

STRATEGIES OF SPANISH CITIES IN A GLOBAL, COMPETITIVE WORLD: BETWEEN LEADERSHIP, TECHNOCRACY AND PARTICIPATIVE STRATEGIC PLANNING

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Abstract:

The main Spanish Cities try to deal with the challenges of a whole-competitive world improving their government and governance mechanisms. On one hand, they have concentrated the local powers in the hands of their mayors, real leaders of their communities. The responsibilities of the local councils have been reduced to the deliberation and discussion of a few but strategic decisions (urban planning, budget, main local regulations, ...), and the control of the local executive bodies. On the other hand, they are improving the tools for the citizens' and Organised Economic Actors' participation. Finally, they are recruiting better-prepared, competitive managers for managing the services and local companies .

The State has acted as a leader of this process, by changing the legal framework of the local governments, in order to allow and give an impulse towards these changes. But in a politically decentralised country such as Spain, most of the proximity public policies are responsibilities of the regions, according to the Spanish Constitution and the Statutes of the 17 regions. And, in general terms, the regions have adopted a neo-centralistic behaviour toward the local governments, which, even in a context of inter-governmental co-operation, can seriously limit the possibilities of the big cities.

Even more, the regions have suppressed the multifunctional metropolitan areas, and have established just monofunctional, technocratic ones in some cases (Barcelona, Valencia), because they look to them as important competitive political actors.

The exception is Madrid, a very small over-populated region in the centre of Spain (about 8.000 square km, 6 million people), whose regional government is, in fact, a metropolitan government, with successful policies in the economic arena, confirming the importance of strong urban governments to take benefit of local resources in international competence.

But also the other big cities (Barcelona, Valencia, Bilbao, Seville, ...) have reacted to the lack of structural reforms at the metro level, or to overcome the effects of the economic changes and re-structuration, and most of them have chosen the way of the strategic planning in order to establish a strategy to improve the position of the city in the national and international competition. An urban renaissance is today quite evident in an important group of Spanish cities, fact that has strengthened the Spanish urban network.

Also the action of the State and the Regions, towards improving the infrastructures (especially in the arena of transports, high education and culture) has been a key factor for this urban renaissance.

This paper tries to present an analytic and synthetic panorama of these processes, with figures and graphics helping to understand the Spanish urban system, and also its government and governance models.

I. INTRODUCTION.-

Spain's major cities face the challenges of a globally competitive world by improving their mechanisms of government and governance. The State, which in Spain is solely responsible for regulating the principal models for government and local administration, being aware of the importance of the Spanish urban system in the articulation of the country, introduced a Law in December 2003 implementing measures to modernise local government and significant improvements to the organic-functional model of major Spanish cities, which focus mainly on three aspects:

- a) The reinforcement of local executive powers, strongly led by the Mayor, reducing the functions of the municipal board (the "Board") to deliberating and discussing a few very important strategic decisions (urban planning), budgets, main urban regulations, ...), and controlling local executives.
- b) The improvement of mechanisms for participation of citizens and organised social and economic sectors.
- c) The recruitment of competitive and qualified managers from throughout the public sector, but with possibilities for including those from the private sector.

However, these reforms affect only the central municipalities of major cities, but have not given rise to the creation of new metropolitan governments, because in Spain the competence for creating, modifying or eliminating metropolitan areas corresponds exclusively to the Autonomous Communities (regions). All without prejudice to the fact that in Spain the most diverse forms of metropolitan government have been implemented, in the past and in the present, with very limited success.

These recent reforms have been limited to the organic-functional model, but do not include the reinforcement of competencies for governments of major cities, which to a great degree should be projected onto politics of proximity, which are competence of the Spanish Autonomous Communities (regions). Accordingly, within the framework of a country like Spain, largely decentralised in a political sense (in politological terms, a quasi-federal model), only the regions may transfer such functions to the municipalities. But this does not mean that supra-local governments have not played a positive role in the modernisation of the country and in improving the competitiveness of the Spanish urban system.

Additionally, the major Spanish cities had already made intensive use of strategic planning processes to improve their position within the context of national and international competition, one of them being a pioneer in the European ambit (Barcelona). Nevertheless, the territorial areas (municipal or metropolitan) and the level of participation of socio-economic agents varies considerably from city to city, and in some these agents have been converted into functional tools for governance which partially offset the absence of pluri-functional metropolitan institutional areas.

In this *paper* we will take on these questions, offering as a starting point a brief description of the Spanish urban system to permit a better understanding of the processes and reforms indicated.

II. AN APPROACH TO THE SPANISH URBAN SYSTEM.-

Spain is a country of profound territorial imbalances. With 505,000 square kilometres and nearly 43 million inhabitants, it presents one of the lowest population densities in Western Europe, with just over 83 inhabitants per square kilometre.

Nevertheless, these global figures are deceiving, and a very different vision is obtained when the data are segregated over a regional base or if municipalities are grouped by population segments. This is because Spain, firstly, has very uneven population densities in its various regions, very high on the periphery and very low in the centre, with the exception of the Community of Madrid. We need only observe that the Autonomous Communities comprising the Spanish Central Plateau, except for Madrid –that is, Castilla y León, Castilla la Mancha and Extremadura- together with Aragon make up less than six million inhabitants over a surface area of nearly 265,000 km², that is, over a territory which, in terms of size, is similar to important European countries such as Italy or the United Kingdom, each of which has close to sixty million inhabitants.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF SPANISH MUNICIPALITIES BY POPULATION SEGMENT (DEMOGRAPHIC DATA AT 01-01-2002)

SIZE	SEGMENT	No. OF MUNICIPALITIES	%	
SMALL	0/ 5,000	6,926	85.42	95.95
MEDIUM	5,001/20,000	854	10.53	
MEDIUM/LARGE	20,001/50,000	205	2.53	4.05
LARGE	50,001/100,000	66	0.81	
VERY LARGE	Over 100,000	57	0.70	
TOTAL		8,108	100.00	100.00

Source: Secretariat General for Local Administration and the National Statistics Institute

However, if the fragmentation of the Spanish municipal map is taken into account (tables 1 and 2), we observe that more than 40.5% of the Spanish population is concentrated in a reduced set of 57 municipalities of over 100,000 inhabitants each; that is, 0.70% of the municipalities in 2002 make up a total population of nearly 17 million. And looking at the set of municipalities with populations of over 50,000 inhabitants (approximately 121), these account for more than 21.4 million inhabitants, that is, more than 51 percent of the Spanish population. By comparison, over 85 percent of the 8,108 Spanish municipalities do not exceed 5,000 inhabitants, representing only 14.61% of the entire population of the country.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF INHABITANTS IN THE MUNICIPALITIES FOR EACH POPULATION SEGMENT (DATA AT 01-01-2002)

%	SIZE	SEGMENT	POPULATION	%	
95.95	SMALL	0/5,000	6,114,592	14.61	34.30
	MEDIUM	5,001/20,000	8,236,982	19.69	
4.04	MEDIUM/LARGE	20,001/50,000	6,070,295	14.51	65.70
	LARGE	50,001/100,000	4,458,891	10.66	
	VERY LARGE	Over 100,000	16,957,134	40.53	

	TOTAL		41,837,894	100.00	100.00
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Source: Secretariat General for Local Administration and the National Statistics Institute

While the average population of the 57 most populous municipalities is 297,494 inhabitants, the 6,926 smallest municipalities present average populations of only 833 inhabitants (table 3).

TABLE 3: AVERAGE INHABITANTS FOR EACH POPULATION SEGMENT (DATA AT 01-01-2002)

SEGMENT	POPULATION	Nº OF MUNICIPALITIES	AVERAGE INHABITANTS/ MUNICIPALITY
0/5,000	6,114,592	6,926	883
5,001/20,000	8,236,982	854	9,645
20,001/50,000	6,070,295	205	29,611
50,001/100,000	4,458,891	66	67,559
Over 100,000	16,957,134	57	297,494
TOTAL	41,837,894	8,108	5,160

Source: Secretariat General for Local Administration and the National Statistics Institute

These data permit us to reach a first conclusion, paradoxical but fairly evident, if the country is taken as a whole: Spain is, essentially, a very urban society located in a mainly rural territory. The urban concentrations contrast with the enormous spaces which are virtually deserted in demographic terms, and, with the exception of the islet of Madrid, we only find what can be referred to as a dense urban network of large and medium sized cities and significant towns in the Autonomous Communities located along the coast (and in certain cases only in their coastal areas), as is the case, for example, in Catalonia, the Community of Valencia, Andalusia, the Basque Country or Asturias.

Obviously, this affirmation cannot be repeated to scale for each of the Autonomous Communities taken individually, but it does offer us a good framework for reflection in which to commence this article. This situation is, at least partially, a result of the imbalanced model for economic and territorial development implemented in Spain through the Stabilisation Plan of 1958 and consolidated in the late years of Francoism, and subsequently stopped and virtually eliminated only through consolidation of the Autonomous State model and the new public policies developed by the Autonomous Communities in territorial and economic areas. In fact, that model meant the abandonment of and emigration from broad rural areas which did not benefit from the policies of reinforcement that the main municipalities of each region or natural area had, and which would have represented at least a serious attempt at articulating the rural ambit on the basis of sustainable models. In parallel, there was a massive emigration to a small number of cities and towards the coastal areas, where tourism acted as the main motor for economic development, giving rise to a completely imbalanced situation which would have a definitive impact on the Spanish system of population settlements.

In any case, within this reality, the Spanish urban system, even after having been developed in an irregular, compulsive and disordered manner, offers undeniable force and dynamism. While there are 57 municipalities with populations of over 100,000, within that group there is a significant group of twelve major cities that, without counting their conurbations or metropolitan functional areas, exceed 300,000 inhabitants (table 4).

TABLE 4: THE THIRTEEN LARGEST SPANISH CITIES WITH MORE THAN 300,000 INHABITANTS (POPULATION AND SURFACE OF THE MUNICIPAL AREA)

Municipality	Population (01-01-2003)	Area (km²)
Madrid	3,092,759	605.77
Barcelona	1,582,738	98.21
Valencia	780,653	134.63
Seville	709,975	141.31
Zaragoza	626,081	1,063.14
Malaga	547,105	395.13
Murcia	391,146	885.96
Las Palmas de G.C.	377,600	100.55
Palma de Mallorca	367,277	208.63
Bilbao	353,567	41.31
Valladolid	321,143	197.46
Cordoba	318,628	1,255.24
Alicante	305,911	201.27

Source: National Statistics Institute

These thirteen large cities have a total of 9.774.583 inhabitants, more than 22.88% of the Spanish population, without considering the conurbations existing in many of them.

Nevertheless, the truth is that the specific weight of all these cities in the Spanish urban system does not depend only on the populations of those municipalities taken individually, but also on the existence and importance of a conurbation making up the central city. Accordingly, in the cases of Zaragoza, Cordoba and Murcia, municipalities with an enormous territorial extension, urbanistic developments peripheral to the central urban nucleus actually take place within the municipal limits. There is no conurbation or functional metropolitan area in the sense of a group of administratively differentiated cities which create an urbanised *continuum*. The same is true in the case of Valladolid, although the territory of this municipality is considerable smaller. Outside their municipal limits, these four cities have virtually no urban belts perceptibly increasing population.

In contrast, the other cities in this group have more or less extensive functional metropolitan areas that must be considered if we are to understand the actual relative position of these cities in the Spanish urban system, which in certain cases changes substantially when this circumstance is taken into account. This is the case of Barcelona, where the million and a half inhabitants of its municipality are increased by another three million in the metropolitan functional area. And Madrid, the largest

municipality in Western Europe in demographic terms, its more than three million inhabitants grow to over 5.5 million if the metropolitan functional area is considered, including the Henares and Toledo corridors. Consequently, Madrid and Barcelona constitute two of the biggest conurbations in Western Europe in demographic terms.

But this situation also clearly arises in Bilbao, which holds eleventh place in this list of large cities and has a very limited territory. Nevertheless, it is the centre of the great conurbation of the Ría de Bilbao, a group of municipalities that exceeds one million inhabitants. From this perspective, Bilbao would possibly be in fifth place in the Spanish urban system, immediately behind Valencia and Seville¹, whose functional areas approach 1.4 million inhabitants, while that of Malaga is also nearly one million.

In the case of the major Spanish island cities, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and Palma de Mallorca, we observe a metropolitan relation with the rest of the islands of fairly reduced dimensions (1,560 km² in the case of Gran Canaria, and 3,640 km² for Mallorca). This means that the population of the metropolitan functional area amounts to 770,000 inhabitants in the case of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (whose metropolitan nature is more obvious due to the reduced size of the island and the large population density) and 730,000 in the case of Palma de Mallorca².

Alicante is the largest city in an important conurbation of nearly 800,000 inhabitants, but with a striking bicephalous nature, as the neighbouring city of Elche/Elx with 207,163 inhabitants is included.

Taking into account the actual metropolitan functional areas, in accordance with the studies carried out in 1994 by the Ministry of Economy and the Treasury for application of the URBAN³ Initiative in Spain and which are largely in line with current situations, urban Spain could be classified in the categories indicated in table 5.

TABLE 5: CLASSIFICATION BY CATEGORIES OF URBAN SPAIN

INTERNATIONAL METROPOLITAN AREAS	Offer a bipolar structure of the system	-Madrid -Barcelona
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¹ No rigorous studies have been carried out in Spain, based on flows of persons, goods, traffic and communications, or density of the urban area, to delimit at least approximately the functional metropolitan areas. In certain cases its existence is highly visible, given the density of the physical conurbation (Bilbao, Barcelona, Madrid). The *Estudio sobre las Grandes Ciudades and sus Áreas de Influencia (Study of Large Cities and their Areas of Influence)* prepared in 2001 by the Ministry of Public Administrations (MAP) uses, in a manner recognised to be approximate and primary, the population of the municipalities existing at a certain distance (around 30 kms.) from the territory of the central municipality. But this criterion is very deceiving, as the circumstances vary notably from case to case. In certain areas the orography make those thirty kilometres into a fairly straight line, while in others it is very uneven. In some areas (Murcia, Zaragoza) the delimitation of the area of influence using this criterion is absolutely artificial, because the dimensions of the municipal area make the functional city end far before reaching the boundaries of the municipal area. Nevertheless, and lacking other data, we have considered the data from that Study to determine, approximately, the population of certain of the major functional metropolitan areas in Spain.

² This clear metropolitanisation is not seen, however, in the third largest Spanish island, Tenerife, since, although its population is very similar to that of Gran Canaria, its surface area is considerably larger (2,034 km²) and its urban system is very different, without the marked macrocephaly of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, and with a capital city (Santa Cruz de Tenerife) that carries much less weight in the Spanish urban system (217,000 inhabitants, 160,000 less than its neighbour).

³ URBAN is a European Union initiative to finance the regeneration of degraded urban areas.

NATIONAL-REGIONAL METROPOLITAN AREAS	Specialised service centres for extensive regions	-Valencia -Bilbao -Seville -Malaga -Zaragoza -Las Palmas de Gran Canaria
AREAS IN PROCESS OF METROPOLITANISATION	Sub-regional tertiary centres	-Palma de Mallorca -Vigo-Pontevedra -Gijón-Oviedo-Avilés -Alicante-Elche -Murcia -Valladolid
OTHER URBAN AREAS	With a population of over 150,000	-Granada -Cordoba -Cadiz-Jerez -Vitoria -Santander -Santa Cruz de Tenerife -Pamplona -Salamanca -San Sebastián -Burgos -Almería -León -Tarragona

Source: Ministry of Economy and the Treasury (1994)

This classification introduces a first reference to another key element to be considered: the position of major Spanish cities in the European urban system.

A recent analysis comparing European cities (Céline ROZENBLAT and Patrice CICILLE, 2003), carried out at the request of the French organisation DATAR⁴, established a classification of 180 cities in countries belonging to the European Union with populations of over 200,000 inhabitants, divided into seven classes on the basis of scores established considering 15 indicators (population, demographic evolution for the period 1950-1990, traffic in maritime ports, airport traffic, accessibility of the agglomerations, headquarters of major European groups, financial enclaves, number of overnight stays for tourism, number of trade fairs and conferences, number of congresses each year, number of museums, number of cultural locations and major cultural manifestations, number of students, number of scientific publications and research networks). The study included 22 Spanish cities⁵, with the distribution by class as reflected in table 6.

TABLE 6: DISTRIBUTION BY CLASS OF SPANISH CITIES WITH MORE THAN 200,000 INHABITANTS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EU (by order of ranking)

⁴ DATAR are the initials of the *Délégation à l'Aménagement du territoire et à l'action régionale*.

⁵ Incomprehensibly, the Canary Islands are not included, with two cities that exceed 200,000 inhabitants.

CLASS 1. WORLD METROPOLIS	-
CLASS 2. MAJOR EUROPEAN METROPOLIS	Madrid
CLASS 3. EUROPEAN METROPOLIS	Barcelona
CLASS 4. LARGE EUROPEAN CITY OF RELEVANCE	-
CLASS 5. EUROPEAN CITIES WITH POTENTIAL	Valencia, Bilbao, Seville, Granada, Palma de Mallorca and Malaga
CLASS 6. CITIES OF CONSOLIDATED NATIONAL RELEVANCE	Alicante, Zaragoza, Gijón, Pamplona, Cadiz and Tarragona
CLASS 7. OTHER CITIES OF NATIONAL RELEVANCE	Cordoba, San Sebastián, Santander, Valladolid, Vigo, Vitoria-Gasteiz, La Coruña and Murcia
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Source: Les Villes européennes. Analyse comparative (2003)

We would point out that, in spite of the fact that the two Canary Island capitals are not included, Spain is one of the countries with most cities contemplated in this study (22, the same number as Italy, behind the 34 for Germany, 31 for the United Kingdom and 30 for France), and one of those showing the best relative positions. Accordingly, after Paris (81 points) and London (76 points), Madrid figures as the third city in the European urban system (62 points), followed by Amsterdam (59 points) and Milan (57 points). Barcelona is in sixth place (55 points), tying with Berlin and Rome, and ahead of such significant cities as Brussels (53 points), Vienna (53 points), Munich (52 points) or Stockholm (52 points).

Valencia (38th position, with 38 points) is ranked at the same level as important cities like Birmingham, Manchester or Strasburg, while Bilbao (40th position, with 37 points) and Seville (45th position, 37 points) are in line with Bordeaux, Essen and Lille.

In any case, the most significant issue is that this recent study confirms the importance of the position of the most influential Spanish cities in the European context, highlighting the third place position for Madrid and the sixth place for Barcelona. Of the 13 European cities ranked in the first three classes, two are Spanish.

III. SPECIAL GOVERNMENT REGIMENS FOR MAJOR SPANISH CITIES UP TO 2003.-

The importance of the Spanish urban system and its major cities had never been accompanied by specific regulations for this group of municipalities. The Spanish local system, inspired historically by the continental or French model, was characterised by considerable uniformism, essentially establishing the same organic-functional model for all municipalities, regardless of their population, or at most implementing certain variations for areas with very low population strata. The regimen for major cities taken as a whole, until special laws for Barcelona and Madrid were drawn up in 1960 and 1963, respectively, was identical to that for the remaining municipalities.

The Law for the Bases of the Local Regimen of 1985 (LRBRL), the “Law for the local regimen of democracy”, continued to be anchored in the profound uniformism that has historically marked the Spanish local system, and in this sense it can be stated that this is a profoundly conservative law, in spite of having been approved under a socialist government. The special regimen for Madrid and Barcelona was merely declared to be prevailing, but only “*except where it opposes, contradicts or results incompatible with the matter established in this Law*”, which reduces to its minimum expression the organic-functional specialities of both cities.

The major reform carried out on the Spanish model for local government through the subsequent Law 11/1999, of 21 April, affects the special regimen for both cities, as it contains a provision that permits the respective Autonomous Communities (regions), via law, to update those special regimens at the request of the respective city governments. To that end, this Law establishes the possible modifications to the common regimen that may be made by this means, which are limited to the denomination of the necessary municipal bodies – a merely semantic and formal aspect, to the possibility of delegating certain competencies to the Commissions of the Board, and a certain redistribution of the shared competencies of the Mayor, the Board and the Government Commission in favour of the latter.

In reality, this modification, negotiated politically by the City Government of Barcelona and the Ministry of Public Administrations, and later supported by the majority of parliamentary forces, was meant to provide coverage to a previous alteration to the basic local regimen that had been implemented by Catalanian Parliamentary Law 22/1998, of 30 December, approving the Municipal Charter of Barcelona.

To express it succinctly, the Municipal Charter of Barcelona contains an organic-functional model differentiated from the common regimen through the reinforcement of the municipal executive, both the Mayor and the Government Commission, the government organ designated by the Mayor from among the members of the Municipal Board (and which in Spain is called the “Board”). The Commission has its own competencies, while under the common regimen it only has those delegated by the Mayor and the Board, constituting a true catchall. Catalanian law also contemplates other mechanisms for citizen participation not foreseen in the LRBRL (citizen initiatives, Quality Council, general audiences, ...). The Charter also reinforces the City Government of Barcelona as regards competencies in various sectorial areas, which has not satisfied the demands placed by Barcelona, which claims and aspires to a new Special State Law granting new attributions in matters of competencies for the central Administration.

As regards Madrid, the Statute of Autonomy of the Community (Region) of Madrid of 1983 contemplates approval by means of a state Law for a special capital city regimen, contemplation which has not materialised to date. This is due to the uncomfortable position of the State on approval of a Law that raises suspicions among certain other Spanish cities, which consider, justifiably or not, that the “burdens” of capital city are far fewer than the benefits to Madrid, in addition to the financial considerations involved, which will certainly be one of the foreseeable objectives of the

capitality law. Proof of this uncomfortable situation for the State is that 20 years have gone by without even a draft law having been drawn up⁶.

Accordingly, the historical panorama of special regimens for our major cities up to 2003 was restricted to the items set out in table 7.

TABLE 7. SPECIAL REGIMENS FOR MAJOR SPANISH CITIES UP TO 2003

Madrid	Special Law of 1963	Partial derogation of the Special law by the LRBRL (1985)	Pending the Law for capitality foreseen in the Statutes of the Community (Region) of Madrid since 1983
Barcelona	Special Law of 1960	Partial derogation of the Special law by the LRBRL (1985)	Municipal Charter of Barcelona, approved by Law of the Autonomous Community of Catalonia 22/1998.

Source: In-house information.

IV. TOWARDS A SPECIAL MODEL OF GOVERNMENT FOR MAJOR CITIES: LAW OF MEASURES TO MODERNISE LOCAL GOVERNMENT.-

At the beginning of the 90s, the seven major Spanish cities at the moment (Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Seville, Zaragoza, Malaga and Bilbao) had constituted their own group or *lobby* called “the big seven”, “Group 7” or “C-7”, without legal personality but quite active during the first half of the decade. This *lobby* had not called for a singular organic-functional model for this group of cities, but rather its objective was essentially to obtain a Law of major cities that would strengthen those municipalities both financially and as regards competencies (RODRÍGUEZ ÁLVAREZ, 2002, p. 311).

The Mayors of these cities met periodically in one of their municipalities to harmonise positions and offer a common front, apart from through the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP). This ruffled feathers among executives of that important State association of local entities, as its chairperson, Francisco Vázquez, Mayor of A Coruña, was to make explicit.

In any case, the activity of this *lobby* declined during the second half of the decade of the nineties, until reaching levels of absolute inactivity⁷. This does not mean

⁶ In any case, and given the bicephalous nature of the Spanish urban system, led by Madrid and Barcelona, approval, in political terms, apparently will need to come through the granting of certain compensations to Barcelona.

⁷ This may be due in part to the fact that the main driver or inspirer of the group was the City Government of Barcelona, which to a certain degree saw a part of its aspirations realised with the Municipal Charter of Barcelona, approved at the end of 1998. As of that time it was decided to follow a path of one-on-one negotiations between the State and the “Generalitat” of Catalonia (the autonomous government of

that certain of those City Governments, especially Barcelona, did not continue to push for more competencies and financial reinforcement of the major cities.

This was the situation in 2001 when the Secretariat General for the Local Administration of the Ministry of Public Administrations prepared its *Informe sobre las Grandes Ciudades and sus Áreas de Influencia (Report on Major Cities and their Areas of Influence)*, which contained a far-reaching comparative study on the regulations for major cities and metropolitan areas in various European and American countries, as well as an exposition of historical antecedents in Spain. The report then set out a series of proposals and abundant statistical material, as well as a list of major Spanish cities and their areas of influence.

This Report was presented to the then newly-created Commission of Local Entities in the Senate on 11 October 2001, where it served as the basis for considerable debate and discussion, which lasted until 2003 with interventions by professionals from a variety of fields.

In March 2003 two significant events occurred. The first is that the Spanish Congress approved a proposal backed jointly by the Popular (party supporting the national government at that time) and Socialist parliamentary groups, in which the government was urged to present to the Congress a draft law aimed at modernising local government. That draft law established, inter alia, a specific local regimen for major cities, with appropriate organic-functional regulations for their needs, establishing the guidelines for that reform. The government was also urged to take any measures necessary to comply with the provisions of the Statutes of Autonomy of the Community of Madrid regarding the special capital city regimen, and to comply with the motion passed by the Senate on 19 February 2002, requesting that the Government present a draft law granting the City Government of Barcelona the capacities and competencies contemplated in the Municipal Charter of Barcelona, without prejudice to the fact that *“as not specifically regarding that city, the instruments should be put in place to permit the application of that regulation in the remaining cities that, given their size and management capacity, share the same needs and problems”* (sic).

The second relevant event was approval by the Senate Board on 26 March 2003 of the Report on Major Cities and their Areas of Urban Influence, approved by the Commission of Local Entities, which coincided substantially with the proposal of the Congress mentioned above. However, it deals with certain key matters not touched on in the proposal, such as the expansion of sectorial competencies of major cities and the need to consider the metropolitan reality, both issues in which the leading role corresponds essentially to the Autonomous Communities, without prejudice to the existence of certain relevant sectorial ambits which are competency of the State, such as municipal justice and public safety.

As of that moment, the preparation of the denominated Law of Measures to Modernise Local Government was accelerated. That Law proposed, inter alia, the inclusion in the LRBR of a new Title X, dedicated to regulating the special regimen for so-called “large population municipalities”. The Board of Ministers at their meeting

Catalonia). Additionally, and from time before, the growing number of cities in this group, at first mostly socialist and subsequently governed by the centre-right Popular Party, diminished the cohesion and continuity of this group’s work.

on 6 June 2003 approved the text as a bill, sending it to Congress for parliamentary treatment. On 27 November 2003 Congress approved the bill, which was enacted as Law 57/2003, of 16 December, for measures to modernise local government (LMMGL).

Title X of the LMMGL refers to major cities periphrastically as “large population municipalities”. This denomination seeks to avoid the polemic that the expression “gran ciudad” (“great city” or “large city”) created among Spanish municipalities, with a considerable number of candidates looking to join the group for reasons of political and institutional symbolism, and local pride. Even so, it has been impossible to escape the inevitable pressures of this nature, in an area so apt to susceptibilities, and especially so in an election year. As a result, the barrier, initially contemplated at 500,000 inhabitants, was subsequently reduced to 300,000, figures that approach what is generally understood as “major cities” in Europe.

The LMMGL (art. 121) distinguishes four groups or categories of “large population municipalities”, and the special regimen is directly applicable only to the first two. The first comprises all municipalities with more than 250,000 inhabitants, which roughly coincides with the real major cities of Spain. The second comprises provincial capitals with over 175,000 inhabitants, and whose inclusion is justified in the law’s memorandum because of the greater complexity that comes with being a capital city. The third category is made up of municipalities that are capitals of Autonomous Communities (regions) or seats of corresponding autonomic institutions. Finally, the fourth category is formed by cities of more than 75,000 inhabitants presenting special economic, social, historical or cultural circumstances. For these last two categories, the application of the special regimen is not direct, but rather will arise only if so decided by the Legislative Assemblies of the corresponding regions, at the request of the interested City Governments.

In accordance with official population figures at 1 January 2003, which are those prevailing on enactment of the LMMGL, the cities directly affected by this new special regimen for “large population municipalities” would be those set out in table 8.

TABLE 8. CITIES DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THE REGIMEN FOR MAJOR CITIES (“LARGE POPULATION MUNICIPALITIES”) (by population)

First group: cities with more than 250,000 inhabitants	<u>A) PROVINCIAL CAPITALS</u> -Madrid -Barcelona (*) -Valencia -Seville -Zaragoza -Malaga -Murcia -Las Palmas de Gran Canaria -Palma de Mallorca -Bilbao -Valladolid -Cordoba -Alacant/Alicante
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	<u>B) NOT PROVINCIAL CAPITALS</u> -Vigo Gijón
Second group: provincial capitals with more than 175,000 inhabitants	-A Coruña -Granada -Vitoria-Gasteiz -Santa Cruz de Tenerife -Oviedo -Pamplona-Iruña -Santander -Donostia-San Sebastián -Almería

Source: In-house preparation using data from the National Statistics Institute
 (*) Application of the LMMGL to Barcelona is suspended until approval of the special regimen.

This is, then, a group of 24 municipalities, comprising 15 cities of more than 250,000 inhabitants and 9 provincial capitals with populations of over 175,000. The official joint population in 2003 for the two groups of cities subject to direct application of the Law is 12,204,820 inhabitants, that is 28.57 percent of the total population of Spain. Additionally, the Law may be applied at discretion to the other 29 provincial capitals, to two regional capitals that are not provincial capitals (Santiago de Compostela and Mérida), to two autonomous cities (Ceuta and Melilla), to the seat of an autonomic institution (Cartagena, seat of the Regional Parliament of Murcia), and to some 35 other cities with more than 75,000 inhabitants which were not included in the above groups. In total, 93 municipalities, including the 24 of direct application and 69 of discretionary application.

Nevertheless, we would point out that application of the LMMGL to the municipality of Barcelona has been suspended until such time as its special regimen is approved, representing a resounding and unexpected success for the negotiators of the City Government of Barcelona, who have managed not only to maintain intact the Municipal Charter of Barcelona approved by the Catalanian Parliament, but have also committed the State to the future preparation of a state law containing a special regimen for Barcelona.

Two fundamental aspects of this Law, as regards the “large population municipalities” are that its scope is essentially organic-functional, and not competency related, and that it affects those municipalities, but does not take on the metropolitan reality. As regards the first aspect, it should be borne in mind that the intention is a reform of the LRBRL to create a special regimen, and that the actual framework for reinforcing competencies of the major cities is the sectorial laws corresponding to each ambit of public activity, whether autonomous, regional (it should be remembered that the majority of demands from Spanish municipalities are of this nature) or state (in certain less numerous, but relevant, matters such as public safety or justice). Nevertheless, it is evident that a complete special regimen for the major cities demands the reinforcement of competencies, requiring a sectorial effort but by the Autonomous Communities and by the State which to date has been postponed and put behind the, no doubt important, organic-functional and structural reforms, and has been delayed as it

involves renouncing or sacrificing competencies –and consequently power- by the supralocal levels of territorial power.

This issue is truly relevant to reorganising the distribution of territorial power in Spain. At this time, the State manages approximately 48% of public spending, the Autonomous Communities (regions) 36% and municipalities only 16%. As a result, the country is profoundly decentralised, but if we concentrate on infra-State levels, the regions are clearly in a privileged position. Consequently, Spanish municipalities, and especially the major cities, have been demanding a new process for decentralisation that transfers to municipalities complete or nearly complete control over certain policies of proximity – city planning, housing, youth, sports, social services, women, culture, protection of patrimony, ...- to rebalance the distribution of competencies and of public resources. But the Autonomous Communities (regions), which are relatively young (all were created between 1979 and 1983), resist the decentralisation of certain policies that they received not long ago, and allege that their actions have been, in general, quite effective, or have at least been perceived so by the citizens, who evaluate the level of meso-government positively.

In this sense, it is obvious that the effort to modernise the country has been evident and fruitful, especially in areas such as infrastructures, education and culture. This has especially strengthened the system of major cities, many of them capitals of the new Autonomous Communities, and the role of the regions has been very important in these areas, for example, investing significant amounts of public funds in the expansion and improvement of public universities, in the construction and improvement of important cultural infrastructures (theatres, operas, museums) and in establishing great networks of transport infrastructures, although in the latter case the role of the State has been key to the major interregional networks. The competitiveness of the Spanish urban system has increased notably with these efforts by supra-municipal governments.

The second aspect – the lack of treatment of the metropolitan phenomenon- is due to the fact that, in accordance with the now antiquated doctrine of the Constitutional Court - the applicability of which we question in the current socio-economic and institutional context (both national and international), this is an area of exclusive competency of the Autonomous Communities (regions). We are once again faced – although for reasons different from those traditionally encountered, in this case due to the constitutional and statutory distribution of competencies, understood in a certain way – with the traditional problem of the local Spanish model in that it does not respond to both dimensions simultaneously – government of the major cities in and of themselves, and of the metropolitan functional areas. Here also a difficult and generous effort is required, involving a loss of protagonism in these areas by the Autonomous Communities, but also a reinterpretation of the role and the responsibilities of the State in establishing and regulating advanced metropolitan areas, in accordance with the demands of a globalised world, always within a context of collaboration with the municipalities and that Autonomous Communities.

Particularly noteworthy is the exceptional case of Madrid. In 1983 the former province of Madrid became a “Self-Governing Community” (region). Its small territory does not in fact coincide exactly with the functional metropolitan area of Madrid, for the latter also takes in two urban “corridors” projecting towards the cities of Toledo and Guadalajara, slightly straying beyond the limits of the Community of Madrid. It could

therefore be argued that the Community of Madrid, created solely because it contains the capital city of Spain, with its modest size of 8028 km² and almost 5.8 million inhabitants, is a true metropolitan area in the form of a political region (RODRÍGUEZ ÁLVAREZ, 2002a), holding legislative powers in essential public and economic policies for promoting the region in the sphere of European and worldwide urban competence (territorial planning, housing, regional transport, industry, the environment, education – including university education – healthcare at all levels, protection of the environment, agriculture and woodland, culture, the historical-artistic heritage coordination of local police forces ...)

The Community of Madrid also has a legislative assembly directly elected by the citizens. This assembly then elects the president of the region on a parliamentary model. This political system has been well received and assumed by the economic and social actors, among other reasons because neocorporative type norms have been developed in its economic policies. It has a Social Council (Consejo Social) and numerous public agencies in this field, with a significant representation of the employers' federation of the region (Independent Employers' Confederation of Madrid, CEIM in Spanish initials) and the two biggest trade unions (The General Workers' Union – UGT in Spanish initials - and the Workers' Commissions – CCOO in Spanish initials), which is equal to the regional representation of these bodies.

These circumstances have placed Madrid in a solid position of dominance in the Spanish urban system, despite the significant weight that Barcelona has always had. For some time, however, it has been impossible to speak of any real parity between both cities.

V. MAIN ASPECTS OF THE NEW SPECIAL REGIMEN FOR MAJOR CITIES.-

Certain key aspects of this new regimen are of interest to us: its organisational model, the importance attributed to a new level of professional public managers, the impulse given to social participation, and the defence of citizens and creation of an urban observatory.

The organic-functional model for major cities or “large population municipalities” is characterised essentially by the creation of a strong executive, with functions clearly differentiated from those of the Municipal Board (the “Board”), and comprising the Mayor and a Local Government Board which names and dismisses members freely. One third of the members may be non-elected. This model is not especially novel because, as concerns the delegates of services and participation, it is in line with what the Special Laws of Barcelona (1960) and Madrid (1963) called the “Executive Municipal Commission”.

The distribution of attributions between key bodies in the common municipal model is modified, attributing absolutely all municipal and management competencies to the municipal executive, following to its ultimate consequences the line of action commenced by the reform of the local regimen of 1999 (RODRÍGUEZ ÁLVAREZ, 1999). The Board becomes a deliberating Chamber concentrating normative, planning, symbolic and control competencies, some of which (very few in reality) may be

delegated to the Commissions. Additionally, for the first time the traditional bicephalous nature of the Mayor, traditionally head of the local executive, and chairperson of the Board is broken, in such a way that now the latter function may be delegated to a member of the regional parliament. In summary, the parliamentary characteristics of the local government model are accentuated, with a clearer separation between the Board and the local executive.

Although the Mayor holds the central position in the system, he/she is no longer in charge of many management competencies, but is more the leader of an executive whose collegiate body –the so-called Local Government Board – takes on a greater proportion of such attributions (as opposed to the common regimen model, in which it only has the faculties delegated by the Mayor and the Board). Nevertheless, that Local Government Board has ample powers to delegate in its individual members–whether elected or not - and, to a lesser degree, in the management personnel to which we will make reference subsequently. In the latter case, the functions that may be delegated principally relate to personnel management, licences and sanctions. But it should not be forgotten that, in the end, it is the Mayor who designates members of the Local Government Board, which should represent at least two-thirds of the members of the municipal Council, as the other third, for the first time, will be designated on an entirely free basis by persons who are not necessarily members of that Council. Accordingly, the Mayor has absolute leadership in the ambit of municipal government, as all members of the Local Government Board and persons of confidence for the Mayor.

Finally, certain bodies of a management nature are created, which may be occupied by qualified civil servants from any of the Public Administrations – General Managers of municipal services and General Coordinators of each main Area or Office. Those civil servants can receive through delegation some of the competencies pertaining to the Local Government Board and referred to above, as well as certain attributions of the Mayor. The ample possibilities of provenance for those managers introduces a new and advanced element of “internal competition” in these municipalities, as they are open to all Administrations. This model should logically be imitated to provide management positions in all public Administrations, expanding the possibilities for designating qualified public professionals and, in that way, for mobility and, accordingly, for the professional career of public managers.

Based on the specific characteristics of certain management positions, the Board can authorise that they be filled by a professional from the public or private sector who is not a civil servant, taking into consideration the criteria of professional competence and experience in positions of responsibility.

For the first time, a true “market for local public managers” is created in Spain, open to managers from the public and private sectors, and constituting the basis for a professionalised local technocracy.

Table 9 shows a summary of the main aspects of the key bodies of the major cities with regard to the common municipal regimen.

TABLE 9. KEY ORGANIC-FUNCTIONAL ASPECTS OF THE SPECIAL REGIMEN FOR MAJOR CITIES

Municipal Board (“Board”)	-Lacks any sort of management
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	<p>competencies</p> <p>-Can delegate some of its functions to its Commissions</p> <p>-Has its own specific Secretary</p> <p>-Its Chairperson can delegate to any of the Board members in respect of the Mayor</p>
Mayor	<p>-Head of the executive, which freely names and dismisses members of the Local Government Board</p> <p>-Has less management competencies than under the common regimen, but is the undeniable leader.</p>
Local government council	<p>-Has its own competencies, as compared with the common regimen's model of delegated competencies</p> <p>-Up to a third of its members, not including the Mayor, may be non-elected</p> <p>-Ample faculties for delegating to members and, to a lesser degree, to local managers</p> <p>-The Secretary is one of its elected members, although aided by a supporting body with important functions, reserved for a civil servant with national authorisation</p>
Executive organisms (local technocracy)	<p>-Creation of the General Coordinators for each main Area or Office and the General Managers of municipal services, management personnel not existing under the common municipal regimen which:</p> <p>.In principle should be qualified civil servants from any of the Public Administrations. However, they may also be private sector professionals with recognised experience.</p> <p>.May receive attributions of the Mayor and the Local Government Board through delegation.</p>

Source: In-house preparation.

No less important are the innovations implemented by the LMMGL in respect of citizen participation (table 10), clearly inspired by the Recommendation of the

Committee of Ministers of the European Board of Member States (2001) 19, regarding the participation of citizens in local public life (FUNDACIÓN PI I SUNYER, 2002).

In the first place, there are certain measures promoting participation to be applied in all municipalities, which are essentially the obligation to establish and regulate through organic norms⁸ the appropriate procedures and bodies for the effective participation of citizens in matters relating to local public life, both in the ambit of the municipality taken as a whole and in each of its districts, where these exist; the creation of popular initiatives – which in the case of large population municipalities should be subscribed by at least 10 percent of the citizens - and the interactive use of information and communication technologies to facilitate participation and communication with citizens, as well as for the presentation of documents, the realisation of administrative procedures, surveys and, where appropriate, citizen consultations.

As specifically regards major cities, specific measures of enormous relevance are implemented. First, the establishment of districts as territorial divisions is stipulated as obligatory. These districts have their own bodies for deconcentrated management, to promote and develop citizen participation, and the Board must create an organic norm setting a minimum percentage of the budgetary resources of the City Government that should be managed by the districts, taken as a whole. The objective of this measure is to open a public debate in each large population municipality on paper and the responsibilities that should be attributed to the district bodies, which obviously may vary considerably from one district to another. This is an institution that already exists in numerous Spanish cities on a voluntary basis, but in general with insufficient level of development (RODRÍGUEZ ÁLVAREZ, 1996).

Secondly, the so-called “Social Council of the City” is created, comprising representatives of the most relevant economic, social, professional and civic organisations. Their functions basically involve the issue of reports, studies and proposals regarding local economic development, strategic city planning and major urban projects. This is the first time that Spanish local public law “officialises” concepts such as strategic planning or local economic development.

This is also the first mandatory creation of a body of this nature under basic Spanish local law, orienting its functions clearly (and in our opinion correctly) towards socio-economic dynamisation and planning, without prejudice to any other areas that each City Government may decide to assign. At present, there is a Council for the City of Barcelona, created by Catalanian law and approved in its Municipal Charter, and whose functions include, inter alia, communicating the City Government budget.

These types of bodies, appropriately organised and utilised, can constitute an ideal institutional framework to strengthen the social capital of the city (together with other participative mechanisms), and to formalise “urban coalitions” aimed at promoting the development of the city and reinforce its position in inter-territorial competitiveness. In any case, given its significance, we will dedicate a separate section of this paper to the Spanish experience in this area.

⁸ These norms must be approved by an absolute majority of the legal number of the members of the Board.

In respect of the defence of citizen's rights, a "commission for suggestions and claims" was opted for as opposed to the creation of an "ombudsman" position. This commission, formed by representatives of all political groups in proportion to the number of members each has in the plenary session, can supervise the activity of the municipal Administration. All bodies of the government and of the municipal Administration are required to collaborate with the commission, which must inform the plenary session through an annual report of the complaints presented and the weaknesses observed in municipal services, specifying the suggestions or recommendations not admitted by the municipal Administration, without prejudice to the preparation of *ad hoc* extraordinary reports when the gravity or urgency of certain matters so require.

The commission option was taken due to the reluctance of many Mayors of major cities to have the figure of a "public defender", which could turn into a sort of general controller for the City Government or a *de facto* competitor with the figure of Mayor.

Also in the area of citizen defence, but in the fiscal terrain, the creation has been contemplated in these municipalities of a body for the resolution of economic-administrative claims, specialised and based on principles of technical independence, celerity and at no cost. The members of this body, always an odd number no lower than three, are designated by the Board in absolute majority, and their resolutions constitute an end to administrative actions, and may only be appealed against before jurisdictional bodies.

A clear precedent for this body is the "Tributary Council" existing in Barcelona, although the LMMGL model appears to be more evolved, as the members of the Barcelona council are appointed by the Mayor not by the Board, and they merely make proposals which are remitted to the Mayor, rather than definitive resolutions in administrative actions.

TABLE 10. MEASURES FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND DEFENCE

<p>Common measures for all municipalities</p>	<p>-Need to regulate the adequate procedures and bodies (approved by absolute majority) for the effective participation of citizens, both in the ambit of the municipality taken as a whole and its districts (when these exist)</p> <p>-Right to civic initiative (formed by 10% of the citizens of municipalities with more than 20,000 inhabitants)</p> <p>-Promotion of the interactive use of new information and communication technologies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Facilitate participation and communication b) Presentation of documents and realisation of administrative
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> procedures c) Realisation of surveys and citizen consultations
Specific measures for major cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Division into districts with deconcentrated bodies to manage a percentage of the budget determined by the plenary session -Creation of the Social Council for the City - Creation of the Commission for Suggestions and Claims -Creation of a specialised body for the resolution of economic-administrative claims

Source: In-house preparation

Finally, we would also emphasise the significance of the Urban observatory, depending on the Ministry of Public Administrations, and aimed at understanding and analysing the evolution of quality of life in large population municipalities. This is the first time that local Spanish Law establishes a benchmarking tool, clearly integrated in the principles of New Public Management, and which, if appropriately designed, could constitute an effective instrument for studying the evolution of the quality of urban life and, consequently, for evaluating the results of certain urban policies.

This is not the only measure related to the adoption the New Public Management (NGP) criteria set out in the LMMGL. Some of those set out above are clearly integrated in the NGP, in accordance with the modernising line of local government reflected in the very title of the Law. These measures are shown in table 11.

TABLE 11. CERTAIN MEASURES IN MAJOR CITIES SUBJECT TO INTEGRATION IN NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Measures	Criteria
Concentration of all the management functions in the municipal executive, named and presided by the Mayor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Efficacy and efficiency -Leave management to the managers
Strengthening of management bodies and accessibility thereto by qualified civil servants from all Public Administrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strengthening of internal competence in the “market” for public managers -Flexibility and mobility in the selection of managers
Possibility of delegating resolatory attributions of the Local Government Board to local managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Functional deconcentration
Strengthening of new information and communication technologies for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Application of information and communication technologies in

participation, information and processes	management
Regulation of procedures and bodies for citizen participation	-Improved accessibility and participation
Creation of Districts	- Territorial deconcentration - Improved accessibility and participation
Creation of the Social Council for the City	- Improved accessibility and participation
Monitoring of cost of services	-Control of efficiency -Cost accounting - Strengthening of cost control measures
Assignment of resources on the basis of the definition and achievement of targets	-Efficiency -Target-based budget -Result-oriented
Creation of an urban observatory	- <i>Benchmarking</i> (comparative analysis) -Measuring of results and evaluation of policies and services

Source: In-house preparation.

VI. SPECIAL ANALYSIS OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING STRATEGIES FOR CERTAIN MAJOR CITIES.-

Although the Local Government Modernisation Act (Ley de medidas para la modernización del gobierno local) is the first ever act on Spanish local government to make express reference to the strategic planning of cities, in dealing with its Social Council, the truth is that Spanish cities have a long track record in this field and have sometimes played the role of veritable pioneers on the European continent. Witness the case of Barcelona (originally sparked off by the preparations for the Olympic Games of 1992) and of Bilbao (arising from the need of reconverting the economy after the crisis of the city's main driving force: the coal and steel sector). In Spain strategic planning has caught on in a big way; nearly all large and medium-sized cities have by now drawn up their plan, albeit doing so with a very uneven degree of involvement of the economic and social actors and citizens. In general terms the plans drawn up by the municipalities run by progressive forces are more participative than those run by the centre-right.

The major Spanish cities (Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Bilbao, Seville, ...) have all striven to make strategic analyses of their situation in the context of inter-urban competence, mostly doing so by invoking the active participation of the most important economic and social actors. There have also been some well-publicised attempts to draw up purely technical or "cabinet-based" strategic plans, although formal consultations were made of outstanding figures (witness the Strategic Plan of the City of Madrid, drawn up by Arthur Andersen) .

The strategic plans of the major Spanish cities are generally municipal in scope, although there are some with a metropolitan dimension. Such is the case of Bilbao, but also Barcelona (where there is a coexistence of the city's strategic plan – also taking into account the metropolitan situation – and the metropolitan area as a whole) and the Self-Governing Community of Madrid, still in the pipeline, also independent of the plan of the capital city of Madrid. In these cases, as the Metropolitan Strategic Plan of Barcelona points out, this approach involves an attempt to move on from a strategic

plan to “a metropolitan region that thinks strategically” (METROPOLITAN STRATEGIC PLAN ASSOCIATION, 2002).

The city of Seville, for its part, has drawn up a strategic plan that affects only its city (OFFICE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN OF SEVILLE, 2003) but also takes into account the functional metropolitan area. The plan of Valencia is also purely municipal in scope.

As far as the initiative of the process is concerned, in most cases this has been taken by the public powers and specifically by the local authorities. There is the notable exception of Bilbao, where it was the major economic and social actors that took the initiative in the form of setting up the private association called “Bilbao Metr poli 30”, also incorporating the major public actors (FONT, 2002). This tactic of setting up a private association for developing strategic planning has been imitated in the case of the Metropolitan Strategic Plan, where the “Metropolitan Strategic Plan Association” was set up (COLOM  and TOM S FORN S, 2002). After the approval of the strategic plan an association was also set up in Seville, to see to the execution and monitoring of the plan.

Apart from other considerations, the process of drawing up these plans has had the effect (except in the city of Madrid where it was not participative) of increasing the commitment of the major economic and social actors, strengthening the feelings of urban identity and the awareness of belonging to a city as a common project with shared interests over and beyond the particular interests of each group or sector. This has no doubt favoured the strategies of local governments in each case.

Table 12 sums up the main aspects of the process in the major cities and metropolitan areas of Spain.

TABLE 12. SUMMARY OF THE MAIN ASPECTS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING IN THE MAJOR SPANISH CITIES

CITY	TERRITORIAL SCOPE	INITIATIVE	PARTICIPATION OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ACTORS	STATE OF THE PLAN
Madrid	a) City b) Regional (Self-Governing Community) (8028 km2, 179 municipalities, 5.8 million inhabitants)	a) Public (City Council) b) Public (regional government)	a) Very little b) Not for the moment (as currently worded)	a) Approved b) In the pipeline. Some political qualms about its contents
Barcelona	a) City (III Strategic and Social Plan of Barcelona 1999-2005)	Public (City Council)	a) High	a) Approved in 1999

	b) Functional Metropolitan Area. (628 km ² , 35 municipalities, 3 million inhabitants)	Public Council (City of Barcelona)	b) High	b) Approved in 2003
Valencia	City (Valencia 2015)	Public Council (City)	High	Approved in 1994
Bilbao	Functional Metropolitan Area (44 municipalities, one million inhabitants)	Private (Asociación Bilbao Metr�poli 30)	High	Approved
Seville	City	Public Council (City)	High	Approved in 2002

Source: Drawn up ad hoc

VII. CONCLUSIONS.-

The Spanish local government system has traditionally been characterised by a marked uniformism and by a fear of organic-functional and competence-related diversity, generally establishing the same regimen for all municipalities, regardless of their populations. The only exceptions are the Special Laws of Madrid and Barcelona, promulgated during the regime of General Franco. This model had proved to be antiquated and needed a significant, in-depth reform to improve government and governance mechanisms in the major Spanish cities in the context of a globalised and competitive world.

This uniformist inertia was broken for the first time in a clear manner and for a significant group of major cities with the Law of measures for the modernisation of local government of 2003, which essentially establishes a new organic-functional model for those municipalities, with a clear separation between the Board and the local executive, as well as a new level of professional public managers. Additionally, it strengthens participation by citizens and socio-economic agents, and establishes mechanisms for citizen defence, as well as generally promoting a more modern, efficient and effective management, setting out various modernising provisions integrated within the criteria of New Public Management.

The promotion of this reform is, without a doubt, a correct decision. However, the establishment of a new urban policy in Spain also requires modification to the area of municipal competencies, reinforcing the presence of major Spanish cities in numerous sectorial policies of proximity, many - but not all - of which are competency of the Autonomous Communities, requiring that a negative inertia be overcome on their part with regard to the strengthening of the local governments in their territories.

But the establishment of this policy also inevitably requires that the metropolitan reality be considered, an ambit which also involves the Autonomous Communities and overcoming their resistance. Nevertheless, it is no less important to overcome the obsolete constitutional jurisprudence in this area, that does not take into account the

clear supra-regional and even international incidence of numerous metropolitan functional areas. This circumstance not only legitimises, but also calls for greater State prominence in the regulation, delimitation and establishment of institutional metropolitan areas that affect these urban territories, without prejudice to the competencies of the Autonomous Communities and acting in collaboration with them and with the local governments affected.

In this context, numerous major Spanish cities have experimented with strategic planning models that in various cases, but not in all, have created instruments for improving governance at the complete urban level, given the absence of truly institutionalised metropolitan areas.

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