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Participatory Budgets in Europe: Between Civic Participation and Modernisation of Public Administration

Typology of Procedures

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What is Participatory budgeting? (I)

- An empirical or a nominalist definition impossible at a comparative level
- An essentialist definition illegitimate
- A methodological definition (not normative)
- A requisite: must be comprehensive enough

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What is Participatory budgeting? (II)

PB allows the participation of non-elected citizens in the conception and/or allocation of public finances. In Europe, in order to sever it from other participatory instruments, five criteria need to be added:

1. The financial and/or budgetary dimension must be discussed; PB is dealing with the problem of limited resources
2. The city level has to be involved, or a (decentralised) district with an elected body and some power over administration (the neighbourhood level is not enough)
3. It has to be a repeated process (one meeting or one referendum on financial issues are not examples of participatory budgeting)
4. The process must include some form of public deliberation within the framework of specific meetings/forums (the opening of administrative meetings or classical representative instances to “normal” citizens is not PB)
5. Some accountability on the output is required

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Three precisions

1. Some PBs may be “more PB” than others
2. The urban context (size of the town/district, existence of social problems, etc.) is not a criterion for this definition, but has an influence on the dynamics of the cases
3. This definition relies on the procedure (and not the general dynamic or outcomes of PB)

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Why a typology?

- Many cases of PB in Europe: difficult to understand the multiplicity of experiments
- Creation of semi-abstract ideal-types
- Ideal-typical map instead of empirical table
- This procedural typology may be included in a more global typology

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Four criteria

1. Origin
2. Organisation of meetings
3. Type of deliberation
4. Position of civil society in the procedure

One additional dimension

Strengths, weaknesses, challenges

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1. Origin

- PBs often have their origin in previous participatory devices from which they integrate some elements
- Some PB procedures may represent a break with the past
- Present differences between various PB ideal-types stem largely from diverging local “pre-histories”
- Some standardised procedures

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2. Organisation of the meetings

- Neighbourhood, city and/or thematic assemblies
- Closed vs. public meetings
- Regularity of participation (cycle vs. one or two meetings)
- Existence of delegates (no, one or two levels of delegation)

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3. Type of deliberation

- Topics of discussion: projects/investments, general financial situation, specific sectors (e.g. school), norms of public policies
- Modalities of discussion: discussion of projects/investments without prioritisation, discussion of projects/investments with prioritisation, discussion of general priorities
- Existence of a body of clear rules vs. informal discussions
- Quality of deliberation
- Existence of distributive criteria or mechanisms for affirmative action (for specific areas, social classes, gender, outsiders such as minority groups, etc.)

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4. Position of civil society in procedure

- Kind of civil society (includes or not the business organisations)
- Type of participating citizens (social sectors, organised citizens, active citizens, ordinary citizens, all citizens)
- Elaboration of methodology (administration, politicians, civil society, third actors)
- Procedural autonomy of civil society (co-elaboration of methodology, meetings of civil society without administration/councillors, etc.)
- Decision-making competence (deliberative competence vs. mere consultation and selective listening, strong or weak public sphere)
- Accountability

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5. Strengths, weaknesses, challenges

- A cognitive and normative evaluation
- The procedural strengths, weaknesses and challenges of each model are explained regarding its internal logic
- They are also explained according to a comparison between the various models

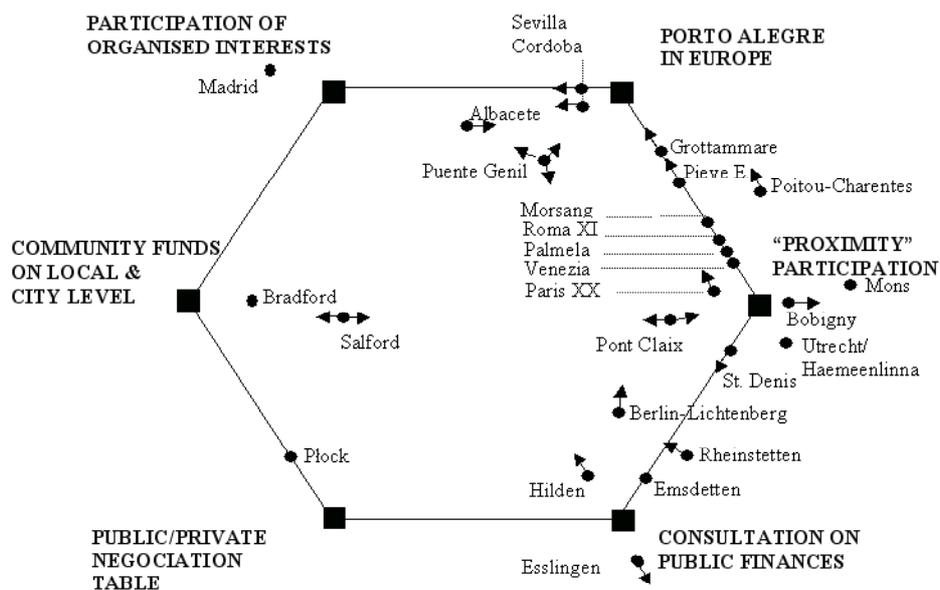
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Six procedures of Participatory Budgeting in Europe

1. Porto Alegre adapted for Europe
2. Proximity participation
3. Consultation on public finances
4. The public/private negotiation table
5. Community funds at local and city level
6. Participation of organised interests

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The six procedures of European PB: A map



(1) Porto Alegre adapted for Europe

Origin

- The Porto Alegre model from Brazil
- In Europe, represents a break with traditional devices of participation
- Porto Alegre as a standardised procedure has been popularised within the anti-globalisation movement and analysed by researchers

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Porto Alegre adapted for Europe

Organisation

- Neighbourhood, city; thematic assemblies possible
- Open access for any interested citizen in local assemblies
- Cycle of participation
- 1-2 delegation levels

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Porto Alegre adapted for Europe Deliberation

- Investments
- Discussion of projects/investments with prioritisation, discussion of general priorities
- Body of participatory rules
- Medium to good deliberative quality
- Existence of distributive criteria

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Porto Alegre adapted for Europe Civil Society

- Business is excluded
- Above all active citizens, informal role of organised citizens
- Civil society influences methodology
- Procedural autonomy of civil society
- Decision-making competence
- Strong accountability

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Porto Alegre adapted for Europe

Strengths, weaknesses, challenges

- *Strengths*: Deliberative quality; co-decision capacity is stimulus for citizens to participate; avoids the arbitrary of selective listening
- *Weaknesses*: the implementation of decisions is not very participatory; no direct link to modernisation; conflicts of power/legitimacy between ordinary citizens and associations
- *Challenges*: Integrate the possibility of co-realisation; articulation between participation and modernisation; increase participation; clear positive role for organised citizens

Examples: Mostly in Spain (Cordoba, Albacete and Sevilla, with some influence of Organised interests); and in Italy (Pieve Emmanuele, Grottammare); some influence on other Italian or French experiments near to Proximity (Rom XI, Paris 20, Venezia, Palmela, Morsang...)

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(2) Proximity participation

Origin

- Neighbourhood councils, neighbourhood funds
- Urban regeneration policies based on participation
- Extension from the neighbourhood level to the city, often largely inspired by the POA experiment, leads to PB
- No standardised procedure

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Proximity participation

Organisation

- Coexistence of different participatory instruments at city- and neighbourhood level, various types of local and citywide assemblies
- Open access to any interested citizen
- Cycle of participation
- Weak forms of delegation possible (1 level)

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Proximity participation

Deliberation

- Investments in the neighbourhood, concrete projects, strategic planning possible
- Discussions of projects/investments without prioritisation
- Very informal rules
- Low-medium deliberative quality (summing-up of discussion made by administration)
- No distributive criteria

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Proximity participation Civil Society

- Business excluded from the BP
- Most of all active citizens, informal role of organised citizens
- Weak influence of civil society on methodology
- Low procedural autonomy of civil society
- Consultative influence on decision (“selective listening”)
- Medium to strong accountability at the neighbourhood level

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Proximity participation Strengths, weaknesses, challenges

- *Strengths:* Better communication between residents and local government; motivation for participation through discussion on „everyday life“ aspects; good articulation with public administration at the neighbourhood level
- *Weaknesses:* “Selective listening”; informality of process; weak link to modernisation beyond the neighbourhood level
- *Challenges:* scale (go beyond neighbourhood level); articulation of the various instruments of participation; articulation between participation and modernisation

Examples: Most French towns; Mons (Belgium), Palmela (Portugal) and several Italian experiments; some influence on Rheinstetten (Germany)

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(3) Consultation on public finances

Origin

- The reform model for public administration of the city of Christchurch (New Zealand)
- Participative versions of New Public Management devices (example: “Bürgerkommune”)
- Participative strategic planning, citizen juries
- Stress on participation and on financial topics leads to PB
- 2 standardised procedures: a. information – consultation - accountability (Bertelsmann Foundation);
b. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (with some influence of the POA model)

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Consultation on public finances

Organisation

- City level
- Usually open access to all citizens, designation by lot possible
- No cycle (often one meeting/year)
- No delegation

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Consultation on public finances

Deliberation

- Information on general financial situation and/or on concrete services; two thematic variants: (1) Evaluation of public services and institutions; (2) Budget balancing
- Discussion of projects/investments without prioritisation, general priorities
- Body of participatory rules possible
- Low deliberative quality
- No distributive criteria

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Consultation on public finances

Civil Society

- Business marginal
- Active (voluntary) or ordinary (randomly selected) citizens
- Administration sets agenda and elaborates methodology
- Weak procedural autonomy of civil society
- Consultative influence (“selective listening”)
- Weak to medium accountability

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Consultation on public finances

Strengths, weaknesses, challenges

- *Strengths*: Link between participation and modernisation at the city level; discussion of the global orientations; use of innovative techniques for the association of ordinary citizens (random selection)
- *Weaknesses*: Participation only a secondary aspect of modernisation; weak civil society/domination of administration; no meetings in neighbourhoods; low deliberative quality; no implementation; no decision-making competence; few or no links with the municipal political structure
- *Challenges*: A real virtuous cycle between participation and modernisation; to increase participation; to move beyond consultation; articulation city-level/neighbourhood level; a cycle of participation all along the year

Examples: Most German experiments (Hilden, Berlin Lichtenberg, Rheinstetten, Emsdetten); some influence on French examples (Saint-Denis, Pont-de-Claix)

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(4) The Public/Private negotiation table

Origin

- Participative versions of Public Private Partnership devices
- Procedures proposed by international programs for local development (United Nations, World Bank outside Europe)
- No influence or indirect influence of Porto Alegre, stress on participation leads to PB
- Standardised procedure from the UNO

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The Public/Private negotiation table Organisation

- City-level fund for single projects
- Closed meetings
- Cycle possible
- One delegation level (for NGOs which take part)

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The Public/Private negotiation table Deliberation

- Discussion of concrete projects partly financed with external money (private sector, international organisations: “trust fund”); elements of strategic planning; strong economic dimension; no relation with the municipal budget
- Discussion of projects/investments with prioritisation
- Existence of a body of rules probable
- Medium to good deliberative quality
- Affirmative action criteria possible

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The Public/Private negotiation table Civil Society

- 3/4 sectors: Business; local authority; NGOs; international organisations possible
- Organised/active citizens
- Methodology influenced by donor
- Citizens and NGOs have a secondary role and a weak procedural autonomy
- Decision-making competence
- Variable accountability

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The Public/Private negotiation table Strengths, weaknesses, challenges

- *Strengths*: Large “hybrid forum” with all stake-holders; deliberation and decision-making competence; fits well in a context where local authorities have limited resources
- *Weaknesses*: Limited influence of citizens/dominance of economic considerations; inherent instability due to the absence of a legal base; weak or no link to municipal political structure
- *Challenges*: to strengthen the role of local government and “citizen” civil society; to avoid reducing deliberation to bargaining; new legitimacy and capacity of action for politics

Example: Płock, Poland

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(5) Community funds at local and city level

Origin

- Participatory procedures for community groups (Community Development Corporations, etc.), urban regeneration policies aiming particularly at the empowerment of communities
- The extension to the city and the influence of the POA procedure lead to PB
- Standardised procedures often developed and proposed by NGOs (Community Pride)

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Community funds at local and city level

Organisation

- Money does not come (only) from the local government
 - Open or closed meetings
 - Community groups implement the projects
- a) Local level**
- Funds for specific community groups in disadvantaged neighbourhoods
 - Regular meetings, organised in each particular community
 - One delegation level possible (from residents to community groups)
- b) City level**
- One community fund, one committee
 - One or several closed meetings
 - One delegation level (from the community groups to the city-level community fund)

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**Community funds at local
and city level**
Deliberation

- Investments or other concrete projects for specific community groups
- Prioritisation of projects/investments
- Body of participatory rules probable
- Medium to good deliberative quality
- Distributive criteria or affirmative action criteria probable

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**Community funds at local
and city level**
Civil Society

- Business excluded or marginal
- Organised citizens; special attention to specific groups (e.g. ethnic minorities); micro-local level: active or organised citizens
- Influence of civil society on methodology possible
- Strong procedural autonomy of civil society
- Decision-making competence
- Variable accountability

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Community funds at local and city level

Strengths, weaknesses, challenges

- *Strengths:* Decision-power and good deliberation; empowerment of particular disadvantaged groups; participatory implementation
- *Weaknesses:* No participation of ordinary citizens; weak or no link to municipal political structure; no link with administrative reform
- *Challenges:* Broad participation; effects on local politics

Examples: Bradford (GB); influence on Salford (GB); weak influence on Płock (Poland)

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(6) Participation of organised interests

Origin

- Traditional local neo-corporatist arrangements in social and/or economic sectors
- Local Agenda 21, strategic planning
- Procedures that rest on the participation of local associations
- Influence of POA leads to PB; procedure now organised around the municipal budget
- Some influence of standardised procedures coming from international programs for local development (United Nations, World Bank)

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Participation of organised interests

Organisation

- City level; thematic meetings probable, neighbourhood level possible
- Meetings of local government and administration with organised interests; local government is the central actor
- Cycle of participation
- 1 delegation level

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Participation of organised interests

Deliberation

- Discussion of general priorities, strategic planning (concrete projects/investments possible)
- Semi-formal participatory rules
- Medium to high deliberative quality
- Affirmative action criteria possible

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Participation of organised interests Civil Society

- Not only civil society, participation of business organisations and local institutions (universities...)
- Organised citizens
- Procedural autonomy of civil society weak to medium
- Usually consultative; possible: stakeholders have decision-making competence, can realise these decisions
- Accountability possible

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Participation of organised interests Strengths, weaknesses, challenges

- *Strengths:* Large “hybrid forum” with all stake-holders; possibility of a large social consensus; foster the organisation of various groups and interests
- *Weaknesses:* Excluding ordinary and active citizens; weak autonomy of civil society
- *Challenges:* to include ordinary and active citizens, to take conflicts into account; to foster the autonomy of civil society; to include the implementation of decisions

Examples: Influence on Spanish experiments (Albacete; Cordoba moves in this direction; tomorrow, Madrid?)

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