

New alternative knowledge to new participative administrations

Angélica Gunturiz

Sociologist, magister in Social policies and Doctorate in social sciences at Instituto de Estudios de América Latina y el Caribe (IEALC), Universidad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

How to cite this article

Gunturiz, A. (2016). New alternative knowledge to new participative administrations. *Administration & Development*, 46(2), 130-133. Retrieved from <http://esapvirtual.esap.edu.co/ojs/index.php/admindesarro/article/view/146>

Diverse Colombian Public administration topics are part of the present volume; however, all of them are transversally considered by two issues that have great importance in the academic analysis and in the administrative practice, that is to say, the production and access to knowledge and the citizens' participation.

These aspects related to the areas of knowledge, in a high or low degree, have been subject to relevant approaches of the social science from different perspectives and disciplines. For instance, the Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos analyses the knowledge issue, exhibiting the actual discrepancy between the social practice and the theory, where "for a bling theory, the social practice is invisible; and for a bling practice, the social theory is irrelevant". Regarding this, the author encourages us, not only to seek for new knowledge, but also to find a new way of knowledge production, adding that "we do not need alternatives, what we need is alternative thinking about the alternatives" (2006, p. 16).

In this discrepancy are involved the academy, social movements, non-governmental organizations, the "ordinary" citizen and, of course, the public administration. The varied approaches that have led the waves' reform

of the public administration worldwide and especially in Latin-American countries, have aimed to modernize this field by integrating the concepts and procedures associated to the management, the efficiency, the quality and, most recently, the participation and access through the information and communication technologies. However, it is a reality that in many cases the theory does not match the daily practices of the public administration in Latin America; thus, we find public officers overwhelmed with work and operational manuals, projects whose effectivity was not properly diagnosed, citizens lost in a new virtual bureaucratic world and a civil society participation, used only, to validate procedures.

With this scenario, one of the main tasks for those who work with the public management –from the research or the governmental practice- is to integrate theory and practice. This is a very complex task that requires production of new knowledge, innovative people who can reflect upon our own realities, but also able to connect to other places' realities.

As if the effort to achieve this knowledge production was not enough, (considering the very poor budget assigned for research, the difficult times, the undignified protocols, among other obstacles), it is also necessary, from whom produce the knowledge to look into and act on them to be passed away and for them to transform realities.

Paulo Freire remind us of "when becoming oppressor, the reality implies the existence of both the oppressor and the oppressed classes. The oppressed, who should really struggle for their liberation along with whom are really generous to them, need to gain critical oppression awareness, in the praxis of this search".(2005, p. 55)

In our "knowledge societies", this is a new decisive factor for social exclusion that had led to vicious circles when strengthening structural factors on its own. Therefore, it is not a minor matter to wonder to whom are our researches addressed and to whom we would like to

address them. Perhaps the integration of both recipients can be a utopian goal, but it is also a task of the research to emphasize in its objectivity rather than the neutral; while for some, it may seem too “territorial” “localized” “marginal” etc. it can become, to many others, great supplies to the social change.

It should not be forgotten that the relation among citizens, the academy and other public administrations tend most times to be asymmetrical, since the citizens are the first in line to monopolize the production, disclosure and use of the knowledge. This “monoculture of the knowledge and the rigor” in which the non-scientific knowledge is considerate invalid and lacking of rigor, allows knowledge to be subjects of what Boaventura de Sousa Santos denominates “epistemicide”, to name the death of alternative knowledge.

It is important to draw the attention to our complex analysis and models which are an extra way to approach issues, but they are not the only way. In this regard, that complexity requires translation for the new information, the innovative tool and the accurate diagnostic to get to the citizen, to the entrepreneur, to the organized community and to the rest of the agents involved in processes of social transformation.

The volume presented is integrated by five case studies which give a new dimension to the value of the products locally and relate this new knowledge to the national and regional events. These studies agree on pointing out district issues (and of the capital city) whose analysis allow to draw conclusions and to make constructive recommendations for a great variety of agents participating and interested on those issues. Thus, these analysis could transform into tools to integrate the theory and the practice and to serve communities, companies government bodies, social organizations and international bodies.

Eduardo Andrés Botero Cedeño's study (2016) holds the hypothesis that the touristic sector of Arauca district has the necessary characteristics to be considered a center for the territory's growth and the development. Based on a qualitative methodology of competitive profiling, the author analyses three dimensions: productive, competitive and technological aspects of the touristic chain.

Among the main findings, the author claims that the business strengthening processes oriented to competitive advantages acquisition, are insufficient, this is indeed a need of the first order in the district. On the other hand, Botero finds, as part of the strengths of

this productive chain that the natural and historical conditions of the territory can be turned into competitive advantages through nichos such as the ecological tourism, the agro-tourism and the adventure tourism; among the limitations were identified, structural issues such as the negative impact of the armed conflict, difficulties to access the area, and connectivity, poor development in touristic complementary services, scarcity of human specialized resource to provide the services.

The article written by Nicolás Simbaqueba Moreno (2016) examines the way in which the New Public Management (NPM) perspective has been applied, in the case of the capital city administration. That examination is relevant not only for the administrators participating in the implementation and application of the perspective (both in the regulation and the practice), but also, for the citizens and the communities that look into becoming valid interlocutors of this administration.

A conceptual revision is done in the article about the modifications that have taken place in the administration of the capital city until now, which are associated to the introduction of the NPM and have for highlight the expedition of the regulations of 2006. The author analyzes four dimensions –administrative structure, organizations management, personnel management, new management tendencies-, reporting a series of findings of great importance in both sectors, the administrative and the political; for instance the concerning number of temporal jobs and contracts presented by Bogota city's administration to the year 2015. Among the conclusions, the study makes it clear that the changes in this administration were basically organizational, rather than institutional and has comply only with the legal framework, but not with the necessities of the administration to get updated.

Another analysis presented in this volume concerning district issues, is the one about *the Responsible governments that encourage public value: from products to impacts*. The authors formulate the question on whether Boyaca's government had a track record that shows public value, considering the period 2005 to 2015 and through the analysis of three dimensions: operational management, support and impacts.

Based on the strategic triangle by Moore (1998), the authors operate these dimensions in 124 indicators whose information is gathered from primary and secondary sources. This methodology allows to establish that Boyaca's government has been improving as a public value inducer along the period studied, going from deficit to acceptable stages. Accordingly, a highlighted

predominance of the operational dimension or institutional development over the legitimacy and support and the impacts. This means that the public value induced by the Boyaca's government is understood better for the services provided, rather than the feasibility and the validity given by the citizens; therefore, the study presents some recommendations in these dimensions to avoid drains in the chain value.

Jaime Mejía Gutiérrez, John Alejandro Pulgarín Franco and Hugo Armando Moreno Rojas (2016) make an analysis about the territorialization of the public action through the operations and the omissions of the municipal and district administrations of Quindío regarding climate change, for the period of 2000 to 2014. The authors understand the territorialization as those local policies oriented to the administration of the territory, hence they examine the climate change approach that is within the territorial planning, municipal development and district development. The study identifies the main weakness and strengths of this territorialization. Among the conclusions, in spite the great importance of public policies for the climate change in the district and the already existent adjustment processes to them in the municipality, there is a weakness in the clear strategies consolidation in a municipal degree to reduce and adapt the climate change.

The authors synthesize a reality that goes through the whole country in different fields of the public policies, this reality is evident mostly in the environmental regards. They highlight the existence of an "institutional weakness in the local management for decisions in the constitutional triad of the decentralization, in which the national participation is superior in legal terms to the territorial complementation, the municipal subsidiarity and the political organization of the communities" (p. 65).

The study written by Germán Rubio Guerrero and Fernando Adolfo Fierro Celis (2016) approaches the relationship between the organization and its impact in the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies. First, a conceptual revision is done about the CSR and the different approaches that apply it; secondly, the study advances on the line of a descriptive analysis based in three different organizations: finance institutions of Ibagué, medium and large enterprises of the industrial sector of Ibagué, students, professors and administrative personnel of Universidad del Tolima.

Among the main findings, it is prominent that enterprises of the finance sector were the best ones in the evaluation regarding their application of CSR, but this application is only regarding regulations. The study

marks that the CRS has been taking place only in the interior of the organization under an instrumentalist perspective that seeks to maximize the shareholders' value, being this a strategy to get competitive advantage.

This volume also has two articles that besides providing an examination about the issues they mind, they also present new forms of knowledge production. The studies of Juan Sergio Cruz (2016) and Castellanos Oviedo, Fonseca Zárate and Castillo Grimaldos (2016) suggest alternative models of analysis, which integrate perspectives and innovative methods, but that also generate a type of knowledge from which is possible to take wide advantage in the social practices of the enterprises, communities and public administrations.

The issue that Cruz (2016) considers, concerns the technology investment dynamics associated to a specific method of accumulation of the autonomous capital –the enterprise-, for the post -constitution of 1991 period. Specifically, the author wonders, what the response of the Colombian manufacturer businessmen was before the challenge of international competition; and what their technological investment level was, as a way to compete. The based hypothesis notes that the board directors' decisions of the enterprises, unleashed processes of autonomous capital reproduction remarkably different. On one hand, an extensive accumulation and on the other hand, an intensive accumulation.

The author suggests an alternative model for the analysis of the investment at autonomous capital level, from the regulation theory, to analyze the accumulation regime that was implemented in 1951. The import substitution industrialization model (modified qualitatively in the national Constitution in 1991), integrating in the analysis the particular ways of capital reproduction in the country.

Finally, in the article, *New knowledge management methods: National consultation of public administration with a participative prospective*, the authors integrate knowledge management elements to the prospective analysis and the usage of massive consultation, Delphi type. Their analysis proposal of possible future scenarios is built based on a tri-axial methodology (scenarios with three axes, vertical, horizontal and diagonal) and it surveys public administration professionals –mainly graduates of Escuela Superior de Administración Pública– about the education type and support that they consider they need to work better during the post conflict agreement with the guerrilla of FARC, in both, at a regional level and in their own professional field.

Among the most important topics for these professionals in the scenario of the peace agreement, stood out, the environmental risk management, climate change, education and health management, agro and food security management, fight against organized crime, crime control; efficiency management, transparency and the fight against government's corruption; sustainable territorial development, the intersectoriality, public policies coordination and integrity.

References

- Botero Cedeño, E. (2016). Análisis del perfil competitivo de la cadena productiva del turismo en el departamento de Arauca. *Administración & Desarrollo*, 46(2). Retrieved from <http://esapvirtual.esap.edu.co/ojs/index.php/a/article/view/14>
- Castellanos Oviedo, F., Fonseca Zárate., C., & Castillo Grimaldos, S. (2016). Nuevos métodos de gestión institucional del conocimiento: consulta nacional a profesionales de Administración Pública con aplicación de prospectiva participativa. *Administración & Desarrollo*, 46(2). Retrieved from <http://esapvirtual.esap.edu.co/ojs/index.php/a/article/view/66>
- Cruz, J. (2016). Un modelo alternativo de análisis de la inversión del capital autónomo en Colombia desde la Teoría de la Regulación. *Administración & Desarrollo*, 46(2). Retrieved from <http://esapvirtual.esap.edu.co/ojs/index.php/a/article/view/78>
- De Sousa Santos, B. (2006). La sociología de las ausencias y la sociología de las emergencias: para una ecología de saberes. Capítulo 1 En: Clacso (editores) *Renovar la Teoría Crítica y Reinventar la Emancipación Social*. Encuentros en Buenos Aires. (pp. 13-41). Buenos Aires: Clacso Biblioteca Virtual. Available at: <http://bibliotecavirtual.clacso.org.ar/ar/libros/edicion/santos/Capitulo%20I.pdf>
- De Sousa, B. (2011). Introducción: Las epistemologías del sur. In *Formas-otras. Saber, nombrar, narrar, hacer. IV Training Seminar de jóvenes investigadores en dinámicas interculturales* (pp. 11-22). Available at: [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/141896/Formas%20Otras%20\(Nov%202011\).pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/141896/Formas%20Otras%20(Nov%202011).pdf)
- Freire, P. (2005). *Pedagogía del oprimido*. Siglo XXI.
- Mejía Gutiérrez, J., Pulgarín Franco, J., & Moreno Rojas, H. (2016). Territorialización de la acción pública en el contexto del cambio climático en el departamento del Quindío. *Administración & Desarrollo*, 46(2). Retrieved from <http://esapvirtual.esap.edu.co/ojs/index.php/a/article/view/81>
- Moore, M. H. M. H. (1998). *Gestión estratégica y creación de valor en el sector público*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- Romero Bolívar, F., Orlando, O., & Caro Cristancho, W. (2016). Gobiernos responsables que inducen valor público: de productos a impactos. *Administración & Desarrollo*, 46(2). Retrieved from <http://esapvirtual.esap.edu.co/ojs/index.php/a/article/view/61>
- Rubio Guerrero, G., & Fierro Celis, F. (2016). La RSE: una teoría, diferentes visiones aplicadas. *Administración & Desarrollo*, 46(2). Retrieved from <http://esapvirtual.esap.edu.co/ojs/index.php/a/article/view/77>
- Simbaqueba Moreno, N. (2016). Una aproximación a la nueva gestión pública en Bogotá. *Administración & Desarrollo*, 46(2). Retrieved from <http://esapvirtual.esap.edu.co/ojs/index.php/a/article/view/67>