Local Public Management: A Spanish Case Study Based on Image Strategy

Ortigueira, Luis C.

Pablo de Olavide University

15 December 2009

Local Public Management: A Spanish Case Study Based on Image Strategy

Luis C. Ortigueira
Department of Business Administration
Pablo de Olavide University

ABSTRACT

The control is one of the factors that can contribute to the success of any organization. In this paper, research for one of the most important control types is presented: the management and evaluation of the local public policies. The research determines citizen satisfaction with local services of a public organization; and, also the criteria, analysis and prescriptions of a different group of experts. Application of this research to a significantly sized municipal results in a descriptive, explicative and prescriptive model system being offered that will greatly assist those responsible at the moment in which they formulate or reformulate performance level tests of services, social events, programs and policies.

Keywords: Local public policies, public policy evaluation, Image strategy

Introduction

The government task, of any organisation, could be conceived as the transition from an actual situation to a wished future situation. Therefore it is necessary to find the answers to three questions: What to do? How to do it? When to do it?. The answer to these questions needs good proportion of information, knowledge and creativity. For this reason, it becomes difficult to find good strategy designers or good public policies. Such answers establish the magic formula named strategy (private sector) or public policy (public sector).The retrospective evolution of a local organisation and its environment could be interpreted in terms of mental scene associated to a citizen sample or in terms of physical scene (Godet 1991).

Public action is conceived through three cybernetic models. Cybernetics is understood as the part of System Theory (von Bertalanffy, 1968) that is in charge of regulation and control in complex systems. The first representation is associated to a physical elemental phenomenon conceived as couple of sequential systems, later; the dimensions of the phenomenon are increased to the level of productive organization, maintaining almost unaffected the formal structure that they represent. Finally, the public organization is modelled highlighting its external regulators, in particular the citizen is the main centre of this research.

It is easy to see that administration, management or government cannot exist if there is no control. Control is consubstantial with the essence of the government task. "If there is no control, there is no government". The reality of public and also private organizational universes is characterized by the existence of a meaningful degree of chaos. That is from systems that are more or less separated from the appropriate orientation towards objectives and strategies of the globally considered organization. Frequently, they act as autarchic machines for their own services and survival.

External Orientation: Measure Instruments and Focuses.

In this perspective the body of public orientation from different focuses and evolutionary processes of great complexity are contemplated in which there is no lack of inspirations that are based on disciplines with significant business echoes. All this

has been done to achieve the correct instruments, which allow the measurement of the impact of the public action upon the citizens.

A public organization conceived as separated from its environment pushes towards two epistemological focuses (Walliser,1977): (i) Externalist: Which considers that organisational behaviours have their origin in external factors. (ii) Internalist: Which attributes behaviours to internal results. Both focuses are complementary but sometimes more interest is given to one of them. That is the case of the denominated Administration External Orientation, which places in first position one of its external agents: the citizens.

Not so long ago the traditional Administration Operative Forces placed the hegemony in the centre of its internal sphere. Throughout the whole of the structure, hierarchy and authority were extended in all directions. However, this situation began to change under the influence of different economic politics and organisational forces, which articulate a number of reformative and modernizing processes, mainly in U.S.A., Canada and Europe (Ortigueira 1992). The implementation of new or organisational formulas, one of whose precisions used the slogan denominated "citizen approach". The German experience in Berlin with its citizen's section, St Galles and Unna (Westfalia), and citizen office, is an example of success that changes many things (Dunker 1985a; Dunker & Noltemeier 1985b). The reality of these actions together with others is the root of an idea that is spreading and has become rapidly established on an international level: Government task legitimization and institutional legitimization (Selznick, 1957; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

The relevance of the role held by new information and communication technologies should be underlined here, which was generated from the controversial globalisation, the society of information, the new knowledge economy and the future knowledgeable society. Due to different imperatives, marketing is becoming established in all kinds of public organizations and taking part in their modern policies. However, in Administration there is no clear awareness about the use of marketing focuses, in spite of the idea of complete coherence with the focus on market orientation of an efficient and effective administration, with quality services concerning the citizens, etc. A focus depends on the necessities, tastes and values of the customer, such as performances and competition plans. In administration sphere, citizen substitutes to customer (Sue 1994), and if the competition is not identified with precision, everyday it will gain presence, even within the public services.

The movement of activities and focus of business Marketing to the field of Administration leads to this reality denominated "Public Marketing" (Ortigueira 1984). This instrument, depending on the situation, could carry out functions as a positive or negative catalyst in relation to internal or external exchange that has been placed in the life of public organizations. Nowadays, Marketing is a good field of transcendental knowledge which, when placed in contact with functional reality of Administration is called Public Marketing.

The Marketing sphere has produced, for a long time, a necessity for a focus, which has progressively gained supporters and that has been described as relational (Martín & Barroso 1999). This concept possesses particular aspects that distinguish it from its predecessor, transactional Marketing, whose base system was exchange or transaction. More humanist aspects and values of exchange relationship, such as, trustworthiness, friendships, sincerity, etc, are used in an attempt to synthesize, whilst their central focus of attention of relational marketing tries to keep an affective and lasting bond with the customer being the citizen in this particular case.

In the field of relational focus, the central core of organizational performances, is the maximization of the value that customers receive from the services and products used and consumed. When the received value increases, customer fidelity also increases, provoking at the same time a higher greater value of the clients as intangible patrimonial actives.

The perceived value deals, essentially, with a mental representation, which can be expressed in a synthetic way, through a qualitative scale (very high, high, medium, low, very low), quantitative (Likert: from 1 to 5, for instance) or analytic, that is, through attributes (effectiveness, speed, proximity…etc.) that can be associated to qualitative scales (very high speed, high speed, etc.) or quantitative (low speed = 2).

The concept of perceived value which contemplates relational marketing is valid within the public sphere. Because the fundamental idea of the focus, that is, achieve an increase in the value that the users put on it, is directly related to the ideas of public success, legitimizing, and to the philosophy of what is the public. If the users grade the services produced by certain municipal administration unit as very valuable there is no doubt that functional excellence of that unit will be of the highest class. It is possible then, that it is extended everywhere by the users causing an improvement of the local entity image as an intangible patrimonial asset. Also, they have to take into account that improved functionality; the taxes and contributions made to the public treasury are

returned to them. Those who are responsible, that are behind the skill benefits will be worthy of great recognition. Their work will not only legitimate them as civil servers, but will globally legitimate to the organizational they serve (Carrillo 1997). To progress in the field of value perceived by the users the star of relational focus, they will have to achieve significant advances in the quality of exchange relationships, which is the key to the transactional focus.

Given that the perceived value deals with a mental entity, its knowledge and evolution in time is a fundamental reference when we want to manage, with success, any public organization. The focus remains near to Relational Marketing with the main idea of maximization of the perceived value. With relation to the organizational paradigm that seeks the improvement or quality maximization of products and services generated by a productive organization, in our case the public character, first it should be highlighted that it would be illogical if a citizen were to be considered as a valuable or very valuable service and was conscious of his own negative attributes. Here, logically, the quality of service should be valued as very low or non-existent, and similarly, the perceived value. The question of the external orientation of Administration needs to be raised to achieve an increase in (or maximize) the quality or perceived value of the services for the citizens, or citizen satisfaction.

Methodology

For the evaluation of local public policies, through the effects that the creation of services produce within the citizens of the specific local community a research in two stages has been used. The research leads to the obtention of a system of physical models that are detailed in figure 1.

The research operates in two successive ways. In the first case, a process is carried out which culminates in the global citizens of a specific local community having a Mental Image of the City Council's services and social events. This image refers to the value perceived by the population of such services and social events related to the group of local public policies that are in function. In summary, in this first stage the population selected is the whole of global population of the studied municipality, and a random sampling simple proportional through neighbourhoods census information was used.

Take in Figure 1 about here

Taking as a base the achieved results in the first stage, second stage is initiated. At this time, the global population of the municipal will not be considered; instead groups of expert users of specific services will be concentrated upon.

Also, here the analytic process culminates in a group of physical models associated to mental representations that each specific group possess of the services and social events, provided by the City Council. Perceived values are also apparent but to different levels of profundity.

In 1960 Miller, Galanter and Pribam found the way that for the first time facilitated the physical representation of strategies and mental programs in people. This type of modelling demands as much the acceptance as the modeling individual's collaboration. The devised method was baptized with the anagram "TOTE" that belongs together with the initials of the expression "Test, Operate, Test, Exit" latent in the stages of any succession of mental operations (strategy). In 1975 Grinder and Bandler perfected the initial chain of TOTE method for another that was revealed more effective: "Desencadenante-operation-Test-point of Election-exit."

In the last thirty years strategies and mental programs modelling expanded for numerous and varied fields. For their interest and importance in organizational field, it interests to stand out Robert Dilts (1999) in the strategies of leadership modelling. Among them the models of leadership abilities associated to the resolution of problems highlight "recurrent" and "virgins" problems. For the confrontation with virgin problems the method arose "Score" conceived by us as the conjunction of a systemic sweeping supported by multiple approaches, and the opinion of qualified experts. In the present research the singularity resides in that the starting point of the chain, the symptoms, it doesn't emanate of the trial of a group of experts, but of the population's sample studied as beneficiary of a service, a product or a public policy.

In summary, user population associated to services whose value has been oriented in a significant way towards low and very low or non-existent levels of excellence. The regularity of the service is known by the answers given in the questionnaire that was carried out in the first level or stage and the method used: for each user population of services seen above, an analyst selects a group of experts. Other experts who are not users of this municipal can substitute the lack of expert users.

Each group of experts have to identify the main problem, which they perceived in the fulfilment of social events, construction work, uses or services considered. Low, very low/non-existent level of satisfaction, indicates the existence of a problem. The target can now be defined whose achievement would permit the reduction or elimination of the detected problem. In a same way, strategies are formulated which, according to the experts, would help to achieve the established target. Finally, the long-term effects are estimated, derived from the objective being attained. In figure 2 the itinerary that is imposed by the empirical research is offered.

Take in Figure 2 about here

The transformation of mental models users/customers/client/co-owner (Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Canales 2002) citizens' individual physical models (fulfilled inquiries) placed at the beginning of the research can be seen in the graph. For this conversion process to take place, first of all a specific questionnaire should be carried out. Next, a process is carried out for the addition and treatment of information in which different criteria, methods and programs take part. As a result, it becomes a descriptive model, which tells us if the citizens are satisfied with the social events and services provided by the corresponding local organization.

Upon the base of this research, the second stage of intervention is initiated: the enquiry into services that were valued as "low" or "very low or non-existent" by expert users. The answer from the consulted groups consists of a group of models with two defined functions, one of explicative character and the other with prescriptive character. The model system formed by the results of the two stages, are put at the disposal of those interested social agents (Local Government, Social Economic Council, citizens, etc.) with the aim to contribute towards the obtainment of future goals.

This research and the model system that it generates adapt to any kind of usable observations, with or without the target group (Deleau et al.1986). With the aim to carry out a practical experiment of this, we used a single procedure in a determined municipal. We did this because we wanted more than one test to evaluate this unique local public policy, including all of the policies that the municipal government transmits to its community through an infinite number of social events and services.

For the whole group of investigated social events and services, a date should be proposed. This date corresponds with the final image of retrospective mental image of the citizens' age equal or superior to 15. So, for the subgroup of these services a date needs to be proposed, which corresponds with the image of citizens' mental scene on the same date. With this, the evolution of specific events and services can be determined. Thus, instead of consulting the population of certain past date, we are able to go for a later date, say, five years later; due to this we are at risk suffering the effects of memory loos. Even in this way, we try to function with the scene formed by two unique images.

The formulation of public policies, which maintain stability and permanence, is not very usual. Also, there are many policies that maintain a certain stability and permanency. From time to time, a policy receives a quantity of significant resources which provoke a renaissance that could be considered as a new policy. In other occasions, organization or legislation naturally changes therefore leading us to return to the new politics idea. In the evaluation of a number of policies the important thing is to sound out social events, infrastructures and services generated by a local organization during a determined period of time. This is the alternative that we have decided.

The Case Study

A city council was chosen to confirm the practicality of the research and its application within a public policy system. One should take in account the following: first, the population size, 103.050 citizens, enough high and difficult for a solvent contrast of the research to use for the evaluation of all, or almost all, the alive policies in the entity; second, The open and positive view of the leaders of municipal government; third, A good financial situation of the organization, which could favour any aspect of improvement derived from the results of our research.

The research was focused towards the Public Policy System of the council, a two different times. For a number of items citizen satisfaction during a certain number of years should be researched to obtain information on the stagnated situation and to evaluate the positive or negative evolution. For the entirety of the considered items we centre ourselves in the satisfactions referred to an specific year.

In this determined municipal City Council organization, we did not find a model that explains in a formal and clear way the final system, of aims and objectives, which

serves as a reference to its Public Policy System. However, we were able to count on clear information to identify organization responsibilities on the highest level, such as physical, human, financial and organizational means that were related to a number of social events, (services) activities joined to the System. Consequently, we designed a System formed by thirteen local policies from this information: information, culture, sport, education, youth, environment, women, safety, social, economic promotion, urbanism, treasury, health- consumer-goods-market.

The thirteen policies studied could change their boundaries to integrated or fragmented, depending on other criteria, different to that which we have used (highest level responsibilities). The intention here is not to justify the epistemological focus we have used in the delimitation of such boundaries, taking into account the nature of the universe considered (extansialist versus substansialist), but to show that policies exist whose identity goes unnoticed, masked by other policies. Such is the case, for example, of the "A Determined Municipal Population and Spatial Integration Politics". It deals with a geographic and human organization, characterized for being (each timeless) an addition to the city centre with a greater or less degree of dispersion, and not for being an integrated physical, cultural, educational and human relation system. The Urban Politicies, Cultural Politicies and many other politicies, are feeding the conquest of this Integrative Policy.

Each policy of a determined municipal City Council can carry out more than one function. At the same time, a Municipal Sports Policy could be interpreted as a health policy with precautionary characteristics, therefore, the resources, which they are provided with, act as a "mental" vaccine against social problems (delinquency, drug addition, etc.).

First Stage, questionnaire plan. The empirical research carried out contemplates people older than 15 registered in a considered municipal. The process of electing the sample was carried out in two stages: the first, in proportion to the number of inhabitants that live in each of the 59 census areas. Kelly & Swindell (2002b) establish the necessity to use the samples distributed by neighbourhoods to be able to establish differences inside the same policy based on a localization difference results.

Later on with those data it is possible with the use of Geographic Information Systems programs (GIS) to carry out different types of satisfaction maps; noise maps, safety maps etc. and establish different policy actuation in different places.

We have used the personal interview to minimize the Sources of error (Kelly & Swindell 2002a). At the same time we adopt the stratified form, taking into account the variable genres (women, men) and the variable ages. This task should be carried out taking the municipal population pyramid as a base. (data facilitated by the City Council).

Given the immensity of its results it is impossible to present here all of the eighty-three elaborated models, which show citizens satisfaction for a period of time, instead, we have opted to present only those related to The Safety Policy. In Table 1 the numbers which result from processing an average comparisons with the answers to the questions associated to the files 1 to 4 of that Table appear: "Are you satisfied with… services? In the Likert Scale, the answers are related as so, value 1 corresponds to "very low/not satisfied", and value 5 to "highly satisfied". Value 3 represents medium satisfaction. We have contemplated the answers don't knows don't answer separately.

Take in Table 1 about here

At this point the first research stage ends. Second Stage. Here, the expert citizen group, which we have selected, is put into action. These people are going to act as if they were the local councillors. They could even replace the politician's values with their own values. In this case, we have had the generous participation of a citizen who was born and has lived all his life in a considered municipal. Furthermore, the status of an urban policy official for a neighbouring council. The rest of expert participants have accepted the analysis and valuations of this expert. The main expert considers, the results in bold in Table 1, for their current situation and their evolution as worrying. In his opinion the low-level citizen satisfaction indicates or defects within the services or insufficient services. Therefore, from his point of view, he establishes the following causalities:

1. High number of crimes and offences committed.
2. Lack of uniformed police presence.
3. Low or non-existent promotion of the work done by the police.

4. Sensation of impunity that is noticed in the society. The absence of responsibility when an infringement is committed, such as penal or administrative, that causes a lack of trust on behalf of the citizen towards the Administration.

5. Dealing with a public service required in emergency situations, each second that the police take to arrive, the citizen feels insecure. The Police are forgotten about until they are needed. When this necessity is manifested and the officers arrive late, criticism becomes a main factor. The motives behind the late arrival are, logically, not understood.

6. Delay in answering emergency calls. The citizen is in a greater or lesser critical situation, what they want is to be attended to at that moment and not have the phone call prolonged: "Nobody's there" "They're not picking up" "Of course not…They're civil servants!" "We have to pay taxes for this". These are totally logical citizen arguments.

7. The administration fails to motivate it's civil servants: they can be stimulated within labour, formative, economic, or personal conditions; unbalance when the judicial power put the rules into effect. If a police officer makes a mistake or is reported (even if without foundation), he / she receives a stricter dealing with than any other criminal/delinquent, which in turn puts jobs, economic situations, etc, into danger; there are not enough investments into innovative materials and technology. All Coca-cola distributors wear "PDA" mechanisms, whilst the police continue to write reports using the traditional folder with self-copy paper.

Next, the expert deals with the objectives and targets that affect the services (example: to achieve increase satisfaction level within two years), and formulates the appropriate strategies/behaviour that is detailed: The establishment of a commitment to the citizens by means of a Service Charter that states the following objectives:
1. Inmediate citizen attention and action, both by phone and directly in the street.
2. Increase in staffing levels and an increase in police presence in urban areas.
3. Motivation of personnel, by planning continuous training and technological innovations.
4. Victim support, especially within particularly vulnerable sectors (e.g.: domestic violence, minors, immigrants…)

5. Within harder law enforcement, the fight against temporal socially rejected behaviours. Anticipation of situations of social unrest.

6. Specially trained police groups (environment, noise control, etc)

7. Personalised and immediate attention in police stations, (fixing a maximum waiting time)

8. Better relationship between citizens and the police and vice versa. Expositions, conferences…etc.

9. Campaign to disclose the police's work and results. Annual report, in traditional form as well as on the Internet.

10. Facilitate communication with the police through phone or e-mail.

11. Changing of police management to quality certified systems ISO.

12. Community Service

Finally, a synthetic version of the effects derived from the objectives and strategies is offered (effects derived from the achievement of the planned objectives) which we deem to develop by integrating them with other policies: "Citizen opinion of the police would be improved and the feeling of insecurity would be reduced".

An integrated vision: a city must see Security as one of its strongest attributes, in the same way, the arrangement of the movement of vehicles and people on the public road. When these attributes obtain high values of citizen satisfaction, the city is more attractive for a great number of clients: residents, investors, tourists, students, the retired, buyers, delegates, the religious, intellectuals, etc. To summarise, it becomes more competitive, with respect to other cities, in the fight to obtain the same clientele. This competitiveness should be translated, in a longer or shorter term, into the elevation in strength of the enterprises' and businesses economies. Selling, production, employment, benefits and wages will increase. Therefore, deposits into the local treasury will potentialize the old and new public policies. Progress and social welfare will be in place. Some local governments have achieved the majority of votes thanks to the implantation of solid public policies and the elimination of the existing traffic chaos. Showing the citizens how to protect themselves, in order to dissuade or repel delinquency, and what to do in case of suffering a "negative" misfortune, we consider a priority action. It is convenient to remember that security has been one of the fundamental human necessities, which gave birth not only to the city, but also to the State. The legitimacy of the government and local institution is not achieved, rejecting or excluding security problems.

Local Government Criteria.

Information generated by the research would not be valuable if the local government of a determined municipal did not test them. Taking as an analytical base the services contemplated before, various occurrences could be seen, such as those detailed in table 2. For other services, the table offers different possibilities for action. This could be amplified by including some small details. But, in general, we consider it as a good guide.

Take in Table 2 about here

Final Considerations

In the ideas developed in the previous pages, have followed a route marked out a series of stages: first, The idea of inventiveness concerning convergent conceptual elements; second, elaboration of the research plans; third, construction of research according to the plans; 4) test or proof of research in real world. The research is a methodology for evaluation and analysis of local public policies, which carry out, principally, descriptive, explicative and prescriptive functions. For these policy evaluation to be effective, its previous associated to the policies i.e.; the construction work, social events and services need to act as a base. We are convinced that the use of this research by any local public organization or at any other level, will offer the responsible politicians, administrative-politicians and the administration, clarity to affront the always-difficult government tasks.

References

Canales, Jose M. (2002). Lecciones de administración y de gestión pública (Administration and Public Management lessons). *San Vicente del Raspeig, España: Publicaciones Universidad Alicante* (Alicante University Publications).

Carrillo, Ernesto. (1997). Legitimidad y modernización de la Administración Pública (Legitimacy and modernization of Public Administration). *Gestión y Análisis de Políticas Públicas GAPP*. National Institute of Public Administration. Ministry of Public Administration. Madrid. 7-8: 143-152.

Deleau, M. et al. (1986). Évaluer les politique publiques (Evaluate the Public Policy). Commissariat Général du Plan, La Documentation Française , Paris.

Dilts, R.B. (1999). Creación de Modelos, Ediciones Urano, Barcelona.

DiMaggio, P.J. & Powell, W.W. (1983) The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. American Sociological Review, 48: 147-160.

Dunker, K. (1985a). Das Bürgeramt der Stadt Unna – Schnittstelle Zwischen Bürger und Verwaltung, an Städte – und Gemeinderat (The citizen office of the Unna city – Interface between citizen and public administration in cities and districts). Heft 9, St Agustin.

Dunker, K. & Noltemeier, A. (1985b). Organisationsmodelle für ein Bürgeramt und deren Realisierung in der Stadt Unna (Organization models for a citizen office and their realization in the Unna city). GMD-Studie Nr. 95, St. Agustin.

Godet, Michel (1991). Prospective et Planification Stratégique (Prospective and Strategic Planning). S.G. Editores S.A. Barcelona España.

Kelly, Janet M., and Swindell, D. (2002a). A Multiple-Indicator Approach to Municipal Service Evaluation: Correlating Performance Measurement and Citizen Satisfaction across Jurisdictions. Public Administration Review 62(5): 612-613.

Kelly, Janet M., and Swindell, D. (2002b). *Service Quality Variation Across Urban Space: First Steps Toward a Model of Citizen Satisfaction.* Journal of Urban Affairs 24 (3): 271-288.

Lassus, René (1990). La communication efficace par la PNL, Marabout, Alleur.

Martín Armario, E. & Barroso Castro, C. (1999). Marketing Relacional (Relational Marketing). Madrid, España: Esic-Market.

Meyer, J.W. & Rowan, B.P. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: formal structure as myth and cerernony. *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 83: 340-363.

Miller, George A., Galanter, E. & Pribam, Karl A.(1960); "Plans and the Structure of Behavior", HoIt, New York.

Ortigueira Bouzada, M. (1984). La Corporación Cibernética (Cybernetic Corporation).Granada, España: Centro de Estudios Municipales y de Cooperación Internacional – CEMCI (Municipal Studies and International Cooperation Center).

Ortigueira Bouzada, M. (1992). *La Modernización de las Corporaciones Locales: panorama internacional* (Modernization of Local Corporations: international panorama). Primeiras Xornadas Galegas sobre Economía das Corporacions Locais.

Consellería de Economía e Facenda, Xunta de Galicia, February 8 - 10, Santiago de Compostela, España.

Ortigueira, Luis C. (2006) La evaluación de políticas públicas: conceptos, orientaciones, metodologías, aplicaciones y comportamientos gubernamentales (public policy evaluation: concepts, approaches, methodologies, applications, and government behavior), in La calidad del gobierno: evaluación económica de las políticas públicas Cansino, J.M. (Coordinador). Delta publicaciones, Madrid.

Ortigueira, Luis C. (2007). A Systems Approach to Public Policies. Working paper series. WP BSAD 07.01 Research Paper in Economics (Repec).

Osborne, D. & Gaebler T. (1992). Reinventing Government. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Pfeffer, J. (1978) The external control of organizations: A resource dependence perspective. New York: Harper & Row.

Sary, Pierre (1990). La programmation neuro-linguistique dans l'entreprise. et ses tactiques, Retz, Paris.

Selznick, P. (1957) Leadership in administration. Evanston, IL: Pow, Peterson.

Sue, Richards (1994). *El paradigma del cliente en la gestión pública* (Client's Paradigm in Public Management). *Gestión y Análisis de Políticas Públicas* (Management and Analysis of Public Policies). National Institute of Public Administration. Ministry of Public administration. Madrid. 1: 5-16.

von Bertalanffy, L. (1968) General System Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications. Braziller, New York

Walliser B. (1977) Systèmes et modèles. Introduction critique à l'analyse de systèmes, aux Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 220-222.

Figure 1. Hierarchic Structure of Local Public Policies System, its Performance and Control.
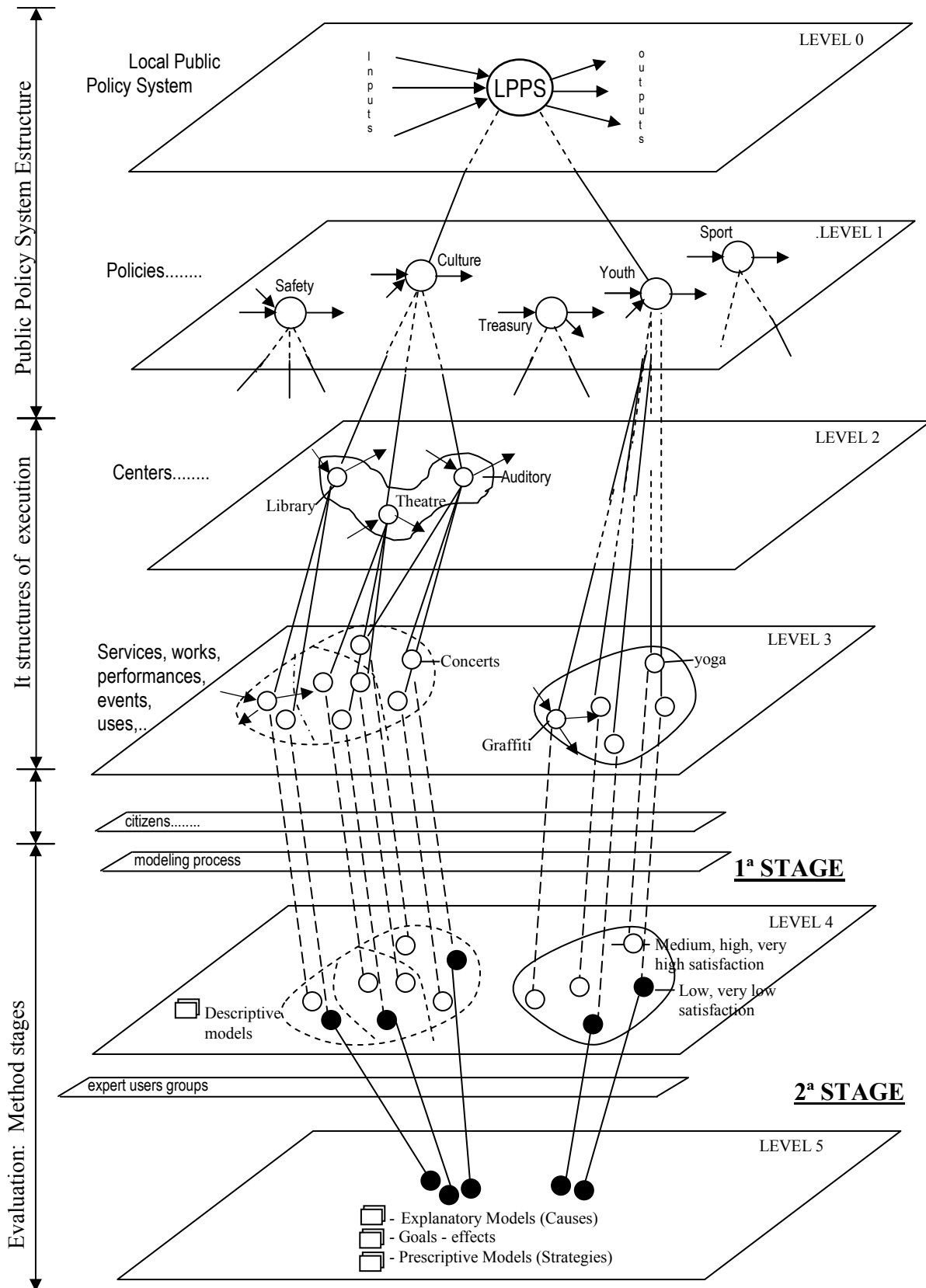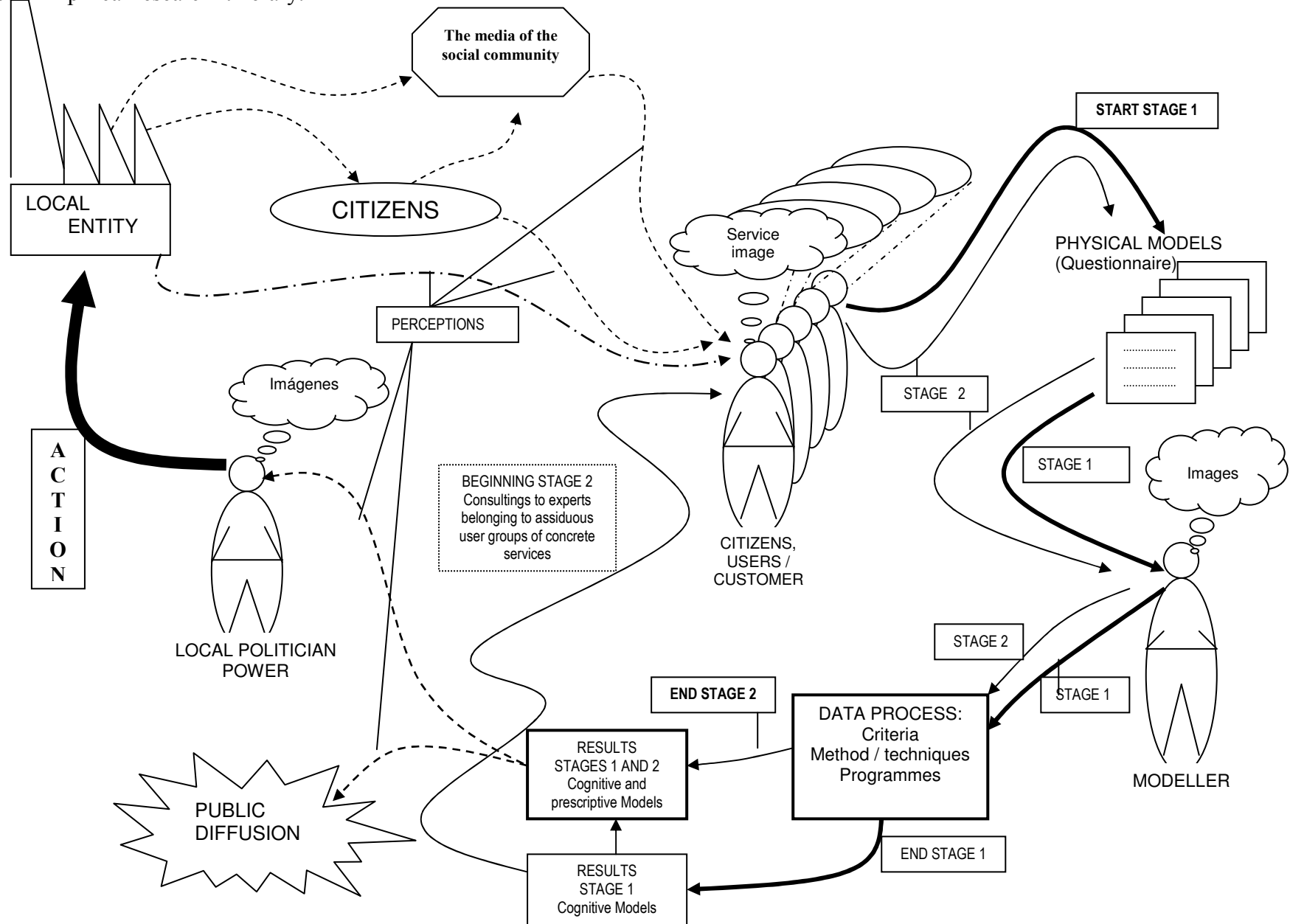
Figure 2. Empirical research itinerary.

The media of the social community

START STAGE 1

LOCAL ENTITY

CITIZENS

PHYSICAL MODELS (Questionnaire)

Service image

PERCEPTIONS

STAGE 2

Imágenes

STAGE 1

Images

A C T I O N

BEGINNING STAGE 2
Consultings to experts belonging to assiduous user groups of concrete services

CITIZENS, USERS / CUSTOMER

LOCAL POLITICIAN POWER

STAGE 2

STAGE 1

END STAGE 2

DATA PROCESS:
Criteria
Method / techniques
Programmes

PUBLIC DIFFUSION

RESULTS STAGES 1 AND 2
Cognitive and prescriptive Models

MODELLER

END STAGE 1

RESULTS STAGE 1
Cognitive Models

Table 1. Safety Policy: The Descriptive Model of Citizen Satisfaction Levels.

	SAFETY	Average	Average 5 years before
1	Fire	3,44	3,15
2	Civil Protection	3,02	2,79
3	Traffic and Road Services	**2,55**	2,33
4	Citizen Safety	**2,13**	2,02

Table 2. Governmental Analysis: Actions on Reality and on Image.

	IMAGES OF CITIZENS	VISIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT	ACTIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
1	Low-level satisfaction within the two services considered of Security policy is present in the minds of the citizens. (Negative image)	The government accepts or agrees with the citizen's assessment (low satisfaction)	Considering the available resources, the existent necessities, and the research contribution, the government will take the appropriate decisions in order to improve the services and therefore improve the image the citizens have of them. (Actions on reality and actions on the image)
2	Idem. (Negative image).	The government does not agree with the citizen's assessment. It considers that reality has been distorted or the image has been contaminated negatively.	Inform and convince the citizens of the inconsistency of their mental representations. Show them with solid and verified arguments that reality is different. (Actions on image)
3	The research reveals reasonable levels of citizen satisfaction with services. (Positive image)	The government accepts or agrees with the citizen's assessment, but wants to assess the improving services.	The second research stage could offer the government alternative actions. Based on this, one could deal with the improvement of services and their image. (Action on reality and on the image)
4	The research does not reveal the presence of determined construction work, road works, social events, services and uses, on the citizen image (positive). (Empty image)	The government is aware that because of some mistakes in its informative policy, the realities or services (positives) are unknown to citizens.	Broadcast to the citizens what they should have known for a long time. Make public knowledge that which never used to be. (Action on image, creation of an image)
5	The research offers, in the citizen image, the presence of determined constructions work, road works, social events, services and positive uses. (Positive image)	The government realise that there is positive distortion in the citizen image. Such realities do not exist and have never existed.	Alternative Action: 1-Studying the advisability of providing reality with that which the research has revealed the citizens have on their minds. (Action on reality) 2-Denying the existence of fictitious realities (Action on image)
6	The research does not reveal the presence of determined construction work, road works, social events, and uses, on the citizen image, that people use to value positively. (Empty image)	The government is aware that some construction work, social events, services and uses that people in general value very positively, are not carried out in the municipal.	Studying the advisability of providing the municipal (the reality) and the citizen image, with the construction work, road works, social events, services and uses that people in general value in a favourable way. (Action on reality and, if necessary, action on image)