

# STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION OF THE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN ECUADOR

X. Peralta<sup>1</sup>, W. Morquecho<sup>2</sup>, A. Briozzo<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*University of Cuenca (Ecuador)*

<sup>2</sup>*Professional (Ecuador)*

<sup>3</sup>*Departamento de Ciencias de la Administración,  
Universidad Nacional del Sur (UNS) IIESS (UNS-CONICET)*

## Abstract

Notwithstanding of the different investigations all over the world related with the stakeholders theory and its identification, even today few authors inquire into what model or typology could be the most appropriate for the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Latin America, moreover, the problem remains in the public field.

Evidently, this problem is present in Ecuador as well. Therefore, looking for a response this paper reviews the stakeholder theory through the years, analysing the different contributions as concepts, definitions, theory validations and complementary models made by important authors. After the reviewing, it is necessary to establish the compatibility between stakeholders and public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Complementarily three theories are evaluated: Gardner's model of power and interest, Savage's model, and, Mitchell, Agle and Wood's model. It is proposed a process for each model, in order to complement their methodologies.

The mentioned models with their proposed processes will be validated using the Delphi method. The result will find the most appropriate model to identify the stakeholders of the public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of the zone six in Ecuador.

Keywords: stakeholder, public university, identification model.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The High Education Institutions have huge importance for different people and organizations because of their main activities: education and investigation, as a result, there is an economic, environmental and social impact. As all the organizations, the Universities look for a great performance, nevertheless, there are marked differences between the public and private field. This research focus the analysis in the public field, specifically in Ecuador (South America), zone six: Cañar, Azuay and Morona Santiago [1].

The objective of the analysis is to select the most appropriate model to identify the stakeholders of the public HEIs in the zone six, but it's necessary to clarify the concepts and definitions through the time about stakeholders. In order to achieve the objective, this paper has the following structure:

First, it is presented the evolution of the stakeholder theory. Second, it is explained the compatibility of the stakeholder theory with the public university. Third, it is indicated the models considered for this analysis. Fourth, there is a theoretical explanation about expert consultation. Fifth, it presents the results about which model is considered the best one. Finally, the conclusion about all the analysis.

## 2 EVOLUTION OF THE STAKEHOLDER THEORY

Freeman created the stakeholder concept in his book Strategic Management: A stakeholder approach in 1984, defined as: "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives" [2]. However, Ricardo Gaete mentions that this term has an older origin; Merrick Dodd investigated it in 1932 analyzing the speeches of the executives in General Electric. Gaete also considers that the Stanford Research Institute coined it for the first time in 1963 [3]. In despite of this, the researchers consider Freeman's definition as the reference in the investigations.

There are many investigations related with this theory, it has supporters and doubters. However, with each new argument this theory has been increasing its validity and applicability in the organizations. Table 1 describes different contributions to the theory, some authors give a definition and others

contribute with complementary analysis from other fields. The presented descriptions establish the basis and connections between the stakeholder theory and the University.

*Table 1. Evolution of the stakeholder theory*

Year	Contribution
1932	Merrick Dodd gave the first notion about this concept: the business corporation should be an economic institution, which has a social service as well as a profit-making function. Not only the business has responsibilities with employees and community, but also the corporate managers (Voluntarily) [4].
1963	Stanford Research Institute defined a stakeholder formally in one memorandum: "those groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist" [5].
1984	Freeman related the definition with business: "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives" [2].
1994	Clarkson gave a new definition after 10 years of researching: "stakeholders are persons or groups that have, or claim, ownership, rights, or interests in a corporation and its activities, past, present, or future" [6].
1995	Donaldson and Preston validated the justification for the stakeholder theory: "the ultimate justification for the stakeholder theory is its normative base. The "management serving the shareowners" is morally untenable. The theory of property rights supports the stakeholder theory" [5].
1997	Mitchell, Agle and Wood developed a typology to identify stakeholders considering the next attributes: "the stakeholder's power to influence the firm, the legitimacy of the stakeholder's relationship with the firm, and the urgency of the stakeholder's claim on the firm" [7].
1997	Rowley used social network analysis (density, centrality) to construct a theory of stakeholders influences, independent stakeholders demands and how the organizations respond that influence [8].
1999	Frooman proposed strategies that the stakeholders can use to influence an organization: direct or indirect withholding, direct or indirect usage, those strategies would be selected considering the resource relationship and the balance of power implied in the relationship [9].
2002	Wolfe and Putler proved the stakeholder homogeneity using a metric conjoint analysis, they found that the "self-interest is often not a sufficient "binding tie" to create homogenous priorities within a role-based stakeholder group" [10].
2004	Savage developed a model to identify the stakeholders and response the financial mismanagement and fraud for the West Alabama Health Services. It was used a matrix with two variables: stakeholder capacity, willingness and opportunity to cooperate; and stakeholder capacity, willingness and opportunity to threaten [11].

*Source: Compiled by authors*

### **3 IS STAKEHOLDER THEORY COMPATIBLE WITH PUBLIC UNIVERSITY?**

Before answering this question, it is necessary to consider the difference between the public and private organizations. The Organization for Economic Co – operation and Development (OECD) define a private institution as: "An institution is classified as private if it is controlled and managed by a non-governmental organization, or if its Governing Board consists mostly of members not selected by a public agency" [12]. OECD also define a public institution as: "An institution is classified as public if it is controlled and

managed directly by a public education authority or agency or; is controlled and managed either by a government agency directly or by a governing body, most of whose members are appointed by a public authority or elected by public franchise” [12].

These definitions describe perfectly the difference between these fields. However, one difference with the mentioned concept in the public High Education Institutions in Ecuador is how they appoint their authorities. Universities have autonomy to establish its own system to elect them. The budget is other clear difference; the public field has two incomes, the first comes from the state and the second from self-management while the private fields depends exclusively on its performance.

Other important consideration are the fields where this theory has been applied, Freeman and Miles mention in his book *Stakeholders Theory and Practice* the following ones: financial reporting, corporate governance, business ethics and marketing [13]. Kakabadse, Rozuel and Lee-Davies argue that “the concepts of Corporate Social Responsibility and stakeholder are intertwined” [14].

After all these considerations, the answer is clear: yes, the stakeholder theory is compatible with public university. As any organization, the public universities need to be competitive. In order to achieve this goal, one useful strategic tool is clearly the stakeholder theory.

## 4 HOW TO IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS OF THE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY?

This question has no clear answer. Some authors as Ricardo Gaete have identified the university stakeholders of *Andalucía* and *Castilla y León* analysing generic and extended typologies to find the most frequent stakeholders. He also analysed the web’s links, it means, for whom they were directed. He identified as stakeholders: employees, clients, shareholders, national or regional governments, suppliers and local community [3].

Ignacio Aldeanueva identified as stakeholders: Administration and services staff, teacher and investigator staff, students (alumni), business and society. His findings were based on the Forum of the Social Councils of the Public Universities of Andalucía (2009).

While Chapleo and Simms applied a case of study in the University of Portsmouth. Using interviews they identified as stakeholders: Staff (academic and non – academic), direct students funders (relatives and parents), students (current, prospective and alumni), students bodies, academic and research bodies & other funding councils, geographical stakeholders, university based stakeholders (trustees, chancellor, agents and governors), other national direct stakeholders and other national indirect stakeholders [15].

V. A. Cloquell, V. Cloquell and M. Pérez used Mitchell, Agle and Wood’s model to identify the groups involved with university in Spain. They applied an exploratory research measuring power, interest, urgency and legitimacy. They identified as stakeholders: students, professors, parents, syndicates, non-professor staff, universities, editorials, religious groups, scholar materials suppliers, autonomy administrations and European administration [16].

Nevertheless, all the identifications have validity. The question remains, because there are more models and they can be applied as well. In previous works the argument to select a specific model is not explained. For that reason, it is presented three potential models to identify the stakeholders for the public High Education Institutions identification of the zone six in Ecuador.

### 4.1 Gardner’s model

Gardner, Rachlin and Sweeny developed this model in 1986. Nonetheless, it is known as Gardner’s model. It considers two va

riables: power of each stakeholder and the interest level for the business strategies [17]. It is recommended to follow the next process:

1. Use a brainstorm to identify the potential stakeholders (secondary information is available). Prioritize the stakeholders using the power / interest matrix (Fig. 1). There is a strategy for each kind of stakeholder:
  - High power, high interest (Manage Closely): Engage these people completely and make the greatest efforts to satisfy them.
  - High power, low interest (Keep Satisfied): Work to keep them satisfied, but not so much that they become bored with your message.

- Low power, high interest (Keep Informed): Inform these people, and talk to them to ensure that no major issues are arising.
- Low power, low interest (Monitor): Monitor these people, but do not bore them with excessive communication.

		Interest level	
		Low	High
Power	Low	A (Monitor)	B (Keep informed)
	High	C (Keep satisfied)	D (Manage closely)

Figure 1. Power / Interest Matrix

Source: From Handbook of Strategic Planning Gardner, by Rachlin and Sweeny (1986)

2. A complement for this model is to know better the stakeholders, they can be asked the following questions directly [18]:
  - What financial or emotional interest do they have in the outcome of the organization's work? Is it positive or negative?
  - What motivates the stakeholders most of all?
  - What information do they want from the organization, and what is the best way of communicating with them?
  - What is their current opinion the work of the organization? Is it based on good information?
  - Who influences their opinions generally, and who influences their opinion of the organization? Do some of these influencers therefore become important stakeholders in their own right?
  - If they are not likely to be positive, what will win them around to support the organization?
  - If the organization do not think that it will be able to win them around, how will the organization manage their opposition?
  - Who else might be influenced by their opinions? Do these people become stakeholders in their own right?
3. The stakeholders can have a colour code to identify them quickly. Table 2 indicates the colour code. The selected strategies will have better reception when the organization considers the stakeholders interests.

Table 2. Level of stakeholder support

Colour	Level of support
Green	Advocates and supporters
Orange	Neutral
Red	Opponents and critics

Source: Adapted from Winning Support for Your Project, by Rachel Thompson (2018) [19]

## 4.2 Savage's model

Savage, Dunkin and Ford created this model in 2004. As the previous model, a double entry matrix is used. It has two critical axes: the first is stakeholder capacity, willingness and opportunity to cooperate and the second is stakeholder capacity, willingness and opportunity to threaten [11]. It is recommended to apply the next process:

1. Identify the potential stakeholders (secondary information is available to select them).
2. Define the stakeholders using the support / threat matrix (Fig. 2) and considering the level of control over the resources:

- Compare the level of power of the stakeholder and the organization.
- The probability that the stakeholder carry out cooperative actions or not.
- The probability that the stakeholder forms coalitions within the organization

		Stakeholder capacity, willingness and opportunity to threaten	
		Low	High
Stakeholder capacity, willingness and opportunity to cooperate	Low	Marginal (Monitor)	Nonsupportive (Defend)
	High	Supportive (Involved)	Mixed blessing (Collaborate)

Figure 2. Support / Threat matrix

Source: Adapted from *Responding to a crisis: A stakeholder analysis of community health organizations*, by Savage, Dukin and Ford (2004)

3. Analyze the stakeholder potential to cooperate or threaten the organization. With this analysis the strategies will be implemented without conflict of interests and the stakeholder will feel integrated in the decision – making.

### 4.3 Mitchell, Agle and Wood’s model

This model was created in 1997 [7] [20]. It identifies the stakeholders using three variables: power, legitimacy and urgency. In order to apply it, it is recommended to follow the next process:

1. This model requires identifying the potential stakeholders (secondary information is useful).
2. Determinate the level of the three variables power, legitimacy and urgency:
  - **Power:** The ability of the stakeholder to influence the organization in such a way that it would not otherwise have done so. For the evaluation of power, it is necessary to choose the degree of resources’ sensitivity, with a scale between zero and three, zero means that there is no sensitivity and three extreme sensitivity. Then the resource degree (availability) that each actor owns is evaluated, with a scale of zero to three, zero means that the actor does not own the resource in question and three that owns it in a magnitude of maximum influence.

Table 3. Power matrix

Stakeholder	Resources of power							Level of power
	Coercive media		Utilitarian media				Symbolic media	
	Physical strength	Weapons	Physical materials	Financials	Logistics	Technological	Recognition and esteem	
Resources’ sensitivity degree								
Actor n								
Availability degree								
Power degree								

Source: Adapted from *Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience : Defining the Principle of Who and What Really Counts*, by Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997). And from *Identificación*

de los stakeholders y conflictos de interés en las cooperativas de ahorro y crédito del ecuador, by Salazar (2015)

- **Legitimacy:** The relationship and actions of the stakeholder with the organization in terms of desirability, property or convenience. To assess legitimacy, it is necessary to analyze desirability at the organizational and social level. For both cases a scale from zero to three is used, zero means that the actions of the actor are perceived as undesirable and three as highly desirable.

Table 4. Legitimacy matrix

Stakeholder	Desirability levels		Total level of legitimacy
	Organization	Society	
Actor 1			
Actor n			

Source: Adapted from *Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience : Defining the Principle of Who and What Really Counts*, by Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997). And from *Identificación de los stakeholders y conflictos de interés en las cooperativas de ahorro y crédito del ecuador*, by Salazar (2015)

- **Urgency:** The requirements that the stakeholder demands immediately from the organization, to determine it, the temporal sensitivity and criticality are evaluated. For the temporal sensitivity and criticality, a scale of zero to three is used, for the first zero means total acceptance of the delay and three non-acceptance of the delay; and for the second, zero means non-critical factors that do not imply losses and three highly critical factors that imply losses.

Table 5. Urgency matrix

Stakeholder	Urgency criteria		Total level of urgency
	Temporal sensibility	Criticality	
Actor 1			
Actor n			

Source: Adapted from *Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience : Defining the Principle of Who and What Really Counts*, by Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997). And from *Identificación de los stakeholders y conflictos de interés en las cooperativas de ahorro y crédito del ecuador*, by Salazar (2015)

3. Build the consolidation matrix using the matrices of power, legitimacy and urgency, after calculate the preponderance index with the standard data of the matrices:

Table 6. Consolidated matrix

Stakeholder	Level of power (A)		Level of legitimacy (B)		Level of urgency (C)		Total AxBxC	Preponderance Index
	Total	Standard	Total	Standard	Total	Standard		
Actor 1								
Actor n								

Source: Adapted from *Identificación de los stakeholders y conflictos de interés en las cooperativas de ahorro y crédito del Ecuador*, by Salazar (2015)

- Classify the stakeholders. Table 6 calculated the standard level of power, legitimacy and urgency. If the standard level of power is greater than or equal to one, the stakeholder possesses it, but if the standard level of power is less than one, the stakeholder does not possess it. The legitimacy and urgency have the same criteria of evaluation. The valuation generates seven types of stakeholders (Fig. 3): dormant, discretionary, demanding, dangerous, definitive, dependent and definitive. If the potential stakeholder doesn't have any variable, it is considered a non-stakeholder.

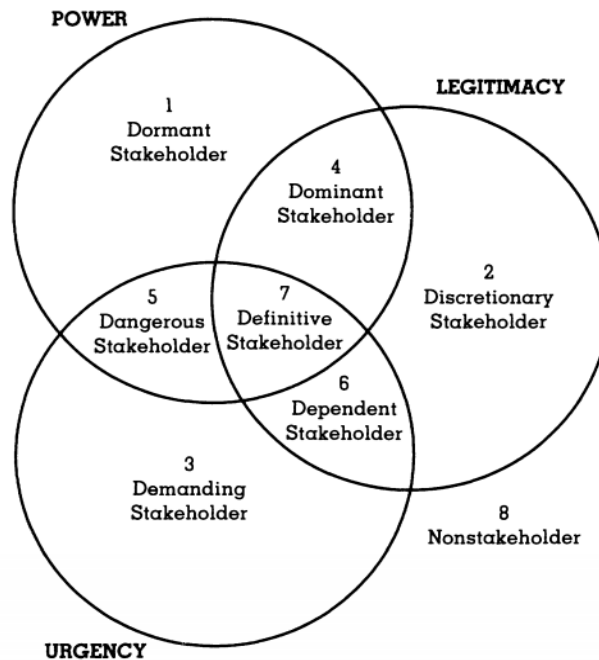


Figure 3. Stakeholder typology

Source: Taken from *Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience: Defining the Principle of Who and What Really Counts*, by Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997)

- Determine the adequate strategy based on the level of power, legitimacy and urgency for the identified stakeholders.

## 5 METHODOLOGY

This analysis requires expertise and experience in the public High Education Institutions, because the identified stakeholders condition the strategies and goals for these organizations. In addition, the three models are subjective and this represents a disadvantage. Therefore, the Delphi method is adequate for this analysis.

### 5.1 The Delphi method

Dalkey and Helmer developed the Delphi method in 1950. Hsu and Stanford describe it as: "is a widely used and accepted method for achieving convergence of opinion concerning real-world knowledge solicited from experts within certain topic areas" [21]. This method is so useful considering its premise that two heads (or n heads) are better than one.

The Delphi method uses questionnaires with different kinds of questions and scales. The advantages of this method are flexibility, simplicity, knowledge sharing, cost effectiveness, freedom of expression, ease of communication, membership variations and lack of geographical limitation [22]. The disadvantages are researcher bias, researcher shortcomings, panel meme anonymity and petulance [22]. The present analysis followed the next steps:

- Design of the questionnaire (see the Annex 1).

2. Selecting the experts for the Delphi method. The recommended sample is between 6 to 30 participants [23], but it is not a rule. For this analysis, seven experts participated because of the concrete field. For that reason, the experts were selected carefully. Five experts have a PhD level. The other two have a Master level however; they are studying a PhD as well. All the experts work for a public University. Five experts are from Brazil and are currently part of an investigation group about university management in different contexts; they also work in management levels and are professors. One expert is from Chile, who collaborates in the Department of Development Sciences and works in a project called "University Governance". One expert is from Ecuador, who has 20 years of professional experience as director, manager and consultant in Latin America, cooperating with different agencies and the third sector and high experience in policy in Ecuador and Bolivia.

*Table 7. Data sheet of Delphi method*

<b>Sample</b>	7
<b>Date of empirical work</b>	November 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2018
<b>Type of study</b>	Delphi method

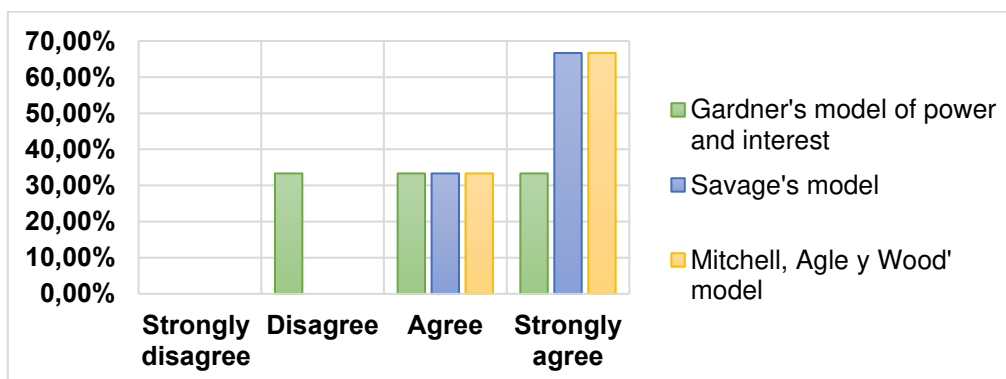
*Source: Elaborated by Authors (2018)*

3. Sending the invitations to the experts (e-mail).
4. Sending the questionnaires to the experts.
5. Analyzing the answers (percentages and the coefficient of variation).

## 6 RESULTS

From the question one to four, exist 100% of approbation. The experts agreed with the implementation of the good governance process to start from a shared and participatory government for the public High Education Institutions of the zone 6 in Ecuador. They also considered necessary to have a clear and effective public leadership, capable of attracting the participation, coordination and collaboration of all the stakeholders. Moreover, they approved the Delphi method as the correct methodology.

The question number five evaluates the three proposed models. Figure 4 presents the results:



*Figure 4. Evaluated models*  
*Source: Elaborated by Authors (2018)*

The coefficient of variation has to be less or equal than 0.20 to have an acceptable consensus level. The 33.33 % of experts disagree with the Gardner's model as the appropriate typology, 33.33% agree and 33.33% strongly agree, its mean is three, the standard deviation is 0.82 and the coefficient of variation is 0.27.



So much the Savage's model as of Mitchell, Agle and Wood's model obtained the same results, 33.33% of experts agree with them as an appropriate typology and the 66.67% strongly agree. Their mean is 3.67, the standard deviation is 0.47 and the coefficient of variation is 0.13.

The coefficient of variation of the Gardner's model 0.27 is greater than 0.20, consequently this model doesn't reach an acceptable consensus level. The coefficient of variation of the Savage's model 0.13 is less than 0.20; therefore, this model reached an acceptable consensus level. Finally, the coefficient of variation of the Mitchell, Agle and Wood's model 0.13 is less than 0.20, indicating an acceptable consensus level for this model as well.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

The results of the Delphi method suggest, as an appropriate model, Savage's model and Mitchell, Agle and Wood's model. Their level of consensus indicates that both models are useful to identify the stakeholders of the public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of the zone six in Ecuador.

The public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can select one of them considering their contexts and needs. Later they can select the correct strategies in conjunction with their stakeholders.

The identification and incidence of the stakeholders are related with the governance in the public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of the zone six in Ecuador.

Savage's model and Mitchell, Agle and Wood's model are still subjective. In order to reduce it, it is recommended to include the potential stakeholders in the identifying process and follow the steps described in the section 4.2 and 4.3 (depending of the selected model the steps change). They can contribute a different perspective about their relation with the public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of the zone six in Ecuador. The final stakeholders would be validated not only for the investigator but also for the potential stakeholders.

As future line of investigation is the proposal of a management model under a governance approach alienated with the stakeholders identification and incidence as Ximena Peralta argued in her work, "The governance in the public universities: incidence of the stakeholders in the levels of university management"[24]. This model validation is the first step to create a governance model.

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**Annex 1. Questionnaire**

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**VALIDATING THE STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION AND INCIDENCE IN THE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY**

**Dear professor / investigator,**

We ask you very cordial, your collaboration with filling the next questionnaire; it will validate the most appropriate model to identify the stakeholder of the public High Education Institutions in Ecuador, zone 6. This survey supports the capability among stakeholders, public university and governance. We thank you in advance for your valuable participation.

**Note: It is necessary to indicate that in the attached file you can find annexes that contain backup information to help answer some questions (the name of the document to be reviewed is specified in the question).**

**1. Do you consider it appropriate for the implementation of the good governance process to start from a shared and participatory government?**

**(Mark with an "X", choose a single answer)**

Yes   
No

If the answer is No, why? \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Do you consider it necessary to have clear and effective public leadership capable of attracting the participation, coordination and collaboration of all stakeholders?**

**(Mark with an "X", choose a single answer)**

Yes   
No

If the answer is No, why? \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Do you consider it necessary for the experts to participate as advisors and to support the different interest groups?**

**(Mark with an "X", choose a single answer)**

Yes   
No

If the answer is No, why? \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Is it necessary to identify the stakeholders involved in university management under a good governance approach, and determine their characteristics?**

**(If your answer is yes, continue to question 5, otherwise explain the reason for the disagreement and thank you very much for your participation)**

Yes   
No

If the answer is No, why? \_\_\_\_\_ The questionnaire has ended

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**5. Please, indicate your level of agreement or disagreement regarding the appropriate typology for the identification and incidence of the stakeholders. (Review Annex 1)**  
**(1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree and 4 = Strongly agree)**

<b>Typology</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Gardner's model of power and interest				
Savage's model				
Mitchell, Agle y Wood' model				
Other, which one would you suggest.				

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COLLABORATION!**

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**Annex 2. Experts' professional profile**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Professional profile</b>
Brazil	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ph. D. in Production engineering, Master in Cardiovascular Sciences, physiotherapist. Professor and coordinator of the integrated Health Clinics at La Salle University. Vice – leader of the research group: Educational management in different contexts.</li> <li>2. Ph. D. in Education, Master in Education. Specialist in psychopedagogy and graduated in Higher Normal. Teacher of pedagogy course and collaborating researcher of the postgraduate program in education of the La Salle University. Member of the research group: Educational management in different contexts.</li> <li>3. Ph. D. in Production and systems engineering. Master business management. Marketing specialist. Master in Management of Higher Education. Business administrator with experience in large organizations. Consultant, researcher and professor. Member of the research group: Educational management in different contexts.</li> <li>4. Ph. D. in Education, Post doctor in Educational sciences. Master in Social and Institutional Psychology. Bachelor in Philosophy and Psychology degree. Rector of the La Salle University. Teacher and researcher. Leader of the research group: Educational management in different contexts.</li> <li>5. Ph. D. in Education, Master in Engineering. Master in Management of Higher Education Institutions and Bachelor in Administration degree. Pro – rector of Administration, professor and researcher. Member of the research group: Educational management in different contexts.</li> </ol>
Chile	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. University of Los Lagos. Currently working on the Department of Development Sciences. Also investigating the Representation and Electoral Systems, Public Policies and Public Administration. His current project is "University Governance".</li> </ol>
Ecuador	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Doctoral student in global governance and rule of law. Master in Political Science. Master of Arts in Political Studies. The political scientist with more than 20 years of professional experience as director, manager and consultant in Latin America. Extensive work experience in transparency strategies, good governance, conflict resolution, conservation of the environment, empowerment of civil society, improvement of political groups and constitutional reform. Strong focus on working with women, youth and indigenous people. Important experience acquired with cooperation agencies and third sector: USAID, NDI, DFID, UNDP, IDEA, AECID, IT, Konrad Adenauer, Friedrich Ebert Foundations and AVINA. Member of the Constitutional Assembly of Ecuador (1997-1998), Executive Secretary of the "Inter-American Democracy Network" (2003), Executive Secretary of the "Latin American Initiative for Public Policy Research" (2016-2018). Member of the Ecuadorian Foreign Service (2009-2011). Coach and teacher with 10 years of experience in Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Panama and Spain.</li> </ol>