Abstract

The Swiss experience is a mandatory reference when talking about participatory institutions and direct democracy, not only for its common use, but because it was one of the first regulations that incorporated these mechanisms to its constitution. This practice, dating back from medieval times, was included in the federal constitution of 1848 and implies incorporating the citizenship participation in different levels of the administration, increasingly from local level towards the superior structures of the administration. This mixture between federalism and direct democracy mechanisms has allowed over the last decades, as we will analyze in this article, to elaborate numerous researches over the convenience of citizenship participation and making Switzerland a particular form of State. In particular, Swiss constitutional treatment of referendum and popular legislative initiative is relevant for Latinamerica, being a direct precedent of several constitutional formulas, as in the cases of Uruguay and Colombia.

Keywords

Referendum, participation, democracy.