

FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO LOCAL GOVERNANCE

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ABSTRACT

The study of local government has undergone several stages that reveal the state of the art of the discipline. It is characterized by the gradual, continuous discovery of where the object of study is located. This article examines some of the stages in the literature. It reviews the questions and arguments that every current of thought brings to the study of local government, and the way discussions evolve. The idea of local government first involves observing local actors fighting over power autarchically, which then gives way to approaches currently known as local governance. They are now experiencing a political-administrative process embedded in a broader, richer institutional context.

INTRODUCTION

The literature on local government is extensive. Any review of the literature and authors would omit important authors and arguments on the subject. This paper seeks to clarify some of the main ideas in order to understand the change in the object of study: from local government to local governance. This implies specifically reducing the discussion to the debates that have explained how the distribution of power and decision-making guide the work and results of local governments.

The central argument of this essay is that studies on local governance have evolved into the gradual discovery and acceptance of the diversity of actors and institutions involved in the work of local governments and local politics. These developments were not initially regarded as matters of local governance, although recent definitions of the term appear to take up what was discussed in the mid-20th century. Local governance, understood as the process of actors and interests whose complex interaction affects the formulation and production of local government and local policy, (Stoker 2009) has become a concept that is widely used to explain what local governments and societies become locally in local policy decisions.

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The literature on local studies has used the term governance extensively. However, though the various disciplines have not agreed on a specific definition, the interpretation of governance has aligned it with various other terms relating to citizen participation or social participation in public affairs. In Mexico and Latin America the effective participation of new stakeholders in public affairs has undoubtedly constituted a way of understanding local governance. In many cases, citizen participation has managed to influence the actions of local governments, and consequently the interests of the latter sectors have been maintained throughout the making and results of public policies. Manuel Canto Chac writes that “[...] *the demand for citizen participation (CP) has made governance a focal point of the 21th century so far...*” (Canto, 2010;21).

In the local sphere, however, the literature has shown a more complex construction of the concept. This essay seeks to provide an alternative perspective to the term “local governance.” To this end, it uses arguments and ideas drawn from various trends surrounding the issue of local government. It stresses the idea that local governance is a far more complex phenomenon in which social, public, private, local and non-local stakeholders seek to preserve or promote their interests through formal and informal institutions. These interests have an impact on government activity and are sometimes visible in the results of the local government decisions. Local governments are therefore important but not necessarily neutral actors, which participate, together with other stakeholders, in producing actions and pursuing ends in public affairs that also incorporate private interests. Restricting governance to civic participation is an idealized vision that limits the explanatory potential the term has constructed over the past 50 years in local government studies.¹

This paper consists of five sections. The first provides the historical background to local government. It explores how the encounter between two theoretical currents (pluralism and elitism) produced one of the most significant debates in the study of local government. That discussion laid the foundation, while the second section explained how other stakeholders be-

¹ For an explanation of governance in the context of studies of public management and administration, see Chapter 1.4 in Luis F. Aguilar (2006) *Gobernanza y Gestión Pública*. Fondo de Cultura Económica. Mexico.

came involved. In local affairs, adding other actors, in the context of the Neo-Marxist ideas of the mid-1980s, helped shape the urban regime program that is still in force. The third section readdresses the theory of regimes, to explain how they modified the study of local issues to achieve a more systemic approach, where the focus shifts from local aspects to the environment. Lastly, the paper explains how this experience precedes and informs the term of local governance. The essay therefore seeks to reformulate the concept of local governance, and understand it from the historical perspective of studies on local governments.

In the past decade, there have been calls for an agenda that creates new theories for local studies that are more versatile in time and space (Snyder, 2001; Sellers, 2005; Pierre, 2005; Stoker, 2011). This paper is part of these calls, and reframes the study of the local, evolving from local government to the study of local governance, as a result of the theoretical and historical analysis of local affairs.

1. THE DEBATE ON COMMUNITY POWER

The debate that overshadowed studies of local governments in the 1960s was called the *community power debate*. This debate, heavily influenced by political science, focused on the way the power of local governments was distributed. The prevailing theoretical framework was democratizing principles, and consequently the research sought to determine how democratic local government politics were. Whereas the pluralists argued that power led to plurality, through social and institutional processes, the elitists maintained that power was actually concentrated in the decisions of a select few (Harding, 1995).

The foundational study in this debate was Robert Dahl's 1961 *Who Governs?*, a longitudinal study of political evolution in New Haven, United States, which concluded that socio-economic changes modified the distribution of power in localities. Dahl's methodology, historical analysis, enabled him to observe how new and different industrial groups, coupled with reforms of the democratic institutions of the time, modified the old ways of doing politics. That is, it evolved from a policy dictated by a small group of nobles to the emergence of other power groups that positioned themselves to influence activity in the city. This new political class consisted of professional politicians and the main players in the then incipient political parties.

Dahl's conclusions had significant normative connotations regarding society's role in government. Clarence Stone (2005) suggests that Dahl's work applied the normative tenets of his predecessor, the pluralist David Truman, who in his 1951 work *Governmental Process* argued that giving society access to universal suffrage would enable persons to gather

and organize themselves around topics that concerned them. According to the pluralist's ideology, including society in democratic processes would create a space in which societies could interact on the basis of their interests. These interactions would influence the role of local government.

In order to qualify his conclusions, in 1961, Dahl wrote that although the political system became more plural, power was not exercised by the general population. In fact, power continued to be wielded by a few professional politicians. These new leaders represented various sectors, not only the local nobility, and formed alliances with politicians in government, who took decisions that ensured they would keep their government positions.

From the perspective of democratization theories, the study of politics in New Haven shed light on how politics is played and power is distributed in local governments. The object of study of this research was power: the actions taken by government in order to maintain it. Despite the aspect Dahl includes, his main legacy in local studies was institutionalizing the pluralist trend as a theoretical framework to explain the new distribution of power in local governments.

As a result of Dahl's study, the main criticisms of the pluralist current, at a local level, came from the elitist trend. Unsurprisingly, this preceded the pluralist approach. The pluralist vision was integrated into the study of community pow-

er as a result of the democratizing rhetoric that infused US political discourse in the early 20th century. Though elitist theories had been developed beforehand, they had not been challenged by apparently opposite tenets.

Elitist theories also observed the local distribution of power, but unlike the pluralists, they reached diametrically opposite conclusions. The elitists argued that power in local governments was concentrated in the hands of a few groups with the capacities and resources to influence the government's decisions, or control local government. This argument resembles the aspect added by Dahl, but not the implication. While pluralists spoke of democratic expansion, the elitists described a government dominated by elites.

Over time, this debate became known as the *community of power debate*. It was an antagonistic confrontation of ideas. Yet both currents were able to offer courses that stimulated the creativity of their questions and implications. They were not able to reach a theoretical synthesis on their own. Instead, both pluralists and elitists submitted their results to a questioning that actually attempted to discredit the research methods used by the opposite school of thought. Ultimately, the debate sought to identify epistemological differences in the means of observing and operationalizing the concept of *power* (Wolman and Goldsmith, 1992).

Alan Harding (1995) provides a

clear example to explain the debate between pluralists and elitists. He explains that elitist theories had found it difficult to gather empirical evidence that supported their hypotheses. This dilemma was by no means new, and was the main problem faced by Marxist theorists. The fundamental problem lay in making the elites recognize or admit their predominant role in the decisions made by local governments. When the elitists subjected the latter to the scrutiny of their actions, they obtained answers that were legitimized by more abstract concepts, such as divine right or the functioning of representative democracy. If, at the end of the day, the explanation lay in the catalog of institutions, asked the elitist theorists, how then could one empirically identify the existence of elites?

The first rigorous attempt to solve the problem was made by Hunter (1953), who used a method called analysis of reputation. It consisted of listing influential members, and placing them in four categories: entrepreneurs, government, civil groups and social organizations. This list was submitted to a panel, which identified the members with the greatest influence, based on their reputation. Hunter applied in-depth interviews to the stakeholders perceived as being the most powerful, and thus defined who the elites were and how they organized and worked.

The pluralists immediately objected to Hunter's results. They accused the elitists of using methodologies that obviously supported their hypotheses. The elitists also criticized their opponents' methodologies (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970). Among these objections, they said that the pluralists selected, from the wide range of decisions made by local government, those that would help support their theoretical positions (Judge, 1995). Thus the positions held within the *community of power debate* were not readily abandoned. This debate overshadowed the method of studying local government during the 1960s and much of the 1970s. While this theoretical sphere was in force, it permitted the production of many studies that applied these approaches to various contexts and moments.

2. BUREAUCRACY AND URBAN REGIMES

Studies of local government gradually distanced themselves from the pluralist-elitist debate, and three factors marked the change. The first was a natural result of the debate. When it came to an end, it became possible to question the tenets, ultimately creating new ideas and explanations. The second factor, also related to the first, were the results of studies on local governments applied in other parts of the world. This revealed other ways of interpreting local power, and above all, showed the other dominant actors involved. Finally, the historical literature observed a third factor in Neo-Marxist trends, which coincides with the weakening of the debate between pluralists and elitists. With the decline in importance of the discussion

on community power, paradigmatic changes occurred in local governance study. The object of study shifted from the distribution of power to others, such as the government's production or decision-making. A new school of thought subsequently emerged, which has prevailed until recently, and explains key aspects of local governance: the theory of urban regimes.

To return to the first factor, temporality became important in the debate on community power. This was particularly because more and new actors were perceived as having various degrees of influence on the distribution of power (Judge, 1995). One key example was provided by Peter DeLeon (1992) on the city of San Francisco, which he described as *hyperpluralist*. That is, an exacerbated pluralism that makes any local governance arrangement unsustainable or fragile. Like DeLeon, the literature would then question a purist vision between pluralism and elitism. Instead, it questioned whether the distribution of power observed in any location depended on the city's socioeconomic and political context. If so, then, how should a clearly pluralist or elitist political process be defined? If the labels "pluralist" and "elitist" are regarded as being on a continuum, then where should one draw the line between pluralist and elitist politics, when both approaches can find empirical evidence to support each of their postulates?

A second factor undermining the pluralist-elitist debate was the implementation of these theories in other countries, particularly Great Britain. This made it clear that the debate between pluralists and elitists was not precise enough to explain the concentration or distribution of power in local governments, and moreover that there was a need for a key actor such as local bureaucracy. For example, Dearlove (1973) argued that studies on local government had a heavy bias towards democratic theory, since their production was based on the North American context. Dearlove's theory (1973) circulated the idea of the need to explore the ideological aspect of the incumbent leaders. The author of *The Politics of Policy in Local Government*, a study based on two British localities, demonstrates that the local governmental organization was already fairly autonomous in relation to the local political environment, and that in addition to the local sphere, the ideologies of the governing bodies should be considered to explain local policy decisions:

My results vary in relation to mainstream theories [...]. Instead of suggesting that the government is weak, open and responsive to environmental influences, I suggest that it is strong, closed and non-responsive, capable of resisting

and avoiding demands for change. Instead of suggesting that the government is controlled by the environment, I would suggest that it can control the latter, at least as regards its actions. Rather than emphasize factors outside the government to understand its behavior, I highlight internal factors. Rather than minimizing the role of ideology, I choose to underline its importance. Finally, instead of emphasizing the way public policies are carried out, I focus on the way public policies are maintained (Dearlove, 1973).

Dearlove clearly states his position on the traditional paradigm to study local government, and incorporates two basic elements. He suggests looking at the importance of bureaucracy, in this case through the ideology it imposes on the government's decisions. This makes it possible to observe the second aspect, namely that the object of study has shifted from the distribution of power to government decisions.

In a similar vein, Dunleavy (1980) criticizes the pluralist-elitist dichotomy. In his book *Urban Political Analysis: The Politics of Collective Consumption*, he highlights the differences between countries. He states that the explanations offered in the United States are not suitable for explaining what happens in Great Britain. Dunleavy focuses on the role of local bureaucracy and its clients, as well as observing traditional political actors such as elected governments. An analysis of the local political organization concludes that in the British context, the increasingly wide range of services provided by local governments has politicized local bureaucracy and the new groups that use these public services. Second, these interactions between bureaucracies and consumer groups have had a proven impact on the way public policy is conducted in local governments. Dunleavy thus distances himself from the debate on community power to include a new stakeholder: local bureaucracies, and their influence on governments' activity.

According to Alan Hardin (1995), the theoretical influence of the *community power debate* was already waning when the criticisms sparked by the neo-Marxist approaches of the 1970s emerged. Neo-Marxist theories to explain local government were short-lived, but made a significant contribution. Its contribution was to reframe the role of local government in the wider context of its role in relation to the state. This proved extremely useful, as I will explain below, in suggesting new models that will make it possible to understand local power relationships and propose a new study program.

The common argument of the neo-Marxist vision is that the capitalist state must reconcile two contradictory objectives. It involves a conflict between the interests of two social classes: capitalist and proletarian. Pickvance (1995) notes that local government, together with the state,

encourages the capitalist class to accumulate capital through an adequate legal system and favorable macroeconomic conditions, while maintaining the legitimacy of the system among the working class, through social welfare initiatives that prevent proletarian uprisings. Under this premise, Marxist schools of thought justify the existence of local governments.

As a matter of fact, numerous theories try to explain the existence of local governments. For Pickvance, the three best known answers were Cockburn's *local state* (1977), Cawson and Saunders' *dual politics* (1983), and Duncan and Goodwin's *uneven development* (1988). The central idea of these explanations is for local governments to work together with the state to preserve the two objectives of a capitalist State: accumulating capital and enjoying legitimacy. There are numerous examples of this in Europe. In Great Britain, writes Pickvance (1980), local government implemented social welfare policies based on the structural order of the capitalist state. These same welfare functions are observed in several Nordic countries. Though the example loses its empirical basis when this framework is applied in North America, some postulates remain valid, giving rise to a new study program.

Although neo-Marxist theories were only useful for explaining local government for a short time, they left an indelible mark. This impact is reflected in the appearance of a new program to study

local government. Based on the Marxist concepts of *value in use* and *economic value*, in the context of the United States, Logan and Molotch (1987) developed the theory of *growth-machines*. The intuition suggested by the authors is very simple and therefore extremely powerful. Landowners have a monopoly on one of the three production factors, land. Unlike the other two, capital and labor, land is immovable. Landowners face the dilemma of increasing their economic power with a more or less fixed production factor, and the strategy that enables them to achieve this is increasing the added value of their asset. The strategy involves developing attractive spaces for capital and work, by maximizing the economic value of their income. The *growth-machines* theory involves establishing partnerships between the landowner and government sectors to implement urban plans that allow the creation of new economic development hubs (Hardin, 1995).

Observing the formation of urban alliances, as Logan and Molotch suggest (1987), proved to be an essential part of the new program to study local government. It is therefore hardly surprising that for Stoker (1995), the approach called *urban politics regime* was born from the contribution made by neo-Marxism in this sphere. The founder of this trend is Clarence Stone, who put forward the concept of urban political regimes in the late 1980s and used that study

plan to crystallize and explain many of the paradigmatic changes that had taken place in local government studies. The theory of urban regimes focuses on the production of local government rather than the distribution of power. It takes up the importance of local bureaucracy without overlooking traditional stakeholders with power; it widens the range of relevant actors to business and social sectors, which, “*although in conflict, form coalitions and guide the political decision process*” (Mossberger and Stoker, 1994; 206). According to Mossberger and Stoker (1994), the perspective of urban regimes is actually one of local governance or urban governance.

The study of regimes in Atlanta provides evidence of how certain private sectors with economic resources and social sectors such as the African American community converge in a stable coalition that moves government action to economically stimulate and shape the city. Urban regime theories identify power groups that lack exclusive access to decisions yet possess economic, political or information resources that are useful for performing non-routine public actions, and require fairly stable coalitions to pursue specific public policy objectives. Stone (2005) described political regimes as the bridge built on the basis of the link between private and public interests.

3. COMPLEX GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

Like earlier trends, the tenets of the urban regimes were tested in various contexts (Deter and Mossberger, 2006), which served to enhance the understanding of local governance. The team led by Dowding (1999), which used the methodology of ideal types, proposed checking whether English localities could be explained using the regimes theory. To this end, the team proposed a definition of regime based on the following eight points to be checked in the field:

1. *An agenda of distinguishable public policy.*
2. *A long-term partnership.*
3. *A coalition supported by interests not necessarily derived from the institutional government structure.*
4. *It crosses economic and social sectors, and formal institutional limits.*
5. *It survives staff changes and successions of political leaderships, reflecting the fundamental ideology or values of coalition members, and allows a certain degree of electoral success.*
6. *It promotes the mobilization of external resources, creating positive sum games within the locality with the possibility of forming pub-*

lic-private arrangements that transcend party divisions.

7. *Associated with exceptional leadership, capable of forming a coalition with a distinguishable political vision.*
8. *It builds bridges between institutions and community interests that overcome the division between private and public sectors (Dowding and others, 1999, p. 515-545).*

The exercise applied to urban areas in Great Britain reached two significant conclusions. First, the regime theory was able to explain political processes in that country, which suggests certain similarities with the United States. However, not all the locations share a political process of the urban regime kind, and some possess a different governance framework. For example, districts such as Croydon, Wandsworth and Islington feature urban regimes similar to those observed in the United States. On the other hand, areas such as Westminster, Tower Hamlets and Lambeth provide evidence of other patterns of local governance.

The second conclusion that can be drawn from the research by Dowding (1999) for the purposes of this paper, is that when the evidence supports the theory of urban regimes, there are considerable differences between them. There are numerous types of urban regime, and at times they incorporate actors that the original version of regimes had excluded. Economic sectors are not the only ones to form urban regimes, “[...] *In the European context, key agents promoting urban regimes include party actors whose interests are shaped on the basis of a broader mosaic in the competition between factions within national parties.*”

From the outset, Clarence Stone had left open the possibility of observing several types of urban regime.² Indeed, creating regime categories was one of the main publication topics during the 1990s; these include the models proposed by Jon Pierre (1999) and Peter Ward (1998). Designing local governance models characterized by two dimensions became a very common method in studies of local issues.

² The names of these regimes are Maintenance, Developmental, Middleclass progressive and Lower class opportunity.

What distinguished the findings of Dowding's team was their inclusion of new agents in the urban coalitions whose *locus* transcended the local. These were non-local agents involved in urban regimes, and though this is not a new contribution to the study program, it represented a clear example of how institutional contexts, government structure, inter-governmental relations and national political-partisan interests influence local governance and the results obtained from it (Stoker, 2011).

Two conclusions can be drawn from this. First, urban regime theories do not contain sufficient elements to explain political processes in contexts different from the United States. Second, neo-Marxist influence is reflected in the reactions to urban studies that paved the way for the study of institutional contexts, and eventually provided a new framework to advance local governance, as described by Gurr and King (1999):

"We disagree with both the traditional theories and the neo-Marxist perspective [...] that localities in Western cities maintain the autonomy of both the central state and private economic interests" (Gurr and King, 1999; 43).

There were thus several facets to the analysis of supra-local factors in local governance. One of these was addressed by studying concepts such as local governance and autonomy. Early contributions to this topic were made by Rhodes (1999), whose book *Control and Power in Central-Local Relations*

underscores how the various levels of government use their legal, political and economic resources to establish inter-governmental networks. There the autonomy of the local government is important, insofar as it creates networks of policies that give it more room for maneuver as a government.

In other parts of the world, contextual factors were studied in the United States by authors such as Gurr and King (1999), who argued that autonomy of local government had two kinds of restriction. Type (I) is represented by the socio-economic conditions that limit the decisions of the local state. The autonomy of local governments is circumscribed in that their decisions are challenged by local economic or social groups, which can extract resources from the local economy through taxes. Type (II) refers to the fact that local governments are subject to structural hierarchies within a national context. These consist in restrictions imposed by other levels of government though constitutional and legal provisions that limit their functional attributions, the economic resources transferred to them, and their autonomy in relation to legal decisions and valid inter-governmental doctrines, such as the *ultra vires* doctrine.³

Gurr and King's study in *The State and the City* was one of the first of its kind to attempt to explicitly systematize the study of local governance and autonomy. It observed factors that transcended the localist approach that charac-

terized earlier approaches. At the same time, Page and Goldsmith (1987), followed by Page (1991), made a similar argument. According to those authors, greater or lesser local autonomy was configured through inter-governmental relations, and involved two dimensions: *legal localism* and *political localism*. The first is a characteristic of inter-governmental configuration, in which the central state delegates, punctually and by law, the allocations and space for maneuver accorded to local governments. Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries, for example, imposed clear legal limits on the activity of local government.

Regarding political localism, the concept refers to the need for local authors to resort to political-inter-governmental alliances to secure the economic and political resources to fulfil their government objectives. France, Italy and Spain belong to this category. Though the authors do not empirically prove it, they suggest that a correlation exists between the two dimensions. The level of political localism, for example, served as the prevailing strategy in response to an ambiguous or complex local legal framework. On the other hand, strict or clear legal provisions inhibit the possibility of accessing supra-local resources through inter-governmental alliances.

Page and Goldsmith (1987)

³ This refers to the legal doctrine that prohibits public bodies from carrying out actions that are not explicitly authorized by the law. In this case, they are the powers of local government.

relate the numerous alternative schemas that emerged to distinguish inter-governmental relations. Although the literature has advanced in this area, the structures for inter-governmental relations remain one of the focuses of study for understanding the capacities and autonomy of local governments.

4. LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Throughout the 21st century, local government studies have yielded a large number of inter-related concepts, which made it difficult to distinguish between the debates already occurring. These notions included some that appeared to assist the understanding of urban studies, notably the concept of *urban governance* and *local governance*, which ultimately became of great interest in the literature. Its usefulness was based on its flexibility and capacity to encompass in a single analytical framework theories on regimes, central-local State and urban policy, among others (Pierre, 1999).

The term "governance" began to be used in local studies from the 1990s onwards. The incipient definition applied to urban studies focused on identifying two aspects: the exchange processes between public and private spheres, and the results of these exchanges, rather than institutional formalities (Pierre, 2005). Moreover, the term served to describe a broader range of arrangements for both

horizontal and vertical exchanges between stakeholders at various levels of government (Stoker, 2011). Before long, the literature on urban issues integrated the confluence of structures, forces, networks stakeholders, resources and local and supra-local interests into this concept to explain the situation in local politics.

However, the historical background leading up the term, and its full meaning, has not been achieved in regions such as Latin America. The sense given to the term governance is often associated with the newly established interaction between the state and citizens. In this context, in his interpretation of Manuel Canto Chac, Flores-Xolocotzi suggests using the term “[governance] as the cooperative action of the State with various social actors (including notably individuals and social organizations).” (Flores-Xolocotzi, 2012; 177). Martin (2009) points to the transparency, accountability, the assumption of responsibility and citizen participation as central elements in the new form of collaborative governance (Martin, 2009; 15), thereby taking up the definition of governance by the United Nations’ Development Program as “...the way in which society organizes to take and implement decisions, achieving mutual understanding, agreement and action. [...]”. Sosa López, in reference to works by Pardo and Aguilar, states that governance “is sustained and legitimized by the widespread application of the principles of decen-

tralization, citizen participation, improved management, deregulation, transparency, efficiency and accountability to the structures and operation of public organizations...” (Sosa-López, 2012). Finally, Hevia, Vergara-Lope and Avila (2011), describing the theoretical input used by academics to understand the new mechanisms of citizen participation, suggest two categories that combine the concept of governance and the broadening of actors in the public sphere (Hevia, Vergara-Lope and Avila, 2011; 66).

This is not a false move. The definition of the term is currently being developed. Porras (2007; 168) notes that certain definitions are even incompatible with the Latin American context,⁴ but that in general, governance has been used to signify a new government process that distances itself from hierarchical control (Porras, 2007; Zurbriggen, 2011). Though the meaning of local governance goes far beyond citizen participation, the evolution from centralist governments to decentralized government systems with greater citizen contact and involvement constitutes a substantial change in Latin American local governance. In Mexico, for example, local government studies have used the concept to describe new local governance processes configured exclusively for local stakeholders. Ziccardi and Arzaluz (1995) explain how the new municipal social policies are the product of the inter-

⁴ This refers to the concept of “good governance.”

action between popular sectors not previously regarded as important actors, which, through citizen participation, manage to exercise influence on local governments. Grindle (2007) recently provided an explanation of innovations in local governments, based on the democratic advances experienced by Mexican municipalities in the past 30 years. Local Mexican governments have triggered a wave of political alternation that enables other parties to rise to municipal power. Grindle also carefully studies the local stakeholders and institutions that mainly explain the local agenda. The *Public Action* study by Enrique Cabrero (2006), for instance, develops the concept of governance as a similar process to that of Stone's urban regimes. It involves designing the agendas and work of Mexican municipalities, based on the influence resulting from partnerships established between economic and government actors. Cabrero uses the analogy of the double helix to undertake public action, which also creates a coordinated government agenda.

5. CONCLUSION

The term "local governance" has a long history that is sometimes overlooked by studies of local government. There is a tendency to equate it with citizen participation. Undoubtedly, greater citizen participation in decision-making represents a change in local governance, although these are not

interchangeable concepts. This work has emphasized one of the numerous theoretical-discursive lines that characterize the term "governance." It should be stressed that this line has different meanings from the concept of governance, which incorporates the newly established relation between state and society, but goes beyond it.

Local governance has been studied from its beginnings as the distribution of local power. This stage was largely dominated by the debate between pluralists and elitists in political sciences. At the heart of the debate was the rhetorical and political argument constructed by democracy theories to support it in the mid-20th century. The debate on community power, as it was then called, collapsed as a result of numerous factors, including the appearance of new evidence in regions outside the United States. At the same time, the neo-Marxist perspective positions, for the first time, local government with specific functions vis-à-vis the capitalist state. This approach soon became obsolete but assisted by new findings the authors agreed that it had considerable impact on local government studies. The study of local politics transcends the government to incorporate various stakeholders and other tiers of government, and goes far beyond the distribution of power as an object of study to determine production and local political decisions. This has given rise to what is now known as urban governance or local governance.

The agenda for local government studies is far from being exhausted. There are worldwide calls for a better understanding of the systems that produce various types of local governance. The emphasis is currently on formal and non-formal institutions (Stoker 2009), and on the inter-governmental relations that could lead to various governance processes, which will provide information on our local governments. Authors including Richard Snyder, Jefferey Sellers, Jon Pierre and Gerry Stoker (2001; 2005; 2005; 2011) clearly mention this situation, and the need for a perspective that summarizes the influence of the structure in a single argument. According to Jon Pierre (2011), studies on local governments are characterized by the difficulty of producing theoretical works whose generalization transcends spatial borders. It is therefore worth considering Lindstrom's (1998) suggestion of comparing governance systems rather than actual local governments.

Over the past ten years, there have been numerous requests for an agenda that creates more and new theories for local, subnational and urban studies, and which travel better in time and space. (Snyder, 2001; Sellers, 2005; Pierre, 2005; Stoker, 2011). This work is also a call to re-focus the study from local government to local governance in its broadest sense.

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