

Mechanisms for Citizen Participation During the National Crisis Process. Citizens Speak

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Abstract

In the midst of crisis scenarios, it is necessary to deepen the representative democracy, since the organisation of the communities, as a mechanism of citizen participation. For this reason, the research had as its intent to understand the reality of the citizens who make it possible mechanisms of citizen participation during the process of national crisis. This was a qualitative study, which was based on the method of phenomenological hermeneutic in which it is called six community leaders that make life in the city of Puno as social actors. The results showed the importance of the role of the leader of the community, as the expression of the feeling voice of all the citizens, also the importance of community organising as a means of citizen participation to deepen the construction of a strong and popular democracy. As a conclusion, in the midst of crisis situations, the mechanisms of citizen participation are fundamental to be able to listen to and give voice to communities that traditionally have been found underserved.

Keywords: *Community Leaders, Community Participation, Crisis Scenarios, Representative Democracy*

INTRODUCTION

Since the dawn of humanity, democracy has been a part of the systems and political currents that have allowed the interaction between the rulers and the people, hence the etymological root of his word “the power of the people” to manage “the thing public, terms coined by the greeks and romans respectively”. However, with the passing of different episodes in the history of humanity, other political models were at home, and the concept and practice of democracy, modernity and contemporaneity, it was becoming. Just understand that the institutionalisation of states, in their majority, are based on the ideal picture of executive, legislative, and judicial³, constituting, unfailingly, in a model of representative democratic, a true copy of the constitutional monarchies of the old continent, which completely loses the sense of the republics, as a territorial unit with its own rules and social shape.

This has been the first of the evils of the republics that were forming in hispanic america in the early eighteenth century, in which derailed completely the sense of the republic, for getting the european ideal or american republic consistorian and Representative⁶ in which, the voice and the vote were prepared in the hands of a privileged class, who will be chosen among themselves, in order to represent the entirety of the population⁷. This, consequently, was becoming until you find the picture of the republican and democratic of the present, in which is still observed as the decision-making power remains isolated from the realities of the communities, who, little or nothing, are favoured by those who are in charge of decision making⁸.

In this sense, it is convenient to recognize which are the mechanisms of citizen participation in the full development of representative democracy, whereas, the leadership can be exercised from the communities is fundamental to balance the scales and proceed to the construction of a society with social justice, with citizens

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with full rights and participation in the decisions that affect or benefit the territory in which they operate, especially in times of crisis.

For this reason, the research was concerned: what is the reality of the citizens who make possible mechanisms of citizen participation during the process of national crisis? Which led to set as the intent of the research, to understand the reality of the citizens who make possible mechanisms of citizen participation during the process of national crisis.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

developing a research with a qualitative perspective¹⁰ for what emerges from the interpretive paradigm, in which " recognizes the weaknesses existing within the numerical calculations, seeking to establish a universal truth, understanding that social phenomena are complex so that you do not possess a unique form of addressed 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 unfinished¹¹. Before the exposure that precedes it, it is declared that the research made use of the method of phenomenological hermeneutic proposed by gadamer¹² for the process of collection, categorization, and interpretation of information gathered, recognizing that, this method, as explained¹³, is based on the understanding that, the experience of life, as part of the Ongoing learning of the human being, it is one of the fundamental units to approach 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 the language¹⁴. It is for this reason that lara¹⁵ emphasised that this method is based on: "to spread awareness about certain situations, which are expressed through language".

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

Social Actors and Selection Criteria

For the development of the research, was selected as social actors¹⁶ six community leaders that make life in the city of Puno, district and department namesake of Perú, who have been a part of the mechanisms of citizen participation during the process of national crisis by the year 2022. The selection of the social actors originated from a sample based on criteria¹⁷, whereas for the case of this research the following: (a) be the leaders recognized for their communities, b) be the constant in the mechanisms of citizen participation, (c) have formed part of the mechanisms of citizen participation during the process of national crisis by the year 2022. In the table 1 shows the characteristics of the social actors participants of this study.

Techniques For the Collection of Information

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

Phenomenological-hermeneutic¹⁸. In this particular, it is necessary to emphasise that there are several types of interview, however, in the case of this research, we employed the in-depth interview, because that allows you to explore the hidden meaning behind the experience of the informants¹⁹, taking as a basis expressed by lara, who explains that: "understanding that the experience is unique and in it are nested deeper feelings.

For, which are unique stories that deserve to be told to be recorded and documented"²⁰ in this sense, we sought to explore the lived experience of the informants about the mechanisms of citizen participation during the process of national crisis.

Before the exposure that precedes, it was felt appropriate to invite the actors to think in terms of three elements to eastern discourse, these being (a) the expression of democracy from the communities, (b) the role of the community leaders as an amalgam between the people and the government organisations and, (c) prospects for achieving greater participation in a representative democracy in crisis scenarios.

Procedure

The process of interpretation of the interviews was performed according to the specifications declared by Lara²¹ who is based on our own ideas of Gadamer²² the latter, who explains that there are no mechanical steps to the art of understanding, also is true makes it clear that, it is a process dynamic and integral, in which makes it relevant to go through a series of stages until reaching a true interpretation, based on the dialectic, as an engine to promote open communication between the author and done well²³. Such moments are presented below:

Preconception

Preconception, it is considered as the previous ideas that you can have the researcher before the reality of research, and, although there are researchers who assume the preconception as a negative element, as the authors Rosales and Alvarado²⁴ explain that these are positive, as they can be the guidance that help you to facilitate the process of interpretation.

This time of the hermeneutic circle is supported on the ideas of Heidegger²⁵, author argues that human beings are bound by culture, which is manifested through the language, which helps to understand the context to which belong subject, and which manifests itself through the *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 social policy associated with the mechanisms of citizen participation in times of crisis, taking as a starting point, this has been positive for the social actors.

Horizon of the Author

This is the moment in which you can highlight the ideas of key informants with clarity; this phase of the hermeneutic circle is also known as the identification of units of meaning or the interpretations of the first order²⁶. With the goal of demonstrating the horizon of the author, it will be used fragments of the verbalizations of the interviews to be carried out.

Fusion of Horizons

This is a time in which both the horizon of the author and the preconception's done well meaning, through a dialogue based on the dialectic, in order to establish a new horizon of understanding²⁷. In accordance with Lara²⁸ this process occurs through two actions, which are presented below:

Hear the text: occurs when the done well in examining the text, seeking to understand what this wants to tell him, allowing unveil categories and edges that underlie hidden in the texts²⁹.

Apply the sense: it is to give meaning and validity of historical texts, in order to contextualise it and improve the understanding of the same.

Interrogate

It should be understood that knowledge is a process of construction and reconstruction, so that the hermeneutic circle is a constant cycle, the resolution of an inquiry leads to find others that help strengthen the interpretive horizon assumed, therefore, that one interpretation can lead to a host of additional questions³⁰.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

From the findings emerging from the interviews as applied to the social actors, these are presented and discussed below, in function of the application of the hermeneutic circle, taking as an element guiding the categories that were formed in the process of interpretation of the texts, as well as their respective edges.

Community Organisation as A Means of Exercising Democracy

.... The organisation within the communities is important, sometimes the institutions of the state do not come here, for a variety of topics, then, we must come together, for a service representative to take up what they need, as they say, if Mahoma is not going to the mountain, the mountain must go to Mahoma (as-5).

The truth is that, if we are not united as a people, our demands are not heard, one stick does not move a mountain... Then we need every one of the members of the community to find out what their needs are, to construct the proposed improvements and to get them to the local rulers... That is what has helped us (as-2).

As can be seen in the verbalizations above, the social actors manifest feelings of comfort, with regard to the process of organising as a community, this being the most direct and pure, to express the democracy, understanding that their participation is essential 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 acknowledge that, by applying the tenets of Heidegger, about the being there, it is recognized that the social actors understand that the community organisation is paramount to the instances corresponding to your requirements, because, sometimes the state, by the representative system, is limited to acknowledge the need of all its inhabitants; it can be perceived in the text of the as-5 when he says: "sometimes the institutions of the state do not come here, for various topics", which then helps to understand that, to generate the mechanisms of citizen participation in times of crisis, it's ideal, to start a process of self-organisation of social communities.

In addition, it is understood that, the community organisation, as a mechanism of participation, many times it is caused by a neglect of the institutions of the state towards the needs of the populations, and this can be seen when you hear the text of the as-2: "if we are not united as a people, our demands are not heard", and therefore, it is assumed that the representative democracy has some weaknesses to meet fully the demands of those who are the subject of the democratic life of the country, being then, the communal organisation, the living expression of these conditions.

In the face of reality argued above, it should be understood that, the community organisation is one of the mechanisms of citizen participation that helps to build a civil society that is healthy and strong, by meeting the demands of those populations that have traditionally been neglected and little visible to the development of democracy, understanding that this mechanism, helps to strengthen the identity of a full citizenship rights and mature before the public policies that are being exercised, and generates more interest to the democratic life of a nation, especially when it is in crisis scenarios³¹.

In this way, it is understood that the state, at all levels of government, it should promote a larger process of community organisation as a mechanism for the participation of citizens in time of crisis, taking as a reference the positive experiences in international.

Settings, where you can see the implementation of the neighbourhood assemblies or meetings, open, and public policies such as participatory budgeting, as a means to deepening democracy through citizen participation³².

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

Community Leader: The Voice of The Neglected

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

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

When people have a problem, where are you going? Our homes to look for a solution, because they know that we are the link between the 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 that we need to do to listen to our needs (as-4).

The verbalizations of the interviews that precede it helps to highlight that, the community leaders, as representatives of the populations in general, are the ones who listen, before state agencies, the needs of the

communities they represent. It should be noted that, the community leaders do not emerge from a process of popular vote or self-appointment, but that, within the mechanisms of citizen participation within

Populations, are recognized for their work and the work of connecting the communities with the state; this can be understood from hearing the text of the as-1 “that's why when we go to the authorities in charge, fight like a cat wound, because we know what we have”.

In this sense, the participation of citizens through the figure of the leader of the community, it is essential to get to give an answer to the problems that plague the communities, this is because citizens perceive in the community leader, an authority figure, which is part of their problems and can get solutions fast to the same. This interpretation arises by applying the heideggerian that postulates the expression of as-4: “when people have a problem, where are you going? Our homes to look for a solution, because they know that we are the link between the reality and who can provide a solution to what ails us”.

Thus, it is understood that, the leader of the community, as part of this process of citizen participation in the midst of crisis, must become, at least from the organs of the state, a strategy that contributes to the management of the development in the localities, giving a higher weight within the decision-making process associated to the communities,

Whereas, this is the voice of an entire population that has its own needs and requirements, which help you to be a real sustainable development, in, by and for the citizens³³.

The above observations lead us to think that the mechanisms of citizen participation, exercised through the community leadership, should contribute to the sustainable development, so that your figure is fundamental in order to establish the mechanisms of communication between the rulers of turn, and their communities, understanding that their actions are essential to achieve a real local development and sustainable in time, being the key to generate a management development for all³⁴.

In summary, this category gives an account of the role of the leader of the community, as the expression of the feeling voice of all the citizens that make life in a territorial space, becoming part of both processes, between the reality of the communities and the actors are able to take decisions to carry out the necessary management to achieving the mechanisms of improvement, being this, a suitable form of citizen participation for the management of the development.

Community Leadership: Hope For a Representative Democracy In Times Of Crisis

Collect the needs of the people sharing the same space with you, at the same time is difficult, but it is hopeful to think that you are doing something, not just for your community, but these helping to 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, the problems of our community, but while we can contribute with our grain of sand to improve the situation, we'll be there, to give the best... (as-6).

The texts that precede it, help them to understand that, the community leadership is essential to build a society that is strengthened in the face of what is known as representative democracy, because in the end, the communities are schemes for exercising their right to free association and participation in order to solve their own needs, which is essential within the construction and society, with a political consciousness 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, the community leadership is critical to help deepen the role of democratic institutions from the communities, whereas they, the essential core to build a homeland of their sovereign, and with a load of social values and democratic assets, that are capable of strengthening the national identity before times of crisis, to strengthen the role of citizen, as a being full of rights and duties, are responsible for their actions to build the homeland with a sense of all in equality, this is achieved

Appreciate applying the ideas of heidegger to the expression of the as-3 “these helping to build a better future for your family and be an example for others”.

Faced with the reality described, it is considered that the role of the community leader, as a manager of the mechanisms of citizen participation, it turns out to be a key player for the construction of a representative democracy blunt to respond to the needs of the population in crisis scenarios, where, it could be a promoter fundamental to the construction of scenarios of management by and for the citizens in full³⁵.

Given this reality, one must understand that, the management of the development should start from the base of the peoples, understanding the critical role that these represent to generate the necessary changes that will lead to a society with more justice, equity, and understanding of the rights, as a fundamental part of a political consciousness and social drive to overcome the situations of political crisis and social to which it is exposed, a nation³⁶.

In shutdown mode, this category has helped me realise that, the community leadership, is a form of maximum expression of the mechanisms of citizen participation in times of crisis, understanding that, it is essential in situations of crisis, so it is a key element to absolve the needs of the populations, linking, effectively, the people's power and the local power generating spaces for debate and the construction of a public identity with a sense of belonging and empowered to make their voices heard , recognizing, in addition, its ability as being composed of rights.

CONCLUSION

The research, understood as a possibility of understanding the reality of the citizens who make it possible mechanisms of citizen participation during the process of national crisis, to verify that you, the community leaders are a key element to that end, understanding that, in a representative democracy, the local leadership is the guarantor of do listen to the voice of the people.

It is understood that, in the midst of crisis situations, the mechanisms of citizen participation are fundamental to be able to listen to and give voice to communities that traditionally have been found underserved, therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the leadership of the community, as a mechanism to find an amalgam between the institutions of the state 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 to continue building a schema of citizen participation effective, in order to link the state with the people, however, it is believed that, it is important that local governments to promote a more expeditious associated mechanisms of participation through the voice of their leaders, which will help

Streamline The Management of The Development from The Municipalities.

It is believed that the research reached the stated purpose, however, the process of interpretation-reflection has led to establish new concerns that can be transformed into new opportunities of 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 take from the legislature to give visibility to the community leadership as part of the mechanisms of citizen participation? What will be the actions of the leaders of a community to scenarios of constitutional crises that affect their communities? Will it be possible to develop new public policies in which to be involved more directly to the community leader as a representative of the mechanisms of citizen participation?

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