is still ongoing like the case of France and Italy nowadays.

In our case, the creation of the current Barcelona Metropolitan Area was the fusion between these three organizations (the Environment, Transport and the voluntary Association of Municipalities) which has allowed the establishment of a new governance framework suited to the complex, physical and institutional reality in the metropolitan territory. The current metropolitan area, now with 36 municipalities, is responsible for town planning, transport and mobility, water, waste, environment, metropolitan infrastructures, economic and social development, and social and territorial cohesion.

Since the dissolution of the previous Metropolitan Corporation, and between 1987 and 2010, the metropolitan territory has undergone important changes. The city has grown, urbanization has extended, mobility has increased and its international positioning has improved.

Today, it is a thriving territory presenting great challenges that require a unique approach to which we will refer later on. However, in principle we are moving towards the general metropolitan plan to contextualize the reality and perspective of our institution.

The context of metropolitan development today

The development of metropolitan regions and areas is becoming one of the prevailing forms of human settlements. In the XIX century only 2% of the world’s population lived in cities, while today more than half of mankind does and, in fact, there are more than 500 cities with over a million inhabitants (and, therefore, considered to be metropolises). According to United Nations data, by the year 2050, seven out of every ten of people in the world will live in cities.

This fact challenges us as to define which attributes best describe a metropolitan area, beyond the geographical, town planning and sociological

development of institutional strengthening of the Greater London Council and the Metropolitan County Councils which might create confusion or rivalry in a traditional dual system, central and local”.

definitions in use. In any event, the issue discussed here concerns how these territories are organized and which are the models of governance they implement.

However, in order to understand this reality it is necessary to answer some questions that will allow us to define this “real” city, beyond the formal delimitations and boundaries of agreed geographical definitions. In any case, the need to define metropolitan governance is determined by the will to live. The will to rely on a joint model of governance is not only defined by a unified labour market or an urban area resulting from residential hubs and the agglomeration economies even though they may be partial aspects, linked to transport, housing or town planning.

Today we are aware that prosperity, territorial cohesion, economic growth and social inclusion come from cities; creative cities, smart cities, resilient cities, changing cities, global cities, technological cities and knowledge cities. Cities are at the core of transformations in the XXI century. Metropolitan areas are in fact a veritable group of cities – of diverse natures and for different reasons in each case – which are the most widespread expression of what future scenarios will be like.

This is why beyond the definition of organization models, it is also essential to think in terms of unique characteristics that allow us defining a Metropolis, by its capacity of managing resources both efficiently and successfully. Metropolitan areas are faced with a variety of problems which require governance which surpasses partial or individual interests in certain territories and which deal with the following opportunities:

- The need to face new challenges of globalization, which oblige one to think in terms of competitiveness of territories and intraregional complementarities.
- The need to present a coherent model of town planning development which allows for a cooperative and collaborative action among the local governments concerned.
- The need to respond to improvements when dealing with certain issues given their volume, range, common nature, economy of scale and research in optimizing measures of resources and efficiency in their management.
- The need to operate a model of leadership and agreements of interests and initiatives which go beyond the local sphere without clashing with other governments, either local or supra-local ones.

Therefore, this approach should encompass the different aspects which lie in history, the challenges, the conformation of the territory, the interaction with

other nearby territories, the coexistence with other administrations and the positioning in the field of metropolitan cities elsewhere.

The framework of new metropolitan governance

The radical changes which cities are undergoing today should lead us to reflect on the need for a significant transformation in terms of making politics from the territory and making politics with citizens.

We find ourselves in a social, economic and political context in which new factors question governments in ways different from “traditional” ones. Quite probably nothing will be the same as it was in the past. The crisis of legitimacy, globalization, the crisis of democracy, the decline of Taylorist and efficiency models of the provision of services, the responsibility of actors, among others, are factors which subvert classical models of governance and require us to take a fresh look at public action.

All these factors pose new challenges for good governance and democracy. Many of them are behind the problems which we find today in public policies, and some of the most outstanding ones lie in a metropolitan setting. This setting, however, might be an excellent space to achieve these aims of good governance and democratic quality.

The main contradictions in this new setting are on many occasions uncertain. Global risks or those which derive from the globalisation of systems (either financial, labour, economic, environmental, of serious inequality, of public safety, etc.) are uncontrollable, and public services which today have to be provided (health, education, science and technology, safety, sustainability, quality democracy, infrastructures, good administration, good regulation of markets, safety services and social cohesion, inclusion, social equity and interculturality, etc.) have become more complex, dynamic, diverse and interdependent than ever.

As Joan Prats said “today the classical binomial effectiveness-efficiency in public management has to be subordinated to “adaptive efficiency” which can only be achieved by means of a process of permanent learning on which the quality of life in present societies depends. That is why innovation and the implementation of an entrepreneurial capacity are essential and valuable at all levels of life (social, cultural, political, administrative, economic and business, etc)². There are three reasons that allow one to understand this development:

First. The change in the level of decision-making, which develops from central governments to more local levels in the territory. More than thirty years ago the EU propounded regional policies and redistribution of resources as a policy for economic, social and territorial cohesion. Progressively, the European

² Prats, Joan. Documents from a working group on democratic quality

Institutions have significantly incorporated urban questions in other policies such as the environment, R & D, energy, etc. To this situation we must add the more and more important and hegemonic role of the metropolis in the conformation of territorial organisations and in the detection of needs and demands. In particular, urban and metropolitan town planning, in the current process of European integration and the loss of capacity in governments faced with key challenges like the financial and environmental ones, makes policies objectives oriented towards limited spaces of action where metropolitan areas can be key stakeholders.

Second. We should observe how one goes from a model “of the aggregation” of cities in which today many of the metropolitan areas are conformed in spaces of authentic function of a city of cities with renewed processes of institutionalisation, which has been the case of London, Barcelona and more recently Paris, with diverse modalities, competencies and forms of action, with bodies directly or indirectly elected, but in all cases with regulating functions and supra-municipal management.

Third. This is strictly local and is due to the firm vocation to work jointly by a group of municipalities in the metropolitan areas which vindicate another way of doing things and the effective application in many cases of the principle of subsidiarity.

The conformation of the metropolitan areas today is trying to find an answer to some of the main questions which result in the following characteristics:

- Its implementation is, on most cases, the result of pragmatic decisions based on the optimization of resources, the efficiency in the management of services and the need to guarantee coherence in the planning.
- On most occasions they are the consequence of the adaptation of structures and existing territorial projects (planned or generated throughout the concurrency of time and needs) and of the problems which areas of supra-municipal governments have to address to find an answer to emerging challenges in metropolitan territories.
- The need to strengthen democratic legitimacy in certain fields of action, often perceived as far from citizens' reality.
- Response agreements with the private sector in all possible projects, whether it be leading jointly, adding or being involved in the management.

It is therefore evident that we need to talk of a new model of Governance which defines new parameters of relationship between different levels of government, in relation to other social and economic actors, in the reciprocal recognition of the role of the municipalities and, of course, in a framework of relationship with

citizenry. This new paradigm signifies changing from a univocal and unidirectional model of government to a system of government in which the resources of public authority, markets and social networks are required and activated, moving from a centralized, hierarchic style to an associated, interdependent style of government between governmental bodies, social actors and private organisations.

Governance should be understood as a synthesis of synergies which overcomes the traditional views of the way of doing things in public affairs, while maintaining the principles of a proactive policy and that of progress: to fight poverty and social inclusion, encourage social cohesion, equal opportunities, equity in the access to public services, proximity, redistributive action, transparency and participation.

Public Administration cannot remain on the side-lines in all these changes, as we are facing a new way of carrying out public management: a more efficient, effective, cost-effective and suitable management in order to address and solve the core problems societies have, which goes into the model which allows one to innovate the discourse and the modalities in the field of the public sector. The objectives of this model of governance would include:

- Placing the public administration at the service of citizens and the latter as the main object of attention at the centre of the process, shifting away from the image of a bureaucratic administration, distanced from people's real problems and capable of managing properly and progressively the citizens' rights and obligations.
- Strengthening the mechanisms which foster a model of sustainable economic development, growth and social cohesion where cohesion, equal opportunities and proximity work to avoid any situation of social exclusion or inequality in terms of access to the provision of services or information.
- The renewal of the models of planning, management and bureaucracy, directed at a strategic perspective, towards a genuine position of leadership, anticipation, agreement and active listening on the part of the administration, while overcoming models with little interaction with the surroundings.
- Investigating ways to promote committed, co-responsible citizens to a deeply democratic civic, political culture.
- Inscribing projects in local-global development models, giving them a new dimension in the territory from a resilient culture committed to the challenges of the climate change.
- Incorporating quality processes, and with optimum use of the potentiality provided by ICT in all fields of management, communication, participation and assessment.

- Applying principles of simplification, subsidiarity, coordinated action and synergy at central, regional, provincial and local government levels to simplify relationships with citizens and the surroundings to optimize resources.
- Reinforcing the set of mechanisms of legitimacy of the metropolitan public policy and strengthening the democratic systems that provide greater credibility, confidence and leadership. The development of accountability processes (transparency aspects, accountability, and ethical innovation) must govern and be present in the main strategies of the operation and communication of government action.
- Promoting a model of adaptive leadership with teams that act as leaders in innovative processes with new values, the spreading of new rules, new attitudes and skills.
- Continuing with clear strategies of the implementation process with the maximum competence of the group of actors and with a greater implication of the institutions and actors intervening from the principle of co-responsibility with municipalities, social and economic actors, other levels of administration and, obviously, with the citizens themselves.
- Creating a scenario of relationship with the social fabric from a dimension of agreement, collaboration and complementarity, in the framework of strengthening actions of agreement between public and private institutions, which will gain the maximum implication, even economy-wise.

In a nutshell one can say that the practices of the present democracy and forms of government are changing in an accelerated manner. Governments are less and less hierarchical and more relational. Our time is making us go from government to governance. To know how to coordinate good governance between the various governments concerned in each question, on the one hand, and the non-public sector on the other and doing so in accordance with the principles of good governance will undoubtedly be part of a good government in our time. In particular, the concept of “institutional sovereignty” conflicts with multi-level and multi-departmental actions, which is our case. Sometimes competencies are not clear enough, or at least the citizens’ perception of responsibility is not always linked to the image of the veritable promoter of the public action³.

In this context, citizens, more often than not, direct their look and the responsibility to the nearest institution, which in our case is the town hall or alternatively the metropolitan entities.

³ According to the Charter for Multilevel Governance in Europe approved by the Committee of the Regions in 2014.

These are key factors in order to understand our particular case, which is nothing less than the combination of historical and political factors which gave rise to the creation of the present AMB (Barcelona Metropolitan Area) subsequent to the municipal elections in July, 2011.

Barcelona Metropolitan Area's major challenges

Barcelona's leading role as a capital has become even more apparent in recent years due to the growth of the city and to a set of legal and administrative measures which have reinforced this. Therefore, throughout the last mandate a greater recognition of the laws has been achieved which can be identified in various aspects such as:

- The deepening of the institutional framework.
- The search for suitable, adequate funding to cover the needs in current challenges in terms of environment, infrastructures, transport and social cohesion.
- The search for more projection as a capital, as a brand, as a metropolitan city benchmark, for cooperative projects and as the capital of the Mediterranean.

However, there are still many aspects which we have defined as real challenges in our metropolis today.

In this regard, the main issues identified (which does not mean that they are the only ones but those we have considered to be priorities in the present situation), are the following:

- The first aspect we have identified is the increasing inequality. For us, this is the central issue of the crisis in the metropolis and in societies like ours in general, and it has implications in defining aspects like the growth of sectors and territories with a high social vulnerability, the progressive increase in groups with an extremely high risk of exclusion, and consequently, the danger that suburbs and the city, in certain cases, may enter in processes of global exclusion and marginalization.
- A second aspect is related to issues of economic development, and the difficulty in producing new jobs and more growth in sectors with greater added value. Despite the general good positioning of our metropolis, the current economic scenarios, both at a global level and at a European level, present constant uncertainties which arise from a strong economic and financial crisis with enormous consequences and affect the development of economies, particularly in the south of Europe, with a direct impact on job cuts, on the loss of competitiveness and on growing territorial imbalances. In this context, the urban and metropolitan economies play and will continue playing

a key role in the process of reformulation and search for solutions for the present situation. We find ourselves at the end of an era in which the model has fallen in a far-reaching crisis. It is a brutal warning cry which reveals the failure of a growth model which promoted consumption rather than production, speculation rather than investment, with no respect for sustainability in the environment, success at any price rather than equal opportunities, social inequality rather than inclusion. Ending with this model will not be an easy task. Growth is slow and complex. The financial markets control money flows and economic orthodoxy takes precedence over the need to increase consumption and credit, with the postponement by a large part of Europe of a way out of this complex situation.

- A third aspect refers to the debate around the challenges of sustainability, where climate change is a key element, in which a decision taken by the metropolitan city will be determinant, bearing in mind that the cities are one of the biggest generators of major problems, above all, due to the effect of contamination resulting from transport of all kinds, based on means of transport which use fossil fuels.
- The fourth element then is clearly that of governance, and it is a key element and decisive in guaranteeing the way in which other aspects are coordinated in the governability and in the relationship and interaction with citizens.

In this context, it is necessary to analyse the core elements which form the governance of the Barcelona Metropolis.

Institutional conditionings and competencies

After many years of municipal advocacy for an institution that was de facto working through the coordination of municipalities at their own initiative, as well as a result of the dissolution of the Metropolitan Corporation, AMB was created. The birth of this new entity in this particular moment generated new realities at several levels.

On the one hand, it brought together the actions of three institutions which, although had worked together, for the first time there would become a sole metropolitan council and governing body, with the full integration of management, administration and budgets and a new plan of action which established, in two plans, sectoral and cross-cutting actions.

The creation of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area was not simply a question of political will, but a strategic need. Housing, transport, railway infrastructures or access to and transit in Barcelona, in addition to the management of urban planning and the environment, require a complex system, as foreseen in the historic claims for the constitution of a metropolitan government, which at the

same time would allow new policies, both of cohesion and of the maximum use of the economic potential.

A new space opened for reflection and for the construction of new instruments which were foreseen in law, namely: the Mobility Plan and the Urban Master Plan which were accompanied by the first initiative of the Environmental Sustainability Plan and later on the Economic Development Plan and REM (Metropolitan Strategic Reflection) itself, as a general tool for the coordination of diverse plans set in motion in the group of areas in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area.

The Metropolitan Plan of Action approved in 2012 established that *“The government of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area has, as an undeniable mission, the promotion of progress and well-being of the citizens of Barcelona in its territorial area of intervention, being understood that the Barcelona Metropolis is the result of a system of governance shared with its Town Halls.”*(..) *“In like manner, in the formation of this will sight should not be lost from the fact the time of radical change we find ourselves in, or the negative consequences of the long, deep economic crisis.”* (...) *“The Barcelona Metropolitan space, which concentrates people, actions and movements of all kinds – economic, social and cultural – is an active actor which should be protected as consistently as possible. Therefore, the metropolitan government understands that this is the time to go further into re-balancing policies in the territory and create the conditions which will allow one to face in better conditions the solution to the crisis and which will favour the joint economic promotion in this territory.”*

In this regard, governance should be carried out from two vectors: from the change in public policies and bearing in mind the history of our metropolitan territory.

The construction of a new metropolitan governance has different levels of articulation. On the one hand, the collaboration of stakeholders is essential in this regard (associations, private business sector, unions and the civil society organisations), as well as the necessary cooperation, collaboration, complementarity and co-responsibility shared by the different administrations in a territory like ours.

In addition, as we pointed out in the introductory framework of the REM⁴ (Metropolitan Strategic Reflection) project, one should bear in mind the fact that citizenry has also become more complex and diverse. In this regard, neither classical models of a huge welfare state, nor the current inspired in a new public management directed at efficiency and effectiveness are able to cope adequately with these challenges. Today the uniformity of benefits does not

⁴ The REM (Metropolitan Strategic Reflection) is a process of the construction of a discourse and intervention programme for the next 10 years drawn up by our institution. To develop, please see <http://www.amb.cat/web/amb/actualitat/publicacions/detall/-/publicacio/rem--versio-reduida-/1134501/11696>

guarantee equity or social cohesion. Good administration today demands the adequacy of services to the citizens' diverse range of conditions and needs of which we cannot assume homogeneity. The need for the sustained participation of citizens is, therefore, reinforced under the paradigm of pluralism and co-responsibility⁵.

However, governance must be promoted through all levels of government and, therefore, it is necessary to have a constant and accurate reading of the reality of the surroundings and of the management plans that are implemented, with indicators and information from the networks of participating actors.

Facing these problems and in the aforementioned context, we have to overcome these permanent limitations in the exercise of a new model of governance, because society now, more than ever, needs to see clearly that the administration takes into account the variables and tools needed to solve the problems raised. The issue today is to convert the solutions for these key issues into government action. In this regard, we need to keep in mind a set of principles in our experience:

- We are the fruit of a particular, recent history of institutional cooperation between a groups of municipalities. One cannot ignore the practices used and the mechanisms established.
- We must assume that we are living at a time of complex governance, with various causes which should be pointed out and borne in mind.
- We should keep in mind the concurrence of several administrations in a complex territory, which has exhausted in many aspects its growth resources, with traditions and different experiences in management, with non-homogenous interests and needs and, sometimes, contradictory.
- The social, economic evolution is not a clear fact and it raises important questions on what needs to be done and how. The economic crisis and the increasing social inequalities, as well as the loss of determined services caused by this situation entail a scenario in the short and medium term of great difficulty in the municipalities and, therefore, in the metropolitan territory itself.

This process exists under the principle of a system of co-existence (like up to now) of metropolitan and municipal structures. One of the wise choices in this process is the vision municipalities have of proximity and belonging to the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, certainly much more so than in the case of other institutions which they do not feel so close to. This also allows for more dialogue and the great potentiality of the project in the building of an innovative and rewarding model for all actors involved.

⁵ Prats, Joan. Op. Cit.

By the same token, we can say that work has been carried out collectively with other administrations very constructively, although at times work on the ground has not always been clear in terms of competences. In this case it must be said that, as a general rule, there have been few failings in the multi-level institutional reality between metropolitan and local management, and this factor is not quite so clear sometimes in the interaction with other levels of administration.

We have seen and shown the need to address a metropolitan model of leadership for many of the issues which affect the territory, on many occasions without having the necessary expertise. One clear example is the position with regard to infrastructures whereby aspects, which “theoretically” do not fall within metropolitan or municipal competence, require a boost and clear, forceful leadership which, basically, should be exercised by the most active and nearest representative, like the Barcelona Metropolitan Area and the municipalities themselves in the immediate surroundings have done, obviously with the concurrence and participation of other levels of the administration (a prime example is the case of the High Speed Train (TAV), but there have been others, like the impulse of the Mediterranean Corridor or the Air Routes Committee, etc., which have also shown this need.)

Inter-municipal cooperation, the deployment of joint, collective and political projects, work in the municipal network and complicity in decisions are key aspects which have strengthened and are deemed necessary to be applied as an essential mechanism, a seat of approval and a major hallmark in metropolitan action.

Bearing in mind these aspects which make examples of governance sufficiently clear and precise, one needs to design future actions taking the following priorities into account which should govern the metropolitan project.

Present challenges in Barcelona Metropolitan Governance

Overcoming major difficulties

We have insisted on the fact that governance in the current context has become a much more complex reality than in previous times. The reasons which we described as a change of social perception in institutions or as a crisis of legitimacy, are also conditioned by other factors which we will detail as follows:

- The first element is the complexity that results from an operation in the territory with diverse logical frameworks: mobility, town planning, the environment, social policies, housing etc. Each one of the areas of action operates with diverse models, systems, procedures and

legalities, and, above all, with very different planning times and management.

- A second aspect lies in the fact that the operations of actors (politicians, managers, opinion leaders and professionals) and sectors (the aforementioned) work with different perceptions and approaches of “efficiency” or sometimes even radically contradictory ones: political logic, social logic, economic logic and criteria for efficiency, etc. There would be no lack of examples of experiences of all kinds which would exemplify advances, obstacles and resistance in regard to this aspect.
- With regard to the aforementioned, but with its own logic, we would find the stakeholders’ pressures and interests which act under principles and objectives which represent different areas and which, on many occasions, give rise to marked contradictions.
- Another key issue is the diverging interests among town halls which form part of the metropolis: investments, the location of projects, national investment priorities, and the social division of work. This phenomenon of inter-municipal competence can sometimes be lethal for a project of cooperation and complementarity. This is one of the core issues in the building of governance.
- A further element, of no less importance, is the municipal will to participate. We have seen that in many countries where metropolitan organization has been imposed from “above”, one has come across strong resistance, above all, when the degree of “sovereignty” has been challenged at a local level or rather its capacity to determine its own policies and its decision making ability.
- In this regard, another aspect which should be borne in mind lies in the limited nature of models of governance. There is indeed a need to begin to experiment with new models, which articulate the diverse levels of relationship: State-metropolis; municipalities-metropolis; municipality-municipality; citizenry-municipality; citizenry-metropolis; metropolis-civil society etc. In this regard, we contribute to an idea which needs to be developed especially, which is the concept of asymmetrical responsibility. Not all of the governance stakeholders have the same interests, wills, knowledge, vocations, or information to participate in an equitable manner. Therefore, the process of governance should be built bearing in mind this reality.
- An aspect we cannot deny is that, although a metropolitan area has been constituted, we have to keep in mind that there are a multiplicity of laws and regulations at different scales and levels which are not always complementary: Europe, States, Regions and Sectors, etc. that converge but not always at the same rhythm, precision and margin of autonomy and responsibility.

- We have failed to mention maybe purposely the main problem of the metropolitan construction: the need for a forceful, credible, legitimate and proactive leadership. This is not a minor issue and, on many occasions, many projects have been abandoned due to the difficulty in building a leadership like the one which is needed in the present context.

After this brief analysis of the problems, we will explain the most important aspects of the governance project in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area as we have done in the REM (Metropolitan Strategic Reflection).

The strategy of capital status and governance

The Barcelona Metropolitan Area must promote a model of adaptive leadership for its correct organization and management, with teams taking important steps to lead innovative processes with new values, the dissemination of new rules, new attitudes and skills.

The new reality we are living in the metropolitan surroundings requires a new vision which must combine leadership, effective policies of social and territorial cohesion, innovation and a strong commitment from up-close, and an approach of transparency and joint responsibility. Within that context, governance constitutes a key element in metropolitan governance which is reaffirmed and consolidated in the project of a user-friendly administration, both effective and proactive, adapted to a changing environment.

This model is reinforced and provides feedback with a conjunction of diverse aspects which define the deployment of strategies for more transparency, more participation, information and communication with citizens. These are the objectives at this stage in which today the new information and communication technologies are an indispensable ally, without forgetting the conventional means of formal and informal communication which should also be used.

We need to prepare human resources to guarantee an effective, civic participation in the framework of good governance. We must continue innovating working technologies and methodologies, constantly looking for more appropriate models and systems to guarantee the maximum efficiency in the provision of services.

In order to guarantee good governance which is close to citizens, participatory, transparent and effective, we need the necessary resources. In this regard, we will continue to claim the models of sufficient, stable funding in terms of transport, water, residues, suburbs and housing are complied with. Only in this way can we guarantee that the metropolis of Barcelona fulfils its role of the capital of Catalonia and pillar of the Euro-region in the Mediterranean.

The main challenge to be developed in terms of governance and which improves the concept of management, utility, accountability, transparency, effectiveness in public goods, of the public perception of a change in the relationship model with the authorities, of justifying the competence framework of participation, and in order to make it reality, the strategic priority of building a **Barcelona as a global capital with innovate governance** emerges.

Arising from this priority, the main strands of work which have to be addressed in the field of metropolitan governance of Barcelona are as follows:-

- The role of Barcelona as a metropolitan capital in a global village.
- The framework conforming to public services of quality, transparency and accountability.
- Greater interaction and agreement with citizens and with the social and economic fabric.
- The strengthening of the competence framework.

These lines will provide an answer to the fact that the Barcelona Metropolitan Area is today a node in the European network of cities and metropolis. We have the identity of a city which is open, dynamic, creative, rigorous and productive.

The role of Barcelona as a metropolitan capital in a global village

This is a city with important town planning and public space, with a social model working in favour of inclusion, an environmental model which positions itself in the fight against climate change and for sustainability, and an urban model which believes in resilient, intelligent cities.

However, this is a positioning which one has to fight daily to maintain; infrastructures, centrality and proposals need to be constantly renovated and strengthened.

Barcelona (and consequently the metropolis) is also the capital of Catalonia and is responsible for working in this regard, as a driver of creativity and to preserve and improve its cultural, linguistic heritage which is part of the nation it defines.

Metropolitan Barcelona should have a relationship and interact with the rest of the cities in the metropolitan region, in Catalonia, in Europe and in the world which would lead us to a relational, strategic model of leadership based on providing support to third parties and working on the great challenges which face metropolitan areas everywhere, particularly in innovation activities in terms of urban policies.

On the other hand, Barcelona has gained a real recognition over the years in the international context. Barcelona's effort to remain in the global area has had unquestionable success which has provided a municipal and metropolitan vision and perspective which has been an example and paradigm of performance, an

effort which has materialized in organizations like the CGLU and Metropolis and in initiatives of diverse cooperation like Medcities and European programmes which position our metropolis as a leader in terms of the transfer of urban technology of all kinds.

Metropolitan Barcelona and the Barcelona Metropolitan Area will play a role in leadership and innovation in terms of metropolitan governance and also in the transfer of knowledge to countries like France and Italy where new laws have been adopted which will create new metropolitan areas.

This role as capital is expressed in many paradigmatic actions, among which the most well-known are its role as capital both in terms of infrastructures and the promotion of Catalan culture, as an example in social inclusion projects, as a support to projects of solidarity and cooperation in development, as external projection and as a bridge with other territories in the Mediterranean, Asia and Latin America.

However, there is another aspect which should be kept in mind in the definition of capital status which is extracted from “vocations and wills”. As Vives i Torrens⁶ rightly says, capital status does not come from one sole factor. We might add that this function is exercised rather than proclaimed. There are cities which have never been state “capitals” but nevertheless have played or play a key role in economy, technology or social innovation. Good examples of this are New York (which is not even the capital of its own state), Toronto, Rio de Janeiro or Milan.

The capital status of Barcelona should combine this vocation with an approach of a more strategic nature, in the best sense of the word, which knows how to combine wills, expectations, challenges, opportunities and feasibility.⁷

The need for governance with quality public services, transparency and accountability

Quality metropolitan public services must be a priority and on the creation of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area we have decided to go in depth into that which was implemented by the three entities separately, broadening its scale also in the organizational suggestions. We need dynamic and committed organizations with values of public service, efficient in the fulfilment of their objectives and effective in the use of resources.

⁶ Vives i Torrens: Strategies in European metropolitan areas faced with the enlargement of the European Union. PEMB Barcelona

⁷ In the same study mentioned in Vives i Torrens it refers to elements which help to define the three models of metropolitan areas in which the central city can be the city seat as the political capital and where their regulatory authority is located and where decisions are made. Innovative city which brings together localisation factors in new technologies (technology, human capital, creativity space). The third specialization would be the recreational city, which could be supplemental to the previous two as it would help to attract qualified human capital, which maybe could be assimilated as “quality of life to attract talent.

In the past years we have proposed many improvements and both the progressive implementation of the ISO standards in many services as well as setting in motion the new web with much more interactive and effective mechanisms for carrying out certain procedures are proof of our good intentions. Since the time of the setting up of the new Barcelona Metropolitan Area, very important steps are being taken to improve electronic administration, citizens' services, new systems of mobility and safety and internal management.

All in all, we understand that the objective in this matter is to intensify and improve the use of information and communication technologies to implement policies in the metropolitan territory, to improve services, develop new ones and increase efficiency and quality.

Finally, we have to go deep into the processes of accountability for citizens and increase the transparency in our action. In this regard, it is necessary to establish a process of public communication and permanent dialogue among all metropolitan actors, and in particular with citizenry. One must keep in mind that the metropolitan government should apply the responsibility of informing, explaining, clarifying the procedures carried out and the way resources are administered and their results.

It is, therefore, necessary to provide information which allows one to view the results obtained from the actions deployed by the Barcelona Metropolitan Area and, in this way, be subject to citizens' scrutiny. In a nutshell, it is necessary to bear in mind that the responsibility for being held accountable to citizens is relevant during the whole cycle of public management and one must be willing to be held accountable throughout all stages. In short, the three key factors are:-

- To increase the level of information to citizens in all management processes and mechanisms.
- To have a conversation, explain or contend, respond to requests, complaints and suggestions.
- Feedback and encourage metropolitan government action, with the implementation of continuous improvements to processes.

The main challenge in public services in the coming years consists of creating an organization which is one of quality, professionalism, innovation and proximity as the core concepts of its activity. These are legitimate demands from citizenry who want to know how resources are administered and require the administration to be more prepared every day to offer quality services.

Strengthening the institutional framework

The setting up of the new Barcelona Metropolitan Area is a political and institutional challenge that requires tasking far-reaching decisions to be able from the beginning to establish and consolidate the structure of the new institution and complete the administrative integration of previous metropolitan institutions, improving efficiency and achieving financial balance by means of an adequate, stable system, adapted to that which the law anticipates and that, in addition to reinforcing its own taxation system, ensures the participation of the

State and the Catalan Government with the aim of achieving progressive improvements and the future feasibility of metropolitan services.

In this regard, it will be necessary to work within the Barcelona Metropolitan Area and in all its organizations and subsidiaries and/or companies linked to the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, to assure the best way to fulfil the institutional objectives applying the criteria of efficiency and rationality, guaranteeing proximity and citizens' participation in the management and provision of public services and the right to good administration defined in terms of rights of access, transparency, information and the promotion of participation, to build an administration model which is resilient and sustainable, which is committed to human capital in its organization and is committed to the challenges in its surroundings. Therefore, it will be necessary to:-

- Consolidate a new, participatory institutional structure
- Improve financial capacity for the provision of services
- Fully assume the new competence framework and the responsibilities conferred

Greater interaction and dialogue with citizenry and the social, economic fabric

The degree of complexity in contemporary societies requires the concurrence of various social actors and that of citizens to develop society. As mentioned previously, it is not enough to centre legitimate democracy exclusively in strict electoral processes, and these must be supplemented with other models and areas of legitimacy which depend, in good measure, on the capacity for agreement, cooperation, and the discovery of mechanisms of mutual understanding with the different groups in society and the capacity of guaranteeing the full participation of citizens.

Improvements in governance necessarily have to reformulate and democratize the relationship between the metropolitan government and the social environment which surrounds it and promote initiatives which allow one to communicate and interact better, by means of the following:

- Systems of open communication, making use of all possible channels, particularly information technologies.
- Innovative mechanisms which make it easier to understand the emerging needs and demands in an objective, proactive way.
- Promotion of a policy of inclusion and dialogue with the different groups of social actors in the processes of public decision.
- Design and promotion of different forms of representation in the civil society for the management of collective interests in the metropolitan area.
- Search for mechanisms of agreement, understanding and cooperation in the promotion of projects with the private sector with implications even in the funding of projects

In this context, the metropolitan project will demand a genuine commitment for the participation of citizens which should be used to strengthen and legitimize public action, increasing plurality in the knowledge of social reality, and, above

all, posing the principles of co-responsibility and actions which involve citizens effectively.

In this context, we need to continue going deep into the processes of exploiting information technologies and telecommunications (ICT) to the maximum offering new opportunities, previously unimaginable, of relationship and communication with citizens and of democratic innovation.

Access to ICT is emerging as a new citizen's right and, therefore, it is our responsibility to make access to these new technologies easier. The reduction of the digital divide is an essential component in the fight against social exclusion.