

Revista de Administración Pública

INAP

Polo Martínez, Humberto. *Administración pública comunitaria y gobierno local en México: Las autoridades auxiliares municipales*. México, Instituto Nacional de Administración Pública, 2012.
Second place of the 36th INAP Awards.

Anahí Gutiérrez Luna

The essay titled: “**Communal Public Administration and local government in Mexico: auxiliary municipal authorities**” analyzes, as well as many other essays, the institutional structure of municipal and local governments which are part of the construction of the theory of public administration. This text also offers various proposals to improve communal public administration within the *institutional architecture of municipal governments* and promote city hall’s closeness with society, promoting Mexican State’s decentralization and democratization.

This research considers that municipal auxiliary authorities build communal public administration within the institutional architecture of municipal governments; its importance lies in the promotion of city hall’s closeness with society which in turn promotes general interest. Said authorities carry out important management tasks; therefore, if their status were recognized by the Constitution, they could become the main promoters of community-municipal development and guarantee the materialization of public policies with a bottom-up approach.

In this sense, one of the goals of this research is the theoretical and empirical contribution to current literature. It establishes a general framework that contributes to the academic debate regarding auxiliary municipal authorities’ public action in local governments. It mentions some proposals to improve and develop Mexican local government and supports the constitutionality of the State’s fourth level within the political organization.

Local Government = Municipal Government?

On the other hand, the empirical contribution is materialized by analyzing municipal auxiliary authorities’ public action’s institutional elements within

local governments of five states of the Republic in order to recognize administrative processes of local communities.

The first part of this research deals with this topic's theoretical-conceptual framework which is based on the universal character of administration which in turn is based on the communal nature of human beings. Later on, the explanation of communal administration allows us to link it to the organization of territorial and functional communities, this way, communal public administration become the object of study of this research. The last part of the first chapter deals with the questions that will guide this research such as the reason to study communal public administration.

The second chapter analyzes conceptual approaches which study local governments: the first one has a multi-use character and the other one is related to local municipal areas and government's closeness. This provides the opportunity to study the administrative-governmental status of city hall, which affects communal public administration. This chapter ends by analyzing the political-administrative organization of municipalities. The latter involves territorial spaces where the unit of analysis of this research is organized: auxiliary municipal authority.

Chapter three explains the elements of the organization, election and powers of auxiliary municipal authorities. The institutional design of actions carried out by auxiliary municipal authorities is limited, organic and occupational structures do not exist, resources are scarce, which affects the compliance of its social object as well as the efficiency to solve community needs and ensure city hall's territorial management.

The last chapter deals with the legal structure of five states and why they are considered the most advanced cases regarding municipal decongestion and the promotion of community closeness. The results of this research allow us to take into account work done by the state of Campeche, which is an example of municipal and communal strengthening.

This research also includes a review of valid legal legislations up to the year 2012, in order to understand the design of some actors that affect auxiliary municipal authorities' actions.

This makes clear that we need more research that yields empirical evidence on the character of informal institutions that determine the exercise of communal public administration regarding economic factors and public territorial management.

The most important part of this research is the conclusions of the five states research, especially because of the intra-municipal and intra-community institutional redesign proposal which includes constitutional recognition of

local communities as fourth level of political organization within the Mexican State; in order to provide them legal persona and patrimony, system of weights and counterweights in the interdependence of territorial bodies of the national political community.

If local communities are recognized as political, legal and social organizations the current legal status of its authority will change; auxiliary municipal authorities will become community governments. The author's proposals are feasible as long as there is progressive institutional change, auxiliary authorities' inner workings will have to adapt and promote institutional stability which is much needed in any institutionalization process carried out by a democratic regime.