

Perspectives of Popular Participation in Brazil

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Abstract: This research sought by means of bibliographical research present important perspectives related to the exercise of popular participation in several instances. The federal constitution in force determines the participation of the community in the exercise of social control, it is a valuable instrument of democratic participation of the Brazilian population, gradually have significant progress in several instances such as: advice, public policy conferences, participatory budgeting, social observatory, public hearings and other. Is detachable social control in the health system in the performance of the respective councils and health conferences. It is important to stress the role of organised civil society in the composition and participation of social control. However, there is a need to encourage the participation of the community in the preparation, monitoring, supervision and evaluation of public policies to ensure the full exercise of citizenship.

Key words: Social control, public policies, popular participation, citizenship, society

INTRODUCTION

It is widespread idea that the Brazilian population does not participate in the discussions and decisions of our country. From this common design, this text proposes to think about the mechanisms of participation of the population in public policies focusing on the right/duty of the citizen. This reflection on the concepts and foundations search on the experiences of a few instances where the organised civil society.

To begin, it is necessary to define what are public policies. According to Parada when we talk about public policy, we are talking about social power. And one of its central features, second RUA is the fact that they are decisions and actions covered the sovereign authority of the government.

These actions of the government should respond to the demands of society, especially those individuals who are in conditions of vulnerability. But for the demand of society turn into actions, you must first enter the government agenda and for this to occur, the social demand should become a priority, i.e., in “political problem” of remarkable importance. At this point, it is worth reflecting on how far the power conferred upon the “people” can influence the decisions of the state.

SOCIAL CONTROL/POPULAR PARTICIPATION

To deal with this matter, it is important to know the concept of social control because among the various denominations follows the definition presented by the Comptroller General of the Union (CGU):

Social control can be understood as citizen participation in public management, monitoring, monitoring and control of the actions of the public administration. It is important mechanism of prevention of corruption and strengthening of citizenship. In Brazil, the concern to establish a strong and active social control becomes even greater because of territorial extension of country and geographical decentralisation of public agencies members of the various federal levels-union, states, federal district and municipalities. In the case of these, still, their large number. Therefore, the monitoring of the application of public resources have to be made with the support of society

It is through, the mobilization that organised civil society can draw the attention of the state to the

general social problems and/or of certain groups. The mobilizations, the more organized, more effective are to draw media attention which in turn are “important opinion makers, agents that have ability to mobilize the action of others” and consequently, influence political decisions and set the government agenda (Subirats, 2006).

However, this mobilization will only happen from an awareness which is the result of discussions and public debates. Second, according to Parada the wealth of a society is measured by the public discussion and its ability to transform itself from it. The researcher adds that the richness of this discussion is subject to the access to education.

The various instances of social participation permit foster discussions and draw up proposals for public policies that meet the need of different sectors of society such as education, health, security, among others. In addition to monitor and supervise the implementation of such policies.

Our constitution a citizen of 1988, ensures the right to popular participation through representative entities and such institutions seek to contribute to the formulation of policies and social control of public acts in the three spheres of government, so it can be considered that the political involvement of each individual will in addition to the ballot boxes because under the law, the society has the duty to monitor the actions of the elected. Therefore, social control becomes a political tool of utmost importance to the exercise of citizenship in this line of thought, Figueiredo says that: “may be exercised individually or collectively. The press conference can contribute to the dissemination of ideas when such collective leaders not meet the dominant interests to the detriment of the popular will “Note that” participation” is the watchword.

The researcher points out that “the strengthening of participation depends on the judgment of each citizen regarding the importance of their involvement in political issues”. Because in the present day, the population still is dominated by the minority, left as a proposal of liberation the involvement of schools in the training of the awareness of social participation and encouraging the exercise of citizenship of children and adolescents, so that in the long run, we have a population more involved with political means.

Social control may be exercised in several instances being the best known: deliberative councils, participatory budgeting, social observatory, public hearing, conferences and others but at the time, highlight just a few of the mechanisms mentioned, starting with the health boards. On this subject, Avritzer (2008) asserts the following:

Policy councils have emerged as a result of the Organic Law Health and social care (LOAS) and as a result of the chapter of the urban policies of constituent process and its regulation in 2001 through the status of the city, began to proliferate during the last decade the so-called “Municipal Directors Plans”. The latter became mandatory in all cities with >20,000 inhabitants. Thus, we have today in the country what we can call an infrastructure of diversified participation in its shape and in its design

To illustrate the social control, there is the possibility of acting popular in the area of health that can and should be exercised among others, through the health boards regulated by law No. 8,142, December 28, 1990 that has on the community participation in the management of the Unified Health System (SUS) and on intergovernmental transfers of financial resources in health care and other matters.

From what has been mentioned, you may want to add the contents of the first study of the law which brings together:

The Unified Health System (SUS) which deals with law No. 8,080 of September 19, 1990 will feature in each sphere of government without prejudice to the functions of the legislature with the following collegiate bodies: health conference; the board of health. The board of health, permanent and deliberative in character, collegial body composed of government representatives, service providers, health professionals and users, operates in the formulation of strategies and in the control of the implementation of health policy in the corresponding instance including economic and financial aspects whose decisions will be approved by the head of power legally constituted in each sphere of government (emphasis added)

The health system has Constitutional origin, specifically in Art. 198 which brings together: “The public health actions and services integrate a regionalized and hierarchical network and constitute a single system”, being the single health system organized according to the following policies: “decentralization with single direction in each sphere of government; full service with priority given to preventive activities without prejudice to the assistance services; community participation” (emphasis added).

In this way, citizens should exercise social control compulsorily, opposed the involvement optional accepted by most. Without a doubt, social control in health management is a major breakthrough within reach of Brazilians.

The National Health Council (CNS) is a collegial body, permanent and deliberative body, composed of 48 councillors with joint distribution of vacancies, i.e., 50% of beneficiaries, 25% of people working in the health area and 25% for the administrators and service providers, being half formed by users and the other reserved for other segments as well representatives of the National Council of Secretaries of health (Conass) and National Council of Municipal Secretaries for health (Conasems), compete through direct electoral process in this drawing, seeks to balance the interests of each representation.

The state has the obligation to promote popular participation, so the responsibilities in social control are also divided to occur in the respective spheres, according to the text below:

The union, the states and the municipalities: support the process of social mobilization and in defense of institutional SUS; providing material, technical conditions and administrative provisions necessary for the operation of the [s] [s] [...] [national, state and municipal health]; [...] organize and provide the conditions necessary for the holding of national conferences [state and municipal health]; support the process of training of health counselors; promote actions of information and knowledge about SUS, next to the general population (Brazil, 2011, emphasis added)

Another fundamental instrument that ensures citizens the opportunity of exercising social control, concerns the Participatory Budget (PB) which appeared in the 1980, more specifically in the city of Porto Alegre-RS, according to the understanding by Avritzer (2008), appears as a:

[...] participatory local-level policy that responds to the demands of the sectors disadvantaged by a fairer distribution of public goods in Brazilian cities. It includes social actors, members of neighborhood associations and ordinary citizens in a process of negotiation and deliberation divided into two stages: a first stage in which the participation of interested is straightforward and a second stage in which the participation run through the establishment of a council of delegates

In continuation, Avritzer (2008) notes that: “the participation in PB fulfills the role of ensuring the deliberative fashion advertising and public access to information and the decision on the distribution of material goods”, so you can realize the great benefit of this mechanism of popular participation which allows the correct destination of the public budget while respecting the priorities listed by the community of each region, being a strong appeal to combat corruption, however, fits warn that the lack of transparency of public acts, committed community involvement because the power that comes from the people (most) should not surrender to the whims of the rulers (minority).

In general, this instance of planning focuses on democratic public funds and therefore a political instrument for the optimal allocation of public resources which depends on the level of involvement and knowledge of the community on: allocation, priorities and insight regarding the correct disposal referred to resources.

In practice, we know numerous speeches disappointing in relation to our rulers and Brazilian policies but the index of involvement of society in political affairs is still too low before a population as large as Brazil, moreover, the exercise of citizenship does not occur in a simple and automatic.

On the issue on the agenda, Kliksberg (2013) shows us that becomes indispensable “democratize democracy”, to put it another way:

This means that if you want a purely electoral democracy but systems with mechanisms that facilitate the active participation of citizens have defined organizational characteristics (such as the total transfer of public management and its social control) and that not only guarantee fully the rights of citizens vis-a-vis the state machine as they provide channels of intervention in state activity

The understanding Figueiredo, it is not enough for the state to offer the instruments of participation, the population needs to be qualified, smartening up about the true role that should carry forward the demands inherent in social control, the researcher adds about the urgent need to insert in the Brazilian education, concepts related to subject area and also on the theme of “transparency”.

For this reason, it is proven that the state has an obligation to act in a transparent way, providing favourable conditions for the integration of citizens in the process of popular participation, this idea is also advocated by the CGU:

The access of the citizen to information simple and understandable is the starting point for greater transparency. The transparency of public administration and of the actions of the Government depends, therefore, spaces for popular participation in the search for solutions to problems in public administration; the construction of channels of communication and dialogue between civil society and the ruler; the functioning of the councils, collective bodies of public authorities and civil society with the role to participate in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of public policies; the modernization of the administrative processes which often hinder the supervision and control on the part of civil society; for social control can be effectively exercised, it is necessary, therefore that citizens have access to public information. This transparency implies, however, a simultaneous work of the government and society: the government, leading to the information society; the company, seeking that information aware that everything that is public is each one of us

This two-way Rua, we can clearly understand that the involvement of society is of the utmost importance to the proper use of social control because if on the one hand, our federal constitution ensures that: “all power emanates from the people which exercises through elected representatives or directly under this constitution” on the other hand, the power delivered to our elected representatives, needs to be constantly monitored, for this to occur in a way that is prudent and acceptable, we need to continually exercise social control because the right to vote is linked to the duty to supervise the public acts.

The understanding by Sano and Abrucio (2008), “the main problem of the elections is that voters think only at the time of voting. Today, however, there are other public spaces that require the participation of society along the mandate [...]” in this context, it is worth highlighting the importance of organised civil society that contributes considerably to social control.

Social control may be exercised more effectively without the interference of the state, being run by independent entities as for example, the social observatory which does not suffer the interference of the government, contributing with practices directed to common interests of society, the social observatory only comprises:

[...] for representatives of civil society have a greater knowledge about the real needs of the population, their concerns and perspectives. The fact of the social Observatory be formed exclusively by civil society representative sets it apart from other mechanisms of social control (emphasis added)

The instrument cited presents itself as a new way of planning public finances in conjunction with citizens certainly have more accurate knowledge about the most urgent needs in the environment in which they live having as purpose to collaborate for improving public administration, this space is composed of Brazilians of various segments including teachers, students, business people, public servants, officials and other citizens who fight for social justice.

CONCLUSION

The importance of strengthening social control as an instrument of democratic participation, whether individual or collective way, lies in the effective involvement of the majority of members of the population. This is: the participation in deliberative, participatory budgeting advice, conferences, social observatory, public hearings and others, allows to exercise the right and the duty to legally established propositional acts, inspectors and evaluators of the actions of the state by means of public policies in different areas of the country.

The advances made after the enactment of the current constitution were leveraged by organised civil society, however, the magnitude of the participation of the community in the process of social control needs to be strengthened to guarantee the full exercise of citizenship and the fundamental rights guaranteed in the constitution.

Before all, subtends that the legitimate right to exercise social control does not exempt the person exercising it simultaneously as an absolute duty, however, it is up to the people to monitor the acts of the public administration as well as participate actively in the political construction of Brazil because it repudiates the participation optional and fragmented society, considering that popular participation is sine qua non, i.e., (essential) for the social and political development of the Brazilian nation.

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