

Citizen participation and its impact on the management model of the decentralized autonomous municipal government of Quevedo

Participación ciudadana y su incidencia en el modelo de gestión del gobierno autónomo descentralizado municipal de Quevedo

Oscar Alberto Gallardo Toapanta*
Marlon Astudillo Lindao*
Guerra Cuenca Feliberto Fernando*
Vaca Quiñonez Xiomara*

ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to evaluate citizen participation that allows the implementation of a new management model of the Municipality of Canton Quevedo, where there is a more proactive citizenship in the formulation, planning, execution and control of public policies, the research will detect the shortcomings of neighborhood leaders in citizen participation. The universe of the research will be through a census of 112 presidents of neighborhood councils in the different urban parishes of Quevedo Canton and also the mayor, councilors and officials of the Municipal Decentralized Autonomous Government of Quevedo Canton. Inductive and deductive methods will be used to obtain the information. The results will allow identifying the key to improve the performance of neighborhood

* Master's Degree, Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo, Master's Program in Local Development, Quevedo, Ecuador, ogallardo@uteq.edu.ec, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4110-3391>

* Master's Degree, Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo, marlon.astudillo2016@uteq.edu.ec, Quevedo-Ecuador, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6064-2617>

* Master's Degree, Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo, Master's Program in Local Development, Quevedo, Ecuador, fguerac@uteq.edu.ec; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5967-2229>

* Master's Degree, Quevedo State Technical University, xiomara.vaca2016@uteq.edu.ec, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9692-2311>,

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leaders in the use of citizen participation mechanisms and the management model of the Municipal Decentralized Autonomous Government of Quevedo.

Keywords: citizen participation, management model, municipal decentralized autonomous government.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de la presente investigación es evaluar la participación ciudadana que permita la implementación de un nuevo modelo de gestión del Municipio del Cantón Quevedo, donde exista una ciudadanía más proactiva en la formulación, planificación, ejecución y control de las políticas públicas, la investigación permitirá detectar las falencias de los líderes barriales en participación ciudadana. El universo de la investigación será por medio de censo a los 112 presidentes de consejos barriales en las diferentes parroquias urbanas del Cantón Quevedo y además del alcalde, concejales y funcionarios del Gobierno Autónomo Descentralizado Municipal del Cantón Quevedo. Se utilizará los métodos inductivo y deductivo para la obtención de la información. Los resultados permitirán identificar la clave para mejorar el desempeño de los dirigentes barriales en el uso de los mecanismos de la participación ciudadana y el modelo de gestión del Gobierno Autónomo Descentralizado Municipal de Quevedo.

Palabras clave: participación ciudadana, modelo de gestión, gobierno autónomo descentralizado municipal.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the United Nations Organization has promoted the adoption of global agendas for development, which can serve as a guide for the establishment of local policies through their implementation. Thus, in the context of an important reconfiguration of the relationships between the actors of international cooperation, national States are no longer the only protagonists in the implementation of global agendas, as local governments and civil society become subjects with enormous transcendence in this sense (González, 2017)

From different sectors of social life, there has been much talk of the need for citizen participation. We understand this participation in a broad sense, as the way in which the people of a community take part in public affairs, because in some way they are affected and involved. This participatory link is often not stable, but stems from certain reactions of the community to events that affect them.

In the Ecuadorian context, citizen participation constitutes the fundamental pillar on which the paradigm of Good Living is based. The 2008 Constitution of Ecuador, the

Organic Law of Citizen Participation and Social Control (2010), the Organic Code of Planning and Public Finance (2010) and the Organic Code of Territorial Organization, Autonomy and Decentralization (2011) protect, promote and recognize citizen participation as a right. However, in the formulation, implementation, control and monitoring of public policies aimed at the fulfillment of the rights of Good Living, citizen participation is scarce and incipient (Rojas, 2010; Paltan, 2013). Consequently, it is questionable due to its ineffectiveness in achieving results in favor of citizens who do not participate proactively in public policy decision-making in Ecuador's decentralized autonomous governments. As a result of this situation, agreements on public policies continue to be led by popularly elected authorities. Under these considerations, with the purpose of identifying the possible causes that originate a deficient citizen participation in the representatives of the civil society (Marco Ramiro Torres L., I Mónica Rocío Mosquera, II Mario Padilla, II, 2017)..

"Citizen participation is primarily a right of citizens, individually and collectively, to participate (be part of, influence) in a leading role in decision-making, planning and management of public affairs, and in the popular control of State institutions and society, and their representatives, in a permanent process of building citizen power" (CPCCS, 2020).

The participation of citizens in public affairs dates back to Greek society. Thus Aristotle, when referring to the presence of the citizen of the city pointed out that man was a political animal in the same way St. Thomas Aquinas interpreting this concept complements that the citizen is a political and social animal (Patiño, 2017).

Therefore, it is opportune to rethink that the existing legal regulations on citizen participation in Ecuador are not sufficient, and it is necessary to look for other options, such as developing certain competencies for citizen participation in the main representatives of civil society organizations, as is the case of neighborhood leaders, who are more aware of the problems, needs, strengths and weaknesses of the city's neighborhoods. In this sense, the work carried out by neighborhood leaders in the processes of citizen participation is evaluated as a fundamental axis in the actions of local governments. In the literature on the subject, there are several positions that value the participation of neighborhood leaders in community development processes, the diagnosis of their problems, participation in decision-making bodies and the development and evaluation of public policies (Rojas, 2010; Pagani, 2012 and Paltan, 2013).

The lack of empowerment of citizen participation in Canton Quevedo and lack of public policy, has meant that there is no real citizen action that is a true auditor of public resources of the Municipality, therefore, the current management model of the Municipality is a failure, at present the works, budget approval, prioritization of the work, are not taken into account the citizenship, they do it unilaterally causing an illegality and illegitimacy to the processes of managing resources with transparency.

The purpose of this research is to present a proposal for a local public policy on citizen participation, where citizen participation is prioritized in an active manner and positively affects the management model of the Municipal Decentralized Autonomous Government of Quevedo.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In Ecuador there is an Organic Law of Citizen Participation which states that all levels of the sectional governments have the obligation to implement mechanisms for citizen participation, but the lack of knowledge and empowerment of these rights leads to the fact that we are not the architects and protagonists in decision-making, planning and management of public affairs.

The lack of empowerment of citizen participation in the Canton Quevedo and lack of public policy, has led to the absence of a real citizen action that is a true auditor of public resources of the Municipality, therefore, the current management model of the Municipality is a failure, currently the works, budget approval, prioritization of the work, are not taken into account the citizenship, They do it unilaterally causing an illegality and illegitimacy to the processes of managing resources with transparency, never from the municipality convene meetings to socialize aspects of infrastructure spending to prioritize with citizens whether they agree or not, but this right does not prevail the citizenship for ignorance of their rights under the Organic Law of Citizen Participation and the Constitution of Ecuador.

The population of neighborhood and urban parish council leaders is 112 neighborhood councils, information I obtained from the office of Neighborhood Coordination of the Municipal Decentralized Autonomous Government of Canton Quevedo,

The sample that we will use is all the leaders and presidents of neighborhood and parish councils, which are 112, therefore we will make a census that will give us a reliable result.

The survey is applied to the people involved in the canton of Quevedo to assess their knowledge about citizen participation and identify potential proposals for its promotion.

Interviews are used to gather information through questions. The interview is conducted with professional experts in the field of citizen participation.

RESULTS

Citizen participation and social control are issues that arise in the daily life of Ecuadorian society, this is because from the 2008 Constitution, both citizen participation and social control were institutionalized, but it should be noted that not all mechanisms that implement these processes are new, because the constitution opens a space for participation and social control under the name of "rights of participation", which incorporate different mechanisms of representative, direct, community democracy, among others. Through this development project, strategies are proposed to the

Municipal Decentralized Autonomous Government of the canton Quevedo, to promote the Citizen Participation in the canton Quevedo and thus improve its management model.

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As is easy to see, the notion of citizen participation is often abused. This is probably because in democracy the idea is politically correct. However, it is usually referred to without there being a consensus as to its meaning or the consequences it should produce. Over the last fifty years, citizen participation has been linked to processes of innovation in the management of public policies and also to better delivery of public services in an increasingly complex and demanding context. Throughout this time, the involvement of citizens at various stages of the public policy-making process has become institutionalized and governments have been obliged to offer citizens programs, processes and policies that contain participatory elements.

A good principle when dealing with the topic of citizen participation consists in warning that it is a concept that is not neutral. Behind each way of understanding citizen participation there are not only involved -implicitly or explicitly- certain systems of norms and values, but also different objectives. In this paper, citizen participation is understood as the process through which citizens, who do not hold public offices or functions, seek to share to some degree the decisions on issues that affect them with governmental actors and to influence them. In other words, the concept of "citizen participation" includes any form of collective action, demand or response to calls from the government to influence public policy decisions. In other words, citizen participation implies a willingness to have an impact. (Aldret I, 2017)

In Ecuador, public policies at all levels of government are the result of at least two fundamental issues: on the one hand, they are the result of the participatory and institutional processes carried out by governments, whether municipal, provincial or national; and on the other hand, they are the result of the approaches with which public problems are conceived and the different strategies aimed at solving them, i.e. how they are treated.

Barbara Nelson (2001) argues that public policy arises from concerns about public issues and the ways in which they affect people and are addressed by government authorities. These concerns about (relevant) public issues lead the gaze of researchers, academics and public officials themselves to the field of public policy (Nelson, 2001, p. 797).

Public policies are the concrete expression of government actions, in which various actors - municipality, central government, ministries, citizens, among others - maintain positions, interests and objectives with respect to an issue that concerns them (Roth, 2002).

Contento (2017, p. 14) states that public policies are "responses of the State to problematic situations, they can be inscribed in the political agenda and have their origin in external or internal sources" and goes on to say that: "public policy indicates the coordinates of how a government manifests its role in social, industrial, economic, financial, etc. policy". Regarding the origin in internal or external sources, the former refers to the government, state institutions, ministries, etc., and the latter refers to the citizenry, civil society, pressure groups, among others.

The participation and (inter)action of diverse political groups and actors can either favor or hinder the policy formulation process, as actors do not always manage to agree on all points that affect or alter the direction and spirit of state actions (Fernando, 2018).

CONCLUSIONS

Governmental actors should promote the linkage between the State and society. One of the most important mechanisms, and one that currently governs the design, evolution and development of participatory budgeting. Nothing is more important than the relationship between society, which has the needs, and budget allocations.

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