

Citizen and city

Citizen and City

developments in fifteen local
democracies in Europe

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editors

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Acknowledgements

In the second half of 2000, eight researchers of the Centre for Local Democracy of the Erasmus University Rotterdam, Department of Public Administration, visited fifteen European cities. Our purpose was to find out what kind of changes in the relationship between citizens and local government can be observed. In the Netherlands we had experienced some developments which suggested that the era of the citizen as a mere voter and customer of local services was slowly drawing to an end. The developments suggested that the dominance of traditional models of representation and of New Public Management was decreasing.

What about other western democracies in Europe, we asked ourselves? Had they also experienced such a dominance of NPM? Are all European citizens treated primarily as voters and clients? Or are there major differences to be observed? And if there are differences, how can we explain these? Questions like these formed the reason for doing an exploratory research project. This book is the first result of that research.

Conducting the interviews took us almost three months. We couldn't have done this without the co-operation of several people and institutions. The assistance we received exceeded our expectations. So let us, first of all, express our gratitude to all our interviewees and their municipalities. With much respect, we like to thank them for their time, creativity, as well as their willingness to receive us at short notice. Second, we would like to thank our academic colleagues in all eight countries (appendix C). They assisted us in the choice of cities to study, carefully read some of our first drafts and made suggestions for improvements. Third we like to thank Rina de Vries, who did a good job in correcting our English. We are also grateful to the Faculty of Social Sciences of Erasmus University Rotterdam, for their financial support.

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