

Corruption, citizen participation and transparency in Mexico: Reflections on the role and strategies of the public administration in the face of SARS-CoV-2

Corrupción, participación ciudadana y transparencia en México: Reflexiones sobre el papel y las estrategias de la administración pública frente al SARS-CoV-2

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Abstract

In Mexico, recurrent corruption has harmed the most vulnerable groups experiencing poverty and socio-economic discrimination. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, administrative procedures can present a number of obstacles and irregularities in the health sector that clearly demonstrate the challenge governments face in creating better strategies to deliver effective public services, foster citizen participation, and a culture of transparency to combat corruption, promoting good governance. During the pandemic, some sales of health materials at exorbitant prices and citizen lawsuits against certain health workers seeking sexual favors for medical care and respirators in some federal states have been reported. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to describe the role and intervention of public administration in public health during the pandemic. This is a qualitative descriptive research in which the biblio-hermeneutic methodology is used to interpret and explain the current situation. At the end of the work, various unfinished expensive works, favoritism and late operation due to poor economic and administrative management are exhibited.

Keywords: Corruption, Governance, Transparency, Citizen Participation, Sex favors

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Resumen

En México, la corrupción recurrente ha perjudicado a los grupos más vulnerables que experimentan la pobreza y la discriminación socioeconómica. En el contexto de la pandemia COVID-19, los procedimientos administrativos pueden presentar una serie de obstáculos e irregularidades en el sector salud que demuestran claramente el desafío al que se enfrentan los gobiernos para crear mejores estrategias para prestar servicios públicos efectivos, fomentar la participación ciudadana y cultura de transparencia para luchar contra la corrupción, promoviendo la buena gobernanza. Durante la pandemia, algunas ventas de materiales sanitarios a precios exorbitantes y demandas ciudadanas en contra ciertos agentes de salud solicitando favores sexuales por atención médica y respiradores en algunos estados federativos han sido reportadas. Por lo tanto, el objetivo de este artículo es describir el papel y la intervención de la administración pública en la salud pública durante la pandemia. Se trata de una investigación cualitativa de tipo descriptivo en la que la metodología biblio-hermenéutica se utiliza para interpretar y explicar la situación actual. Al final del trabajo, se exhiben las diversas obras costosas inconclusas, favoritismo y atraso de operación debido a deficientes manejos económicos y administrativos en México.

Palabras clave: Corrupción, Gobernanza, Transparencia, Participación Ciudadana, Favores sexuales

1. Introduction

Often the problem of corruption was confronted with courage and will. Although ethical authorities have tried to end corruption, some public servants continue to conduct the same as dishonestly, especially in times of the Covid-19 pandemic. It seems that the population is desperate and pessimistic about real change. This comment is justified when we consider that in just a few months the number of complaints, complaints and claims recorded against certain public officials and health workers. It appears that some public servants clearly demonstrate their indifference and lack of interest in eradicating corruption. The authorities' repetitive scandals in the three powers leave more questions, doubts and mistrust than solutions to the various structural problems. According to Ochoa (2017, p. 207), the best examples of corruption are:

The delivery of bribes to officials or business leaders to condition the conclusion of contracts; agreements or agreements between employers to affect their competitors; offering or receiving a benefit in exchange for providing access to inside information about products or services, or simply making arrangements to pre-define results at

sporting events.

However, we may add the naive and manipulative conduct of certain police officers when giving a traffic ticket to citizens; the custodies arranged and paid to certain judges and finally the recent scandals of the federal and state authorities detained for their connection with drug traffickers and accused of money laundering, kidnappings, among other crimes. It is more worrying when we see the shattered effects that corruption has on economic growth, integral human development and poverty in society, which means corruption, weakens citizen confidence in institutions but also influences the social well-being of future generations.

Consequently, the reason for the weak growth of the Mexican economy is because over the past decade, public investment has a very low rate from international levels, with 2.5% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)... The multiplier effect of investment in the case of Mexico is much lower than in most Latin American countries because there is corruption and there is poor planning and other elements (El Universal, 2019). Corruption therefore consists of the violation of an obligation on the part of a devisor in order to obtain an extra positional personal benefit from the person who bribes or extorts him, in exchange for the granting of benefits for the briber or the extortion, which exceed the costs of bribery or extorted payment or service. (Garzón Valdés, 1997, p.47)

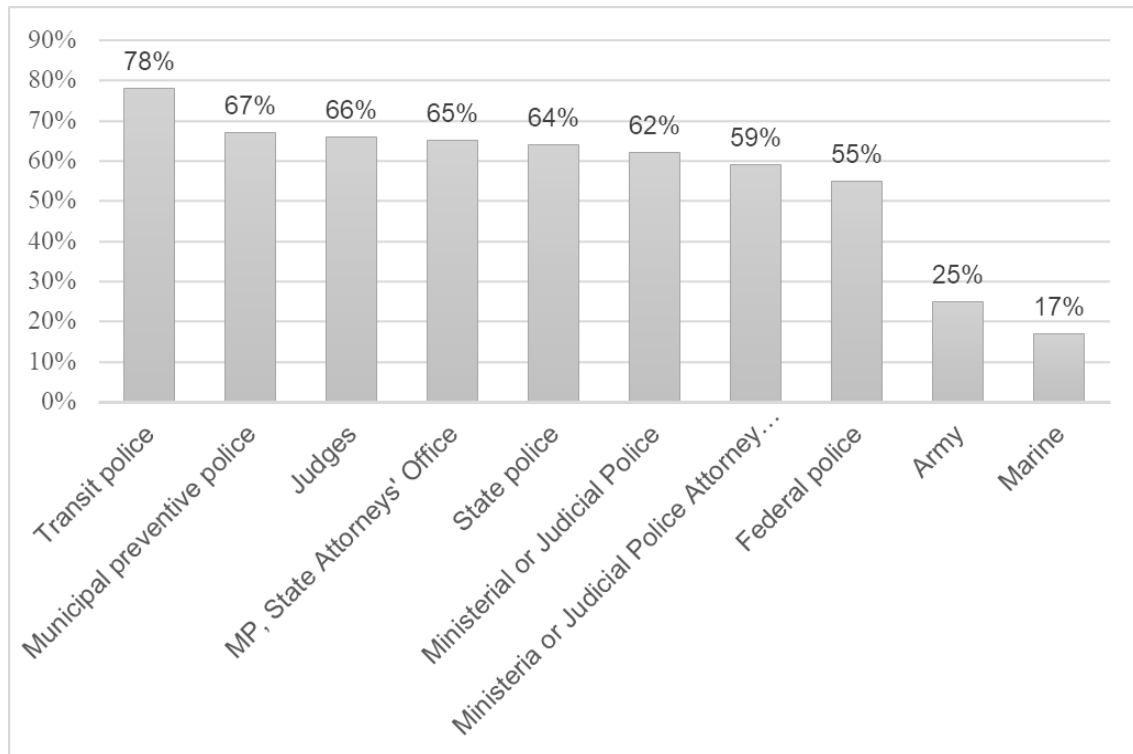
Data from Transparency International 2013 on the perception of corruption in government institutions in Mexico show that political parties and police simultaneously present greater cases of corruption is 46%, while public servants (45%) ranks second (see Table 1). Similarly, these data show that Mexican public institutions are more prone to corruption than: Brazil, India, Chile, Denmark, Spain, the United States and Uruguay.

Table 1. Perception of corruption in government institutions

Government Institutions	Mexico	Brazil	Chile	Denmark	Spain	USA	India	Uruguay
Political parties	46	43	42	29	44	41	44	35
Legislature	43	41	40	24	39	37	38	32
Army	32	27	30					
ONG,s	32	29	29	24	24	30	29	25
Media	36	31	34	29	32	37	32	28
Private sector	35	30	39	30	33	36	34	30
Judiciary	43	34	39	17	35	33	33	31
Police	46	40	35	20	31	33	41	33
Public servants	45	33	37	22	33	36	38	32

Source: own elaboration with global corruption barometer database, Transparency International 2013.

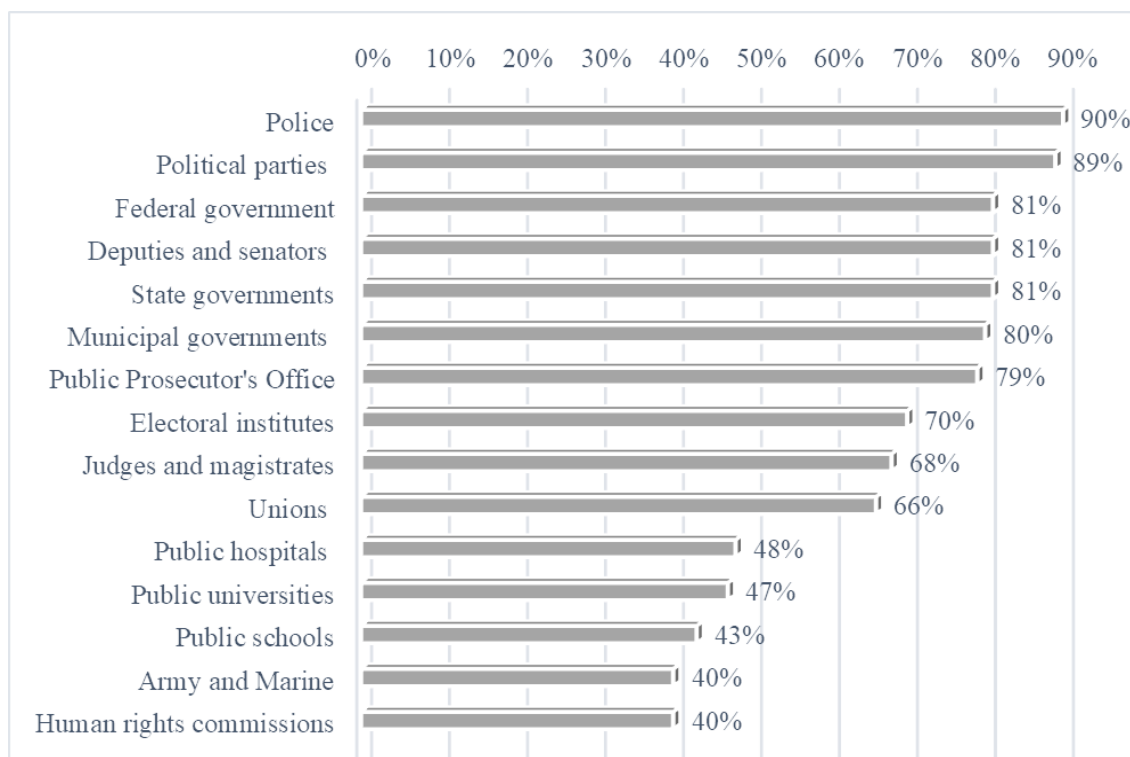
INEGI's (2015) results on the victimization and perception of corruption show that 78% of transit police are corrupt, municipal preventive police (67%), Judges (66%), MP, state prosecutors (65%), state police (64%), ministerial or judicial police, among others. It is interesting to understand that corruption is found in all administrative and judicial institutions but it can be noted that police officers and judges top the list of the corrupt in Mexico (see graph 1).

Graph 1. Perception of corruption of authorities of the justice procurement and administration system.

Source: own elaboration based on the National Victimization and Perception Survey on Public Safety (ENVIPE), INEGI 2015.

Similarly, the results of national perception of frequency of corruption in institutions show a large proportion of 90% of corrupt police, political parties (89%); simultaneously federal government, state governments and deputies and senators (81%); municipal governments (80%). While 68% of judges and magistrates are allegedly corrupt. What is most surprising is that 40% of corruption-prone human rights commissions have been identified at the national level.

Graph 2. National perception of the frequency of corruption in institutions



Source: own elaboration with database in ENCIG, INEGI 2015.

The culture of transparency and accountability definitely benefits the people, government and civil societies seeking to measure, prevent and punish corruption to eradicate poverty levels. As Del Castillo (2003, p.5) states, it has been found that:

Corruption inhibits the social effect of public investment in strategic areas, thus promoting the sharpening of poverty and marginalization; it is therefore undeniable that corruption rates have an important influence on a country's political, economic and social development. Therefore, measuring levels of corruption is a necessary condition for taking measures to improve the political and economic life of modern democracies; it also points out that without measurement there can be no improvement and therefore efforts to combat corruption and strengthen accountability risk becoming a dead letter.

Thus, corrupt public servants long maintained control of public institutions, obviously with the

help of the other two powers, i.e. there is administrative, political and judicial corruption but political corruption predominates. Every aspect of the public administration was controlled by the usual privileged collective where unnecessary and unjustifiable expenditures highlight the lack of transparency and accountability in Mexico.

To better understand the manifestations and repercussions of this phenomenon, it is important to note that corruption is understood as a human action to transgress existing norms and laws where the people involved suffer from a lack of ethical and moral principles and values. This simple definition refers to all types of bribery, fraud, sexual favors and illegal activities to obtain advantages or benefits contrary to legality.

For this reason, we can confirm that, regardless of public and private office, corruption is strictly related to a narcissistic personality disorder and other severe behavioral problems manifested by an absence of integrity, dignity, self-respect, ethics and empathy, perhaps as a result of a break in self-regulation during childhood. It should be remembered that self-regulation is linked to the control of emotions, stress, impulses, behavior, allowing thinking before acting and focus attention on a given task.

These situations involve the ability to control one's impulses and stop some activity (even if not desired) when necessary. This is not only in social interaction (emotional self-regulation) but also in thought (cognitive self-regulation), would say Villanueva et al, (2011, p.4). In addition, Kopp, (1982, p. 199) cited by Villanueva et al, (2011) defines self-regulation as the ability to meet a lawsuit, initiate and cease activities according to social demands, to modulate the intensity, frequency and duration of verbal and motor acts in social and educational contexts. In addition, it includes the ability to act on a goal or goal and generate socially appropriate behaviors in the absence of external monitors.

In this sense, self-regulation is often indispensable for the educational preparation and socialization

of children who will have to interact with the outside world. For this same reason, parents should preach by example because they are their children's first and best teachers. This means that parents are an important guide for infants because the habits of parents or guardians are used as a pattern of action for the little ones. These patterns will be repeated in adult life. Corruption must therefore also be studied and understood from an educational and behavioral perspective of the human being. In other words, family education has a great impact on criminal behaviors and antisocial skills such as corruption and other vices.

Let us coincide with Torres (2002, p.78) when he pointed out that it must be taken into account that when talking about a child this formation is done on the basis that the creature already exists and that it has personality, thoughts and feelings, that is, that it does not form out of nothing and that its genetic structure is already established. It is not that there is nothing, but based on what exists and through parenting a person is socialized by adjusting his behavior and attitudes to the culturally established and instilled in him values recognized by society.

However, one can understand the responsibility and commitment of human beings by becoming parents with regard to the future, socialization and teaching of good behaviors in society. So, the ethical principles and moral values that guide human action and define personality, an individual's attitude and behavior to do good (being generous, loyal, honest, fair, transparent, respectful, altruistic, empathetic, sensitive, responsible, grateful, etc.) and thus avoiding bad qualities (Being violent, envious, corrupt, disloyal, dishonest, liar, ambitious, cheating, rapist, unfair, irresponsible, disrespectful, hypocritical, degenerate, etc...), recognizing morally and socially acceptable behaviors, are transmitted from home during the first years of the individual (childhood).

There is no doubt that an ethical and moral person feels an obligation to cultivate and teach mutual respect and subjection to social norms. Therefore, responsive and timely learning of moral values and ethical principles is key to promoting the culture of transparency and accountability in societies. We remember that honest children are adults and future full public servants and

politicians. However, we can consider that being ethical does not mean being perfect but acting correctly and honestly in any circumstance. That is why the ethical and moral person will never seek to satisfy his own interests at all costs by harming collective well-being.

Unfortunately, the moral and ethical principles that have made our ancestors full and transparent individuals and administrators have lost their validity. It seems that bad individuals tend to get the greatest respect and distinction than honest people; they are those who occupy the high command of the public service. Corruption is therefore constantly on the move; structural, multidimensional and multifactorial. Others would say that corruption is a cultural phenomenon; because they get used to hearing certain Mexican phrases, for example. “He who does not trade, does not advance”; “Él que no tranza no avanza” “The dog dances with money”; “*Con dinero baila el perro*” “How do we manage?” *¿Cómo nos arreglamos?*

We insist, everything is learned in childhood, so the fight against corruption and other dishonest actions in society must start from home and school. In this sense, responsibility in parenting refers to parents including in the reasons for their behavior the foresight of the possible effects of their behavior on the optimal integral development of their children. Therefore, responsibility for parenting is the obligation of parents to account for the consequences of their behavior on the child development process (Villanueva et al, 2011, p.81).

We believe that family education and the creation of self-regulation techniques for behaviors in children since childhood are essential to prevent all the antisocial problems that individuals might present in the future including dishonest acts such as corruption, violence, rape and organized crime, etc., as well as self-love, mutual respect and control of their emotions.

Similarly, the term corruption is defined as any activity through which the form and object of one thing, a procedure or a relationship is altered and disrupted, in exchange for the promise or mutual benefits among its protagonists. In short, it is a question of altering the essence of a

process by means of composites that generate undue advantages (Ochoa, 2017, pp.206-207). From an economic context, Gilli (2014, p.41) defines corruption as a relationship where the power of money influences public administration to obtain certain favors and public officials, in turn, break the rules to favor those who provide them with an economic benefit although the advantages may include any form of non-directly measurable gratification in money.

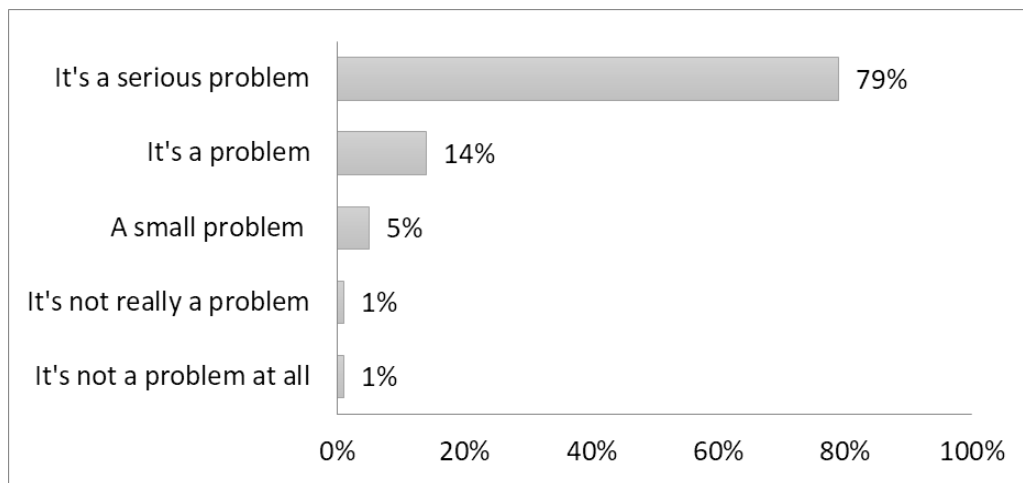
In this context, it can be understood as an exchange where actors have rational behavior as they seek to satisfy their own interest. Even, from an extreme stance, it is claimed that a bribe is a market price when a free market is not allowed. While Garzón Valdés (1997) quoted in Gilli (2014, p.45) said:

Corruption is a crime or an offence involving the violation of any obligation on the part of a decision-maker. If it is accepted that obligations are duties acquired by the express or implied acceptance of a particular position, corruption always implies an act of disloyalties towards the regulatory system. The corrupt act or activity requires, in addition to the decision-maker, the intervention of one or more persons. It is a participatory act in which one party seeks to influence the behavior of the other through promises, threats or benefits prohibited by the regulatory system.

It is very interesting to see that all the authors agree that this phenomenon is harmed for collective development, and certainly corruption is a mental health problem because it alludes to the symptom of narcissistic personality and behavioral disorders manifested by “dishonesty, irresponsibility, disloyalty and abuses of trust, absence of fortitude that incites the corrupt to endure in his criminal practices overlooking all notions of ethics, morality, personal and social well-being. The corrupt lets himself be controlled by Id, weakens his Ego and ignores the Superego. In this case, the fight against corruption becomes a constant and necessary struggle between good and evil, the just and the unjust, between good and dishonest public and private servants. However, it is understood why the corrupt do not care so much about their reputation and that of their family members.

Moreover, greed, arrogance, and power make him feel unstoppable and untouchable until justice acted properly and impartially. For this reason, impunity is the enemy of justice, ethics and democracy. According to the Global Corruption Barometer (2013) for more than 90% of Mexicans, corruption is a problem and for almost 80% of them it is a serious problem (Casar, 2016, p. 25). It is important to note that 14% of respondents consider corruption to be a problem. While a ratio of 5% said this phenomenon is a small problem; by contrast, 1% minimize its impact on society.

Graph 3. Mexicans' perception of corruption as a social problem



Source: own elaboration with database in Global Corruption Barometer, Transparency International 2013.

Corruption should therefore not be limited to simple political discourse but is worth being treated as a real obstacle to sustainable development, social peace facilitated by democratic processes, quality public management, and efficient and effective governance. Therefore, this article aims to contribute to the prevention and combat of any form of corruption by describing its manifestations and impact on the population during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We reiterate that corruption relates to some extent to problems of conduct and the lack of integrity exclusively of the public due to the premeditated and obsessive decision to remain in criminal acts. For, citizen participation and denunciations are fundamental to countering corruption and bribery in Covid-19 times.

2. Methodology

Method

It is a qualitative investigation where the descriptive and bibliographic method is used to describe, interpret and argue acts of corruption in Mexico before and during the Covid-19 pandemic. It should be remembered that the bibliographic method allows obtaining useful information to structure and explaining the phenomenon to be studied.

Research carried out using descriptive methods is called descriptive research, its purpose is to define, classify, catalog or characterize the object of study. When it is intended to obtain general descriptions we will say that it is of a nomotetic type, and when the purpose is the description of specific objects we will say that it is idiographic. Descriptive methods can be qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative methods are based on the use of verbal language and do not resort to quantification. The main methods of descriptive research are observational, survey and single-case studies².

For his part, Jiménez (1998, p.12) noted that descriptive studies are based on a stronger knowledge base than exploratory ones. In these cases the scientific problem has reached a certain level of clarity but information is still needed in order to establish paths that lead to the clarification of causal relationships. The problem is often practical in nature, and its solution is about knowledge of the causes, but causal hypotheses can only start from the full and in-depth description of the problem in question. On the other hand, the bibliographic method as the name implies is the revision of the existing bibliographic material on the subject to be studied, useful for analyzing, diagnosing and drawing conclusions. (Matos, s.f) considers it an essential step because it includes a set of phases covering observation, research, interpretation, reflection and analysis to obtain the necessary basis for the development of any study.

In this sense, the documentary method allows the selection and collection of information through

2 Véase: https://www.uv.es/webgid/Descriptiva/331_mtodos.html

reading, documents and bibliographic materials that facilitate the interpretation of the researcher reflect and analyze a particular phenomenon. In this case, we focus on the phenomena of corruption and the lack of culture of transparency that significantly impede democratic processes, sustainable development and respect for human rights in Mexican society in Covid-19 times.

Research and technical design

Therefore, a literature review was conducted using updated databases in various indexed journal articles on the subject of research to collect relevant information. Therefore, the process consisted of collecting articles related to defined variables, analyzing them, comparing the evidence they provided with similar authors (Manterola et al., 2013). In this sense, the description, explanation and impact of corruption in Mexican institutions was taken into account, considering that this phenomenon has a historical-cultural aspect that causes its permanence and institutionalization. In addition, corruption is linked to impunity, which harms criminal proceedings and compliance with existing rules on justice, transparency and human rights. Similarly, the formulation of the problem was to identify the relationship between corruption, citizen participation and transparency in the public administration in Mexico, emphasizing the essential role of the state in creating strategies that would prevent and combat corruption as a tremendous threat to democracy and good governance.

In order to achieve the main objective of the investigation, on the one hand, recent acts of corruption, bribery and sales of health materials at exorbitant prices were considered, and on the other hand, complaints against certain health professionals seeking sexual favors from relatives of patients in exchange for medical care and access to respirators during the Covid-19 pandemic. Finally, evidence was sought from several expensive hospital constructions unfinished by the health contingency in Mexico mainly in the north and northeast of the country.

Therefore, the criteria for selecting articles that are linked to the keywords of the work were defined and analyzed in order to obtain as much information as possible and establish theoretical

and conceptual relationships. Because the database on corruption at the time of the pandemic is not available to the public, complaints and interviews by the person responsible for anti-corruption and transparency issues were considered to corroborate irregularities, bribery, abuse and requests for sexual favors in exchange for medical care and a respirator in the federal states mentioned in the document. To this end, a number of sources relating the facts were consulted in order to extract the relevant data.

3. Literature review

3. 1 Corruption, citizen participation and transparency

One of the impediments caused by corruption is the low participation of Community actors in decision-making and access to public information, as well as the lack of complaints for various reasons. In all democratic countries, citizen participation is an indispensable piece for local development, the implementation of consistent public policies, equal opportunities, and transparency and accountability. Similarly, the National Commission on Human Rights (2016, p.11) mentions “One of the fundamental elements of the rights approach is participation. The right to participate is a right that is intertwined with fundamental democratic principles. As a result, public policies should be developed and implemented on the basis of broad participation and consultation of populations and social actors affected by development projects.”

That is, the State is obliged to recognize and guarantee the right to citizen participation in all areas to promote inclusion and democracy as a fundamental element of good governance. Although human rights activists state that the conduct of consultation processes is a responsibility of the State, not of other parties, such as the company seeking to obtain the concession or investment contract. In many of the countries that are part of the inter-American system, state responsibility has been transferred to develop the prior consultation to private companies, leading to a de facto privatization of state responsibility (NCHR, 2016, p.26); several cases of abuses of power and

exploitation of indigenous peoples and communities have been identified.

We know that indigenous people remain one of the most vulnerable and chronic poor groups in the country because of discrimination and corruption. It was reported that 7 out of 10 indigenous people in Mexico are poor; 3 out of 10 members of an indigenous community have educational lag, inability to feed and low quality of their homes. 2 out of 10 do not have access to health institutions. Referring to CONEVAL figures published in 2016, it estimated that 77.6% of indigenous people do not have access to social security and 56.3% do not have access to basic life services such as water, electricity, gas, drainage and communications (El Economista, 2018).

While the recent report of the Senate of the Republic (2019) reveals that between 16 and 25 million indigenous people are in extreme poverty; eight thousand of them, imprisoned for the misrecognize of their rights. The truth is that these individuals live in the most inhospitable areas of the country, are exploited and/or used for political discourse. Their situation of poverty and marginalization is as extreme as it is secular and their communities are on the threshold of extreme poverty.

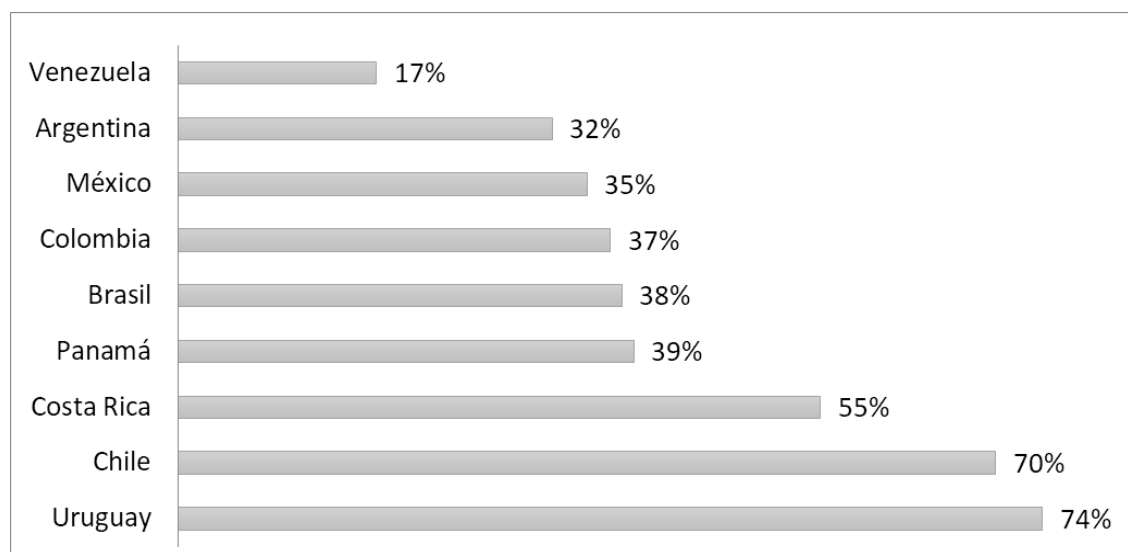
Similarly, INEGI (2018) mentions that 14.6% of the adult population in contact with a public servant in 2017 experienced some act of corruption at the national level. Meanwhile, 5.4% of all establishments were victims of corruption. In 2017, the incidence rate of corruption (25,541 crimes per hundred thousand inhabitants who had contact with public servants) was even higher than the criminal incidence of street robbery or public transport (11,081 crimes per hundred thousand inhabitants). By the end of 2017, 15 entities had fully incorporated the scheme of the General Law of the National Anti-Corruption System into their work processes; 14 states had partially implemented it.

In addition, the Federation Superior Audit (ASF) estimated that 86 billion pesos were used in the last decade for diversions, sub-activities, waste of public resources and improper payments in the federal government. The damage, however, can be greater

when you consider that it slows down the development of the economy, defeats erdurism, decreases productivity, favors rentism, and inhibits investment. In addition, it generates disenchantment with democracy, weakens institutions, promotes clientelism and damages credibility; but it also decreases social welfare and spending efficiency; exacerbates inequality, limits mobility and hinders justice (SinEmbargo, 2015).

According to the Barometer of the Americas 2014, Mexico (place 35 of the ranking) is the fourth country in Latin America where the payment of bribes is most common, only below Haiti, Bolivia and Paraguay (Casar, 2016, p.17) cited by (Vital et al, 2014). That is to say that Mexico had greater cases of corruption than Argentina and Venezuela (see Graph 4).

Graph 4. Corruption perception index according to selected Latin American countries



Source: own elaboration with CPI database, International Transparency 2015.

3.2 Citizen participation, allegations of corruption and sex favors in COVID-19 times in Mexico

In these difficult times, the culture of transparency and accountability and public integrity are imposed as a possible alternative to this social and administrative problem. The current administration is committed to promoting institutional integrity by combating bribery and fraud,

but corruption remains a recurring phenomenon in Mexican society, it appears that much remains to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

UN Mexico (2020), reporting the intervention of the Secretary-General who has expressed concerns about possible irregularities and acts of corruption perpetrated by certain officials and citizens during the pandemic. For this reason, the international official notes that “corruption is criminal and immoral, and represents the greatest betrayal of public trust. It is even more damaging in times of crisis, as is happening now in the world with the disease pandemic (COVID-19). The response to the virus is creating new opportunities to exploit weak supervision and inadequate transparency, diverting resources that should be earmarked for people in their most in need. Governments can act hastily, without making proper checks on suppliers or without determining fair prices. Unscrupulous traders sell poor products, such as faulty respirators, poorly manufactured tests, or counterfeit drugs...” Therefore, Flores (2020) said that, in Aristegui’s news program, the executive director of the initiative, Angeles Estrada, disclosed that a large number of complaints (35%) they refer to corruption and, among other allegations, unseemly proposals are made by health personnel. According to complaints, relatives of patients have been asked for sexual favors to care for patients or to provide them with specific services, such as providing them with a respirator.

According to Forbes (2020), in Hidalgo State, he bought 20 fans last May from a company, owned by a son of a senior Mexican government official, from the Federal Electricity Commission. He offered the fans at 1,550,000 Mexican pesos per unit, equivalent to about \$70,000. This is the highest price since the pandemic exploded. Likewise, very recently in San Luis Potosí, where the fans were acquired did not meet the requirements established by the health authorities, (COFEPRIS). To another company to which 2,500 fans had been acquired, we show evidence that the owner was flagged for fraud in the United States and sanctioned by that country’s Securities and Exchange Commission. The Covid-19 pandemic found high corruption rates in the region, so more equitable public management is needed.

Similarly, it has been reported in Monterey that some health workers have taken advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic to ask their patients for sexual favors. Those affected have also reported operational failures by health care providers for viral health care, as well as acts of micro corruption of those who are victims when seeking help. There are 135 reports recorded so far, of which 35% relate to acts of corruption, although there are also reports of unwanted applications (Progreso, 2020). According to the updated data found on the #Denunciacorrupcióncoronavirus platform, a number of 352 complaints are observed at the moment i.e. health personnel (33.3%), Operational Failures (29.8%), Corruption (26.2%) and Clinical record (10.7%).

According to the map of complaints (see chart 5) - by acts of corruption we have: Baja California (3), Nuevo León (2), Jalisco (1), Michoacán (2), Guanajuato (2), Aguascalientes (2), Querétaro (1), Guerrero (1), Colima (1), State of Mexico (10), Morelos (2), Chiapas (1), Campeche (1) and Mexico city (15). The other states do not record allegations of corruption at the time of consultation of published data.

Graph 5. Map of allegations of corruption in Covid-19 times.

Source: own elaboration based on denunciacorrupcioncoronavirus, 2020³.

Also, between March and May of this year #DenunciaCorrupcionCoronavirus has recorded 120 complaints from 17 states of the country (especially Mexico City, State of Mexico and Querétaro) that are divided among the areas of corruption, operational failures, health sector reports and personal data restriction. 37 and 29 per cent belong to complaints from health personnel and acts of corruption, while the rest belong to operational failures and failure to deliver clinical records or COVID-19 test results. It seems that they are not only asked for money and sexual favors but also some goods such as watches (Guerrero, 2020).

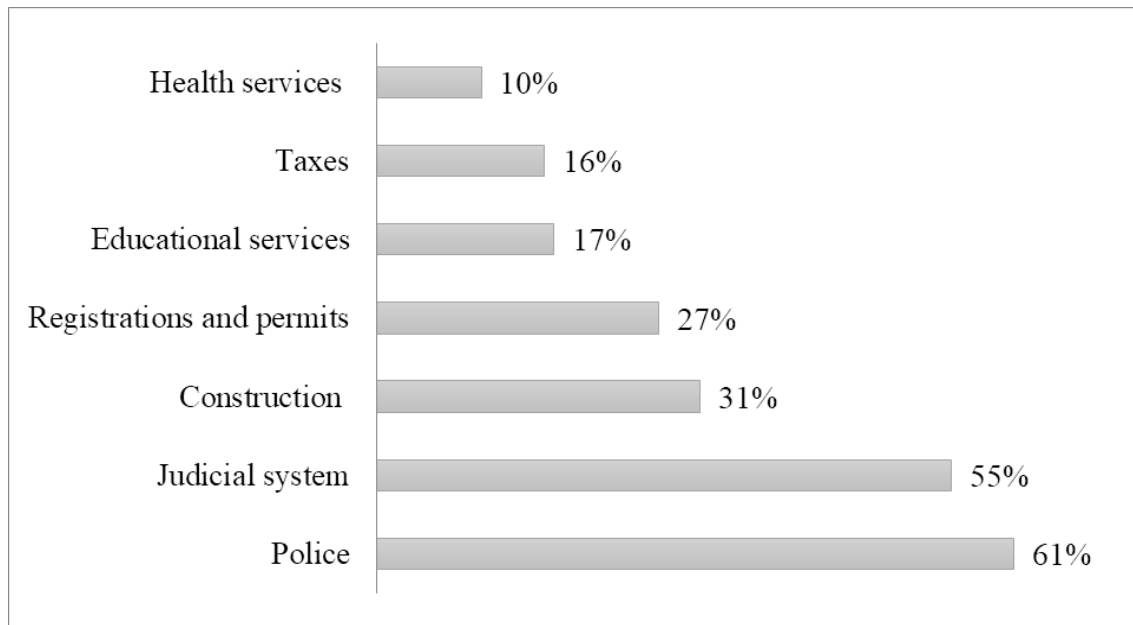
According to Ramirez (2020), some expensive works unfinished because of the pandemic have also been revealed. Only infrastructure in the north of the country adds up to an investment of four thousand and 254 million pesos unused. A report discusses the causes of three hospitals in the northeast of the country: Coahuila, Nuevo León and Tamaulipas. The results range from favoritism

³ Last consultation date: September 7, 2020.

to builders, non-compliance with construction advances and government oversight failures. By the end of 2019 in Mexico there were 306 hospital works whose construction had been dilated and remained unfinished, 22 of them in the six states of the northern border: something unfavorable to the population in the context of the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. In northeastern Mexico there are at least three health buildings such as Coahuila that have delayed its operation for years and doubled its costs due to poor economic and administrative management that have prevented thousands of inhabitants from accessing better health services.

We are convinced that it takes two for bribes and corruption. In this sense, the eradication of this crime must be understood as teamwork, co-responsibility, a moral commitment linked to civic education and patriotism, regardless of political conviction or opposition groups. We therefore highlight the dishonesty of some public servants but we also blame the complicity of certain citizens who contribute to bribery and the permanence of corruption in Mexican society. Nationally, it has been reported that 61% of respondents agree to have bribed the police, 55% from a member of the judiciary, 27% from public servants for registrations and permits, and 17% of Mexicans have bribed for some type of tax. Likewise, most Mexicans agree to have purchased one or the other type of pirated product or to take service illegally in 2013 (Casar, 2016, p.52).

Graph 6. Did you or someone in your household pay a bribe to one of the following institutions in the last 12 months?



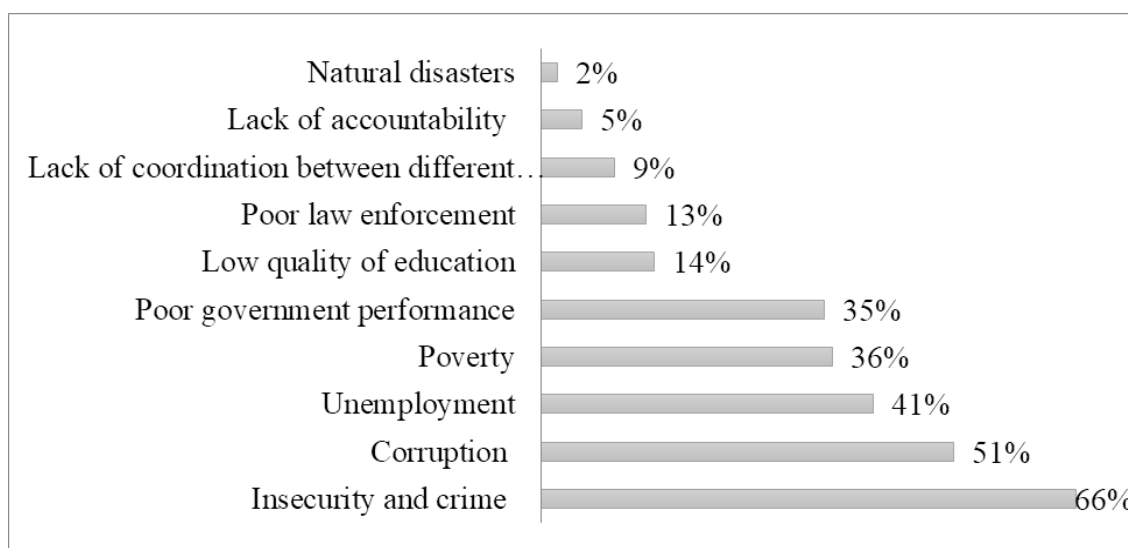
Source: own elaboration with Global Corruption Barometer database, International Transparency 2013.

It appears that several complaints of corruption in the entities were not punished because of impunity. We know that there is impunity because there is complicity of certain senior managers. It is obvious that the authorities must remedy this situation through a consistent public policy to combat corruption by promoting the culture of transparency and allowing openness to citizen participation as well as the coordination of the various bodies or organisms competent to enforce the law to restore citizen trust in public institutions and their representatives. “Trust as a democratic value has been especially important for those countries that build the democratic building today because it is part of the catalogue of values by which it is possible to cement their institutions. The value of trust is largely a sign of health in a political community” (Heras, 2010, pp.5-6). But, the corruption cases that occurred during Covid-19 also will be forgotten?

Definitely, citizen trust, efficiency and quality of government performance are essential for the preservation of power and participatory democracy. We remember that corruption (51%) has

become the second most important problem nationally in 2015; insecurity and crime (66%) lead the perception. Meanwhile, lack of accountability reached 5%, poverty (36%), unemployment (41%) and poor government performance (35%) (See graph 6).

Graph 7. Perception of the most important problems at the national level



Source: own elaboration based on ENGID⁴ INEGI, 2015.

This is why the important role of citizen participation in the decisive processes of public management to consolidate participatory democracy and local regional development arises. It has been noted that corrupt servants and public officials literally and arbitrarily impede citizen participation because it is obviously not in the public interest that the constitution and international human rights agreements grant the right to access government decisions autonomously without the need to be a member of the public administration, let alone a political party.

In this sense, citizen participation serves for the integration and inclusion of communities in political affairs and public activities privileging their social interests and defending and guaranteeing collective rights through public strategies, methodologies, processes and policies corresponding to social expectations where the citizen is at the heart of decision-making. Therefore, there is

4 National Government Quality and Impact Survey

an important link between citizen participation and civil society because they both things seek to promote participatory democracy, defend collective interests, ensure government control and sanction their “Political Action” performance and wrongdoing.

In this case, citizen satisfaction measures both the actions of the government the reduction of citizen complaints and the evidence of significant results meeting their own needs, through the quality of the services it provides to society (public value); this decisive process influences the approval or censorship of the administration leading to a possible vote of punishment from the administrator.

All of the above demonstrates that the state must be the main guarantor of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all citizens including their participation in political and social decision-making. “This implies an understanding of the conception that the person enjoys the human rights recognized in both the Constitution and international treaties; the conforming interpretation to be done with those provisions; the pro-person principle; the obligation of all authorities to promote, respect, protect and guarantee human rights in accordance with the principles of universality, interdependence, indivisibility and progressiveness. Moreover, the State is obliged to prevent, investigate, punish and remedy human rights violations when they occur” (NCHR, 2016, p.7). But, what is the role of citizen participation in democratic consolidation and good governance in Covid-19 times?

Before answering this question, it is substantial to note that citizen participation is an essential issue for good governance because citizens are involved in government actions, managing resources for the development of communities through the design and implementation of effective public policies. Yes, it is the intervention of citizens in decision-making that gives value to transparency and interaction between the state and society by strengthening democratic and even government. Which means that the state cannot act on its own; the active and committed participation of all inhabitants is needed for the reasonable achievement of the objectives and goals of the public

service? In this sense, citizen participation facilitates the proposals developed on the political agenda by and for citizens.

This distinguishes open government, transparent, inclusive and flexible from a closed and corrupt government. As Sanchez pointed out (2015, p.53), closed governments are accustomed to blocking the modalities of citizen participation, so the few institutionalized consultation mechanisms are controlled by their own control rules. On the contrary, open governments should stand out for their level of transparency, accountability, citizen participation mechanisms and public integrity. It is no surprise to anyone that society has seen a tangible transformation in recent decades. Questions surrounding the state's performance to respond to social demands are in force because accounts on economic resources, administrative capacity, the judicial and fiscal system, among others. We are very pleased with the statement of the National Commission on Human Rights "when governments do not fulfill their responsibility to consult does not violate not only a procedure, but a set of fundamental rights of peoples linked to their own existence [...]"

In addition, the exploitation of natural resources in indigenous territories without the consultation and consent of the indigenous peoples concerned violates their right to property and their right to participate in the government. It is the peoples and communities that must be consulted, through "truly representative indigenous and tribal institutions or organizations" (NCHR, 2016, p.21). The acquisition of fans in the pandemic is supposed to be a human right in public health and survival. Selling at an exorbitant price and medical care instead of sexual favors do not promote citizen confidence in health institutions or relevant officials.

Well, in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, citizen participation has a fundamental role for promoting the culture of transparency and accountability, open government, inclusion and insertion, social, participatory democracy, combating corruption and the holistic development of communities as long as decision-making processes, designed public policies take into account the proposals developed , complaints and consultations of citizens considering their intervention

in administrative matters, independently and equitably, as part of their human and constitutional rights.

Therefore, only citizen participation and access to public information and the satisfaction of basic and even health needs without bribes or sexual favors, make it possible to verify the existence of a democratic state and good governance in Covid-19 times in Mexico. Finally, we can say that the formula is simple: More citizen denunciation, better justice and less corruption. Finally, we can say that the formula is simple: More citizen denunciation, better justice and less corruption. But how easy is it to carry it out freely without fear of reprisals? Will the culprits receive the penalties for their crimes?

4. Conclusion

More than ever, governments have the great challenge of replenishing citizens' confidence through good deeds that enable them to achieve the significant results of the expected goals and objectives. Public policies should also be designed in a consistent manner taking into account the social demands that citizens themselves propose for the development of their communities in Covid-19 and post-pandemic times. We argue that citizen participation is regarded as a human and constitutional right of citizens that allows the population to intervene in decision-making to have an opinion on the management of resources, goods and services and government actions for the socio-economic growth of communities; as well as the ability and right to denounce the various acts of corruption.

This inclusion of citizens in political and administrative matters promotes democratic status, equal opportunities, transparency and accountability, and even sanctions institutional performance. For this reason, citizen participation in decision-making and social insertion are essential conditions that promote participatory democracy and good governance in any circumstance and spheres of life. Therefore, the integration of citizens drives real democracy, and privileges the right and

task of all citizens to convey their preferences, concerns and promote collective and community agreements and interests, not a few influential and powerful residents.

Obviously, transparency and accountability promote democratic consolidation, respect for human rights, combating corruption, bribery, fraud and discrimination. It is concluded that there were actually allegations against workers for acts of corruption, medical care instead of sexual favors and fans of patients in Monterey and Morelos. In addition, the State of Mexico (10) and Mexico City (15) are the federation entities with the highest allegations of corruption during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Transparency and accountability are the basic criteria for open government and quality public management because public policy management and production are supposed to be designed and oriented to the coordinated and collaborative care and solution of social problems considering plurality, and citizen participation, innovation, flexibility, social coexistence and improvement of services and social communication that generate the right quality of life and citizen trust converge as long as public policies are relevant and respond to the real demands, priorities and needs of the population.

Therefore, the democratic regime is a guideline that promotes the right to access to information, active transparency from transcendental participation that requires the government and municipal and state representatives to make public information regarding their actions and decisions in a timely, ethical and relevant manner. We need to recognize the efforts of certain ethical and competent servants and civil servants to establish the institutional trust, and of course the sacrifices of committed “nurses and doctors” health workers are those transparent citizens who should occupy and remain in existing administrative positions in Mexico as these exemplary public servants recognize and respect the obligation made by citizens to make available to individuals and patients, information about their health and the actions they take to solve public and health problems, without intervening a direct request for information or resorting to abuse of power, corruption and

other favors such as sexual.

Finally, professional ethical behavior and moral values in the public service can help eradicate these cases of corruption. In addition, all citizens should be involved in this great project of administrative and health renewal, fostering the culture of transparency and accountability, citizen participation and replenishing citizen trust during and after the pandemic. However, it is up to everyone to make a difference in ingesting a society free of corruption, fraud and bribery.

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