



ARCHIMEDES' RETURN OR THE POWER OF IMAGINATION ON THE STREETS

Fractional participation: a decisional-associative technique for unprecedented political activism

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ABSTRACT

Fractional participation is an innovative, decisional-associative technique based on the combined action of certain principles (disaggregation-aggregation, cooperation, complementarity, publicity, connectivity, direct involvement, eco-citizenship, agreed acquiescence, cooperative cohabitation, variable role, open leadership, confidentiality, eco-civic-leisure and eco-civic-tourism). It is a kind of virtual, self-instructive political tool that fosters a new dimension of associationism (soft association) and participation (participation à la carte) to strengthen democracy, facilitate its exercise and extend it beyond the realm of the nation-state. The fractional participation instance (FPI) is the prototype of a political tool for exercising fractional participation. The FPI, endowed with the application of the *ad hoc* software it requires and progressively adapted to the needs of every age, place and circumstances, may eventually become a useful, popular political tool for exercising eco-citizenship. Since this technique functions through the on-going generation of spontaneous open processes that aggregate a series of complementary participation impulses, it could also be called 'aggregative participation' or 'participation through complementary impulses'.

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'Give me a place to stand, and I shall move the world'
Archimedes

1. PRESENTATION

From time immemorial, various usages or utilities of the lever principle Archimedes mathematically formulated in the third century BC has allowed us to apply physical force intelligently. The rigid bar that rests on the fulcrum, the hoist, the seesaw, scissors, tongs, pliers, the catapult, the truck, the oars, the clamp, the staple remover, even the nutcracker itself are practical applications of this permanent physical principle that human imagination has made available to us as the need arises. However, such fertile creativity in this and many other realms does not correspond with the astonishing technological vacuum in social and political engineering that blindly continues to market that wheel-less trunk —political parties— and has not fully developed its most recent star product: the NGO. Hence, this disquisition begins with a call for a return to that great Syracuse-born inventor's spirit as a model and stimulus for breathing as much imagination as needed into conceiving innovative political tools for applying the democratic principle in our times.



Archimedes' return
or the power of imagination on the streets
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Hence, I start out from the premise that in the midst of the degraded obsolescence of the political tool par excellence —the political party, which today is abducting and colonising all known democracies— and the uncertain drift of the most popular type of participative political association —the NGO, which is threatened by the double-stranded virus of sectoralisation/sectionalism and moderation/adulteration— the main obstacle blocking citizens' effective participation in governance —local, regional, state, and global— lies in the lack of appropriate political tools.

I unabashedly call for the untenable status of today's *shameful democracy*¹ to be undermined, confronting the collective task of skilfully designing, developing and using new generation, decisional-associative tools cooperatively on the basis of civil society.

When applied to the democratic principle, these innovative political tools: self-generate autonomy (the antidote to political dependence); provide pluralism (a key requirement in the new, diverse, intercultural global context); overflow the nation-state's traditional sphere of action; induce efficient self-instructive processes related to a specific participative undertaking; renders needless the customary political leaderships exclusively dominated by one or a few leaders of initiatives, management and representation; require little or no need for institutionalisation; flexibilise associationism and conventional participation by promoting innovative options for 'soft associationism' and 'participation à la carte'; do not require any membership or constituency; allow for coexistence in its multidirectional, even antagonistic approaches and actions; and turn political inaction or absenteeism into action that operates for the collective weal by supplying new energy and the capacity for influencing the new political activism they inspire.

I maintain that this challenge can be successfully faced if: a) it is assumed that unprecedented long-term political activism to be promoted collaboratively and creatively by civil society organised as a whole is a priority; b) there is a firm commitment to support based on the mutual interrelationship of info-communicative and political technology and the avoidance of the crass erroneous point of view in which the former's advances is associated with the mere casting of votes from a distance and at any time—the illusion of an ultimately sterile participation—and c) care is taken to ensure that the new tools applied to the reality of the democratic principle prioritise continuous education or self-instruction components, i.e., components deliberately conceived to foster individual and collective, inseparable, ongoing teaching-learning and republican action processes.

As an example or prototype for undertaking this task, I propose a preliminary, new-generation, decisional-associative model—the *fractional participation model* (FPM)²—its corresponding policy tool to be applied—the *fractional participation instance* (FPI)—and a preliminary *sui generis* support to enable dissemination, experimentation and co-operative development—the *3.0 platform for self-instruction and ecocitizen action*, or PAUTA/e 3.0.—which was launched in pilot form at the University of Huelva in 2009.



2. CITIZENSHIP *versus* ECO-CITIZENSHIP

If the true democratic ideal is for citizens to be capable of deciding major public issues directly, why resign ourselves to a representative democracy that political parties are abducting and colonising in increasingly greater degrees? If advancements in info-communication technology—the '*crucial determinants of democratic innovation*' as Benjamin Barber called them (2004, 27) more than twenty years ago—are the horizon on which '*strong democrats*' pin their most fervent hopes for political renewal, why risk that they be used in the future to further shore up representative democracy by strengthening a pseudo-participative, citizenship quasi-circumscribed to passive suffra-

ge in periodic elections? Moreover, if human beings' collective interests converge in their global dimension, why not make political participation, today restricted to the intrastate realm, give way to the exercise of a new citizenship —eco-citizenship— oriented to governing the global *res publica* in this space that opens up beyond the nation-state, but is closed to democracy? Yet, what is meant by eco-citizenship? What challenges drive it? What formidable obstacles must it overcome?

2.1. Eco-citizenship, eco-citizen attitude and FP eco-citizens

The term 'eco-citizenship' refers to a concern for the *res publica* on a global scale, for the sustainable management of humankind's common abode. It is rarely used in political-legal literature and in any case, I have never come across it with the meaning I have been proposing since the late nineties. My case is based on the sense of the prefix *eco* (from the Greek *oikos*) which means 'house', 'dwelling' or 'vital realm' to refer to humankind's all-house, dwelling or vital realm, and the meaning of the word *citizenship*: the condition of a subject of a State with full rights and responsibilities who is entitled to intervene in his or her government. At first glance and strictly parallel to the concept of citizenship, this would be every human being's condition: a subject with full rights and responsibilities, holder of a share of global sovereignty, entitled to intervene in his or her government. A citizenry of eco-citizens who in the awareness of belonging to a sustainable, globally responsible society, act accordingly exercising the full autonomy of the will and decide to attribute to themselves full legitimacy to intervene in any public matter, regardless of nationality, to promote the development of all the planet's inhabitants by meeting their needs without compromising future generations.

The basic difference between citizens and eco-citizens lies not only in their different levels of attachment or reference —the State versus Planet Earth— but also in the basic fact that a citizen's status is founded on a pre-constituted, politically and socially articulated, territorially circumscribed circumstance equipped with a deeply-rooted institutional organisation —the State— that legitimises and ultimately invests it with its right to political participation, whereas the eco-citizen's circumstances have no comparable institutional reality today. Citizens exist; they generate real rights and responsibilities and have specific instruments at their disposal for their exercise. Devoid of legal support, eco-citizenship would be an aspiration *de lege ferenda* at best. Hence, lacking foundations, eco-citizenship seeks to assume a legal and technical sense, since it extends into the extra-State realm and currently lacks institutional support. International society is a strange space, one potentially hostile to democratic forms. In legal terms, we recognise that no other citizenship exists than the one determined by State constitutions and a few timid experiences underway, such as the incipient European citizenship.

Therefore, today eco-citizenship can only be an alternative civic attitude that is aware, informed, responsible, solidary and committed to defining, formulating and effectively defending humankind's common interests; this defines the eco-citizen attitude, one of increased democratic depth and legitimate emancipation consistent with globalisation's historical circumstances, one that reacts decisively to the bleak scenario of a widespread dearth of democracy at national and international levels, one that will only progress through strenuous efforts and the proper perspective of the overriding task of vesting itself with adequate political instruments for its individual and collective exercise.

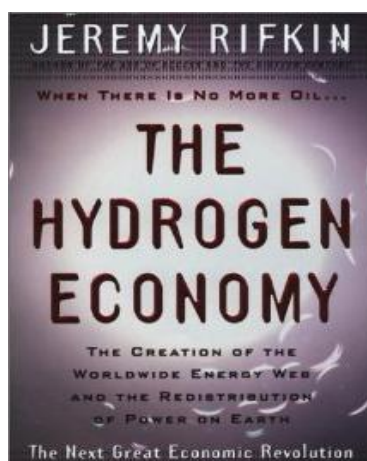
As Dahl explained (1997), the first democratic transformation pushed the earlier boundaries of the traditional 'government by the few' and generated new structures and beliefs supported by the 'government by the many' in the democratic or republican city-states. Two millennia later, in deliberately applying the notion of democracy

to the broader jurisdiction of the nation-state, the second democratic transformation went beyond the limits of all earlier beliefs and structures. The third transformation, which I call eco-citizen democracy, must take on the challenge of making it belong to citizens³, while incorporating this new civic attitude that will enable today's citizens to travel even farther down the road of global citizenship. This is a citizens democracy, yet one with an eco-citizen attitude exercised diligently by new actors who want, know how and are able to intervene as directly as possible in all levels of governance.

This is where the interplay among the decisional-associative (D+A), teaching-learning (T+L) and initiative and control (I+C) roles inherent in the FPM can generate effective, creative political activism that features a singular type of politically acting citizen—the FP eco-citizen—committed to applying the democratic principle to constructing an eco-citizen democracy.

3. THE FRACTIONAL PARTICIPATION MODEL (FPM)

In attempting to imagine hypothetical evolutionary scenarios for our species, I have considered the role that the burgeoning leisure phenomenon could come to play in transforming democracy and its exercise. And why leisure precisely? Because if citizens' scant willingness to participate politically is often attributed to the lack of stimulation and time, it makes sense to incorporate a civic or republican component in a natural, suggestive way into people's pleasant leisure activities (eco-civic-leisure)⁴ especially, those linked to the increasing mobility associated with tourism (eco-civic-tourism).⁵ Thus, the ongoing, personal, teaching and learning processes of the civic or republican dimension, as well as the political undertaking itself, not only would find a suggestive stimulus, multiple occasions and geographical areas for their exercise, they would also be defrayed thanks to a new, constant and inexhaustible source of self-funding that would generate an indispensable autonomy, since in leisure the user pays, unlike many of our political representatives. Moreover, as Keynes announced back in his *Essays in Persuasion*, the day may come when humankind will have to face the use of its new independence from economic concerns and reconsider the existence—and the new role on Planet Earth and perhaps in the universe itself by then—of a new widespread *homo ociosus*. A distant hypothetical scenario I consider desirable and possible, especially if today's pyramidal energy model were replaced by another, alternative horizontal structure of the kind Jeremy Rifkin heralded in *Hydrogen Economy* (2000), e.g., a structure in which the result of links among progress in info-communications, info-robotics, the availability of cheap energy and low environmental impact from renewable sources would make it truly possible to produce goods and services for everyone with only a fraction of the workforce required today (RIFKIN 1995).



The fractional participation model (FPM) briefly described here⁶ is the foundation of a new generation, participative, decisional-associative technique for exercising eco-citizenship under plural, autonomous conditions. The FPM enables unprecedented political instruments that are exceptionally well-equipped for eco-citizens' collaborative performance of the three main political functions cited above. It aims to pave the way for an eco-citizen democracy in which future eco-citizens decide on major political issues without intermediaries and gradually replaces conventional representative democracy. And above all, it provides those who embrace an unprecedented political activism and are committed to its design,

development and diligent use the gratifying individual and collective satisfaction of cooperating effectively to weave the fabric of a truly alternative future.

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3.1. The disaggregation-aggregation process (D+A process)

At the heart of the FPM is a participatory undertaking's disaggregation-aggregation process (hereinafter the D+A process). A handful of practical cases will serve to illustrate this:⁷ the sage's gate, the assembly line, the *Guadiana Vivo* environmental group, the ATM and the *Guadiana Educa* NGO.

3.1.1. Practical cases



The sage's gate

Many years ago there was a famous physicist who was very fond of receiving visitors in his country home. Since visitors were always welcome, there was no need to call ahead of time; all they had to do was to give a good hard push to the heavy gate blocking entry to the leafy garden to open it wide. However, they also had to make sure to shut it securely, which couldn't be done if they hadn't been made the effort to open it so wide beforehand. Although this inconvenient quirk never ceased to surprise visitors, no one commented on such a trivial matter with the famous host.

But one day, a student who was visiting for the first time and was more willing than quick-witted offered to take a look at the gate and try to repair it. The sage's response came swiftly: *'You are very kind, but as a physics student, you should have considered the possibility that the gate's extra-long trajectory may have a logical explanation. And indeed it does, because, as should be common knowledge, its movement provides the driving force that activates the mechanical system I installed years ago to draw the well water I use to water the garden.'*

Our wise and practical sage, who offered a series of visitors such original cooperative 'opportunities for participation' in the task of irrigation, thus managed to transform hundreds of efforts into useful 'impulses' aggregated to generate the intended 'action' of watering the garden. At first glance, this story highlights four features of the D +A process, namely: a) it is a two-stage process: disaggregation-aggregation; b) it uses a particular tool or mechanism of induction and support: a water—wheel activated

by the garden gate; c) it responds to a deliberate purpose: drawing well water, d) it is cooperative in nature.

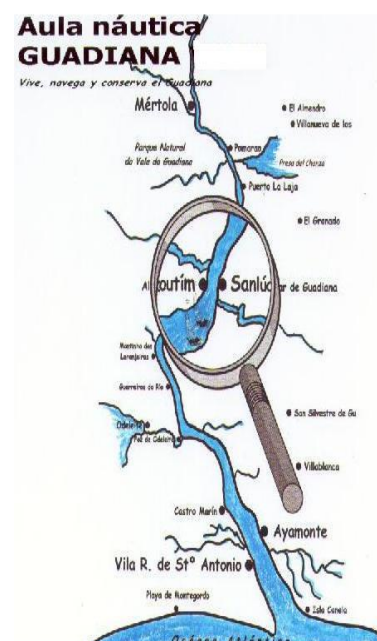
The assembly line and the Guadiana Vivo environmental group

The disaggregation-aggregation principle is also operative in the assembly line of a soft drinks factory and the everyday practices of a militant environmental organisation I shall call *Guadiana Vivo*. An assembly line is a device made up of a set of mechanisms that travel along a conveyor belt enabling a series of different, previously programmed tasks to be carried out automatically: washing, rinsing, supplying components, capping, labelling, etc. In turn, when *Guadiana Vivo* tackles an environmental problem related to the Guadiana River, it also goes through a series of tasks, in this case performed by an instrumental mechanism with a decisional-associative character and a political legal nature: a collective or association of persons governed by a few bylaws that determine the purposes, organisational structure and decision-making procedure, etc. The specific tasks or actions inherent in the public performance of these types of collectives -although diverse- have a series of steps in common: observing, detecting environmental problems, searching for information, conducting studies, identifying responsible parties, shaping their members' will, making decisions by voting and filing complaints with the media or courts of justice, etc. Furthermore, having identified and sorted the tasks or actions in a campaign, *Guadiana Vivo* normally proceeds to commission several of its members with their execution.

However, compared with the sage's gate, the cases of the assembly line and environmental group incorporate a note of heterogeneity that complicates their D+A processes. In effect, the activities inherent to the assembly line and environmentalists' participatory undertakings consist in a number of different kinds of actions that rupture the elemental homogeneity typical of the identical, repetitive task of drawing water in the first case.

The ATM and the Guadiana Educa NGO

I shall offer two more examples that add new doses of complexity to the D+A process because of their openness and potential multiplicity of participants: an ATM and a group dedicated to environmental education and protecting heritage. The former has been programmed by a bank entity to provide users with a varied series of operations (balance inquiry, movements, cash reimbursement, telephone recharging, transfers, deposits, issuance of multiple orders, etc.) that can be carried out by those who have certain magnetically identifiable documents. The latter, which I will call *Guadiana Educa*, is a Spanish NGO that operates in the Hispano-Portuguese stretch of the Guadiana River and a) is governed by bylaws duly registered in the associations registry, and b) runs an environmental education programme for university students based on a permanent nautical classroom that incorporates I+C observatory exercises which aim to accustom participants to assuming the function of citizen initiative and control (I+C).



We know how to operate an ATM, but how does the NGO *Guadiana Educa* organise its I+C observatory exercises? By planning in advance, as does both the designer of the soft drinks assembly line as well as the environmental group. This allows it to have an orderly list of tasks or potential actions to undertake. However, instead of assigning the execution of all these tasks or actions to its own members, it chooses to fragment this participative undertaking, i.e., decompose or disaggregate it into multiple sub-tasks or sub-actions that instructors propose as 'opportunities for participation' to the series of students who pass their nautical classrooms. Thus, people who are not NGO members have the chance to become significant actors in the instructional participatory undertaking it promotes.

We shall analyse Guadiana Educa's procedure in three successive nautical classrooms that incorporate three I+C observatory exercises on the debate over a bridge to be erected between Spain and Portugal. A controversial decision, since the socio-economic benefits of the cross-border connection are inseparable from the environmental impact of works in a protected natural area.

In the first nautical classroom, the instructor presents the first I+C observatory exercise. To do so, he lists all the problems associated with the works and proposes various activities to be accomplished during a tour of the river site: taking photos, discussing the possible pros and cons and approaches to building the bridge and suggesting alternatives, etc. In other words, the instructor provides nautical classroom participants with a series of previously prepared 'opportunities for participation' in relation to a matter of public record.



In the second nautical classroom, the instructor tells the new participants about what had been accomplished during the previous I+C observatory exercise and proposes that they undertake new actions such as: completing the photographic report and collaborating in maintaining a website to promote debate, and so on. Those present may in turn suggest other actions, e.g., translating some of the documents sent by the Portuguese authorities into Spanish, seeking further information on the persistent rumours that point to the link between the bridge, its approaches on the Spanish side and a speculative urban operation sponsored by municipal authorities in protected coastal areas, etc. This will probably enliven the debate and highlight the lack of agreement among participants, which will not prevent them from all agreeing on the need to ask Spanish and Portuguese authorities for more information, pursuant to current legislation.

In the third nautical classroom, the instructor refers to the divergences produced and hands out copies of newspaper articles defending the different positions. He may have to announce the government's lack of response and a participant may propose to file a complaint on those grounds to the Spanish or Portuguese Ombudsman Offices. Perhaps the participants in this third I+C observatory exercise will put aside

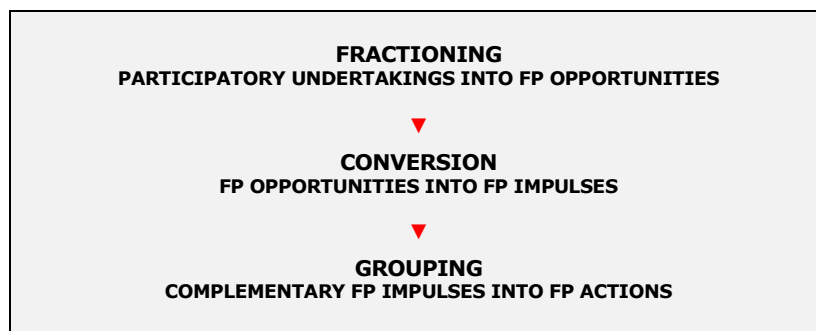
their disagreements on the merits of the matter, agree not to turn a blind eye to the breach of regulations on access to environmental information and decide to sign joint complaints. And so, this dynamic in the I+C observatory exercises repeats itself over and over in subsequent nautical classrooms organised by *Guadiana Educa*.

The conclusion is that this collective observation, information, reflection, debate and action is the result of the use made by successive participants in the nautical classrooms of the many 'opportunities for participation' the instructors provided. In fact, it is as if the *Guadiana Educa* had set the conveyor belt in motion, ensuring at all times that 'opportunities for participation' are not lacking or that the regular involvement of groups of participants does not stop providing new individual and collective 'stimuli impulses' that could be aggregated to create 'actions'. The point is that the pails draw and pour water when the gate is opened or closed, the empty containers are transformed into bottles of fizzy soft drinks at the end of the run and so on. In other words, thus the D+A process operates in the I+C observatory exercises in the nautical classroom.



3.1.2. A three-stage process

However, a new feature appears and joins the note of heterogeneity mentioned above in the series of mechanisms the ATM's sophisticated software program coordinates and *Guadiana Educa* with its I+C observatory exercises: the openness to an undetermined, potentially unlimited number of users, which makes the D+A process more complex. If we agree that 'opportunities for participation' are meaningful insofar as they aspire to become 'stimuli impulses' capable of being grouped into 'actions', we can conclude that in fact, the D+A process operates in three stages: fractioning, conversion and grouping.



First stage: fractioning participatory undertakings into FP opportunities

As seen in *Guadiana Educa*'s I+C observatory exercises, fractioning a participatory undertaking is the first or initial stage in the D+A process; it consists in deliberately decomposing the potential development of a particular undertaking of public interest

into 'opportunities for participation' (hereinafter FP opportunities), in order to divide up their execution among an open number of actors called on to cooperate in a series.

Second stage: converting FP opportunities into FP impulses

In taking advantage of the series of FP opportunities, the participants turn them into 'participation impulses' (hereinafter FP impulses).

Third stage: grouping complementary FP impulses into FP actions

The series of FP impulses are grouped to complement each other and generate FP actions. Writing and justifying a complaint, providing information or a relevant argument, locating the target institution's address, printing, signing and certifying the document, etc., are examples of FP impulses that are aggregated complementarily to generate a FP action (in this case, filing a reasoned complaint at an Ombudsman's office) that generates new FP opportunities. Thus, when an individual is faced with such FP opportunities, he may act in the knowledge that his FP impulse is a cooperative decision—either explicitly or implicitly— that can be aggregated with other FP impulses within an ongoing, collective process of fractioned participation for the public weal.

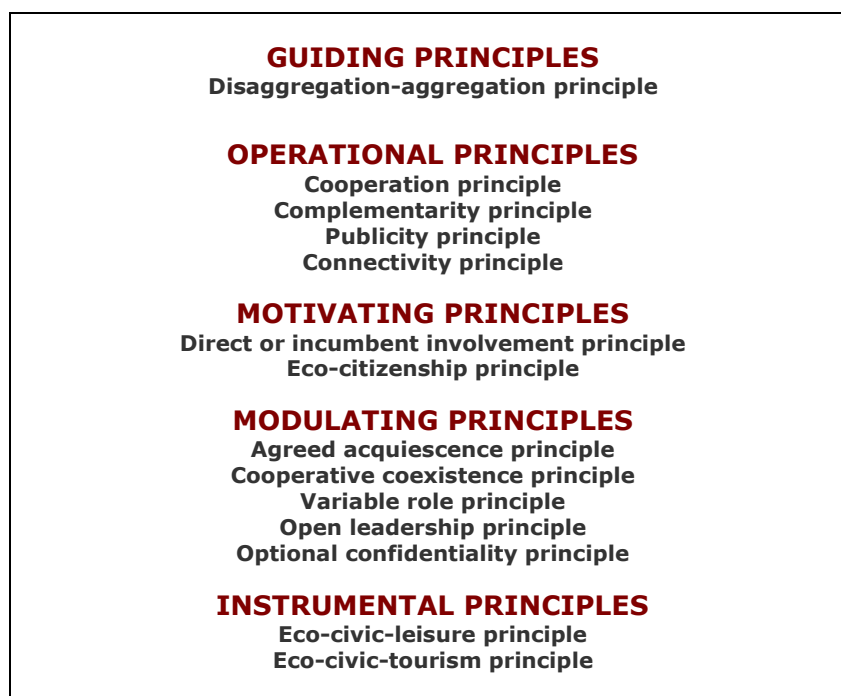
One singular feature of the FPM's D+A process that is a variant of this complementary grouping of FP impulses is the possibility of directionally grouping FP impulses and FP actions. We have seen that inconsistent or even antagonistic FP impulses may arise during the Guadiana Educa's I+C observatory exercises. Must such FP impulses pass through the conventional democratic sieve? In other words, must they be put to a vote so that the group as a whole supports only those who obtain majority support or conversely, will participants only limit themselves to providing the number of FP impulses they deem to be appropriate, in the knowledge that these will be grouped together with other complementary FP impulses (before or after, individual or collective) to generate FP actions? In effect, the FPM's D+A process does not envisage voting as a democratic modality since by definition, it does not reject or discard any minority FP impulse, no matter how dissenting or antagonistic it may be. The D+A process limits itself to stimulating its complementary groupings into FP actions. In the FPM—and this is a key differentiating feature— all FP impulses can be taken advantage of and therefore are potentially apt for complementarily grouping and generating FP actions capable of forging new paths or directions in the participatory undertaking's D+A process. Hence, I shall call the FP impulses that pave new paths or directions in the D+A process 'directional FP impulses', the FP actions that they generate 'directional FP actions' and the new FP opportunities that keep a participative undertaking functioning 'directional FP opportunities'.



At this point we know that the D+A process: a) is based on an autonomous cooperative will, both explicit and implicit; b) has heterogeneous components; c) is within reach of an undetermined –potentially unlimited– number of recipients; d) is interactive; e) operates in three stages: fractioning, conversion and grouping; f) ensures openness and transparency by its public nature; and g) requires the presence of a specific *ad hoc* support (the ATM or I+C observatory exercise, in the last case).

3.1.3. The FPM's structural principles

In addition to the guiding disaggregation-aggregation principle, various concatenated principles interact in the FPM and can be classified as: operational, motivational, modulating and instrumental.



Operational principles

- The cooperation principle: this signals the D+A process' unequivocally cooperative character –explicit or implicit–.
- The complementarity principle: this ensures that when FP impulses are grouped together to produce FP actions, they do so by complementing each other, thus empowering their one-directional, discrepant and even antagonistic natures.
- The publicity principle: this ensures the permanent transparency of the D+A process.
- The connectivity principle: this refers to the indispensable resort to info-communication technology and its accessibility

Motivating principles

- The direct or incumbent involvement principle: this operates when the motivation for a participatory undertaking, with respect to a particular issue or situation, derives essentially from a prior awareness of some degree of direct or incumbent personal involvement, this being a key motivational factor in exercising the right to political participation.
- The eco-citizenship principle or principle of participatory self-attribution of legitimacy: this is responsible for incorporating citizenship's planetary dimension and all the functions inherent in its exercise. Its contribution is an exponent of the FPM's deliberate intention to incorporate the demands inherent in the new eco-citizen or global democracy that is on the horizon of this political and social engineering initiative into the political tools derived from it.

Modulating principles

- The agreed acquiescence principle: this refers to deliberate inaction or silence, as defined previously in the conscious exercise of the autonomy of will as a valid political option. Yet, how does this work? How does it modulate the FPM? The principle of agreed acquiescence involves being able to redirect the potential public energy inherent in the right not to exercise political participation —political absenteeism or inaction— towards the broad channel that facilitates the D+A process and turn it into useful, profitable public energy that can be and is taken advantage of by the collective that agrees to it. To borrow an analogy from physics, it might be argued that the right to political participation creates a kind of potential civic energy capable of being wasted. Or what is worse, of being exploited tortiously by those who in fact, attribute a self-interested interpretation to political inaction or silence that is unintended by its source. Is it possible to prevent this inaction or silence —usually interpreted as laziness, apathy, listlessness, lack of motivation or passivity— from nurturing confusion and growing political absenteeism in order to become a singular, new option for political participation modified by the source of its nature, thanks to the play of a deliberate, voluntary and previously noted decision? Would it be useful to society if remaining silent or refraining from acting were to be transformed into a clear, useful and usable gesture, instead of generating speculation or simply signifying an apathy or laziness associated with an inert event, i.e., sterile and useless, related to carelessness and the neglect of the fulfilment of civic rights and responsibilities? Wouldn't clearly establishing these political behaviours' true meaning —and beyond that, giving them a new, incontrovertible meaning— put a stop to the diverse conventional partisan interpretations of the phenomenon of political abstention in general? Would it not open up a new, flexible option for political participation since —as shall be seen— the most prominent effect of the agreed acquiescence principle is its capacity to deliberately transform conscious, voluntary inaction into FP impulses?
- The cooperative coexistence principle: this is associated with notions of tolerance, pluralism and effectiveness. It refers to the FPM's capacity to encourage a new dimension in the decisional-associative process that allows divergent and even antagonistic approaches and actions to exist side by side in one single, instrumental framework. In the case of Educa Guadiana's I+C observatory exercises, the cooperative coexistence principle operates when it enables two groups of participants with conflicting positions on the bridge's construction to be formed, as well as when they all, whether for or against the bridge, agree to demand that the Adminis-

tration enforce the regulations on access to the environmental information that supports them.

- The variable role principle: this provides participants in the A+D process with the option to choose freely the role they wish to play within it at all times.
- The open leadership principle: this extends the freedom to choose one's role to the exercise of leadership of one's own proposals or initiatives and to the right to act as spokesperson for the group on its behalf.
- The optional confidentiality principle: this provides security to a participatory undertaking by envisaging various formulas for anonymity so as to minimise or completely eliminate the least or greatest personal risk of various kinds, which can enhance the exercise of the right to political participation. And not only in authoritarian political contexts, but also within the context of the conventional representative democracies.

What are the modulating principles' main effects on the FPM? In short: a) they make any decisional-associative process more simple, flexible, dynamic, participatory, autonomous, pluralistic and efficient; b) they provide security to the participatory undertaking; c) they enhance the decisional-associative exercise's virtual, non-exclusive nature to facilitate meetings, exchange views and adopt agreements without the need for notifications, meetings and trips; d) they provide a greater degree of participatory protagonism; e) as a result of a previously agreed upon acquiescence, they incorporate the concept of deliberate inaction and a mechanism for enabling abstention or silence to function for the good of the collective in practice; f) they pave the way for assuming any role or part; g) they make unnecessary or superfluous normal political leadership based on the permanent or rotating assumption by one or a few leaders of initiatives, management and the exclusive representation of the collective; h) they make it possible for FPM-based, decisional-associative processes not to require regulatory by-laws or conventional organs (management board, assembly etc.).

Instrumental Principles

The instrumental principles are eco-civic-leisure and eco-civic-tourism principles and enable the FPM to associate both civic self-instruction and education, as well as the exercise of the right to participation, the burgeoning leisure phenomenon and especially, the mobility associated with tourism, which respectively generates eco-civic-tourism and eco-civic-leisure. Yet, returning to the Guadiana River, we shall now reflect along the lines of a new practical case that will complete this brief explanation of the FPM.

3.1.4. The COOPERA=OBSERVA+EMPRENDE initiative

Suppose the members of *Guadiana Educa* come to the conclusion that is best to stop organising I+C observatory exercises, given the political tension they generate in the zone. In fact, in its last general assembly, the majority decided to keep on organising nautical classrooms, but dropped the conflictive I+C observatory exercises. What happened? Unfortunately, a quite commonplace occurrence: Guadiana Educa's inevitable passing through the stage of moderation, abdication and institutional integration⁸ that undermines civil organisations' strength and commitment. Because bothered by the I+C observatory exercises' observation and denunciation activities, the public institutions that sponsor nautical classrooms threatened to withdraw their financial support. So, what should be done in the face of circumstances that restrict autonomy, efficiency

and ultimately defeat the NGO's social object in our example? Does the FPM provide a solution to these very frequent situations?

3.1.4.1. A *sui generis* collective: COOPERA

Imagine a new collective promoted by twenty young dissidents from *Guadiana Educa*, who, after collaborating with www.proyectointersur.org in the process of designing the FPM, wish to apply its principles in practice. They call it COOPERA (an acronym in Spanish for Rio Arriba Eco-Citizen Cooperation) and it is a singular, not-for-profit association that has not been permitted to file in the registry, since its articles of incorporation state that its functioning will not be governed by conventional rules of association, but rather by a *sui generis* decisional-associative procedure they call the 'acquiescence procedure' or fractional participation procedure (FPP).

COOPERA'S FRACTIONAL PARTICIPATION PROCEDURE

DENOMINATION: Río Arriba Eco-Citizen Coop Collective (**COOPERA**)

OBJECTIVE: To promote sustainable development and eco-citizen environmental education, protect natural and cultural heritage and promote the Bajo Guadiana Nature Park.

REGULATION: By this decisional-associative, fractional participation procedure.

MEMBERS:

- **Founders.** The twenty initial signatories of the individual declaration of participation in the COOPERA collective and acceptance of the decisional-associative procedure
- **Ordinary.** Those who, upon the proposal of two members, are admitted and electronically sign this declaration. Resignation is effected through a simple communication.

ORGANS:

- **Portal web -www.coopera.org-** equipped with the software applications needed for the functioning of this decisional-associative procedure

FUNCTIONING:

- **First:** Each member of COOPERA, individually or with other members -proponents- who wishes to put forward a proposal shall formulate and submit it, together with the pertinent documents, following the formalised computer procedure that can be found on the web portal so that they can be recorded, stored and distributed to all participants.
- **Second,** COOPERA members shall have a minimum of ten calendar days -or longer if the proponent so indicates- to communicate his or her position, which may be: positive (**positive active position**), conditioned (**conditioned active position**), negative (**negative active position**) and abstention (**abstaining active position**).
- **Third:** It is understood that those who do not respond with an active position to the proponent by the deadline acquiesce to the proposal and their inaction will be counted as positive votes -**acquiescent position**-.
- **Fourth:** After the 10-calendar-day deadline or other if specified in the proposal has passed, the **proponent**, if backed by the group members, can execute it in the terms contemplated therein, acting on behalf and as spokesperson for COOPERA.
- **Fifth:** It is understood that a proposal has COOPERA's backing when it is endorsed (**positive active positions+acquiescent positions**) by a simple majority of members.
- **Sixth:** For the purposes of tallying the positions, it shall be considered that the numbers of members is the one indicated by the computer system at the time and date of the proposal's submission.
- **Seventh:** By acting as COOPERA's spokesperson, the proponent is inexcusably obligated to mention the number of negative active positions or abstentions he or she has been informed of during the term, identifying only those senders who so expressly request it by their first and last names.

SUPPORT ORGANISATION: Initially, the logistical support required by COOPERA for its proper functioning will be provided disinterestedly by the PAUTA/e 3.0 Agency.

FUNDING: COOPERA has no economic resources. Its members, when acting as proponents, are the ones who shall resolve or include all matters related to funding his or her proposal as if it were merely another element thereof, so that the collective can resolve it.

REPRESENTATION AND SPOKESPERSON: The proponent who, in carrying out this procedure, is empowered to act as spokesperson for the group on behalf of his or her proposal, shall always use the following heading formula in his or her writings, communiqués or public speeches: Mr/Ms ..., with National Identity Number... on his or her own behalf, as spokesperson for COOPERA and promoter of (denomination of his/her proposal)...

MODIFICATION: The decisional-associative, fractional participation procedure may be modified by amendments to be incorporated by following these same rules.

ANNEXES

Individual declaration of participation in the COOPERA collective and acceptance of its decisional-associative, fractional participation procedure

Mr/Ms..., with National Identity Number and e-mail address expresses his/her willingness to form a part of COOPERA and states that he/she expressly accepts this decisional-associative procedure.

Agreement between COOPERA and the PAUTA/e 3.0 Agency

The PAUTA/e 3.0 Agency shall act as a support organisation and undertakes to provide the logistical support needed for the functioning of COOPERA's decisional-associative procedure.

The OBSERVA initiative

One of COOPERA's members —Teresa (M1)— decides to act as a proponent and formulates her 'proposal' —FP leadership impulse— to activate OBSERVA (the Permanent Eco-Citizen Observatory of the Bajo Guadiana Nature Park). In keeping with COOPERA's procedure, she informs the other 19 members, awaits the deadline for receiving their responses and then tallies the count: 18 members maintain an 'active position' in response to her proposal and 1 (M3) does not reply (acquiescent position). Of the 18 'active positions', five support the original proposal (positive active positions), four condition their support on the acceptance of certain modifications (conditional active positions), 8 oppose it (negative active positions) and 1 (M12) abstains (abstaining active position).

MEMBERS	ACTIVE POSITIONS			
	Positive	Acquiescent	Negative	Abstains
M1	x			
M2	x			
M3		x		
M4	x			
M5	x			
M6	x			
M7	x			
M8	x			
M9	x			
M10	x			
M11	x			
M12				x
M13			x	
M14			x	
M15			x	
M16			x	
M17			x	
M18			x	
M19			x	
M20			x	
Total	10	1	8	1

So, Teresa decides to accept the suggested changes and secure the definitive backing of the four members who conditioned their support. Therefore, the OBSERVA initiative has obtained the minimum support required by the procedure: 9 positive active positions and 1 acquiescent position in favour versus 8 negative active positions and 1 abstaining active position. Once the COOPERA's FPP has been applied correctly, Teresa has a free hand to act as the group's leader and spokesperson and develop her proposal.

One item Teresa has had to incorporate into her initial proposal is posting a website with a database for filing all matters related to OBSERVA's operations: www.observa.fpw.⁹ Thus, the successive participants in the I+C observatory exercises —as well as any other individuals or groups interested in the Bajo Guadiana Nature Park— may have access to its development and take advantage of its FP opportunities.¹⁰

As an provisional balance, COOPERA's use of this unprecedented decisional-associative procedure has made it possible for: a) M3's inaction to be turned into something profitable, since its acquiescence —the agreed acquiescence principle— has helped Teresa's proposal go forward; b) the twenty group members to choose their role freely at a given time —the variable role principle—; c) the original proposal to be improved with input from other members; d) Teresa to act as spokesperson for the group, taking the lead on her own initiative —the open leadership principle—; e) the decisional-associative undertaking to be facilitated by resorting to modern info-communication technologies —the connectivity principle—; and f) the cooperative cohabitation principle to facilitate, albeit still timidly, this new dimension of the decisional-associative process I call soft associationism. In short, a potentially many-headed collective whose members can develop diverse, mutually agreed-upon initiatives without the need for meetings and with few formalities; they are free to choose the roles they wish to play, including leader and spokesperson. An initiative in which inaction or silence can be turned into useful or beneficial action.

The EMPRENDE initiative

As for OBSERVA's operational aspects, how do its promoters intend to overcome the objective difficulty of carrying out their proposal with the utmost efficiency and autonomy, given COOPERA's precarious operating position, which arises from its inadaptation to Organic Law 1/2002 of 22 March, which regulates the Right of Association, established by art. 22 of the Spanish Constitution?¹¹

Pablo (M2), who is an economist, has developed a complementary proposal to solve the financial question while generating a self-employment option for many people. His plan is to launch a small, simple cooperative eco-enterprise called EMPRENDE (an acronym for Ecotourism Development Entrepreneurship in Spanish). To do so, like Teresa, he activates COOPERA's FPP and secures the necessary support. His idea is to combine tourism with self-instruction and eco-citizen action in such a way that the former finances the latter. Therefore, EMPRENDE is prepared to market attractive leisure activities (Weekends in the Guadiana) based on eco-entrepreneurial criteria closely associated with OBSERVA and its I+C observatory exercises. In fact, Pablo's initiative to self-finance OBSERVA introduces a key element, in that it couples eco-citizen action and self-instruction with eco-civic-leisure and eco-civic-tourism.



Given leisure's innate characteristics, particularly the mobility associated with tourism, its use to promote civic education and the self-instruction process, as well as the individual and collective exercise of the right of political participation is an essential component of the FPM. Specifically, three characteristics are essential: its innate appeal, its self-financing and the spatial displacement involved. In fact, since people pay for these leisure options themselves, this not only ensures their appeal (self-expansive collection effect), but also the voluntary self-funding of activities associated with instruction and exercising the right to political participation. There are two elements that indisputably provide an ideal formula for resolving two key questions: how can people be infused with the civic dimension and how the FPM can be endowed with the autonomous and plural conditions required for the exercise of political participation and learning? In turn, the spatial displacement derived from tourism's characteristic mobility is essential in dealing with the dispersion, intercultural approach and multi-ubiquity of the public affairs that are the object of eco-citizen interest.



3.1.5. An individualistic political model?

As we have seen, the FPM is the result of the interactive concatenation of a series of principles that operate within its core process: the A+D process, a *sui generis* process that operates in three stages: fractioning, conversion and grouping. Thus, when a potential actor in fractional participation encounters an FP opportunity, he may act in the knowledge that its use —the FP impulse— although *per se* an individual political act, will nurture a cooperative or aggregative process on a large-scale level. Therefore, although fractional participation enables and intentionally empowers the individual exercise of political action, it cannot be concluded that it encourages individualism. Moreover, while FP actions constitute singular political acts by their nature,

there may be collective FP impulses in their origin. This would be the case of FP impulses contributed by citizen collectives who resort to the FPM. At any rate, whether individual or collective, singular or plural, FP impulses or actions respond to specific or general, spontaneous or deliberate interests; FP impulses and FP actions will never be isolated efforts, given the successive, interrelated, cooperative and ultimately, democratic and plural nature of the D+A process.

4. THE PROTOTYPE OF A POLITICAL TOOL FOR IMPLEMENTING THE FPM

After this introduction of the FPM's essential features, I shall now discuss a preliminary draft of the prototype of a generic policy instrument designed to exercise fractional participation —the fractional participation instance (FPI)— as well as the functions it performs and how they can be incorporated into conventional political instruments.

The term 'instance' is used to best express its predominantly informal, non-institutional and spontaneous aspect, its distinctly instrumental character, qualified by the peculiar note of imprecise embodiment derived from the customary legal sense of '*instancia*' in Spanish, which alludes to the jurisdictional degrees the law establishes in trials and other matters, its status as a platform, means and opportunity for pursuing truth and achieving justice, in short, its connotation with claiming, appealing, demanding, urging, reiterating and insisting on the prompt execution of something that the Latin *instare* symbolically contributes. These are relevant nuances given its predominantly virtual reality, its use to promote global republicanism and the double mood it inspires: constructive, given the complexity of the challenges to be faced, and vindictive, in the face of the powers that be. Hence, the fractional participation instance or FPI.



An artistic vision of FPI
Humberto Jacome MAYANZA, Quito, 2004

Initially, the FPI might be defined as the generic prototype of a new generation, political instrument for soft associationism and à la carte participation that is autonomous, plural, self-instructive, virtual, interactive and capable of triggering the five-fold, permanent effects of self-financing, self-regulation, self-expansion, self-renewal and self-generation. This is accompanied by an *ad hoc* software for applying the FPM that can be used individually and collectively by an indeterminate number of FP ecocitizens. In fact, an FPI could be reduced to a series of more or less sophisticated software applications that its users can use to perform the series of functions inherent in republican practice indicated below through fractional participation. A FP software, as yet to be developed, that in the application of the publicity and connectivity principles, provides the utmost transparency and accessibility.

4.1. FPI functions and their support

Like any useful policy derived from applying the FPM, the FPI should perform eight functions at a minimum. The first three are essential: decisional-associative (D+A function), teaching-learning (T+L function) initiative and control (I+C function) and the remaining five are instrumental: encounter and debate (E+D function), compilation

and storage (C+S function), information and assessment (I+A function), coordination and management (C+M function) and watchfulness and security (W+S function).

4.1.1. The D+A function: soft associations and à la carte participation

Because of the FPM's innate characteristics, the FPI's development of the decisional-associative function will modulate the practical accomplishment of the conventional decisional-associative undertaking by providing dimensions unprecedented in the civic exercise of the fundamental rights to association and participation. Aside from the eco-citizen (attitudinal) or global (spatial) dimensions, two of these are essential:

- On the one hand, by empowering an unlimited number of FP eco-citizens, whatever their position on a particular public issue may be, the FPI can be involved in multiple D+A processes (turning successive FP opportunities into FP impulses that generate FP actions), that will allow conventional associationism's tendency to institutionalisation to be transcended and give way to a new associative dimension I call "soft associationism". Since the free play of the D+A process' disaggregation-aggregation principle is responsible for the FPI, not only will the associative desire not neglect any imaginable associative act, it will also serve them, from the more institutionalised and permanent ones to the most spontaneous, informal and temporary ones.
- On the other hand, the FPI's elimination of any rigid associative factor, which enables the minimum expression of an associationism, will have the beneficial effect of enhancing a political undertaking's individual —not individualist— component to encourage a wide range of participatory options I call 'participation à la carte', a *sui generis* participatory mode that will allow the customary formal processes of adopting and executing decisions inherent to democratic, majority rule-based, conventional associationism to add or perhaps be replaced by the unprecedented options that arise from the promising development of D+A processes, with all that that entails. In other words, not only will the participative undertaking's FPI not be diminished in any way by the absence of a prior formal associative frame, it will acquire unprecedented potentialities.

In effect, there are essential differences between the FPI and political parties or different forms of participatory political associations, including NGOs. First off, no one will be members of the FPI, only users. Conventional associationism will no longer condition political participation as it does now, since, rather than satisfying citizens' will to associate in order to participate (or to thrive), the FPI will instead provide FP eco-citizens with countless ways to exercise the right to political participation without the need for conventional associations. The FPI's legitimacy —its hallmark— will not be grounded in a few votes in closed meetings that will have become obsolete for many purposes, but rather in its status as a eco-citizen platform that generates D+A processes. This scenario will require substantial changes in the legislation that develops the fundamental rights to association and political participation.

4.1.2. The T+L function and FP classroom

As mentioned above, the lack of instruction is an unacceptable argument for impeding or limiting the exercise of political participation, but there is no doubt that the greater the degree of political culture, the more effectively public interests will be defended. Hence, the importance attached to the FPI's prioritising eco-citizen action and self-instruction (EAS), in other words, the importance of fostering interactive civic learning/teaching processes and growing interventions to defend the global *res publica*

that stimulate FP eco-citizenship, embedded in an interdependent global system with a fragile and precarious balance, to raise its members' awareness in a sustainable society with a collective responsibility and to permanently acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and experiences needed to exercise eco-citizenship. The FPI's functioning is unviable if EAS is not effectively developed. Hence, its design should pay preferential attention to performing this essential function under the autonomous and plural conditions associated with leisure and tourist-based mobility, whose generic support would be the FP classroom.

4.1.3. The I+C function and FP observatories

On the one hand, the initiative and control function is concerned with eco-citizens FP's conception, design, presentation and/or execution of tasks, of initiatives that consist in solutions proposed to all kinds of relevant public problems. On the other hand, the initiative and control function is concerned with verifying, watchfulness and when appropriate, denouncing any actions or omissions with implications for matters of general interest. Hence, this FPI function can be split into two separate components expressed by the I+C tandem.



Observation is the prelude to citizen participation. Observing is noticing reality with the determination to examine it carefully to see what lies ahead. Observing involves sharpening multiple senses, since it requires paying attention, activating the capacity for inquiry, deploying an individual's critical sense to the utmost and so on. If political participation is assumed, in essence, to be cooperation in the process of adopting political decisions by providing creative and innovative solutions for the public issues that arise at all levels of social organisation and exercising rigorous oversight of power, of all power with a collective impact, then the prior crucial role played by observation is clear. Observation requires training and considerable amounts of information, training, dedication, insight, a critical sense and in many cases, expert advice. Using the results of observation to generate initiatives or solutions requires creativity and of course, courage, boldness, and civic engagement, whether in exercising the control of power or proposing alternatives that modify the status quo. And in any case, it requires un-faillingly reliable instruments and channels endowed with significant doses of autonomy and pluralism. Hence, our priority concern to condition the FPI to successfully develop this function.

In representative democracies, the I+C tandem's first component —initiative— appears almost entirely associated with political parties' primary work inside legislative chambers. Yet, it is far from being exhausted in this area. Civil society's exercise of political initiative is essential and must be strengthened by reinforcing democracy's direct and participatory components, as well as those inherent in a creativity-oriented education. In turn, political control, which is one of a parliament's classic functions, is

also exercised by the media in its own way according to its particular interests. However, a citizens democracy —understood as an intelligent, balanced combination of direct and participatory representative democracies— envisages the direct exercise of this function by citizens. And of course, since this is a legitimate part of increasing democratic depth, direct citizen political control should not be limited to governmental action, but should also extend to the functioning of legislative¹² and judicial¹³ powers. Hence, it is essential to endow the FPI with efficient, accessible support that is easily managed by citizens, so that they can perform this political function: the initiative and control or FP observatory.¹⁴

In addition to these three essential functions, the FPI develops the following functions with their purely instrumental character.

4.1.4. The E+D function and FP forum

The decision to intervene politically in a particular public issue, whether at the head of a collective effort or by joining one to cooperate to a greater or lesser degree, is usually preceded by some kind of relationship between those who are prepared and respond to some kind of incentive. As a result, one of the FPI's functions must be to facilitate encounters and debates or exchanges of ideas among its users. Today, the major leaps in the info-communication field makes it increasingly easier for this all to take place without interlocutors or without potential co-participants needing to know or deal with each other or meet in person. In fact, virtual encounters, this kind of potential prelude to soft associations and à la carte participation, is a widespread reality today. Thus, it would suffice for the FPI to make available to potential users the computer resources needed to enable them to fluently discuss their ideas —the connectivity principle— and, when appropriate, extract virtual stimuli from this encounter to exercise fractional participation. This need not be dwelt on, since it is a well-known flourishing phenomenon.

However, attention should be drawn to an aspect that may be strengthened in the future: the extension or continuation of such virtual meetings through face-to-face debate, since the play of the eco-civic-leisure/eco-civic-tourism tandem will greatly encourage and facilitate this function's face-to-face character, thanks to tourism's acknowledged role as an opportunity for intercultural understanding and encounters and a tool for personal and collective development. I shall call the support for the E+D function 'the FP Forum'.

4.1.5. The function C+S and FP file

The FPI must also play a compilation and storage function to enable the reception and directional arrangement of the D+A process' components. In fact, when our friends in COOPERA decided to post the www.observa.fpw website, they were aware that in order for their I+C observatory exercises to function properly, any individual or group willing to contribute its own FP impulses would need prior knowledge of earlier contributions to be able to do so. Hence, the EMPRENDE-organised, weekend Guadiana eco-civic-tourists' initiative and control activity is not limited to me-rely using the opportunities offered by the FP *in situ*, but can also still be taken part in at a distance in OBSERVA, thanks to the powerful FP file, record or database available at www.observa.fpw.



At the same time, this would enable those who are interested to follow its progress at all times and if necessary, intervene. Consequently, the support of the FPI's C+S function will be a powerful public FP file or database that will allow the D+A process' main components (FP opportunities, FP impulses and FP actions) to be received, stored and managed; it will be equipped with an efficient search engine so that all FP eco-citizens or interested entities can easily access its content and freely decide the role they wish to play in the application of the variable role principle, including the option to assume the leadership of one's own initiatives —the open leadership principle.—

Saying that the FP file must be public means that it can be used by anyone who wishes to, in addition to its full accessibility to all its users.¹⁵ The FPI should have an unrestricted public file model that will make all the information compiled in it available to its users. In turn, accessibility, derived from the connectivity principle, will require that the most modern info-communication technologies be used in its design.

4.1.6. The I+A, C+M and W+S functions

The I+A, C+M and W+S functions are the last three main instrumental functions. With its counsel, the information and advice (I+A) function will make it easier for users to exercise republicanism armed with an adequate knowledge of the facts. With its logistical support agency, the coordination and management function (C+M function) is needed for its functioning. With its advocacy, the watchfulness and security (W+S function) aims for security and the eventual legal defence of its users and people or institutions concerned. The provision of these functions will not pose any major difficulty since they can be integrated into the D+A process itself and carried out through specific FP impulses I respectively call assessment, agency and advocacy impulses, which are provided by the users themselves in response to the corresponding FP opportunities.

5. THE ECO-CITIZENSHIP 3.0 STRATEGY

I specifically designed the FPM and FPI to promote eco-citizenship and this work would be to no avail without an appropriate strategy for their indispensable experimentation and cooperative development; this raises the questions of how they should be developed; how they should be publicised and their use should be spread; how they should be applied to education and self-instruction to foster a fractional participation culture that contributes to the shift from representative democracy to eco-citizens democracy; and how eco-citizen initiatives should be conceived, designed, promoted and implemented incisively at the local, state, regional and global level.

Hence the initial strategy at www.ecociudadania.com, whose main component is the initiative below.¹⁶



5.1. The PAUTA/eco-citizen initiative

The PAUTA/eco-citizen initiative proposes that universities and actors in civil society jointly activate a *sui generis* tool for experimentally applying fractional participa-

tion's decisional-associative technique to self-instruction and eco-citizen action: the 3.0 platform for self-instruction and eco-citizen action, or PAUTA/e 3.0. It has the dual goal of encouraging on-going learning habits and eco-citizens behaviour on a large scale and creating the conditions needed for experimentation and the cooperative development of the FPM and the FPI. In the latter respect, PAUTA/e 3.0 is to fractional participation as the powerful European particle accelerator built in Geneva to recreate the conditions that led to the origin of the universe is to particle physics.

In essence, PAUTA/e 3.0 is an articulated, systematic series of specialised supports capable of freely and permanently providing a potentially unlimited number of users with theoretical and practical interactive training materials on attractive proposals related to eco-civic-mobility¹⁷ and eco-civic-leisure activities in autonomous, plural and good-quality conditions. A versatile platform that allows its self-instructional, participatory proposals to be designed and implemented directly by the various, freely incorporated, social actors and ensures their free choice by users at all times. Thus, it is an open proposal which, undertaken on a widespread basis, would make a powerful instrument available to a watchful citizenry to stimulate large-scale, continuous, eco-citizen learning and behavioural habits that would gradually be self-perfected because of their capacity to incorporate the advances inherent in political technology.

Below I shall enumerate PAUTA/e 3.0's basic characteristics; I shall allude to its activation process, mention some of its advantages and compare it with the controversial topic of citizen education. To get to know its components and practical functioning as a whole, I refer to the distance communication and assessment programme on the FPM and its applications, which can be accessed by everyone, and the participants guide to the pilot 3.0 platform currently being activated by the University of Huelva¹⁸ at www.uhu.es/pauta.

5.1.1. Characteristics, activation and comparative advantages

PAUTA/e 3.0 has the following basic characteristics: a) it is open to all citizens; b) it is permanent in the sense of uninterrupted, with registration mechanisms that allow new participants to be incorporated at all times and allows their participation without any time limits; c) it is collective because of the wide variety of actors called upon to intervene in its design, promotion, development and self-renewal; d) it is mixed, in that it incorporates modern techniques culled from open learning, distance learning and continuous education and combines them with theoretical-practical, on-site learning activities as well as ad hoc supports for action; e) it is versatile, capable of including various types of content with different degrees of complexity associated to those supports for action and adapted to different educational levels and interests; f) it is flexible, given participants' free choice of objectives, incentives, content, diplomas, practical activities, work pace, timing, degree of involvement and commitment, etc., g) it is autonomous, because of its capacity not to restrict its users' free actions; h) it is plural, thanks to a civil support network's active participation to ensure the presence of disparate points of view and commitment to the exercise of critical, holistic, interdisciplinary observation of the relationships between man, society, nature and the universe; h) it is committed, to the degree in which it assumes the status of a teaching-learning process and action platform; i) it is attractive, thanks to the recourse to eco-civic-tourism and eco-civic-leisure as essential vehicles of self-education and action; j) it is disinterested, since it is not for profit; k) it is affordable, thanks to its modest cost, the incorporation of collaboration/savings mechanisms and the lack of a need for new consumptions, but rather the use and reorientation of habitual consumptions l) it is accessible, thanks to the simplicity of its registration mechanisms, the recourse to modern info-communication, multi-ubiquity of its activities and policy of eliminating all

kinds of barriers; m) it is self-financing, since it is the result of a combination of factors, such as non-profit goals, computer support, Internet use, generation of economies of scale, imaginative use of resources, underutilised available equipment and the incorporation of eco-civic-leisure and eco-civic-tourism, which generates self-organisation and volunteer work; n) it is self-renewable, thanks to the inclusion of specific mechanisms for interactive cooperation to ensure its improvement and on-going permanent adaptation, o) it is transferable, easily adapted to different geographical and cultural contexts to take advantage of the growing economies of scale produced by the simultaneous, coordinated functioning of similar experiences; p) it is useful, thanks to the many socially beneficial effects derived from its activities; q) it is efficient, thanks to the potential of its advanced teaching/learning methodology for self-instruction and action; r) it is galvanising, thanks to its considerable social, economic and cultural impact on the spatial area of execution; s) it is innovative, thanks to the inclusion of the decisional-associative, fractional participation technique.



Activating a PAUTA/e 3.0 is a political-educational decision, fruit of a deliberate strategic alliance between one or many universities and interested actors from civil society, especially NGOs, in their launch and continuity. One essential aspect of activating these types of platforms is the capacity for self-financing, since that best guarantees autonomy and pluralism and is, of course, a key factor to enabling its implementation in any environment, including those foreseeably hostile to the sudden or increasingly effective incorporation of citizens in governance tasks.

Hence, it has been designed so that it can be funded by the users themselves. However if, on the one hand, its appeal is reinforced by its permanent character, on-going registration process, participants' free configuration of their own self-instruction and action process, many available choices of activities and lack of deadlines to carry them out within; on the other, such extreme diversity and flexibility makes its activation process difficult. Like the airplane that must combine the proper positioning of levels with its engines' maximum driving force to take off, PAUTA/e 3.0 also needs to reach a tipping point or critical threshold during the activation process, a threshold achieved when a number of participants is reached that allows a reasonable match between the standing offer of activities and the free, growing demand for them. To achieve takeoff within a reasonable time, PAUTA/e 3.0 must be supplied with institutional funds or resources that allow a sufficiently varied range of attractive, initial activities programme to be sustained.

Some of the most prominent comparative advantages of a PAUTA/e 3.0 with respect to a conventional educational activity include: a) the possibility of a much higher (theoretically unlimited) number of participants or users; b) its broadest potential heterogeneity, significantly lower cost and possible self-funding; c) its innate appeal and flexibility, which has repercussions on its affordability and accessibility and the-refore, on its increasing social demand; d) the greater pluralism derived from both the wide diversity of teaching teams and inclusion of a broad civil support network, as well as the action of the generalised free choice principle applied to users' proposed activities; e) the enhanced didactic efficiency, a contribution with a substantial social impact derived from the inclusion of specialised supports; f) the higher degree of galvanisation

from multiple socio-economic activities related to the spatial area of execution; g) the greater impact on employment and self-employment; h) the on-going —lifelong— nature of the self-learning-exercise it promotes; i) the fact that its activities —although closely associated with school activities in many cases— primarily take place outside school hours or working hours, etc.; j) the general rationalisation it provides to managing certain university activities; and k) the promotion of tasks associated with the actors intervening in civil society.

There are some essential differences between the proposed PAUTA/e 3.0 model and the official model in the extra-university realm represented by the controversial subject of citizenship education. To begin with, this is not education for citizenship, but rather for learning and exercising eco-citizenship; incidentally, this difference is not insignificant. Nor is it actually education, but rather self-instruction and exercise (self-study or self-education and exercise or action —associationism and participation—) that can be carried out in autonomous, plural conditions, thanks to this platform's characteristics and the decisional-associative, fractional participation technique. Furthermore, it is for everyone, in an attractive, lifelong manner (continuous self-study and exercise). In fact, PAUTA/e 3.0 is a powerful tool —autonomous, pluralistic and quality— for self-instruction and the direct exercise of eco-citizenship placed in the hands of the academic community and citizens interested in their environment. The incorporation into the platform of various teams of university professors and a civil support network empowered to propose and implement activities with total freedom, the permanent play of the free choice principle among them by participants and its self-financing makes its users safe from any temptation, attempt or perpetration of systematically indoctrinating practices.

6. CONCLUSION

First: thanks to the intelligent combination of extremely flexible modalities of associationism —soft associationism— and participation —participation à la carte— enabled by the D+A process that inspires them and the incorporation of the civic or republican component in pleasurable habits associated with increasing human mobility, I believe that the proposed FPM opens a viable door to developing unprecedented, new generation tools for self-instruction and political participation equipped with exceptional conditions for performing three republican functions essential to the exercise of eco-citizen democracy: decisional-associative (D+A), teaching-learning (T+L) and initiative and control (I+C) .

Second, I consider that the use of the corresponding software applications specific to the decisional-associative, participation fractional technique will allow experimental modalities of fractional participation instances (FPI) with various uses to be activated.

Third, I maintain that activating 3.0 platforms for self-instruction and eco-citizen action along the lines initiated by the University of Huelva will not only be essential to experimentation and the cooperative development of the proposed technique, but also to: a) providing the watchful citizenry with a useful tool for stimulating large-scale, on-going, eco-citizen learning habits and behaviour that will be self-perfected as the advances specific to political technology are incorporated, and b) disseminating the idea that commitment to designing, developing and promoting new-generation policy instruments —whether the FPM or any others that may arise— is *per se* an alternatively progressive, innovative political option for self-instruction and political action.

Although I am aware that fractional participation would only be fully viable in hypothetical future scenarios, such as the one mentioned earlier, I believe that there is no obstacle to start channelling people's free time —which a privileged influential minority has available in a growing proportion— towards a self-instructive leisure model associated with promoting and protecting the global public weal. Therefore, I believe that the vital optimism that emanates from the triple somersault —spatial, temporal and attitudinal— this text proposes is justified. Moreover, I would say to young readers and of course, those who, like me, over the years have not yet managed to appease the irresistible adolescent impulse to change the world, that to the extent that humans have policy tools truly adapted to the demands of their time, they will not have to desist from doing so.

This text is a bold commitment to my own status as a global federalist¹⁹. To paraphrase my former teacher, the great federalist thinker Denis de Rougemont, I hope the FPM and the many political instruments it may eventually inspire will be a useful contribution to a "*new global, pluralistic system made up of peoples without sovereignty and open communities that is on its way*".

¹ See SORIANO, R.; RASILLA, L.; Democracia vergonzante y ciudadanos de perfil, Ed. Comares, Granada 2002. The Sepha publishing house -www.editorialsepha.com- is preparing a new, updated version entitled, 'Democracia vergonzante: males y remedios de una democracia obsoleta' that will come out in 2010 as part of the Akademia collection.

² Since the FPM operates thanks to the on-going generation of open and spontaneous processes of the successive disaggregation-aggregation of complimentary participation impulses, it could also be called a 'successive participation model', 'disaggregative-aggregative' or 'participation by complementary impulses'.

³ An intelligent and balanced combination of representative, participatory, semi-direct and direct democracy. Building a citizens democracy requires: reducing representative democracy to its proper terms, promoting ways and means of participatory democracy, improving access to semi-direct democracy procedures, expanding its areas of operation and gradually introducing direct democracy practices. This concept is due to Professor Ramón Soriano. See SORIANO, R.; RASILLA, L.; op. cit., pp. 219-267.

⁴ (From the Greek *oixo* —house, dwelling, life sphere— to highlight human's common planetary sphere; *cive*, from the Latin *civicus*, from *civis* related to the citizen and *ocio* from the Latin *otium*). Generic modality of occupying free time oriented deliberately to implementing self-education and eco-citizen action to a lesser or greater degree.

⁵ Modality of eco-civic-leisure associated with tourist travel.

⁶ For a detailed explanation, see RASILLA, L.; La participación fraccionada: Una técnica asociativo-decisional de nueva generación para la autoformación y la acción políticas en el horizonte de una ciudadanía mundial; Publicacionesintersurdelibre@cceso, 2nd edition, reduced, updated and clarified, 01.2010. Available at www.proyectointersur.org/publicacionesintersurdelibreacceso/laparticipacionfraccionada.pdf

⁷ To make the FPM easier to understand, I have also used a logical introduction tool as a teaching aid entitled '*Un viaje fantástico: Del curso de verano de La Rábida de 1492 a la era del ocio.*' RASILLA, L.; La participación fraccionada... Op. cit. pp. 21-71.

⁸ See SORIANO, R.; RASILLA, L.; op. cit., pp. 246-247

⁹ The ending 'fpw' is the acronym for 'fractional participation watch', which does not exist today, but may be frequent in the future.

¹⁰ This imaginary legal figure is a vindication of the major Hispano-Portuguese ecology groups. See www.ecologistasenaccion.org/spip.php?article8938

¹¹ I draw the reader's attention to the arduous legal problem this poses, both in terms of the soft associationism modality, as well as others that may stem from the recourse to the FPM, although I postpone the debate over this for another occasion.

¹² See el Observatorio de I+C de Control del Diputado (Asunto Felipe González Márquez) in RASILLA, L.; *'La observación y el control ecociudadano de los asuntos públicos como modalidad de aprendizaje y ejercicio generalizado del derecho de participación política'*, in SORIANO, R.; ALARCÓN, C.; MORA, J.J. (dirs. edition), (2004): *Repensar la Democracia*, Seville, Aconcagua, pp. 165-188.

¹³ See RASILLA, L.; Preview of the report-complaint filed with the GCJ in the experimental exercise of "popular observation" during a decade of magistrates', judges' and prosecutors' actions in processing preliminary investigation 99/99 of proceedings initiated against the multinational ATLANTIC COPPER, S.A., for the alleged repeat violations related to highly contaminating dumping at Río Tinto, followed in the Court of First Instance and Preliminary Investigation No 2 in Valverde del Camino (Huelva). Available at: www.proyectointersur.org/documentacionasuntoac2.htm

¹⁴ See RASILLA, L.; Manual de ejercicios de observatorios de I+C; Publicacionesintersurdelibre@cceso, 01.2010. Available at:

www.proyectointersur.org/publicacionesintersurdelibreacceso/manualdeejerciciosdeobservatorio.pdf

¹⁵ See RASILLA, L.; Propuesta de aplicación de la participación fraccionada al futuro Observatorio Ciudadano de la Movilidad en Cataluña; Publicacionesintersurdelibre@cceso, 03.2009. Available at: www.proyectointersur.org/publicacionesintersurdelibreacceso/ocmc.pdf

¹⁶ One aspect of this strategy is coupling the FPM with conventional political instruments through incorporating an eco-citizen virtual space, i.e., an association's generic sphere of action for political participation, delimited by its members' agreement, which will be outside the control of regular organs of government, economic management and representation.

¹⁷ Generic mobility modality of human beings —real or virtual— generator of individual or collective processes of self-instruction and eco-citizen action associated with the use of fractional participation.

¹⁸ Since the start of the 2008-09 academic year, the University of Huelva has been preparing a proposal with the assessment of the www.proyectointersur.org for activating a pilot PAUTA/e 3.0 denominated an open, continuous university programme at the University of Huelva for self-instruction or eco-citizen action or PAUTA/e UHU 3.0.

¹⁹ A current applied by the basic regulating principles of federalism to economic, social and cultural sectors, making classic federalism a universal organising principle in relations between individuals and groups. Global or integral federalism originated in the 1930s within the circle of committed intellectuals such as Alexandre Marc, Arnaud Dandieu, Emmanuel Mounier, Denis de Rougemont, Robert Aron, etc.. It represents an innovative conception that, stemming from the battle to resist Nazism and fascism, took the shape of the European Union of Federalists and inspired the most innovative efforts in the process of construction Europe. For a historical view of federalism's evolution, see the classic work: VOYENNE, B.; *Histoire de l'idee federaliste*; Presses d'Europe, Paris-Nice, 1973-81. For an overview of the global federalist current, see DIAZ-CARRERA, C. (Dir. de Ed.). *El federalismo global*. (Libro Homenaje a Alexandre Marc); Unión Editorial. Madrid, 1989.