

Participatory Public Policy Making

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The scientific monograph entitled Participatory Public Policy-Making brings new dimensions to the study of participation in public administration and builds on the long-term scientific research and pedagogical activities of doc. Ing. Katarína Vitálišová, PhD. and prof. Ing. Anna Vaňová, PhD., who work at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica. The publication responds to the long-term underdevelopment of knowledge in the field of participation, as well as to the insufficiently reflected transformation of public administration, which in many local governments is increasingly applying the principles of cooperation, transparency, and active participation of citizens and other stakeholders.

The aim of the monograph is to provide a systematic explanation of the theoretical and methodological foundations of public policy, with a special emphasis on participatory approaches and new forms of governance. The publication is the result of long-term research and teaching activities by the authors, and therefore captures the issue of participatory public policy-making in a broad and complex context, offering an analysis of the tools and mechanisms of participation and supplementing them with examples of good practice from abroad and from the Slovak Republic at the national, regional, and local levels. The monograph is aimed at experts, young researchers, and students of political science, public administration, economics, law, and regional development, as well as public policy makers and implementers with a real impact on the development of participation, cooperation, and open government principles, while also creating a solid theoretical basis for the creation of strategic documents in this area. The publication has a logical and clear structure consisting of three thematically linked parts that follow on from each other in terms of content.

The first chapter focuses on the theoretical definition of the terms public policy and public governance. The authors characterize the development of these concepts, identify the main actors in public policy, and describe the process of its creation, including the individual stages, tools, approaches, and the most common problems that accompany this process. The chapter concludes with an analysis of Slovak activities aimed at promoting the principles of open government, implemented within the framework of the international Open Government Partnership. The authors systematically describe the structure and content of individual action plans and assess their significance for the development of transparent, participatory, and accountable public administration in the Slovak Republic.

The second chapter focuses on participation as an element of modern public governance. The authors elaborate on the theoretical definition of participation in a democratic society and characterize the participatory process, its phases, and the conditions for its successful implementation. A significant part of the chapter is devoted to the analysis of specific instruments of

participation at the state, regional, and municipal levels, with an emphasis on their practical application in public administration. The chapter then systematically elaborates on approaches to evaluating participation, specifies its benefits for the quality of public decision-making, and critically analyzes the limits and risks of participatory processes.

The third chapter provides an overview of selected innovative tools and approaches in the field of public policy management and participation. The authors present the participatory budget in Banská Bystrica as a mechanism for direct citizen involvement in decision-making on public resources, innovative participatory planning tools applied in Tallinn, the concept of living labs as a platform for cooperation between the public sector, academia, and citizens, as well as the use of open data and the organization of hackathons, comprehensively elaborating on the mechanism of their implementation and practical application. They pay particular attention to the virtual walk method used by local governments in Denmark and Sweden to evaluate territory.

The monograph *Participatory Public Policy Making* provides a theoretically and methodologically grounded framework for a comprehensive analysis of participatory public policy making. The authors link conceptual foundations with current trends and innovative approaches in public governance and reflect on their applicability in the context of local government practice. The significance of the publication lies in linking theory with specific tools of participation and in analytically grasping their contributions to the transparency, openness, and quality of public decision-making. The monograph also creates a professional framework for further research and discussion on participatory forms of public administration. Overall, it is a significant contribution to the current discourse on participation in the public policy-making process.

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