

Original article

Fundamental variables for a participatory public management model in the case of Cuba



Variables fundamentales para un modelo de gestión pública participativo en el caso de Cuba

As variáveis-chave para um modelo de gestão pública participativa no caso de Cuba

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ABSTRACT

Cuban public management is undergoing a process of transformation as a result of the updating of the Cuban economic model, which is based on decentralization and the development of competencies in territorial management. This demands greater citizen participation in the innovative solution of public problems and the generation of local development. It is a challenge for the government and local administrations in their work system, generating the construction of scientific and innovative tools for the performance of their functions. The objective of the article is to identify variables that, when integrated, allow local governments to conceive sustainable solutions to public problems that contribute to local development through citizen participation. The historical-logical, systemic-structural and hypothetical-deductive methods were used, which allowed knowing the interrelations between public management, citizen participation, public problems and local development, as well as the identification of the variables to be integrated in a participatory public management model in

Cuban conditions. The starting point was the process of socialist public management for the solution of public problems, its integration to local development and citizen participation. The use of the cluster made it possible to determine the limitations of several models that will give rise to new research, improving current public management. The dimensions identified to work on the conception of a model of participatory management of public problems are: citizen participation linked to the functions of the public management process (diagnosis, planning, execution and control), the use of the feedback process and the dimensions of sustainable local development.

Keywords: local governments; public management models; public problems.

RESUMEN

La gestión pública cubana atraviesa un proceso de transformaciones a partir de la actualización del modelo económico cubano, que tiene como base la descentralización y el desarrollo de competencias en la gestión de los territorios. Esto demanda mayor participación ciudadana en la solución innovadora de los problemas públicos y la generación de desarrollo local. Supone el reto para el gobierno y las administraciones locales en su sistema de trabajo, generando la construcción de herramientas científicas e innovadoras para el desempeño de sus funciones. El objetivo del artículo es identificar variables que, integradas, permitan a los gobiernos locales la concepción de soluciones sostenibles a problemas públicos que contribuyen desde la participación ciudadana al desarrollo local. Se usaron los métodos histórico lógico, sistémico estructural e hipotético deductivo, lo que permitió conocer las interrelaciones entre gestión pública, participación ciudadana, problemas públicos y desarrollo local, también la identificación de las variables a integrar en un modelo de gestión pública participativo en las condiciones cubanas. Se partió del proceso de gestión pública socialista para la solución de problemas públicos, su integración al desarrollo local y la participación ciudadana. El uso del clúster permitió determinar las limitantes de varios modelos que suscitarán nuevas investigaciones, perfeccionando la gestión pública actual. Las dimensiones identificadas para trabajar en la concepción de un modelo de gestión participativa de los problemas públicos son: la participación ciudadana vinculada a las funciones del proceso de gestión pública (diagnóstico, planificación, ejecución y control), el uso del proceso de retroalimentación y las dimensiones del desarrollo local sostenible.

Palabras clave: gobiernos locales; modelos de gestión pública; problemas públicos.

RESUMO

A gestão pública cubana está a ser submetida a um processo de transformação como resultado da atualização do modelo económico cubano, que se fundamenta na descentralização e no aprofundamento das competências em matéria de gestão territorial. Isto requer uma maior participação dos cidadãos na solução inovativa dos problemas públicos e na geração do desenvolvimento local. É um desafio para o governo e as administrações municipais no seu sistema de trabalho, gerando a construção de ferramentas científicas e inovadoras para o desempenho das suas funções. O objetivo do artigo é identificar variáveis que, quando integradas, permitem aos governos locais conceberem soluções sustentáveis para os problemas públicos que contribuem para o desenvolvimento local através da participação dos cidadãos. Os métodos histórico-lógicos, sistémico-estruturais e hipotético-dedutivos foram utilizados para identificar as inter-relações entre gestão pública, participação cidadã, problemas públicos e desenvolvimento local, bem como para identificar as variáveis a serem integradas num modelo de gestão pública participativa em condições. O ponto de partida foi o processo de gestão pública socialista para a solução dos problemas públicos, a sua integração no desenvolvimento local e a participação dos cidadãos. A utilização do aglomerado permitiu determinar as limitações de vários modelos que irão dar origem a novas investigações, melhorando a atual gestão pública. As dimensões identificadas para trabalhar na concepção de um modelo de gestão participativa dos problemas públicos são: a participação cidadã associada às funções do processo de gestão pública (diagnóstico, planeamento, execução e controlo), a utilidade do processo de retroação e as dimensões do desenvolvimento local sustentável.

Palavras-chave: governos locais; modelos de gestão pública; problemas públicos.

INTRODUCTION

It is in the states where, since ancient times, socioeconomic activities aimed at responding to social needs have been developed. From the State, structures were established to organize, control, maintain citizen tranquility and other functions, which were carried out empirically.

With the aim of studying the State and achieving its growth, Public Administration emerged as a science, heir to other sciences that pursued the same goal. Public administration is composed of the processes of public management and public policies, whereby the former plan, organize, execute and

control the actions of local governments, as representatives of the State in their territories to respond efficiently, effectively and efficiently to public problems.

Public management is the process of State action that, together with public policies, coordinates actions and resources efficiently and effectively, generating sustainable solutions to citizens' problems.

This process is composed of several phases, which vary according to the opinion of different authors, although there are some coincidences among them. The following phases of public management were considered for this study: diagnosis, planning, organization, execution and control.

Changes in the environment make local governments face challenges that lead them to move from traditional, rigid models to others in which governments act as mediators and catalysts of relations between the different social actors (Prieto Martín, 2010). This author also considers that getting closer to citizens, working with them, stimulates continuous improvement in societies.

This generates a growing protagonism of citizens in the public management process for the solution of public problems. Citizen participation will not only reinforce the legitimacy of governments, but will also create a sense of belonging and commitment to public welfare, since citizens, by getting involved in the solution of their own problems, will be looking after their own interests for the benefit of the collective.

Citizen participation is understood as the set of actions in which the individual is voluntarily involved in public management processes, exercising his or her right and duty in the construction of the community's welfare.

Citizen participation contributes to a more efficient, efficacious and effective solution of public problems. In turn, local development favors the sustainability of solutions over time. This is presented as an alternative for governments in the territories to promote their own growth to respond to the problems of the citizens, as well as contributing to eliminate the disproportions of development that these have and that are reflected in the quality of life of the citizen. It is important for its implementation to bring about a change in the mentality and actions of local actors, to stop acting reactively and start thinking proactively.

For the authors of this article, local development is a process of transformations at the territorial level, with the participation of all local actors, with the formation of capacities and making use of endogenous resources, as well as taking advantage of exogenous resources to stimulate economic development that leads to raising the quality of life of citizens.

It is important to consider that local development must be sustainable, so it should not only include the economic dimension, but also the social, environmental and institutional dimensions.

Based on this study, the authors consider that there should be an interrelation between public management, citizen participation and local development in order for governments to be more efficient, effective and efficacious in their response to public problems, demanding a management model that integrates these three variables.

However, the bureaucratic model has long characterized public management around the world. Max Webber is known as the forerunner of this approach and it emerged in response to the needs of his time. However, although since then the purpose of governments has remained the same, to meet the needs of the population and improve their quality of life and social welfare, the conditions of the environment in which they operate today, especially at the local level, have changed, making it a challenge for them to manage in a way that responds to these new conditions.

The bureaucratic approach is an essential component for the structure of contemporary organizations; however, the bureaucratism it generates represents a threat to the proper functioning of today's governments. Among other consequences, bureaucratism has led to inefficiency, mechanicism, lack of creativity, routine, inertia and corruption in the response of governments to the needs and interests of citizens, which has led to a lack of public confidence in their management and legitimacy.

Linked to this, the rigidity of its structure, the fact that it does not consider innovation and sees citizen participation as a threat, the bureaucratic model has become obsolete for today's governments, which seek to be more open, participatory and transparent. To this end, citizen participation has become an imperative and bureaucracy hinders this process.

The citizen cannot only be seen by governments as the object of their public management, but as a subject, capable of contributing to the solution of their problems and improving their lives. Hence, citizen participation must be articulated with public management through the active intervention of

the population, even of those who do not often participate, in order to achieve a model that leads to self-government.

In order to respond to the limitations of the bureaucratic model in the current environment, the New Public Management (NPM) emerged as an alternative in the 1980s and governance around the 1990s, both in the last century, and in this 21st century it is a phenomenon that still manifests itself in governance processes.

Since its inception, the NGP has sought to promote a managerial approach in governments. Its purpose is to make the market govern public services, viewing the citizen as a customer. This approach is oriented towards efficiency, effectiveness and process quality. Its main shortcoming lies in the fact that public and business administration, although they have similarities, have essential elements that make them different, such as the purpose they pursue, the legal and regulatory framework, the social impact, the guaranteeing principles, the organizational structure of human resources and the political process that inevitably marks their management (González Díaz et al., 2017; Vera Álava et al., 2017).

On the other hand, governance is a resurgent term, where its main objective is to promote self-government through the articulation of the government with local actors in the public management process. The government plays in this case a role of organizer, mediator, articulator and catalyst of the processes (Subirats, 2019; Unión Iberoamericana de Municipalistas, 2018).

The reality is that in practice all three approaches (bureaucratic, NPM and governance) persist in governments around the world, however, a preference is being observed for those models that are creative, innovative and participatory, that use their endogenous potential and take advantage of the exogenous to promote local development and sustainable solutions to public problems.

Cuba is one of the countries currently seeking to improve its public management, making its public administration more efficient, participatory, transparent and visible, eliminating the bureaucratic obstacles that hinder processes and affect the population, supported by the computerization process.

Cuban public management is undergoing a series of transformations as part of the updating of the Cuban Economic and Social Model of Socialist Development, the fulfillment of the National Economic and Social Development Plan for 2030 and the implementation of the Economic and Social Policy Guidelines of the Party and the Revolution 2021-2026, as well as the proposal made by Díaz-Canel

Bermúdez and Delgado Fernández (2021) for a Government Management Model oriented towards Innovation, which advocates development from the municipalities, with an intelligent, participatory and comprehensive management that provides innovative solutions supported by science and the use of information and communication technologies.

This favorable framework for the improvement of public management in Cuba to make it efficient, effective and effective, faces a long tradition of bureaucracy, treated on several occasions by the country's leadership as a hindrance to development and which has been confronted at different times since the triumph of the Revolution.

The public management models to be developed in the country should consider citizen participation as a process of transformation and promotion of development in the localities, since the localities are the sphere recognized by the people to build their life project and it is in the territory where the governments can provide solutions to the population's problems.

From science, many models have been designed, developed and implemented to improve public management, responding to dissimilar objectives and contexts; therefore, by analyzing several of them, their contributions and limitations for Cuban socialist public management are determined. Therefore, the objective of this article is to identify variables that, when integrated, allow local governments to conceive sustainable solutions to public problems that contribute to local development through citizen participation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The dialectical-materialist scientific research method expressed in the use of theoretical, historical-logical, inductive-deductive and systemic-structural methods.

The historical-logical method made it possible to know the essence of the evolution of public management approaches and how each of them understands citizen participation, as well as its linkage with local development and the involvement of local governments in its success. For this purpose, the analysis/synthesis procedures were used, by means of which a mental division and union of the components of the public management process, the different existing relationships and their main characteristics were created.

In turn, the structural systemic method established the judgment for the identification of the fundamental variables for the development of a participatory public management model for Cuban conditions, creating the links between public management, citizen participation and local development.

Finally, the hypothetical deductive method demonstrated the use of the cluster, identifying the fundamental conceptual elements to define public administration for local development in contemporary socialist Cuba. The procedure for this was that of induction/deduction, which allowed establishing a general conclusion on the use of the cluster and, in particular, its usefulness in public administration.

Cluster analysis is a multivariate technique that aims to group objects by their characteristics, i.e., it is a classification technique. This analysis has no statistical basis, so it is mainly used for exploratory studies, which makes it extremely useful for forming clusters according to the similarity characteristics of the analyzed objects.

This technique was used in this study for the analysis of management models and was developed through six steps. In the next section, the result of the application of this tool and the analysis carried out as a result of the application of all the methods used will be found.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What is fundamental for participatory public management is to start from a correct diagnosis (identification, definition and classification) of public problems, which has a high subjective component. For Pérez Enciso (2017) and Castillo Salina and Martínez Tena (2022), the problems that come to be included in government agendas are not the priority ones, or those that have the greatest impact on the population, but rather respond to the interests of the powers that be or depend on the play of the actors. That is why authors such as Mballa and González López (2017) and Pedroza Estrada (2018) saw the need for citizen participation in the identification, classification, evaluation and solution of the problem.

Public management has been characterized by bureaucratic models, where citizen participation does not play an important role, as it is seen as a threat to the *status quo* of bureaucrats and their lifestyle. These have been a reflection of their time, a period where most of the citizenry had no knowledge

and no way to access it, where they were dominated by monarchies, states and the church, where their voice was muted with various forms of oppression and their vote was no more than a number.

However, the introduction of other models that respond to NPM and governance approaches has led governments and citizens to understand the importance of participation in achieving local development. These approaches respond to the evolution of science, the development of knowledge and social transformations. Today's human beings have been changing their way of thinking and acting, they are different. Their desires and expectations have been changing and they increasingly demand attention to their problems from the public administration, to be heard and represented.

The NGP, although it gives prominence to the citizen, sees him as a client, whom he consults and with whom he dialogues, but does not involve him in the management process. However, governance is an open approach that seeks to govern with the citizenry and a strong articulation between the government and local actors.

At present, these three approaches coexist in the management of public administrations, hence the importance of the analysis of various models with respect to the public management process, citizen participation, public problems and local development, seeking variables that allow the integration of all these elements in the design of a public management model in a socialist country.

The context in which management models are developed permeates their design, as well as the objective pursued by them. They are in turn influenced by the political system and the dynamics of the environment in which they are developed.

Management models in local governments, both internationally and nationally, are various (Boffill Vega, 2010; Carreño Mendoza et al., 2012; Da Fonseca, 2015; Díaz-Canel Bermúdez & Delgado Fernández, 2021; Torres Paez et al., 2018; Unión Iberoamericana de Municipalistas, 2018); each of these models responds to an objective and context in which they were developed, they depend on the moment and specific characteristics of the place and system where they are framed.

These models contribute to laying the foundations for improving public management, both nationally and internationally, by providing valuable elements. However, they have limitations inherent to the context in which they were designed.

For a more in-depth study, thirteen models of various authors, characteristics and countries were analyzed and are listed below:

- I. Local Development Management Model (MDDL in Spanish)) with a strategic approach, experience in Pinar del Río (Lazo Vento et al., 2007).
- II. Information model (Ganuzá Fernández & Moyano Estrada, 2008)
- III. Consultative Model (Ganuzá Fernández & Moyano Estrada, 2008)
- IV. Active participation model (Ganuzá Fernández & Moyano Estrada, 2008).
- V. General model to contribute to Local Development, based on knowledge and innovation. Yaguajay Case (Boffill Vega, 2010)
- VI. Community Model for Integral Development in Bolivia (Quispe Condori & Delgado Fernández, 2010).
- VII. Integral model of strategic public management with quality in Colombia (González Bermúdez & Delgado Fernández, 2010).
- VIII. Model and support procedures for public management of quality of life. Zone 4: Manabí-Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas, Ecuador (Carreño Mendoza et al., 2012).
- IX. Model and Procedure for the Management Control of Social Investment Projects (Da Fonseca, 2015).
- X. Model for the management of territorial policies for local development at the municipal level (Torres Paez et al., 2018).
- XI. Innovative Governance Model for Local Development Management (González Díaz et al., 2017).
- XII. Citizen participation model (Valencia City Council, 2017).
- XIII. Conceptual Model of Territorial Management for Development (Fonseca Vásconez, 2018).
- XIV. UIM Model of Good Governance and Democratic Quality (Unión Iberoamericana de Municipalistas, 2018).

As mentioned above, the clustering technique was used, which made it possible to profile the different models, creating groups with homogeneous traits based on similar traits. Once the groups were obtained, the main characteristics of each one were defined and the limitations were determined. This would lead to the possibility of new research that would contribute to improve public management with high citizen participation that promotes the development of localities, responding to the problems of the population.

The cluster was developed in six steps, which are explained below.

1. Cluster objective

The objective was defined as: To determine the theoretical-methodological gaps of the public management models analyzed with respect to citizen participation, local development and the management process.

In addition, based on the analysis of the literature on the dimensions of Public Management, Citizen Participation and Local Development, a group of variables were defined and presented for expert judgment. Seven variables were defined as a result of this step:

- Use of citizen participation (V1)
- Type of citizen participation (V2)
- Local development (V3)
- Diagnostic Analysis (V4)
- Planning Level (V5)
- Execution Function (V6)
- Control function (V7)

2. Cluster analysis research design

Once the objective and variables have been defined, the researchers analyze the atypical data, which are not perceived in this case, as well as the definition of the measurement of similarity, using the measure of association. Finally, the standardization of the data is carried out, deciding to do it by models (observations/cases). The results of the association matrix are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Agreement matrix between the models analyzed

Cases	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII
I	-	0	1	0	4	0	1	1	4	1	3	3	0
II	0	-	6	6	0	1	1	2	2	2	0	2	4
III	1	6	-	6	1	1	1	2	3	3	0	2	4
IV	0	6	6	-	0	2	1	3	2	2	1	2	5
V	4	0	1	0	-	1	1	3	2	3	4	2	0
VI	0	1	1	2	1	-	1	2	1	2	2	0	1
VII	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	3	2	1	2	1	1
VIII	1	2	2	3	3	2	3	-	2	1	3	3	2
IX	4	2	3	2	2	1	2	2	-	2	1	2	1
X	1	2	3	2	3	2	1	1	2	-	1	0	1
XI	3	0	0	1	4	2	2	3	1	1	-	2	1
XII	3	2	2	2	2	0	1	3	2	0	2	-	1
XIII	0	4	4	5	0	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	-

Source: Own elaboration

3. Cluster analysis assumptions

Considering the small number of models analyzed, the sample may not be representative; however, given that these are public management models specifically aimed at the dimensions studied: management functions, citizen participation and local development, they can be considered representative for this study. The Mahalanobis distance is used to compensate for multicollinearity if present.

4. Obtaining groups and assessing the joint fit

Using the Minitab® 15.1.30.0 statistical package, the data obtained were processed, which allowed the selection of three groups of models described below. The hierarchical category algorithm was used, which led to the construction of the dendrogram. This is shown in figure 1.

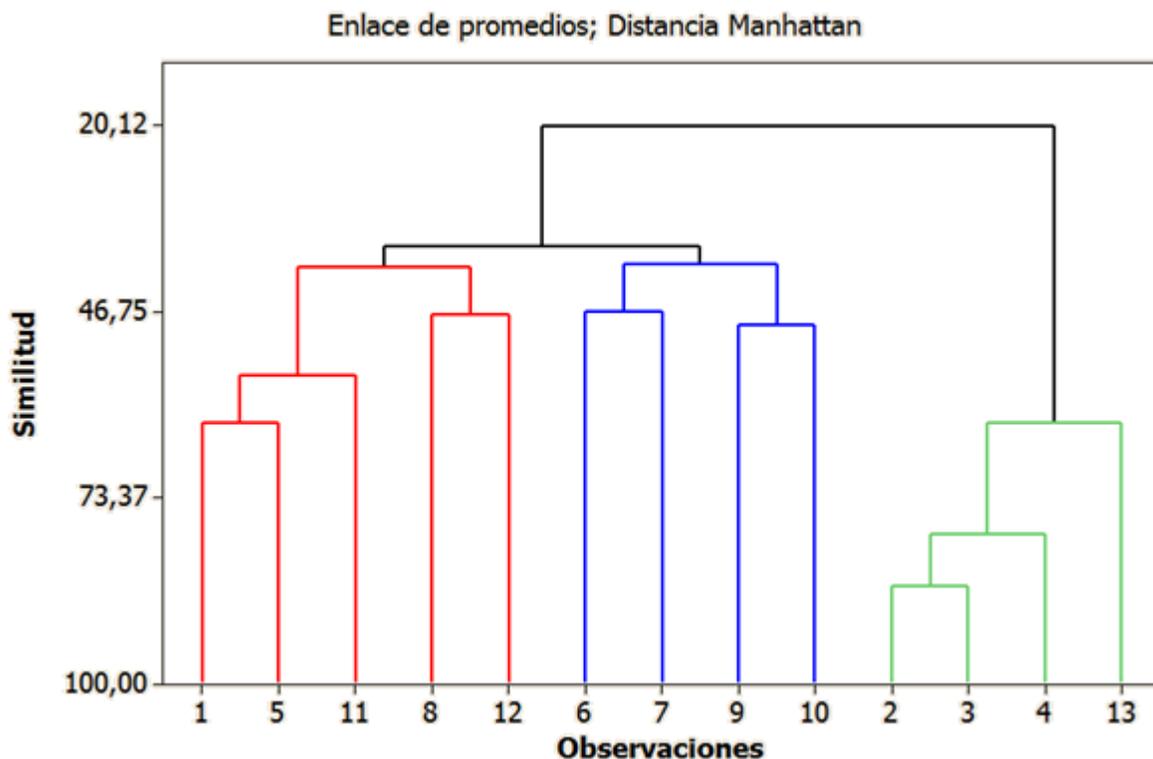


Figure 1. Dendrogram of the models analyzed in the cluster

Source: Own elaboration based on Minitab® 15.1.30.0

The number of clusters to be worked on in the selection was three, since they correspond to the dimensions of interest in this study (management process, local development and citizen participation). From this step, three groups were formed and divided as follows:

- Group 1: I, V, VIII, XI, XII
- Group 2: VI, VII, IX, X
- Group 3: II, III, IV, IV, XIII

5. Cluster interpretation

Once the groups have been obtained, the models that compose them are analyzed in order to find out where their coincidences and propitious values lie, labeling each of the groups as follows:

- Group 1: Local development (the models shown here are grouped according to their local development orientation).
- Group 2: Management process (in this case there are models that are more oriented towards the development of the management process with the diagnostic analysis, as well as the functions of planning, execution and feedback).
- Group 3: Citizen participation (this group includes models that are more oriented towards citizen participation).

6. Groups validation and profiling

With these groups, it is proceeded to interpret the obtained results. Group I receives its name Local development from the predominant characteristic, which is the orientation of the management process and the use of citizen participation towards this element, where the most outstanding variables were V2, V3, V5, V6 and V7. The diagnosis they mainly use is previous and the planning is at a strategic level; they also propose the feedback process.

Group II, Management process, showed the development of management functions. It was observed that most of them develop diagnoses and carry out planning, although at different levels. The execution of planning through public policies, programs and projects is also proposed, as well as the predominance of control through the feedback process. The use of citizen participation was noted, but in a very basic way and without specifying its use. None of them is oriented to local development. The predominant variables in this group are V2, V3, V5, V6 and V7.

Finally, in Group III, the predominant variables were V1, V3, V4, V5, V6, V7 and was identified as Citizen participation, since the use of citizen participation in public management is observed, even if only at elementary levels. The public management process is weak, with little diagnosis, planning, execution and control.

Each of the groups was taken and the variables were analyzed globally, which made it easier to understand each of them, their objectives, their contributions and limitations. By way of summary, it was determined that:

- In the models oriented to local development, it was observed that it is often considered as a participatory system, where the relationship between local actors is important and alludes to the leadership of public administration leaders to achieve such development. Some of them

propose the creation and training of these actors for local development, generating innovative solutions. Two propose the creation and use of multidisciplinary groups to lead the local development process.

- Some take into account public policies in the territories to generate development and respond to public problems.
- Among those corresponding to the management group, it can be observed that, although there are few, participatory diagnosis and feedback are proposed.
- The models make use of tools that contribute scientifically to the results and help to facilitate their application. Some of these tools are the management tree and objective tree, Fuller's triangle, relationship matrices and the Balanced Scorecard.
- In a model of the citizen participation group, quality of life is conceptualized as a mixture of the individual's living conditions and satisfaction.
- The use of Pearson's coefficient for the variables public management, citizen participation and local development made it possible to verify the positive correlation between them (values above 0.6: GP/PP - 0.748; GP/DL - 0.779; PP/DL - 0.695). However, the analysis of the groups formed by the cluster revealed a lack of integration in their treatment in the models studied. Each group addresses them independently and not integrated in terms of the generation of local development to solve public problems.
- It was observed that most of the models do not define the use of citizen participation for the solution of public problems, although they allude to the management of these problems and the needs of the citizenry.
- Few models consider citizen participation, and in those that do, its use is not clear. The main weakness lies in the fact that they do not have participation mechanisms that promote deliberation, co-management and oversight in the solution of public problems.
- Few of them are oriented to local development as a way to solve public problems.
- Most of the models, although focused on the management process (diagnosis, planning, organization, execution and control), do not cover it completely, and the functions least addressed are diagnosis and execution.

As can be seen, public management models are diverse and varied, with clearly defined objectives and goals that respond to a given context and situation, making contributions to both the theory and practice of public management. However, the lack of integration between public management, citizen participation and local development in the response to public problems was observed in most cases.

Particularly, citizen participation is scarce and, in the cases, where it is used, it is done at the elementary levels, consultation and dialogue.

These elements lead to the opening of new areas of research, focused on the integration of these three variables (public management, citizen participation and local development) to provide sustainable solutions to public problems, with public management models that replace the bureaucratic approach and are transparent, comprehensive and participatory.

In the case of Cuba, it is proposed the design of a participatory public management model in response to public problems that integrates the management process in its generality (diagnosis, planning, organization, implementation and control, especially participatory diagnosis and execution), the levels of citizen participation (information, consultation, dialogue, deliberation, co-management and surveillance, with emphasis on those that lead to self-management and strengthen citizen intervention) and the dimensions of sustainable local development (economic, social, environmental and institutional). The integration of these three elements seeks to help local governments provide innovative and lasting solutions to public problems with a high level of citizen participation.

It is important in the design of the model to start from the legal framework established in the country, this will allow the expansion to all municipal governments and will perpetuate the principles of a socialist system.

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Conflict of interest

Authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Authors' contribution

All the authors reviewed the writing of the manuscript and approve the version finally submitted.



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