








Citizen participation in public management processes, Puno Case, Peru

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Abstract: In crisis situations, it is essential to increase representative democracy by structuring communities as tools to encourage citizen participation. For this reason, the research aimed to understand the reality of citizens and the processes of citizen participation mechanisms during the national crisis. It was a qualitative study that was based on phenomenological hermeneutics and identified six community leaders who are social actors in the city of Puno. The results demonstrated that the role of the community leader as an expression of the emotions of all citizens and the importance of community organization as a means of citizen participation are crucial to advance towards the construction of a strong and popular democracy. In conclusion, it is essential to have citizen participation mechanisms in times of crisis, as they allow communities that have traditionally been neglected to be heard and given a voice.

Keywords: Citizen participation, Democracy, Local leaders, Public management processes.

1. Introduction

Since the dawn of humanity, democracy has been part of the political systems and currents that have allowed interaction between rulers and the people, hence the etymological root of its word "the power of the people" to manage "the public, terms coined by the Greeks and Romans respectively" [1]. However, with the passage of the different episodes in the history of humanity, other political models settled at home, and the concept and practice of democracy, modernity and contemporaneity was transformed [2]. It is enough to understand that the institutionalization of the States, for the most part, is based on the ideal framework of the Executive, Legislative and Judicial [3] constituting, unfailingly, in a model of representative democracy, a faithful copy of the constitutional monarchies of the old continent [4] which completely loses the meaning of the Republics, as a territorial unit with its own rules and social form [5].

This has been the first of the evils of the republics that were being formed in Hispanic America at the beginning of the eighteenth century, in which the sense of the republic was completely derailed, in order to achieve the European ideal or American republic consistorial and Representative [6] in which the voice and the vote were prepared in the hands of a privileged class, who will be chosen from among them, in order to represent the entire population [7]. This, as a result, became until we found the picture of the republican and democratic of the present, in which it is still observed how the power of decision remains isolated from the realities of the communities, which, little or nothing, are favored by those in charge of decision-making [8].

In this sense, it is convenient to recognize what are the mechanisms of citizen participation in the full development of representative democracy, while the leadership that can be exercised from the communities is essential to balance the balance and proceed to the construction of a society with social justice, with citizens with full rights and participation in decisions that affect or benefit the territory in which they operate. especially in times of crisis [9].

Therefore, the research was concerned: What is the reality of citizens who enable citizen participation mechanisms during the process of national crisis? This led to establish as a purpose of the research, to understand the reality of the citizens who make possible mechanisms of citizen participation during the process of national crisis.

2. Methodology

Developing research with a qualitative perspective [10] for what emerges from the interpretative paradigm, in which "the existing weaknesses within numerical calculations are recognized, seeking to establish a universal truth, understanding that social phenomena are complex so there is no single way of approaching and it is necessary to be studied from different angles, Under the premise that knowledge is a process of constant construction and reconstruction, it is considered unfinished [11]. In view of the foregoing exposition, it is stated that the research made use of the phenomenological hermeneutic method proposed by Gadamer[12] for the process of collection, categorization and interpretation of the information collected, recognizing that this method, as explained [13] is based on the understanding that life experience, as part of the

The continuous learning of the human being is one of the fundamental units to address the understanding of the dynamics of the human being, assuming that this is beyond what can be quantifiable; It is based on the senses and meanings that underlie hidden in language [14]. That is why Lara[15] emphasized that this method is based on: "spreading awareness about certain situations, which are expressed through language."

The exposition that precedes it leads to understand that the choice of this method is due to the need to understand the meaning that is hidden behind the individual stories of the citizens of Puno about the mechanisms of citizen participation, in Peru, during the process of national crisis in the year 2022, to be, it is the experience that constitutes the common denominator that unifies each of these experiences.

3. Social Actors and Selection Criteria

For the development of the research, six community leaders who live in the city of Puno, district and department of the same name in Peru, who have been part of the citizen participation mechanisms during the national crisis process for the year 2022, were selected as social actors [16]. The selection of social actors originated from a sample based on criteria [17] while in the case of this research the following stands out: (a) To be the leaders recognized by their communities, b) To be the constant in the mechanisms of citizen participation, (c) To have been part of the mechanisms of citizen participation during the process of national crisis for the year 2022. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the social actors participating in this study.

4. Information Collection Techniques

Taking into consideration the nature of the research, it was decided that the appropriate technique for the development of the same period, the interview, because it is a spoken encounter between a researcher and a social actor, the latter is considered as the possessor of the necessary information for the development of the research

phenomenological-hermeneutical [18]. In particular, it is necessary to highlight that there are several types of interviews, however, in the case of this research, we use in-depth interviews, because it allows us to explore the hidden meaning behind the experience of the informants [19] based on what Lara expressed, who explains that: "understanding that the experience is unique and deeper feelings are

nested in it for which they are unique stories that deserve to be told to be recorded and documented" [20] In this sense, we sought to explore the experience lived by the informants on the mechanisms of citizen participation during the process of national crisis.

Before the foregoing presentation, it was considered appropriate to invite the actors to think in terms of three elements of the Eastern discourse, namely: (a) The expression of democracy from the communities, (b) The role of community leaders as an amalgam between the people and governmental organizations, and (c) The perspectives for achieving greater participation in a representative democracy in crisis scenarios.

5. Procedure

The process of interpreting the interviews was carried out according to the specifications declared by Lara [21] who is based on our own ideas of Gadamer [22] the latter, who explains that there are no mechanical steps for the art of understanding, it is also true that it is a dynamic and integral process, in which it is relevant to go through a series of stages until reaching a true interpretation, Based on dialectics, as an engine to promote open communication between the author and the well done [23]. These moments are presented below:

5.1. Preconception

Preconception is considered as the previous ideas that the researcher may have about the reality of the research, and, although there are researchers who assume preconception as a negative element, as the authors Rosales and Alvarado [24] explain, these are positive, since they can be the orientation that helps to facilitate the interpretation process.

This time of the hermeneutical circle is based on the ideas of Heidegger [25] author maintains that the human being is linked by culture, which is manifested through language, which helps to understand the context to which the subject belongs, and which is manifested through *Dasein*, understood as the way of being, to be there, which is conducive to the process of interpretation.

It should be noted that, in the case of this research, the preconception focuses on a complex reality of social policy associated with the mechanisms of citizen participation in times of crisis, taking as a starting point, this has been positive for social actors.

5.2. Author's Horizon

This is the moment when the insights of key informants can be highlighted clearly; This phase of the hermeneutical circle is also known as the identification of units of meaning or the interpretations of the first order [26]. In order to show the author's horizon, fragments of the verbalizations of the interviews to be carried out will be used.

5.3. Merging Horizons

It is a time in which both the author's horizon and the preconception become well-intentioned, through a dialogue based on dialectics, to establish a new horizon of understanding [27]. According to Lara [28] this process occurs through two actions, which are presented below:

- *Listening to the text*: It occurs when the fact is good to examine the text, seeking to understand what it wants to tell you, allowing you to unveil the categories and edges that underlie hidden in the texts [29].
- *Applying meaning*: it is to give meaning and validity to historical texts, in order to contextualize them and improve their understanding.

5.4. Interrogate

It must be understood that knowledge is a process of construction and reconstruction, so the

hermeneutical circle is a constant cycle, the resolution of an inquiry leads to finding others that help to strengthen the interpretative horizon, assuming, therefore, that an interpretation can lead to an endless number of additional questions [30].

6. Results

Based on the findings that emerge from the interviews applied to the social actors, they are presented and discussed below, based on the application of the hermeneutical circle, taking as a guiding element the categories that were formed in the process of interpreting the texts, as well as their respective edges.

6.1. Community Organization as a Means of Exercising Democracy

... organization within the communities is important, sometimes the institutions of the State do not come here, for a variety of issues, so we must unite, so that a representative of the service takes care of what they need, as they say, if Muhammad does not go to the mountain, the mountain must go to Muhammad (AS-5). The truth is that, if we are not united as a people, our demands are not heard, a stick makes a mountain... Then we need each of the members of the community to find out what their needs are, to build the proposed improvements and to pass them on to the local rulers... that is what has helped us (AS-2).

As can be seen in the previous verbalizations, the social actors manifest feelings of comfort, regarding the process of organizing as a community, this being the most direct and pure, to express democracy, understanding that their participation is fundamental to respond to the needs of the communities, only they can know, so this is the mechanism of participation originally to solve problems in times of crisis.

In this sense, we can recognize that, when applying Heidegger's postulates about being there, it is recognized that social actors understand that community organization is above the instances corresponding to their requirements, because, sometimes, the State, through the representative system, limits itself to recognizing the needs of all its inhabitants; it can be perceived in the text of the AS-5 when it says: "sometimes the institutions of the State do not come here, for various issues", which then helps to understand that, in order to generate the mechanisms of citizen participation in times of crisis, the ideal is to initiate a process of self-organization of social communities.

In addition, it is understood that community organization, as a mechanism of participation, is often caused by a neglect of State institutions towards the needs of the populations, and this can be seen when listening to the text of ACE-2: "if we are not united as a people, our demands are not heard", and therefore, It is assumed that representative democracy has some weaknesses to fully satisfy the demands of those who are subjects of the democratic life of the country, being therefore, the communal organization the living expression of these conditions.

In the face of the above reality, it must be understood that community organization is one of the mechanisms of citizen participation that helps to build a healthy and strong civil society, by meeting the demands of those populations that have traditionally been neglected and little visible for the development of democracy, understanding that these mechanisms, It helps to strengthen the identity of a full and mature citizenry in the face of the public policies that are being exercised, and generates more interest in the democratic life of a nation, especially when it is in crisis scenarios [31].

In this way, it is understood that the State, at all levels of government, must promote a broader process of community organization as a mechanism for citizen participation in times of crisis, taking as a reference the positive experiences in international matters scenarios, where the implementation of neighborhood assemblies or meetings, open, and public policies such as participatory budgeting, as a means to deepen democracy through citizen participation, can be seen [32].

In this category, it has been possible to highlight the importance of community organization as a means of citizen participation to deepen the construction of a strong and popular democracy, which is suitable to meet the demands and needs in scenarios in the midst of crisis, thus becoming, therefore, a State with guarantees for the development of full citizenship rights.

6.2. Community Leader: The Voice of the Underserved

We are one more, we suffer and suffer the same needs as our neighbors, only that, by good or bad luck, we have become the leaders of our

communities, and who more than any of us can know what is or is not happening in our territory? That is why, when we go to the authorities in charge, we fight like a cat's wound, because we know what we are doing (AS-1).

When people have a problem, where do you go? That our homes look for a solution, because they know that we are the link between reality and who can provide a solution to what ails us... obviously we are not God and we do not do things by magic, but yes, we know what we have to do to listen to our needs (AS-4).

The verbalizations of the interviews that precede it help to highlight that community leaders, as representatives of the populations in general, are the ones who listen, before State agencies, to the needs of the communities they represent. It should be noted that community leaders do not emerge from a process of popular vote or self-designation, but rather, within the mechanisms of citizen participation within the

the populations are recognized for their work and the work of connecting the communities with the State; this can be understood by listening to the text of AS-1 "that is why when we go to the authorities in charge, we fight like a cat's wound, because we know what we have".

In this sense, the participation of citizens through the figure of the community leader is essential to provide a response to the problems that afflict the communities, this is because citizens perceive in the community leader, a figure of authority, who is part of their problems and can obtain quick solutions to them. This interpretation arises by applying the Heideggerian interpretation that postulates the expression of the AS-4: "When people have a problem, where do you go? That our homes look for a solution, because they know that we are the link between reality and who can provide a solution to what ails us."

Thus, it is understood that the community leader, as part of this process of citizen participation in the midst of the crisis, must become, at least from the organs of the State, a strategy that contributes to the management of development in the localities, giving greater weight within the decision-making process associated with the communities. while this is the voice of an entire population that has its own needs and requirements, which help you to be a true sustainable development, in, by and for citizens [33].

The above observations lead us to think that citizen participation mechanisms, exercised through community leadership, must contribute to sustainable development, so their figure is fundamental to be able to establish communication mechanisms between the rulers of the day, and their communities, understanding that their actions are essential to achieve real and sustainable local development over time. being the key to generating managerial development for all [34].

In summary, this category accounts for the role of the community leader, as an expression of the feeling of voice of all citizens who live in a territorial space, becoming part of both processes, between the reality of the communities and the actors are capable of making decisions to carry out the necessary management to achieve the mechanisms of improvement. this being a form of citizen participation suitable for the management of development.

6.3. Community Leadership: Hope for Representative Democracy in Times of Crisis

Collecting the needs of the people who share the same space with you is difficult at the same time, but it is hopeful to think that you are doing something, not only for your community, but that they help build a better future for your family and be an example for others (AS-3).

We know that we are not part of the government, and that we are only the representatives in certain situations, in the problems of our community, but as long as we can contribute our grain of sand to improve the situation, we will be there, to give our best... (AS-6).

The texts that precede it help them understand that community leadership is fundamental to build a

society that is strengthened in the face of what is known as representative democracy, because in the end, communities are schemes for exercising their right to free association and participation to solve their own needs, which is fundamental within construction and society. with a political awareness and awareness to absolve the events that occur in times of crisis, this can be evidenced in the phrase of the AS-6 "we are only the representatives in certain situations, the problems of our community".

In this way, it is understood that community leadership is essential to help deepen the role of democratic institutions from the communities, while the communities, an essential nucleus to build a homeland of their sovereign, and with a load of social values and democratic assets, which are capable of strengthening national identity in times of crisis, Strengthening the role of the citizen, as a being full of rights and duties, is responsible for his actions to build the homeland with a sense of All in equality, this is achieved

Be grateful to apply Heidegger's ideas to the AS-3 expression "these help build a better future for your family and be an example for others".

In view of the reality described, it is considered that the role of the community leader, as a manager of citizen participation mechanisms, turns out to be a key actor for the construction of a forceful representative democracy to respond to the needs of the population in crisis scenarios, where he could be a fundamental promoter for the construction of management scenarios by and for the citizenry as a whole [35].

Faced with this reality, it must be understood that the management of development must start from the grassroots of the peoples, understanding the critical role that they play in generating the necessary changes that lead to a society with more justice, equity and understanding of rights, as a fundamental part of a political awareness and social impulse to overcome the situations of political and social crisis to which they are exposed. a nation [36].

In off mode, this category has helped me realize that community leadership is a form of maximum expression of citizen participation mechanisms in times of crisis, understanding that it is fundamental in crisis situations, so it is a key element to absolve the needs of populations, effectively linking, popular power and local power generating spaces for debate and construction of a public identity with a sense of belonging and empowered to make their voice heard, also recognizing their capacity as composed of rights.

7. Conclusions

The research, understood as a possibility of understanding the reality of the citizens that enable mechanisms of citizen participation during the process of national crisis, to verify that you, the community leaders, are a key element for this purpose, understanding that, in a representative democracy, the local leadership is the guarantor of listening to the voice of the people.

It is understood that, in the midst of crisis situations, citizen participation mechanisms are essential to be able to listen and give voice to communities that have traditionally been neglected, therefore, it is necessary to strengthen community leadership, as a mechanism to find an amalgam between State institutions and the needs of the communities.

Probably, the participants of this research will continue to develop their activities within the communities in which they live, and will continue to build an effective citizen participation scheme, in order to link the State with the people, however, it is considered that it is important that local governments promote more expeditious associated mechanisms of participation through the voice of their leaders. which will help Streamline the management of development from the municipalities.

It is considered that the research achieved the proposed purpose, however, the process of interpretation-reflection has led to the establishment of new concerns that can be transformed into new opportunities for deepening, these being: What will be the role of the State in a process of political transformation to achieve a participatory democracy? What are the policies to be taken by the Legislature to give visibility to community leadership as part of citizen participation mechanisms? What will be the actions of the leaders of a community in the face of constitutional crisis scenarios that affect

their communities? Will it be possible to develop new public policies in which to engage more directly with the community leader as a representative of the mechanisms of citizen participation?

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