

PERCEPTIONS ON THE CREDIBILITY IN DEMOCRACY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION OF A FOCAL GROUP OF FIFTEEN STUDENTS OF THE FACULTY OF LAW OF THE UCEVA, TULUÁ, VALLE

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Abstract: - This article is the product of the investigative process of the thematic perceptions on the credibility of democracy and citizen participation of a focus group of fifteen students of the Law Program at This article is the product of the investigative process of the thematic perceptions on the credibility of democracy and citizen participation of a focus group of fifteen-year-old students of the Law Program of the Unidad Central Del Valle del Cauca (UCEVA) Tuluá Valle Del Cauca, Colombia. The general objective of the study was to identify perceptions of credibility in democracy and citizen participation, within the UCEVA. On the other hand, the type of research was qualitative ethnographic. Likewise, the research focused on the development of the subjects of study in relation to the democratic processes within the university.

Because they consider that they are permanent processes that the professors from their chairs have contributed to a formation in these processes, but that it is a duty to insist that it has a much more ethical tint, in addition they emphasize that their participation is very active, that is to say, that the participation of the academic community in electoral processes is high and allows an ideological freedom. However, a minority of those investigated do not believe in the democratic processes within the Institution, believing that they do not have a specific purpose that they do not serve or claim that the candidates do not socialize their proposals or work plans. In general, the issue of democracy is articulated with education, since from this discipline they are oriented and political subjects are formed so that with their leadership they participate and represent the system of government and transform the dynamics of social institutions.

Key-Words: Democracy, credibility, citizen participation, education, complexity, subjects, politics.

1. Introduction

The research study was developed during the academic year 2015 at the Higher Education Institution Unidad Central Del Valle Del Cauca UCEVA in the municipality of Tuluá, department of Valle del Cauca in Colombia. For their part, the study subjects were fifteen students from different semesters of the Faculty of Legal and Humanistic Sciences of the UCEVA Law Program. On the other hand, according to the Ministry of National Education (2010) and Law 115 of 1994 enshrine that "The Colombian educational system is made up of: initial education, pre-school education, basic education (primary five grades and high school four grades), middle education (two degrees and culminates with the bachelor's degree.), and higher education. "Higher education is what people who want to perform some trade or profession, with the guidelines of a science of knowledge.

It is important to highlight that the objectives that originated the research was to investigate and interpret what are the opinions and perspectives that the students of the Law Program attached to the UCEVA's Faculty of Legal and Humanistic Sciences have about democracy, credibility and citizen participation in the elections that take place inside the university, in a historical moment where the electoral contests at the national level is in full activity.

The gnoseological interest of the research was to link democracy with education, since these two disciplines are essential in the integral formation of the subject, especially because democracy has been a practice of very old citizen participation, the first to cultivate it were the Greeks. Both Plato and Aristotle considered it a

form of government full of rights and freedoms. For Bobbio (1996, page 28). Democracy:

It was born from an individual society of society, that is, from a conception for which, contrary to the dominant organic conception of antiquity and the average age, according to which the whole is first that the parties, the society, all forms of Society, especially political society, is an artificial product of the will of individuals (1996: 28).

From the Greek civilization to the present day many peoples of the planet have organized their societies from a democratic system with the aim of fostering the participation and representation of citizens within political power for Touraine (1994, page 47) "Democracy is the recognition of the rights of individuals and collectivities because, from these, history is built." Now, democracy must be cultivated in the heart of education because to the extent that citizens are democratically educated, they will have a critical vision of society and the institutions that make it up.

2. Epistemic basis of democracy and citizen participation

The university context is democratic for excellence , that is to say, that the university is a pluralist scenario, since there is a governability in each of its estates and for this, an educational government system is formed that governs the academic-administrative destinies of the institution, in this sense a public university is by extension an extension of the Nation-State.

Therefore, the university community is itself a complex system because it implies a form of participation both representative and active and it must be regulated by

state standards, hence the university community must assume the democratic exercise and not only as an institution that agency the academic For Wasserman (2015, p. 12) "the university is an institution based on merit. It is paradoxical the claim that precisely to choose their leaders that criterion is abandoned"

Education is in itself a democratic practice, since to the extent that the subjects are critically educated they will be able to put into tension the democratic and political exercise. Now, democracy is learned, therefore "it can be formed on it in different public or private scenarios. Democracy is an idea that unifies the culture of experiences and experiences of different ways of thinking, being and acting in social realities ". (Tobón: 2004, page 188).

To understand subjectively the relationship between education and democracy, it would be worthwhile asking the following problematizing questions, which are structured as nodal axes.

For its part, education is a system that is composed of levels, cycles and modalities, the latter are: formal education, this modality has a legal recognition and is structured in school cycles and subject to curricular criteria in order to establish degrees and grant titles. Informal education, is characterized by Another essential aspect of the education of the present and the future is to form ethical citizens, but not with moral lessons or literal recipes, but through the conscious recognition that each subject is in itself an individual and that human condition entails being part of a whole called society and logically to a species that has biological and psychological characteristics such as language and

Origins of education and its democratic conception.

Education and its democratic influence on the formation of political subjects.

Relations between subjectivity-democracy and education.

Education and democratic participation of the community.

Education and school governance as democratic practices.

Education and problematization of democracy as a political exercise.

Promotion of democratic participation in the school.

Possibility in the construction of new forms of democratic Participation in the school.

promoting a free and spontaneous knowledge of people who can obtain it through entities, mass media or own experience. Non-formal education, this modality offers complementary studies that allow the updating of information and knowledge to people and not it is subject to levels or degrees.

thought, therefore, this individual is in the duty to assume critical consciousness about the care of the planet and the other species that force it to live in an earthly harmony, since its dwelling is the earth. Morín (2011), introduces the ethics of the human race from the triad: individual-society-species, constituting a recursive loop where the three categories are imbricated within a whole. The mutual

interactions between the parts make up the human tissue.

It should be noted that the school is not the only socializing space for good citizenship practices, it must also be the home and the same neighborhood, however, from the school has to enact citizenship training that enables comprehensive education of the subjects. Now, to educate in citizenship is to make young people aware of their rights so that they are protagonists of democratic participation in proactive decisions. The quality of citizenship has goodness among them: respect for difference, recognition of other cultural groups, obedience of standards and duty to the homeland. Today it is necessary to propose an education for democracy from an open, critical and humanistic conception as proposed by Nausbaun (2015) in his book "Non-profit".

For Nausbaun (2015) democracy requires a Socratic dialogue, which is necessary for the political formation of the subjects, but this dialogue is only possible through an educational process where the slogan is democratic formation. On the other hand, the author proposes the defense of the humanities, since through the arts it is possible to promote an education to the individuals so that they are capable of living in democracy. The anti-discourse of Nausbaun (2015) lies in harshly criticizing education oriented to economic growth, given that said power is dehumanizing. In this sense, Nausbaun points out (2015, page 13) that, "education does not consist in the passive assimilation of data and cultural content, but in the posing of challenges for the intellect to become active and competent, endowed with critical thinking for a complex world." Consequently, an active learning focused on the Socratic

Method is required with the purpose that students awaken a critical attitude.

Nausbaun (2015) expresses a critical questioning of politics in his book "Non-profit", which calls attention to the silent crisis that overwhelms many countries today, especially in education where the constant pedagogical discourse is oriented to the pursuit of economic power, that is, an education for rent, misguided vision of capitalism that seeks by all means economic growth, belittling other intellectual knowledge such as the humanities, therefore, the leading role of the school today is cultivate the imagination to expand freedoms in the world and not economic markets.

Therefore, democracy is not reduced only to political participation, or even to comply with the moral precepts, that is, that democracy is a more encompassing and pluralistic category, since a democratic subject builds with other processes of justice to harmonize the world, hence there is no ideal model of democracy. In this regard, Lozano (2012) points out that:

"Democracy is like love: there is no modality of love that we can imitate and copy, each couple has to build their own model. No one knows which is the perfect match, no one can tell which is the perfect marriage; There are as many couple models as there are couples. It is up to each society to begin to build the democratic order based on its history, its knowledge, its tradition, its memory; from what it is, what it has and the projections it can make. "

Otherwise, participatory democracy does not only have a political scope; but also social, given that by favoring relations of concomitance, and "by allowing the recreation of a social bond, can reconstitute weakened organic solidarities today, redo a social fabric broken by the advent of individualism and the departure

of a system based merely in competition and interest "(Benoist, 2014, page 1).

On other occasions, representative democracy is characterized by an incipient activism and dynamism of citizens, who are subject to elect the popular candidate on Election Day, even on some occasions choose without identifying the government plan of who later goes do your oppressor. There is a need for greater awareness and responsibility in the face of democratic decisions on the part of many citizens, which is why it is necessary to educate for democracy, a mission that must be assumed by the school.

For its part, representative democracy is the modality in which the rulers govern, the people who are the product of being elected by secret suffrage, so that they can integrate the various organs of civil authority. Now, representative democracy is *"of a liberal and bourgeois nature, in which elected representatives are authorized to transform the popular will into acts of government, at the present time it constitutes the political regime most commonly extended in Western countries"* (Benoist, 2014, page 2).

It is worth noting that some philosophers introduced new forms to the representative democratic system, in this sense, in the XVIII, Locke founded his political theory thought of the right of the citizen to choose and control their rulers. Later, Montesquieu, introduced the theory of the division of powers as a guarantee to avoid the abuse of authority. For his part, Rousseau, established the democratic component of the general will as a legitimate source of power. On the other hand, the advantages of participatory democracy are the following: the decisions that are adopted seek to satisfy specific needs and have a collective benefit. The rulers represent the common citizens, through the execution

of government plans. Representative democracy draws public policies on vital rights.

On the other hand, the disadvantages of representative democracy are those described below: Some leaders are not ethical and end up diverting State resources. Corruption occurs at high levels, some candidates assume oppressive positions against the people who elected them and in some cases the leaders do not comply with the government plan and the most worrisome is that the citizens do not popularly raise the revocation of the mandate.

Now, "a politics of man must necessarily have the planet as a stage; it is necessarily a policy of the development of the human species in planetary unity ", (Morín: 2002, page 72) in terms of justice, equity and dignity, this last category being understood as the right to the vital minimums that must be guaranteed to every citizen in a full way.

Nations democratically cannot remain submerged in a unitary policy, full of tricks and legitimately vitiated by all evils, it is necessary to emerge a multidimensional policy that includes biodiversity, plurality, intersubjectivity and everything that is complex. It is up to education to promote a globalized policy where all citizens are visible and recognized as political subjects. The school is the perfect setting to socialize political and democratic practices.

Citizen participation emerges from participatory democracy, in which citizens participate actively in decision-making, through participation either individually or collectively in politics. Citizen participation encourages spaces for reflection in politics, since citizens can express their needs, listen to proposals, points of view, and in this sense the participation of citizens is a real

way to get involved both politically and democratically in governmental matters. Democracy has always been associated with citizen participation. However, the issue gained importance when, despite having a democratic system, the societies of some countries were not satisfied with the negative consequences that democracy could present, which caused a crisis of satisfaction and disillusionment of this system. Government. (Escobar, 2002 p.136).

For Annan, "true democratization is something more than elections", meaning that the system of elections and participation by vote does not guarantee democracy, but democracy itself requires a more participatory process. According to the UN, (1999) through its Commission on Human Rights, published the catalog of democratic rights, among them are:

The right to freedom of opinion and expression, of thought, conscience and religion, of association and of peaceful assembly. The right to freedom to investigate and receive and disseminate information and ideas by any means of expression. The law empire, including the legal protection of the rights, interests and personal security of citizens and fairness in the administration of justice, as well as the independence of the Judiciary. The right to universal and equal suffrage, as well as to free voting procedures and free periodic elections. The right to political participation, including equal opportunities for all citizens to stand as candidates. Transparent and responsible government institutions. The right of citizens to choose their system of government by constitutional means or other democratic means. The right of access, under conditions of equality, to the public function in one's own country. Each of the above rights consolidate the participation of citizens in the forms of

exercising democracy, since "the greater the level of citizen participation in the political and social processes of a country, the more democratic a system". (Orozco: 2014, page 1). This requires citizens to assume a critical aptitude and become overseers of resources and public management.

3. METHODOLOGY

The present study was developed from qualitative research with an ethnographic design, since this type of research focuses on the study of social phenomena, including educational ones in particular. Each phenomenon under study is framed in a socio-cultural context, constituting complex phenomena that require a non-deterministic view, but rather intersubjective readings that allow multiple views of reality.

The study subjects were fifteen students from several semesters of the UCEVA Tulua, Valle. With students which schedule time is in the evening and belong to the Law Program. The selection of the students was done in a random way, in addition to that, students of both genders were chosen at an average age of 28 years. The socioeconomic level of the subjects studied is of the middle stratum. Another characteristic of the population is that the vast majority of students work in different jobs. It should be noted that the instruments used for the collection of information were the following: focus group and the ethnographic interview.

It should be noted that the questions used in the ethnographic interview were the following:

- Tell us how democratic processes are carried out within the University?

- Do you participate in the election and establishment of the University's Board of Directors?
- Do you think that the electoral processes in the UCEVA are transparent?
- Do you think it is important to educate for democracy?
- Tell us within the Law Program is students being educated to assume democratic exercise in an ethical manner? Advancing this reasoning, the previous questions are semi-structured which allow the interviewee to give an open opinion on the subject, for example, the democratic processes within the UCEVA, and they give clarity about what is really perceived, including contributing to their possible solution or continuity.

It was considered that the five questions were sufficient to understand the intentionality of the general objective, and the idea was not to oversaturate the interviewees with several questions, but to extract from them the most relevant information that will fit the gnoseological interest of the study.

Otherwise, the selection of the fifteen students was carried out randomly because the purpose was to form a focus group and not to interview the universe of students of the Law Program.

Taking into account the testimonies of the living sources, it was possible to interpret the way the subjects of study perceive democracy. Likewise, the documentary sources allowed us to understand the panorama of democracy as a way of governing the people. In this sense, the primary (living) sources maintain that the democratic processes within the university are transparent because freedom of conscience is guaranteed and spaces are granted for the exercise of democracy. In addition, each member of the educational community can choose and be elected, that is, that promotes the

two essential forms of democracy, in this case the participatory and representative.

It was found that the Unidad Central Del Valle Del Cauca from its Institutional Educational Project - PEI articulates democracy, given that in all careers offered, especially the Law is guided by the Constitution Chair with the purpose that students recognize their freedoms, rights and duties enshrined in the constitution and the rules. Turning to the documentary sources it can be said that the findings and contributions of some authors on the subject are relevant to understand the political and ethical dimension of democracy, as explained throughout this article.

Turning to the findings, the following strengths were found: in the UCEVA there are participation mechanisms by the students when conducting meetings and electoral activities. The electoral processes are transparent and have oversight and the respective legal guarantees, according to the student's academic regulations of the Institution. The vast majority of students believe in democratic processes and this is reflected in citizen participation. There are clear guidelines from the curriculum and curricula on the importance of the chairs of Constitution and Democracy. The institution guarantees the participation and representation mechanisms in the conformation of the democratic system in the university.

Among the aspects to be improved, the following can be mentioned: a minority of students do not participate in the democratic exercise because they consider that it is not necessary and others because they do not believe in political processes. There is a lack of greater disclosure of the proposals of the candidates for representation positions in the two academic time slots (day and night). It is necessary to assume a critical

conscience on the part of the students who do not participate in the democratic exercise, for it, it requires more pedagogical orientations in the chairs of Constitution and Democracy. Consequently, it is necessary to educate citizens in democracy, since people are political subjects because we owe them to constitutional freedoms and rights and also because we are regulated by norms that are thought for peaceful coexistence and harmony among peoples and all the species that inhabit the planet.

4. CONCLUSIONS

As a conclusion, within the process of closing-opening it should be said that the purpose of the study was to investigate the credibility of democracy and citizen participation by the subjects of study. On the one hand, the findings show that there is a credibility with respect to democracy according to the perceptions of the students of the Faculty of Law. It can also be said that according to the perceptions of the population under study, the majority believes in democracy and citizen participation as a means for decision-making, diversity and plurality, since "democracy is therefore a political system complex in that it lives of pluralities, competences and antagonisms, remaining as a community ". (Morín: 2011, page 115).

Educating for democracy is a pedagogical and ethical exercise. In relation to the above, it was determined that the UCEVA, within its curriculum and Institutional Educational Project promotes democratic practices from the processes of participation and representation of its members for the formation of its governance system.

It was noted that within the university, transparency in the democratic exercise is guaranteed, a fact that vitalizes credibility

in political, citizen and democratic issues. Another aspect that is concluded is that the system of government in the UCEVA, has a solidity because the mechanisms of participation exist, in addition every four years the democratic exercise is stimulated from the election or re-election of the dignitaries to the different positions of representation.

The students felt that within the UCEVA, an education for democracy is encouraged and that the Law Program emphasizes constitution, politics and ethics issues, since these courses are the basis to fully educate future candidates to occupy positions of public representation. According to Nussbaum, (2012) "education is the call to train citizens in shaping their democratic system.

In short, we can say that democracy is a dynamic process that is constantly renewed, thanks to the participation and representation of citizens, but for there to be transparent and certainly ethical processes, it is essential that training in said exercise, therefore it is up to the school to educate in that missionary task.

Democracy needs to be revitalized to the extent that citizens actively participate in political processes, in this sense, it is essential that the university has spaces for reflection on issues that address ethical aspects and citizen coexistence.

Therefore, students who are apathetic to democratic processes, it is important to have conversations with them that allow them to change their stance towards political participation, since through citizen participation, democracy and the restructuring of social institutions are consolidated. Educating for democracy is a key task for institutional and social life, which is why citizens must participate with their voice and with their vote in shaping the university government system.

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