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**STRENGTHENING
PUBLIC YOUTH
POLICIES
THROUGH HYBRID
IMPLEMENTATION
APPROACHES:
AN ANALYSIS OF
COLOMBIA AND
MEXICO**

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Abstract: The current Latin American context presents a series of conflicts and social problems in which children, adolescents and young people are directly affected. A problem debated today by academia and civil society is associated with the guarantee of rights for this population through the effective implementation of public policies. In this sense, it is important to respond to this pressing need, taking into account the different variables or contexts that arise to address this problem. The purpose of this article as an advance of research on implementation models of public youth policy has as its central objective to identify the implementation models of public policies through networking; also understand the contribution of hybrid approaches in the implementation of public policies; analyze the participatory construction of public policy implementation processes from the territories; Finally, describe youth participation as part of the local implementation model. As a methodological proposal, a comparative analysis of the implementation models of public youth policy in Colombia and Mexico is proposed based on case studies and documentary review. From the recognition of the realities in the territories that allow the construction of autonomy through participation mechanisms that affect social justice actions.

Keywords: youth, public policies, implementation, territory, participation.

INTRODUCTION

The construction of public policies is important for young people, social organizations, the State and academia through collective actions that facilitate implementation processes. In this sense, the presentation of four strategies or proposals that allow strengthening the implementation models of public youth policies is considered pertinent.

The process of advancing research on youth public policy implementation models has as its central objective 1) identifying public policy implementation models through networking; also 2) understand the contribution of hybrid approaches in the implementation of public policies; analyze the 3) participatory construction of public policy implementation processes from the territories; Finally, 4) describe youth participation as part of the local implementation model. The commitment to transformation in the processes of implementing public policy based on participatory and networking scenarios becomes an element of analysis for the construction of citizen culture and new public policies.

As a methodological proposal, a comparative analysis of the implementation models of public youth policy in Colombia and Mexico is proposed based on case studies and documentary review. From the recognition of the realities in the territories that allow the construction of autonomy through participation mechanisms that influence actions of social justice, assuming public actions as a framework of social transformation for the full exercise of citizenship.

This article seeks to establish a common language and conceptual and practical lines of action that allow the construction of dialogic, interactive and interdependent scenarios typical of hybrid approaches related to actor-network theory (Latour, 2008). It is also proposed to analyze programs and projects that allow youth policies to materialize.

This process is carried out through the recognition of the realities in the territories where young people gain autonomy through collective action and networking, establishing participation mechanisms that directly affect the context. The proposal is developed through the different implementation models

proposed for the development of public policies where the participation of young people and youth organizations is essential. It consists of taking a historical tour by the processes of implementation of public youth policy that allows a theoretical analysis in the contexts of Colombia and Mexico.

This process leads to the question: How do hybrid implementation models allow the strengthening of public youth policies?

CONCEPTUAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

With Pressman and Waldawsky (1973) a whole conceptual development began regarding the implementation of public policies, taking into account the difference between what was planned and the actions carried out. The process of implementing public policies is based on public action by the State, as Roth mentions, “this stage is fundamental because it is there that policy until then, almost exclusively made of speeches and words, is transformed into concrete facts.”, actually palpable” (Roth, 2002:107).

The implementation processes prioritize some collective actions that become the roadmap for planning exercises, and also facilitate the development of plans, programs and projects that make the process more effective. It is assumed as a pedagogical action as negotiation exercises. “Implementation supposes the continuation of the complex process of negotiation and commitment that characterizes the elaboration process, and that implies effects in an upward direction, from below” (Pallares, 1988:157). Implementation becomes a legitimation tool to guarantee governability and governance exercises through the linking of different actors in the midst of dialogic negotiation scenarios.

It is an act of interaction that arises from the decision-making of the different actors involved according to Hill & Hupe (2002)

“The issue at stake here is that of logic. In its most general form, the act of “application” presupposes a prior act, in particular the “cognitive act”, of formulating what needs to be done and making a decision about it” (4). The public policy implementation processes are related to the possibilities of making decisions and operationalizing actions by different actors who are involved in public management.

Therefore, the public policy framework requires taking into account a technical process within the policy cycle, but clearly defining decision-making regarding the objectives to be achieved and the structures to be transformed.

As Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983) state, “implementation is the making of a basic political decision [...] that decision identifies the problem(s) to be the objectives to be pursued, and in a variety of ways, “structures” in the implementation process” (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1983: 20-1) cited by (Hill & Hupe, 2002:7). The implementation enhances the appearance of new scenarios of political encounter that emerge with the diversity of actors and interests that come into play from power and converging forces. Public policies ensure that actors generate plural implementation scenarios where different networks of interdependence and application levels converge. This way, contexts of political contest are established.

Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) point out that policy implementation encompasses actions by individuals or public and private groups that seek to achieve previously decided objectives. Their actions are small efforts with the aim of transforming decisions into operating principles, as well as prolonged efforts to comply with the changes, small or large, ordered by political decisions (cited by Revuelta, 2007: 139). Implementation promotes public action as a significant element

for achieving the common good through the enforceability of rights and the generation of opportunities that the context and the actors generate.

Because many of the studies are individual case studies, few consider how implementation varies when a different type of policy is considered. According to Matland (1995) "Building a more effective implementation model requires a much more careful evaluation of the characteristics of a policy (155). The transformation of the context or a specific reality guides the possibilities of implementation through agreements or negotiations that require effective decision-making and empowerment of the different actors. More inclusive territories are produced for actors.

The implementation assumes territorial spaces as the diversity that defines the common good, it is achieved through intergenerational dialogue between what was a policy and what it can be in prospective terms, its impact is observed in the improvement of living conditions. of the different actors.

Political will is another element to promote a new regulatory framework, a larger budget and strategic alliances with different social sectors. The objective is to develop articulated strategies to achieve co-responsibility in the implementation of Public Policy.

Scientific evidence as a way to make decisions and implement public policies. Have exchange tools that allow establishing a common work agenda with clear and concrete results that can mean progress for the entire sector.

The implementation of public policies from the diversity of actors demonstrates that political and collective action reconfigures local scenarios.

TOP DOWN IMPLEMENTATION MODELS

Top-down public policy implementation models refer to the definition of pre-established actions by the State or the central government through institutions and officials, corresponding to the traditional conception of administrative work that was developed from the top (top) down. (down) or from the center to the periphery. Its main postulates are the hierarchical primacy of authority, the distinction between the political universe and the administrative world and, finally, the search for the principle of efficiency (Thoenig, 1992: 159 cited by Roth, 2002: 109). Given this panorama, the proposal presented in this document departs from this traditional vision and tries to incorporate some elements presented here, to articulate them with the proposal of the so-called hybrid or alternative approaches.

BOTTOM UP IMPLEMENTATION MODELS

Implementation models focused on the Bottom-up perspective propose that social actors become involved in the different strategies and actions that allow the deployment of public policies, that is, from the bottom up. "Historically, the models that are inspired by this category were developed as critical or alternative approaches to the deficiencies and inefficiency (the implementation gap) presented by traditional top-down implementation processes (Roth, 2002: 109). The proposal focuses on recognizing some central elements raised by this approach through a continuous, dialogic, interactive and spontaneous learning process that favors adaptation and agreement in the midst of negotiation processes for the articulation of networks.

In summary the top-down approach seems to have a comparative advantage in

situations where: 1) there is a dominant piece of legislation that structures the situation; or when 2) research resources are very limited, the researcher is primarily interested in average responses and when the situation is structured at least moderately well. In contrast, the bottom up approach is more appropriate in situations where: 1) there is no dominant piece of legislation but rather a large number of actors with power dependencies; or where one is mainly interested in the dynamics of different local situations (Revuelta, 2007: 147).

HYBRID APPROACHES TO PUBLIC POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Within the framework of the loss of trust in government institutions and actions, public policies must redefine asymmetric relations towards more democratic relations between the different actors involved in the implementation process, this means that they must start from the principle of symmetry where the weights and counterweights are evident where a multiplicity of interests, needs, discourses and actors appear. As Parsons (2007) states:

“Each approach or theory provides a certain perspective to look at a certain dimension of the reality of implementation and, in the case of the debate, to a certain extent forced, between the top-down approach and the bottom-up approach, both, accompanied by its hybrids and variations show part of reality” (Parsons, 2007:508).

The above reveals a set of roles and functions that operationalize public policies in different ways, which requires finding common languages, socially shared practices and a reading of context. As stated by Grau, Íñiguez-Rueda, & Subirats (2010)

“The governance perspective shows us a scenario of openness, which recognizes the complexity and greater pluralism in the elaboration and implementation of public

policies that, currently, have to be developed through constant negotiation between different organizations, different levels of government and different private and community actors (Grau, Íñiguez-Rueda, & Subirats, 2010: 65).

Hybrid approaches require constructivist and interpretive pedagogies that enhance the liberating and decision-making power of social actors, allowing young people to engage in full citizenship. That is, the generation of spaces for coordination, interdependence and deliberation that enable the reassembly of public policies.

Following Pressman & Waldawsky (1998), it can be stated that implementation processes must be considered “as a constant process of redefining objectives and reinterpreting the results, that is, there is always a reformulation of public policies.” This type of process must allow the promotion of methodological pluralisms that make it possible to transform the decision scenarios necessary in the definition of public policies. According to Grau, et al., (2010)

“the postulate of heterogeneity allows us to conceive new ways of thinking about human action and agency, as a result of materially hybrid frameworks (Domènech and Tirado, 2008a), which can be very useful for the analysis of public policies” (75).

Hybrid approaches highlight the need for different analytical approaches for implementation through collaborative scenarios focused on action and cooperation that challenge government institutions. Therefore, it is a problem to be faced through hybrid measures that take into account the dignity of the person, the balance with nature’s resources and the common good, that is, enabling more humanizing management and collective action instruments. According to what was stated by Roth (2002) “The challenge that the analysis of implementation processes represents for both actors and

analysts requires it to be conceived in a broad, flexible and multidimensional way” (127). Strengthening implementation models through hybrid approaches requires strengthening online networks through virtual platforms and applications, but also face-to-face through collective actions with long-term goals, comprising new forms of organization, interaction and connectivity. According to López (2010) “Hybrid disciplinary fields are results of scientific fragmentations, many of which fail to hybridize; However, in the case of public policies there is a successful hybridization process” (190).

Here the case study analyzes take importance from the possibility of working on the sociotechnical approach of the actor - network (Latour, 2008) where the actants are taken into account from the man - nature relationship and its impact on the use of new technologies. technologies and participation processes. This way, hybrid approaches must serve to increase participation and reduce social inequalities and power inequalities. This requires redesigning institutions based on a variety of multidimensional scenarios focused on inclusion, deliberation scenarios, the empowerment of actors and the sequentiality of actions.

METHODOLOGY

As a methodological proposal, an analysis is proposed based on the documentary review on implementation approaches and the comparative case study of the implementation models of public youth policy in Colombia and Mexico. From the recognition of local realities that allow the understanding of mechanisms of participation, interaction and interdependence that affect public actions.

STRENGTHEN NETWORKING WITH OTHER SOCIAL INITIATIVES

Networking processes favor the actions carried out by young people and youth organizations through different initiatives related to culture, the environment, gender and community development that create the articulation of initiatives with other types of social causes. We can summarize these different interactions with public policies by returning to (Mc Adam, et al., 2005):

Public policy consists of demanding interactions between agents, members of the political system, challengers and external political actors. The political contest is made up of that (large) subset in which the demands are collective and, if satisfied, would affect the interests of their objects (Mc Adam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2005: 13).

This allows us to define that the involvement of young people in political processes must allow them to act as agents of social or collective demands that revive many processes of collective action from the territories, promoting new forms of agency from the youth condition. This way, young people manage to break institutional participation scenarios towards organizational processes focused on action for the transformation of reality. Based on the socio-technical approach focused on the role of the actor-network, it is possible to strengthen social association processes for the use and management of public resources. Likewise, it enables localized action plans and the transfer of local capabilities.

However, networking processes present a series of ruptures and tensions that allow the creation of new categories of analysis focused on the reassembly of public police forces but also on the creation of new spaces for youth political participation.

This way, some elements arise that permanently interact in the youth

processes such as collective action, political participation and public policies, these interdependent elements enable the articulation of network work that surpasses the objectivism of concepts towards the role of actors, achieving the rupture of dichotomies to find a new meaning for the contexts.

Networking with other social initiatives allows us to rethink the meaning of the human and the non-human defined in the theory of the actor-network that facilitates the generation of new ways of understanding the world from different worldviews, senses of action and relationships with nature (objects).

THE PARTICIPATORY IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC POLICY FROM THE TERRITORIES

The implementation of public policies requires understanding the meeting of diverse actors in permanent negotiation processes “Public policy can involve competing demands and, however, develop in incremental processes” (Mc Adam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2005: 9). This means eliminating any barrier that restricts participation processes in the construction and implementation of public policies. In this framework, legislative measures and public policies require combined agendas that put into practice the diverse interests of the different actors, while better policies enable more effective implementation through public participation and a more critical citizenry.

This way, the processes of participation and the democratization of knowledge require that social actors have the possibility of getting involved in decision-making according to the encounter of multiple subjectivities that converge around the same territory. That is, the generation of interdependent relationships that enhance the creation of public policy definition networks. They must also allow us to build from the diversity

and difference of the actors, managing to establish negotiation processes and search for consensus based on different worldviews and ways of understanding the world.

As Santos and Luz (2022) mention, it is “imperative to implement policies that ensure access to social infrastructure services in the areas of culture, education, health and leisure” (own translation: 12), conditions that reduce the exposure of young people to risk factors, limiting their opportunities for personal and collective development of each young person,

These elements will enable the construction of local governance processes where the actor – network becomes fundamental from the dynamics of horizontal interdependence between social organizations, the private sector and the State from their different levels.

In this sense, the territory becomes the ideal setting for the generation of different interaction relationships where interdependence becomes evident through objects that mediate between the different actors present in the context, giving new meaning to the actions that result from the implementation of public policies.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION AS A MODEL OF LOCAL CONSTRUCTION

The generation of participation scenarios and the construction of participatory diagnoses, in this case territorial or population-based, allows for higher levels of interaction and decision-making. The participation of young people has been a fundamental element in the transformation of societies, this way collective action and the development of public policies must, following Mac Adam, et al., (2005) “show coalitions subject to growth, decline and incessant renegotiation and explicitly represent the construction, destruction or transformation of political actors” (13).

Participation through local actions can

allow the construction of governability and governance scenarios that transcend local interests towards well-being and the search for the common good. Collective action initiatives defined by young people favor discussion, debate and the implementation of public policies in local contexts. On the contrary, as Moraes, Pinto, and Magalhães, (2020) mention:

The weakening of the role of the State and the intensification of the ideology of individual freedoms to the detriment of the collective increasingly place the youth of the working class in the role of “by-product” of capitalist society (own translation: 7).

The generational perspective has a fundamental role in the local construction of the public that allows us to answer the question: What does it mean to be young today?, taking into account the changes that arise between the urban and the rural, especially having elements of differentiation such as family, school and work, which brings with it elements of diverse socialization that is evident in the need to build public policies.

This in turn establishes mediated relationships of the subjects with study, work and leisure that are often not associated with politics. “Citizens not only find the State as a frame of reference, but also each of the movements and organizations that serve to define the general interests that become such, precisely because of their publication, their publication in institutions, organizations and movements that are capable of channeling them and turning them into objects of political deliberation within the State and outside it” (Blanco, 2011: 114).

The inclusion and participation of young people through participatory budget scenarios will allow them to be part of decision-making, in the design, formulation and implementation of public policies aimed at youth. It will also promote the exercise of

democracy and the political rights enshrined in the National Constitution. New paradigms are being developed focused on consensus, dialogue and the common good.

These processes of youth participation require processes of autonomy and independence of young people towards the generation of critical knowledge. However, “it is worth remembering that in the evaluations of participation experiences several underlying difficulties stand out (Blanc, 1995; Lorcerie, 1995 Atkinson, 1998) which are summarized in the fact that the population does not always appropriate these new spaces” (Lulle, 2004: 503).

As a local construction, participation must be understood as a heterogeneous cultural network that respects the worldviews, perspectives and lifestyles of young people. That is, the appropriation of youth spaces that often do not correspond to the uses proposed by adults, where collective construction can be seen in the long term, redefining symbols, practices and discourses, what Latour (2008) will call a reassembly of what social.

Following García Canclini (1995), it can be stated that youth participation allows:

“Reconceiving citizenship as a political strategy serves to encompass emerging practices not consecrated by the legal order, the role of subjectivities in the renewal of society, and, at the same time, to understand the relative place of these practices within the democratic order. and seek new forms of legitimacy structured in a lasting in another type of State. It means both claiming the rights to access and belong to the political system and the right to participate in the reworking of the system, therefore defining what we want to be included in” (García Canclini, 1995: 21).

In this sense, public management is an important element for the implementation of public policies since it guarantees higher levels of interaction between public and

private actors and the State through a set of actions and decisions. From these elements, public policies are generated for the benefit of young people, in times where institutions are in crisis and representations are in permanent discussion, the way is to strengthen citizen participation, transparency and collaboration in the implementation of public policies from the local.

ELEMENTS OF PUBLIC POLICY IN THE MEXICO CASE

The design of strategies for the adaptation of State policies for the benefit of youth dates back to the 1940s, a time when, in response to the processes of sectorization of society, a youth representative force was formed, leading to the creation of groups such as the Confederation of Mexican Youth in 1938, and the Single Central of Youth in 1939 (Santos, 2002).

Under this context, the Youth Action office dependent on the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) was created in 1942. This entity generated for the first time a space for relations between the Federal Government via youth organization (Santos, 2002).

In the Mexican case, it has responded to clientelist models associated with traditional political parties that have diversified their actions through territorial processes that link young people. Following (Aguilar, 2009) “youth policies in Mexico during the PRI regime were characterized by its corporatism, paternalism and welfare” (55)

According to Landero (2014), the public policy implementation process in the Mexican case must take into account the following elements: regionalization, coordinated government management and leadership, adherence to the legal framework, equitable implementation, the operational axes of the policy aimed at youth and effective management of resources.

From what was proposed by Landero (2014), it can be deduced that the policies of youth were restricted to the dynamics of the hegemonic governing party, determining their emphasis from a limited regulatory and budgetary framework.

ELEMENTS OF PUBLIC POLICY IN THE COLOMBIA CASE

The first and most important intention of clear state attention for youth is the creation of the Colombian Institute of Youth and Sports – COLDEPORTES in 1968 under the administration of Carlos Lleras Restrepo, in what was constituted as one of the efforts most significant modernization of the State undertaken in the 20th century (Santos, 2002).

The implementation model for the Colombian case arises from international policies promoted from the Declaration of the Rights of Boys and Girls in 1989, which urges States to formulate and implement public youth policies taking into account the demographic dividend of this population group during the first decades of the 21st century. Following Sarmiento (sf) it can be stated that “To the traditional youth policies – sectoral and welfare – three new approaches are being added: Strategic Development Actors; Affirmative Policies; Expansion of youth citizenship within the framework of the Social and Democratic State of Law. The greater emphasis on one or the other depends on the political-social regime and the hegemonic development style; the degree of evolution of public policies; the financing capacity of the State; of the social and political strength of the groups that support the youth issue; and the average levels of quality of life of young people.”

Under these premises, it is possible to infer that public youth policies have achieved historical advances since the implementation of different models and approaches, which are mentioned by Sarmiento (sf) from a

purely welfare perspective, through human development or human rights approaches., which for the most part are deployed from state public action, however, some experiences that arise from the initiatives of associations, social organizations and popular sectors are rescued.

CONCLUSIONS

The perspectives for the implementation of public policies proposed by the top down and bottom up approaches demonstrate the need to generate hybrid approaches that guarantee breadth, flexibility and change, called here policy reassembly public.

This article manages to establish a common language in its conceptual lines of action that propose finding new methodologies to strengthen hybrid models or approaches for the implementation of public youth policies.

The proposal of hybrid approaches for the implementation of public policies is less committed to elitist and hierarchical forms of public governance in favor of new mechanisms and strategies of political expression. Where tools are created to define processes to strengthen public policy focused on local actors and networks. In the implementation processes, if they are not integrated as a single actor, a variety of actors involved are necessary.

Strengthening proposals can generate deep internal and structural conflicts between the sectors and different actors involved in the implementation of youth policies that, instead of coordinating, contradict each other.

The analysis of the approaches also allows us to break with traditional visions of implementation that focused mainly on paternalistic and welfare visions of public policies towards more comprehensive rights approaches from a differential perspective.

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