Did you win? Sortition comes to the politics of Madrid

¿Te ha tocado? El sorteo llega a la política de Madrid

ERNESTO GANUZA (IESA/CSIC) & MARIA MENÉNDEZ (University of Copenague)

Abstract

In early 2019 Madrid launched the first permanent citizen participation scheme in which members are chosen by lot: the Observatory of the City. Although the scheme was abandoned by the new government after the May 2019 elections, the Madrid experiment raises important questions about democracy. The project is another example of the growing prominence that the draw has acquired in many countries, as an ideal element to organise and order the participation of people in political affairs. In this paper we describe the first steps of this scheme and also highlight the features that make the draw in Madrid a unique experience both because of the implications of the use of the draw, and from the point of view of similar schemes that are being carried out in other parts of the world.

Key words: draw, participation, deliberation, politics, Madrid.

Resumen

Madrid ha puesto en marcha, desde inicios del año 2019, la primera experiencia de participación ciudadana permanente cuyos miembros son elegidos por sorteo, el Observatorio de la Ciudad. A pesar de que la experiencia fue abandonada por el nuevo Gobierno después de las elecciones de mayo del 2019, la experiencia madrileña plantea importantes cuestiones sobre la democracia. Esta experiencia se suma al creciente protagonismo que ha adquirido el sorteo en muchos países, como un elemento idóneo para organizar y ordenar la participación de la gente en los asuntos políticos. En este trabajo exponemos los primeros pasos de esta experiencia, así como destacamos los rasgos que hacen del sorteo en Madrid una experiencia singular, tanto por las implicaciones que tiene el uso del sorteo como desde el punto de vista de las experiencias similares que se hacen en otras partes del mundo.

INTRODUCTION

"Democracy was created around 2500 years ago in Athens. Back then, many politicians and people who were part of the public institutions were selected by sortition. Today we launch the Observatory of the City in Madrid, which is a permanent citizen participation body where members are selected by lot." In this way, Pablo Soto, the regional representative for Transparency, Open Government, and Participation in Madrid, launched one of the most innovative democratic schemes to date. The launch took place on 30 March 2019 and was hosted in the same room where the regional representatives in Madrid participate in plenary debates.

For three months, the Observatory of the City (OC, henceforth) was the first worldwide attempt to establish a permanent participation body in which members were elected through sortition. Since the end of 2019, a similar initiative has been implemented in a German-speaking region in Belgium, where the parliament approved the creation of a similar citizen assembly with the support of all the political parties.

Indeed, sortition has been the focus of attention in many of the most innovative participatory schemes worldwide (van Reybrouck, 2017). For example, in 2011 a citizen assembly elected by sortition developed a new constitution in Iceland. Similarly, in 2016 a citizen assembly composed of 99 citizens selected by sortition proposed to change the abortion laws in Ireland, where abortion had been a controversial issue for a long time. The proposal to change the law was eventually accepted by a public referendum in 2018 (Farrel et al., 2019). Another example is a citizen assembly in Oregon (USA), where citizens selected by sortition gather periodically to draw up reports preceding public referendums. The reports are then sent to all citizens before the actual referendum. These reports seek to help them make informed decisions on the matter at stake (Gastil et al., 2014). Finally, a citizen assembly has recently been created in France to discuss public policies that address climate change.

The number of participatory schemes using sortition is increasing rapidly, but they are not new. They started to become popular in the 90s in the form of Deliberative Surveys and Citizens' Juries (Cuesta et al., 2008). Even though they are not novel, a distinguishing aspect is their ability to influence the political context in which they are created. More specifically, while sortition

initiatives used to have limited impact, they have recently become part of formal decision-making processes, resulting in a greater visible impact on public policies (Sintomer, 2011). In times of democratic crisis (van Reybrouck, 2017), sortition is starting to offer alternatives to the current political systems. The main objective of these alternatives is to extend citizens' opportunities for qualified participation in public debates.

1. WHAT IS SORTITION AND HOW IS IT ENACTED? THE IDEA THAT ANYONE CAN PARTICIPATE IN POLITICS

Even though the idea of selecting a participatory body through sortition is considered to be disruptive according to current understandings of politics, the underlying concept is quite simple. It basically means that "anyone" can participate in a public debate. Although this kind of participation was legitimated in classic forms of democracy, it opposes the distinctive element that justifies representative democracies (Manin, 1999). This is due to the fact that representative democracies are grounded on the idea that politics should be done by "experts", meaning highly knowledgeable people or people with socially desirable features. Conversely, in democracies that rely on sortition, anyone could be elected to participate in a political debate, regardless of their background, ideology or preconceived ideas.

Following this line of thinking, the OC in Madrid was conceptualised as a permanent participation body, where selected citizens met a minimum of eight times throughout one year. After this period, new members were elected through sortition. Those who had already participated would be left out of the process. This procedure ensured a periodic renewal of elected members, thereby preventing the establishment of power relationships among participants while minimising as far as possible dishonest or fraudulent conducts (Moreno Pestaña, 2019). In addition, this procedure sought to disrupt the logic that characterises participative processes by allowing other citizens, who might not proactively promote themselves, to participate.

Sortition is usually undertaken through a random lot of citizens taken from the official demographic reports. In Spain, this could be the "Padrón Municipal" (local census) or "Censo Estatal" (national census). Let us take a closer look at how this was done in the case of Madrid. The OC was designed to be constituted by 49 members and 49 alternate members. To select all of them, the city council selected 30,000 households in Madrid by using an

algorithm that delivered randomised numbers.[1] Then, a single invitation letter was sent to each of those households, and any person registered in the household could accept the invitation. In all, 1135 citizens accepted the invitation. After this, the second selection phase started.

This second stage began by randomly selecting participants among those who had accepted. This selection was controlled by a series of sociodemographic criteria, which were aimed at achieving a representative sample of the population of Madrid. Thus, a total of 50 layers were created depending on different variables, such as 1) gender (male and female); 2) age group (five groups); and 3) geographical distribution (five groups resulting from the aggregation of 21 districts). The objective was to select a sample that enabled heterogeneous participation, following the usual criteria in statistical sampling.[2]

This procedure is common in contemporary sortition initiatives, where the selection of participants is not totally randomised but instead considers stratified statistical sampling (van Reybrock, 2017). Although statistical representation cannot be claimed, this procedure seeks to achieve a descriptive representation of the assembly members.

Finally, it is common practice for participants to be reimbursed for their participation. This was also true in the case of Madrid, where the city council offered the same amount as that paid when citizens are selected to participate in election polling stations. The financial reimbursement is often justified as an incentive for citizens to participate.

2. BUT WHAT'S THE POINT OF SORTITION?

Deliberation is the distinguishing characteristic that differentiates sortition from any other participatory democratic experiences. The fact that "anyone" can participate, and that elected participants change periodically, seeks to set the conditions for an open political debate. This choice might seem contradictory, since we are used to associating deliberation with

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[1]   The whole selection procedure can be consulted in the City Council documents:
https://sede.madrid.es/FrameWork/generacionPDF/boam8330_185.pdf?numeroPublicacion=8330&idSecc
ion=29c1f86e8e7b8610VgnVCM2000001f4a900aRCRD&nombreFichero=boam8330_185&cacheKey=42
&guid=ac4ddf4208998610VgnVCM1000001d4a900aRCRD&csv=true

[2]   Further details on the second phase can be found at:
https://www.madrid.es/UnidadesDescentralizadas/ObservatorioCiudad/Actas/Acta_2019-03-
12/Acta_2019-03-12.pdf

discussions among experts. How could we possibly expect deliberations among strangers, who are supposedly not qualified? Considering the current political framings, the fact that supposedly non-qualified people discuss issues of critical relevance for the correct functioning of politics is possibly the most disruptive aspect of sortition. However, this is one of the fundamental cornerstones of the sortition initiatives that are starting to emerge worldwide.

Acknowledging the value of deliberation among supposedly non-qualified people is a well-established practice in the literature on political deliberation. The underlying idea is that citizens participate in solving specific issues of public interest. In Athens, in the early days of democracy, sortition was justified by its associated features. More specifically, sortition allowed governments to be defined as a government of "many" in which "anyone" could participate, unlike a government of just a "few" or even "one". Nowadays, sortition is not presented as an institutional alternative to current governmental arrangements; instead, it is presented as a support to governments, thereby opening up debates around concrete issues of public interest. Consequently, the internal dynamics of bodies constituted through sortition are usually enacted through deliberation (Sintomer, 2011). The underlying idea that justifies establishing debates among supposedly non-qualified people has to do with the universalisation of deliberation as a political tool. This universalisation has primarily occurred in the last 50 years and it foregrounds the importance of human activities that deal with communication, rather than with the maximisation of individual profits.

This stance does not imply that deliberation theories are so naïve as to claim that no person is guided by self-interest. Nevertheless, they consider that it is still possible to consider a communication space in which deliberation among people is the main focus.[3] Following this line of thinking, deliberative experiences in the last decades have focused on empirically-based comparative assessments of different methods to help maximise deliberation. Indeed, maximising deliberation is precisely the reason behind implementing many of the current sortition initiatives.

In the 90s, Popular Juries and Deliberative Surveys became popular. These two participation mechanisms seek to discuss a specific issue based on

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[3]   Studies on communication, from the most classic (Habermas, 1996) to the most recent ones (Dryzek, 2010), can be accessed. For an overview, see Ganuza (2012).

previously provided qualified information.[4] Methodologically, these mechanisms were grounded on public opinion surveys and, therefore, participants were randomly selected based on a stratified sample of the population, as was carried out in the OC in Madrid.

Once the participants had been selected, they could discuss a topic or issue, which was usually appointed by the government on which the participation body was dependent. To facilitate discussions, participants had access to 1) expert information and 2) facilitators with experience in designing deliberation mechanisms. This procedure ensured that the participants had access to people who were qualified on the matter at stake. Divergent opinions by qualified people were usually provided. Also, before engaging in a debate, participants had the chance to ask these experts questions. Afterwards, the debate took place among the participants, following a set of dynamics designed by the facilitators. The resulting outcome was a space of rich discussions, different from discussions that could happen on the street, and grounded on the general human ability to develop political thinking based on qualified information.

The initiative implemented in Madrid was not too different from other participation schemes, although it did have some peculiarities. As in similar experiences, the city council offered a facilitation team (7 people altogether), who were in charge of enabling the discussions. In addition, there were also experts on participation mechanisms. However, the initiative carried out in Madrid slightly pushed the boundaries of what had been done up until then by granting the OC a distinguishing feature, as we will see in the next subsection.

3. SORTITION IN MADRID – A DISTINGUISHING FEATURE

In Madrid, the OC had two main objectives, which were described in its regulations and approved by the local government on 29 January 2019. The first objective was to discuss and provide recommendations on issues of public interest that were the responsibility of the local government. The second objective was to propose public consultations based on proposals made by citizens on the digital platform developed by the local government

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[4]   There is an extensive body of research on this kind of schemes. This book (in Spanish) describes many of these experiences while providing a detailed overview and analysis of a deliberative survey carried out in the region of Andalusia in 2006: Cuesta et al. (2008).

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(decide.madrid.es). More specifically, the OC members had to assess the most voted proposal and decide whether they supported the idea of the city council launching a public consultation to the entire population. It was at this point where the deliberative dimension came into play. Both objectives granted the OC enough autonomy to establish its own agenda. Therefore, the OC constituted an autonomous political space, which did not depend on the local government. Nevertheless, the government still reserved the right to ask the OC to provide its own assessment on a particular matter, as happens in most of the sortition initiatives worldwide.

This distinguishing feature is very emblematic, as it means that the political body created a citizen assembly whose sovereignty directly depended on the citizenship in Madrid (through the digital platform decide.madrid.es), bypassing the municipal plenary. In this way, the local government attempted to culminate its main political proposal in terms of participation, which refers to the development of the award-winning digital platform decide.madrid.[5] On this platform, any citizen of Madrid could propose and vote on issues for which the local government was legally responsible. Every proposal supported by at least 1% of the citizenry of Madrid (approx. 27,000 supporting votes) would be discussed by the city council and eventually brought to popular consultation. The creation of the OC meant that the OC could support the most popular proposals, even if they had been supported by 1% of the population. The second aspect described in the OC regulations was that its members had full autonomy to discuss any issue of public interest. In addition, they could request the local government to organise a popular consultation or to provide them with a report describing what was currently being done to address the issue. This meant that the OC had controlling power over local political activities and that this power was not determined or specified by a particular person, but was constructed through discussions among its members.

Most of the handbooks seeking to describe the mechanisms and underlying conditions required to organise a sortition initiative discourage providing such a level of autonomy to members that are selected by draw.[6]

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[5] The digital platform decide.madrid.es was awarded by the UN in 2018 on the basis of "making institutions more inclusive and supporting participation in decision-making". https://diario.madrid.es/decidemadrid/2018/06/29/el-ayuntamiento-de-madrid-recoge-el-premio-al-servicio-publico-de-la-onu/

[6] This link provides access to one of the most active foundations in promoting sortition experiences based on deliberative approaches: https://www.newdemocracy.com.au

Instead, they suggest focusing primarily on the deliberative functions, meaning that the body depends on the political institutions. The main reasons underlying this are that a deliberation is relatively easy to organise, has been broadly tested, and does not require a special setup since it relates directly to the institutionalised dynamics. In sum, the main objective of the draw is to broaden participation in debates about controversial public issues by selecting a heterogeneous sample of citizens who do not have a background in politics. Conversely, having an autonomous agenda implies granting a group of citizens selected by lot with political agency. This approach has not been tested empirically. In addition, the resulting body would not be related to the existing institutions chosen through representative forms of democracy. Therefore, establishing such a body would require a solid foundation that goes beyond the nature and benefits currently agreed on by academics.

The novelty of the OC has been rejected by the new government cabinet (led by three political parties: PP, Ciudadanos, and Vox), which was composed after the local elections in May 2019.[7] Therefore, the members of the OC met only twice, which prevented us from engaging in an exhaustive analysis of this initiative and therefore limits the extent to which we can come to conclusions. Nevertheless, we can highlight some of our impressions based on the participant observations we performed in the two sessions. We summarise our observations in two main points. The first point relates to the challenges associated with minimising biases that occur in participative initiatives. This challenge is indeed commonly reported in other schemes, including those which experiment with sortition mechanisms. The second one deals with the challenges that emerge when trying to articulate an autonomous agenda within a body in which dynamics are shaped in terms of enabling deliberation rather than a critical reflection on local policies.

4. BIASES IN PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES

Participatory processes tend to suffer from a specific bias, namely, participation tends to be higher among highly-educated people with economic resources and spare time (Bryan, 2004). This bias is usually amplified in those cases in which participation happens on a voluntary basis. It also opens an important social gap and fosters inequalities. In theory, sortition could

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[7]   https://www.lavanguardia.com/local/madrid/20190913/47320881340/el-gobierno-modificara-el-observatorio-de-la-ciudad-para-reservar-los-foros-locales-como-herramienta-de-participacion.html

prevent those biases. This is a non-trivial matter, since a great part of the claimed benefits of deliberation and sortition procedures lie in their ability to provide a more representative sample of society.

However, there is an underlying issue in all the sortition initiatives, namely that not everyone would be willing to participate even if they were selected by draw. For example, in Madrid, only 1.3 out of every 30 households accepted to participate, which introduces a bias. Who are the people who agree to participate? Do they have any common characteristics? Data protection regulations do not allow access to detailed information about the participants; it is therefore difficult to outline the profile of those who participated in the two OC sessions. However, we can infer some of them through a short questionnaire that was filled in by the participants at the end of the first session. This questionnaire included general questions and did not allow the identification of particular individuals. For example, based on regular surveys on public opinion, it is known that not all citizens have the same interest in participating in activities and public policies or in knowing what happens in the city. Taking into consideration this bias, which tends to influence the profile of those who participate in traditional participatory initiatives, the local government included a knowledge question (i.e. "Do you know the digital platform decide.madrid.es?"). The results of this question can shed some light on potential biases among the members of the OC.

More particularly, we can compare their awareness of the digital platform and the extent to which they participated in the platform to the level of general awareness of the platform among the population in Madrid, as reported in the Quality of Life Survey (ECV).[8] This survey is carried out periodically by the city council.

The aggregated results suggest that those who accepted the invitation to participate in the OC indeed have a greater awareness of the digital platform than the general population. Specifically, a total of 34 people (74% of the members) stated that they knew the digital platform. This percentage is relatively high when compared with the data provided in the ECV in 2019, which shows that 33.7% of the population knows the platform. Figure 1 illustrates this difference. In addition, the responses to the question about the way/s in which they had participated in the digital platform show that most of

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[8]   This link provides access to a summary of the results of the ECV survey: https://www.madrid.es/UnidadesDescentralizadas/Calidad/Observatorio_Ciudad/06_S_Percepcion/En cuestasCalidad/EncuestaMadrides/ficheros/2018/Principales%20resultados_2019_ECVSSP.pdf

the participants declared having used the platform to support proposals (41%), followed by those who had only looked at proposals (20%).

The fact that many of the members of the OC had used the digital platform in different ways suggests that they accepted the invitation because they had a greater interest in politics than the general population in Madrid. Based on the results of the ECV we also know that those who know the platform are also those who participate the most in other participatory activities. In addition, those who know the platform have a higher level of education than the general population (according to the results of the ECV, 48% of the people who know the platform have completed a higher education degree).
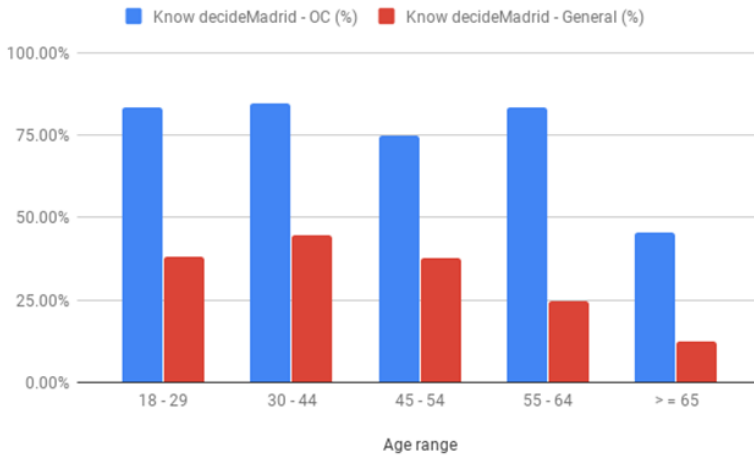
Source: Own elaboration based on ECV in Madrid 2019

Sortition in Madrid did not totally address self-selection biases in participation; however, it could have reduced this bias in comparison to other participatory experiences (although we would need further empirical research to confirm this). The impact of the draw on self-selection bias is something that the authors investigated through the first session of the OC. Specifically, at the beginning of the first OC session on 30 March 2019, we agreed to carry out short interviews with the participants to investigate the reason that led them to accept the invitation. The goal was to have a better understanding of the enrolment dynamics. We interviewed seven people (15% of the total number of participants): four women and three men. The interviews took the form of informal encounters and they were not recorded. Even though their

replies do not constitute a representative sample of the participants, they can help shed light on some of the main aspects regarding enrolment. Two of the interviewees regularly participated in local associations in their neighbourhoods, although only one of them was fully active. Another interviewee, who was retired, used to participate in a neighbours' association. The remaining interviewees did not participate in any association or local group, although they all mentioned that the main reasons for participating were their interest in the city, their constant discontent with how things were being done in their neighbourhood or district, and their regular complaints about ill-functioning aspects of the city. Those regular criticisms were not sufficient motivation to trigger their participation in existing participation bodies, such as local forums, or to become part of a local association. Yet, they were paramount factors when considering whether or not to accept the invitation to participate in the OC.

The experience gained in Madrid illustrates the importance of carefully designing the sampling method, which entails reflecting on the choice of sociodemographic criteria and on the incentives to facilitate the means for anyone to participate. For example, in a city with a high proportion of immigrants (accounting for approximately 15% of the population), there were no immigrants among the main members of the OC. A distinguishing characteristic of institutional bodies selected by sortition, when compared to other traditional participatory methods, is their ability to learn from the past and to rotate their members. Since the draw is primarily based on sociodemographic criteria, it is relatively easy to apply other criteria with the aim of increasing representativeness. For example, in the case of the OC, additional sociodemographic criteria could be added that take into account the educational level or nationality. Simultaneously, incentives could be applied and updated. Indeed, continuous learning is one of the main objectives of most of the sortition schemes and it is fundamentally related to their internal dynamics.

5. THE POLITICAL AGENDA AND THE DEBATE

As previously mentioned, most of the sortition initiatives have two main objectives. On the one hand, they seek to create a space to address issues which is open to the general population, while, on the other hand, they seek to justify the outcomes based on a deliberative process. For this purpose, bodies

selected by draws are usually designed around a specific issue, which they try to solve through rich debates. This means that those bodies have no agency to establish their own agenda. For example, the citizen assembly created by the Irish government – which can be considered the most emblematic deliberative experience to date (Farrel et al., 2019) - met with the aim of addressing an issue that was proposed by the Parliament. The OC in Madrid goes beyond this logic, since its members are granted the ability to deal with the issues that they consider relevant, as established in its regulations. The exceptional nature of the OC in Madrid calls for the opening of a debate that is hardly ever considered in the existing body of literature. Furthermore, in those few cases in which this debate is considered, they tend to dismiss it (Delannoi et al., 2013).

Nevertheless, based on the novelty and uniqueness of the OC, we would like to highlight some of its peculiarities and reflect on the difficulties hindering its development. Here, we should highlight the fact that these insights are primarily based on our observations during the first two sessions. This short period limits the extent to which we can develop an informed opinion on how the OC could have evolved within the political agenda in which it was created.

The OC presented a paradox due to the constitutive regulation that was developed by members of the local government and the internal dynamics that depended on external experts in deliberative processes. The friction between these two different logics, represented in each of the parties, became evident through the tensions that emerged in the first two sessions we were able to observe.

The facilitators provided by the local government had extensive experience in facilitating debates; in addition, they participated in a course to develop professional skills on deliberation. Even some members of the New Democracy Foundation, who are international experts in organising deliberative processes, took part in some of the sessions. All these aspects brought to the foreground the deliberative nature of the scheme, which can be considered to be aligned with many other experiences currently being implemented worldwide. However, these sessions were organised by representatives of the local government, who emphasised the ability of people selected by lot to independently establish their own agenda. Therefore, the facilitators and organisers often had to reach methodological and operational compromises to establish a deliberative process while ensuring that the OC could make use of its autonomy. One of the biggest challenges could come

from different interpretations regarding the expected outcomes: while some interpreted "debate", others understood "proposals".

An interesting anecdote that happened during the second session can illustrate this point. In any debate organised following a deliberative approach, it is required that the participants have access to divergent - and even opposing - expert views on an issue. The extent to which such views are represented depends on the facilitators because they are critical to the quality of the debate. In the OC, the experts were appointed by the members of the OC, which in fact triggered some confusion at the end of the first session. The main reason for this confusion was that the participants did not know the experts and therefore could only point to problems or gaps. In half an hour, the participants identified some aspects that required further elaboration before being able to take a decision on whether to support the proposal. That request was channelled to some of the employees at the local government, who were given the task of gathering information and experts on the topics. That information was meant to aid participants during the second session. In this case, the proposal was "Derecho a jugar: para un Madrid más amigable con la infancia" ("The right to play: A child-friendlier Madrid"). This was a broad proposal, which put forward a strategic plan to develop policies and infrastructures for children in Madrid. As it was difficult to narrow down the proposal, the employees requested large amounts of information from different departments in the local government. This information was not curated but given directly to the employees at the second session, as they reported, and then provided to the participants. Experts were also involved in the second session, such as a person from local government elsewhere in Spain where successful interventions aimed at creating a child-friendlier city had been implemented. Therefore, the outcome was a session with very little deliberation if compared with other instances. A possible underlying reason for this limited deliberation could be that there were no opposing views; instead, a single positive view on child-friendlier cities was portrayed. Moreover, even though a large amount of information was made available to the members of the OC, this information was often provided as "raw" data. More particularly, the lack of contextualisation could have negatively influenced their ability to deliberate the positive aspects of the proposal.

The setup at the OC evidenced the challenges associated with creating a participatory body with agency to establish its own agenda. Some of these challenges are operational, meaning that the local government needs to be capable of taking charge of carrying out all the required tasks. Some other

challenges are structural, meaning that there needs to be a culture of participation among the general population. The latter entails enabling the means for the participants to realise their ability to bring proposals forward and to establish their own agenda independently. In this case, the proposal that was discussed was not supported and was therefore rejected.

6. CONCLUSIONS

In light of the experience at the OC, it might seem that the deliberative handbooks, associations and lobbies in favour of sortition were right when claiming that the main responsibility of a body elected by lot should be to discuss specific issues, and those issues should be selected by traditional political bodies. That might make sense. However, the Madrid experience is especially valuable, since it attempted to design an instrument that restored sovereignty back to citizens. In addition, it certainly suggests that to be able to set up such an instrument, many other instruments are needed. For example, it would be necessary to set up ways to compare different dynamics so that success could be determined empirically. In any case, the scheme in Madrid has certainly offered the first empirical case of a body elected by lot and with political autonomy. The only similar project to this is the permanent assembly recently created in the German-speaking region in Belgium. In that case, the participants also have the chance to establish their own agenda, although this will be done in a slightly different way. Specifically, in the case of Madrid, the agenda was partially guided by the proposals created on the digital platform Decide.madrid.es and this could not be changed; however, in the case of Belgium, the deliberative structure is divided into independent assemblies. One of the assemblies will set up the agenda, whereas the other one will discuss the issues that emerge from the first assembly. As we write, there are still no results from the Belgian initiative.

It is not possible to know what would have happened if the local government in Madrid that launched the OC had been re-elected. One thing that is almost certain is that we would have had time to investigate the OC empirically instead of doing it intuitively, as in this manuscript. Nonetheless, it is important to note this scheme as an attempt to open up questions on the role of citizens in democracy through direct participation and in relation to power distribution. It goes without saying that the representatives of the political parties in government at the time of writing (Ciudadanos and

Partido Popular) rejected the OC. The argument underlying this rejection was that it duplicated the responsibilities of the local government plenaries.[9] They were quite right in equating the OC and the local government plenaries, although there was not enough time to evaluate whether this could be a viable approach.

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[9]   https://www.europapress.es/madrid/noticia-luz-verde-observatorio-ciudad-49-ciudadanos-elegidos-aleatoriamente-deliberar-asuntos-consenso-20190129103054.html

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