

REVISITING THE DEMOCRATIC PROMISE OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN LIGHT OF COMPETING POLITICAL, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND TECHNOCRATIC LOGICS

YVES CABANNES AND BARBARA LIPIETZ

ABSTRACT Participatory budgeting (PB) has been a major innovation in participatory governance worldwide, with more than 3,000 experiences listed across 40 countries. PB has diversified over its 30 years, with many contemporary experiments (referred to as PBs) only tangentially related to the original project to “radically “democratize democracy”. We propose a taxonomy to distinguish the logics currently underpinning PB in practice: **political** (for radical democratic change), **good governance** (to improve links between the public and citizens’ spheres), and **technocratic** (to optimize the use and transparency of public resources for citizens’ benefit). Illustrating these competing rationales through contemporary experiences, we reflect on the contributions of the good governance and technocratic frameworks to managerial and state modernization. Undoubtedly, these help explain PB’s growing attraction for proponents of the good governance agenda. However, rekindling PB’s promise for democratic deepening, we argue, requires refocusing on its deliberative quality. We draw attention to civic education and empowerment of participants as key components of PB practices intent on opening pathways towards alternative political systems – indeed, of materializing Henri Lefebvre’s “right to the city”.

KEYWORDS democratization / governance / local governments / participatory budgeting / right to the city / spatial justice

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I. THE WORLDWIDE EXPANSION, DIVERSIFICATION AND SUCCESS OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

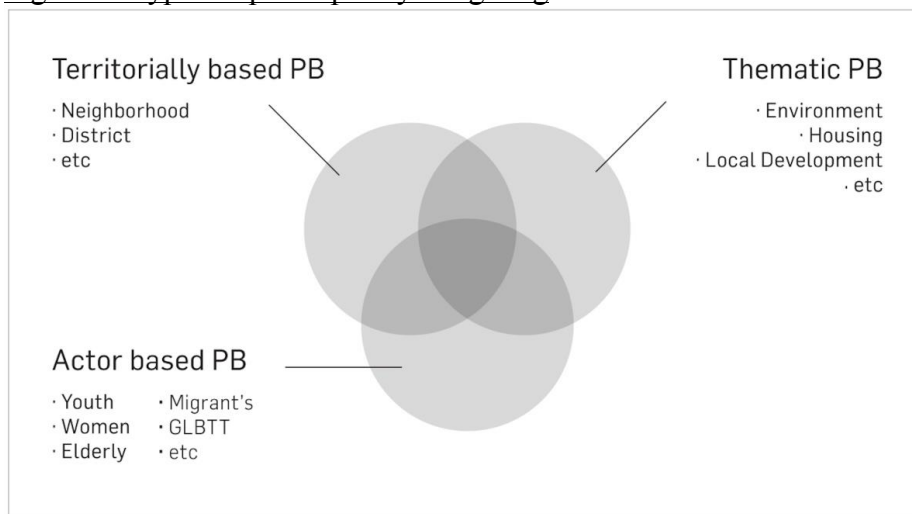
Participatory budgeting (PB) is, at core, a form of decision-making that actively involves the citizenry in prioritizing spending of public resources.⁽¹⁾ Beyond this general definition, PB experiments span a broad spectrum: from symbolic participatory gestures with little transformative impact, to vectors of structural change in cities’ governance systems. The latter have reconfigured relationships and responsibilities among actors and institutions in the public domain – and have led to measurable improvements in the quality of life of their citizens.

Participatory budgeting occurs in human settlements of all sizes: from mega and capital cities to intermediary and peripheral municipalities. PBs are also being developed at the village level. Originally confined to municipalities, PBs can now be found at other administrative scales as well, both the supra-municipal level (e.g. Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil, the Lazio region in Italy and the Poitou Charentes region in France), and the sub-municipal (e.g. Itzapalapa, a borough [*delegación* in Spanish] of Mexico City with 2 million inhabitants, or Chicago’s Ward

49, which pioneered PB in the United States). This makes for a great diversity of experiences and local governance contexts under the heading of PB.

The heterogeneity of participatory budgeting stems also from its varied organizational underpinnings (Figure 1). Most PBs are *territorially* based: they occur at the community, district, city or regional level and act primarily as “space-based” budgetary and management instruments. Alternatively, PBs can be *thematic*, addressing context-specific priority issues such as transport, housing, education, the environment or local economic development. The issues or themes debated under PBs are likely to change over time, but decision-making generally occurs at a citywide scale. More rarely, PBs can be *actor-based*, with budgetary resources earmarked for specific social groups – usually the most vulnerable and excluded, such as youth, women, the elderly, Afro-Brazilians in Brazil, or First Nations/indigenous groups.⁽²⁾ The majority of PB experiments so far have combined territorial and thematic approaches.

Figure 1: Types of participatory budgeting



The extreme diversity among PB experiments is a relatively recent phenomenon. In effect, one can distinguish three phases of PB evolution. The years 1989 to 1997 were marked by a period of *experimentation*: Starting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and a few other cities (Santo André in Brazil and Montevideo in Uruguay), new forms of management of public resources were literally “invented”. This was followed, in a second phase, by a “*Brazilian spread*”, when more than 130 Brazilian municipalities adopted the model, with marked variations. Finally, with the new millennium, came a stage of *expansion* beyond Brazil and of *diversification*, with existing models being profoundly adapted.⁽³⁾ Under this later phase, PB has gradually spread throughout Latin America, followed by Europe and, since 2003, the African continent. Asia, including China, is the latest newcomer to the fold.

The worldwide spread, however, masks regional differences in intensity. Latin America is broadly ahead in terms of the percentage of residents living in cities where some forms of PB are taking place. In Argentina, one-third of the urban population is practising PB; meanwhile, all local governments in Peru and the Dominican Republic are now mandated to engage in PB on a yearly basis. By contrast, in other regions, it is rare for a substantial percentage of the national population to be involved, even if numbers are high in some cities.

The spread and endurance of PB are impressive given the time-consuming nature of the process – for the people participating in the process and people’s delegates primarily, but for civil servants as well.⁽⁴⁾ Undoubtedly, an important explanatory factor relates to its unique value added, relative to other participatory processes – that is, *its ability to deliver short-term, concrete outcomes* for the people involved. Unlike many other participatory processes, PBs have very real concrete impacts on people’s lives and on cities through the *endogenous* resources (not aid) that are allocated and used in the course of one year of a budgetary cycle.⁽⁵⁾ However, there are also other factors at play that explain PB’s staying power, related to the competing logics that now lie at the heart of PBs’ highly divergent practices.

II. COMPETING LOGICS AT THE HEART OF PBs: FROM RADICALIZING DEMOCRACY TO GOOD GOVERNANCE AND TECHNOCRATIC MANAGEMENT

Participatory budgeting is inextricably tied to the iconic experience of Porto Alegre. After all, it is in this Southern Brazilian city of 1.4 million inhabitants that PB was introduced in 1989, in the aftermath of Brazil’s military dictatorship. PB was intended to seal a new way of doing politics between the PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores – the Workers’ Party) and Porto Alegre’s citizenry. The image of Porto Alegre’s PB as a means of democratic transformation⁽⁶⁾ was central to the diffusion of PB in the early days; indeed, the multiple World Social Forums hosted by Porto Alegre have sustained the association of PB with the city’s radical experimentation.⁽⁷⁾

Thirty years down the line, however, it is possible to identify qualitatively different logics underpinning the heterogeneity of PB experiments, from Rosario, Argentina to Chefchaouen, Morocco, from Paris, France to New York, USA – to name only recent experimentation with PB. Along with the original **political** project to “radically democratize democracy” we can now clearly delineate PB as an instrument of “**good governance**” and even cases of PB as primarily a **technocratic** tool (Figure 2). While the first two logics represent different responses to the perceived failure of representative democracy in the global North and South,⁽⁸⁾ the latter approach represents a novel interpretation of PB, as we describe below.

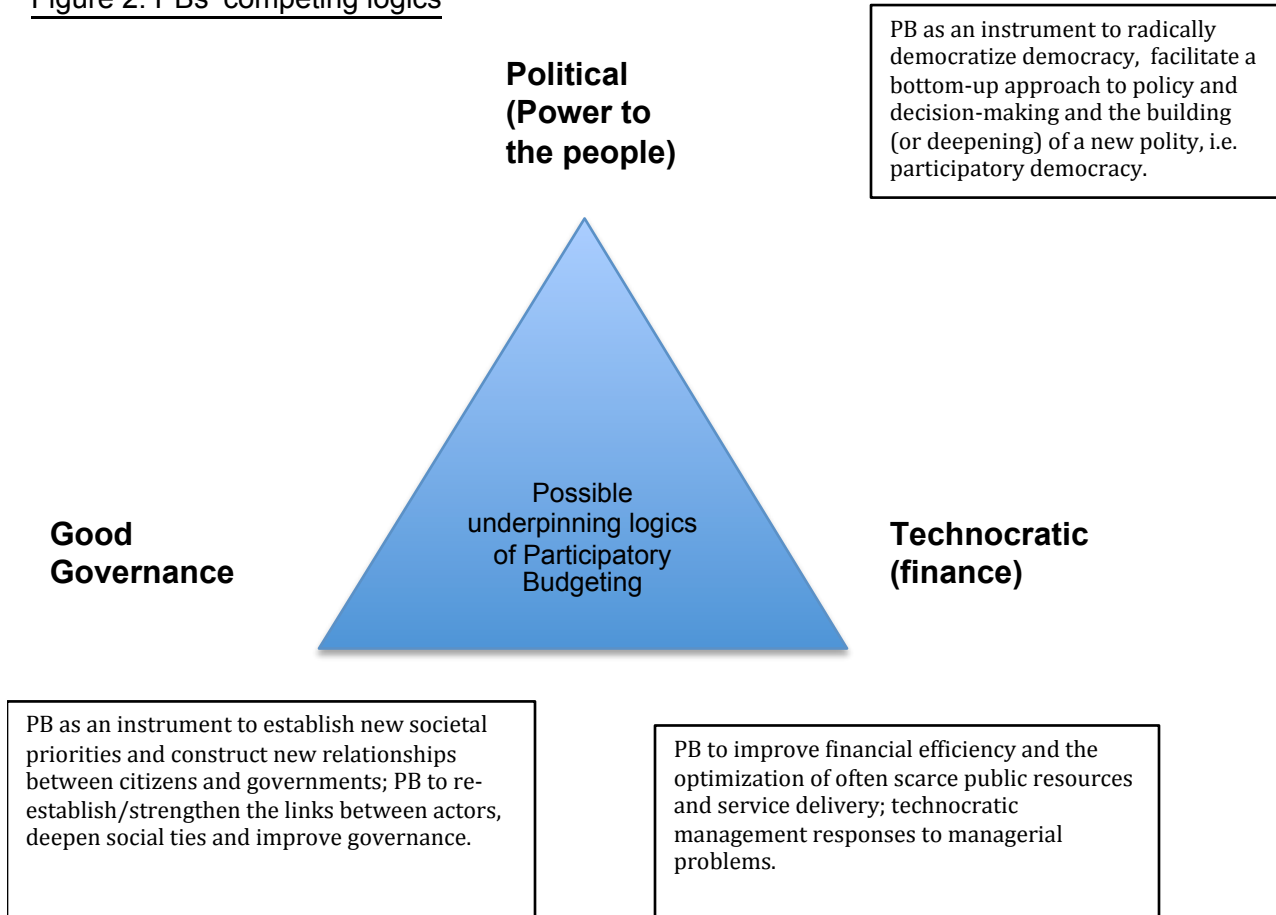
Before turning to an analysis of these three strands of PB and what they mean for its democratic promise, we illustrate each with a concrete case of PB experimentation.

a. Participatory budgeting in Seville, Spain: PB as a vector for deepening democracy⁽⁹⁾

We begin with a case of PB underpinned by a *political* logic, indebted to the iconic Brazilian PB experiment. With its 700,000 inhabitants (1.5 million for the metropolitan area), Seville is the first large city and regional capital of Europe to adopt PB. Building on prior experiences in Spanish Andalucía, Seville’s PB, initiated in 2004 by a socialist–communist coalition, has quickly become a PB reference in terms of quality and innovation. A number of aspects combine to support its *political* logic.

A first element is the financial commitment towards PB: from 2005 to 2009, approximately US\$ 100 million of public money were spent through PB, representing an average of US\$ 25 to 30 per inhabitant per year. Internationally, this ranks high in terms of PB experiments.⁽¹⁰⁾ Moreover, a significant budget allocation was set aside to assist the functioning of PB, facilitating the hiring of experts from local universities and NGOs for technical support and monitoring in the early years of the process. This provision has significantly enhanced the

Figure 2: PBs' competing logics



quality of the PB.

Second has been a clear commitment to the inclusion of traditionally excluded groups in the PB process. For instance, support was granted to low-income urban farmer groups generally not eligible for PB processes, and their participation allowed them to obtain significant financial resources for their allotment gardens and allotment parks. This has opened up access to urban land to people who have

traditionally been excluded from such access. And while participation in Seville's PB is universal and open to all citizens, emphasis has been placed on the participation of youth and children, and measures have been taken to facilitate the participation of migrant populations. One such measure includes the development of posters calling for PB participation – and women's participation in particular – in multiple languages: Spanish, but also Arabic, French and English (see Figure 3). This inclusive approach to public participation extends to PB meetings where officials are careful to avoid delicate topics such as the legal status of participants.

Third, PB in Seville has attempted to encourage participation and mobilization beyond the neighbourhood scale, towards a *citywide scale of participation*. Thus, while some of Seville's PB projects are debated at the scale of the neighbourhood and earmarked as neighbourhood projects, the "*carril bicy*" (cycling paths) project has had a clear citywide ambit. Significantly, this innovation has benefitted low-income residents most, dramatically improving their mobility

Figure 3: PB poster in Seville



and access to places of work and education.

Fourth, the commitment to participatory democracy has translated into an established set of rules

– the manual for PB (*Autoreglamento de los presupuestos participativos*) – that enshrines the binding nature of decisions voted on through direct democracy in citizens’ assemblies. Produced by a commission composed of elected delegates, the *Autoreglamento* includes, among other things, the following rules: local government must declare the size of the overall budget and the proportion allocated for PB in a transparent fashion; PB decisions are binding; and oversight and control of project implementation are in the hands of follow-up commissions, whose members are elected during project proposal assemblies.

The underpinning logic of PB experimentation in Seville has therefore been to deepen democracy by giving more power to the people of Seville – and to the excluded, primarily. Such an approach has had tangible effects in terms of distributive and spatial justice, as evidenced by the *carril bicy* and the support to urban farmers. In that sense, PB in Seville has given substance to Lefebvre’s “right to the city”.⁽¹¹⁾ But the effects have also entailed a broadening and deepening of people’s decision-making power. The development of the PB manual, in particular, reflects the transformative power of PB and the insitutionalization of democratic deepening. That is, people can decide not only on projects funded through PB but on the *process* of PB itself, on the rules of the game. PB in Seville has provided citizens with an institutionalizing power – as opposed to simply responding to a process whose contours and modus operandi are decided from above. The quality of the Seville PB manual and its regular amendment through a transparent process have made it a reference for European PBs and beyond. However, this contribution of PB to democratic deepening is probably why it was scrapped when the right-wing Popular Party

came to power in 2011: the party understood the political implications of such a radical form of PB.

b. Participatory budgeting in Dondo, Mozambique: PB as a driver of good governance⁽¹²⁾

Our second case documents an attempt to address the beleaguered relations between citizens and the local state in the context of post-war reconstruction through an emphasis on good governance processes. Dondo's PB process is a pioneer on the African continent. Its sophisticated governance model, able to overcome deep historical divides, as well as its distributive outcomes, won it the United Cities and Local Government Africa (UCLGA) 2009 Excellence Award.

Dondo is located half an hour away from Beira, the regional capital of Mozambique's central region. Its population (roughly 70,000 in 2010) is spread across 10 largely self-built districts/neighborhoods that surround the city's formal colonial centre, and spills into rural Dondo, which includes 51 villages and hamlets. Many of these rural areas are poorly accessible, particularly in the rainy season. In 2007, fewer than 6 per cent of the population had access to water on their plot of land. Dondo is a poor municipality in one of the world's poorest countries – and yet, through PB, US\$ 2.6 million were discussed, debated and invested in the area between 2007 and 2009,⁽¹³⁾ with impressive distributional outcomes. Living conditions have improved with PB-related investment in basic services, in particular the provision of health centres and a water supply, through the installation of standpipes. Community mobilization has further led to a large number of public works, such as the construction of latrines and drainage canals.

PB in Dondo unfolds in several stages. The first stage consists of a socioeconomic diagnosis conducted in each district by community-led Development Units and community councils. Projects and identified needs are then divided into three categories: (i) those with local solutions (e.g. cleaning streets or drainage channels); (ii) those that require solutions involving both the community and the municipality (e.g. repairing zinc roofs on schools: nails are purchased by the municipality while labour comes from the community); and (iii) those that depend solely on the municipal budget (e.g. street lighting). Such classification of projects into three categories as described above is a Dondo innovation. Once priorities have been defined by the communities, the municipal team calls upon its Consultative Forum (explained in the next paragraph), which finalizes the budget matrix, taking into account the anticipated municipal revenue. The conclusions and recommendations of the Forum are then presented to the Municipal Council, which votes on the proposed budget. Finally, decisions are implemented with the participation of the community.

PB in Dondo emerged in the context of decentralization initiated at national level in 1998, and a number of key features underpin its strong *governance* logic. First, the essentially "territorially-based" process operates in a highly decentralized fashion: decisions on key PB projects (divided across the key priority sectors of urbanization, infrastructure, water, sanitation and roads) are debated at the level of 51 village communities, *unidades comunais* – as well as the 10 official districts/neighbourhoods that comprise urban Dondo. Second, the Dondo PB experience stands out for the sophisticated way that the complexity of formal and informal institutions operating in the area has been incorporated – overcoming, in the process, deeply entrenched historical tensions.⁽¹⁴⁾ Over the years, several spaces that play a role in participatory budgeting have taken shape. The most sophisticated, which was refined over time, is the Consultative Forum. This is composed of 75 members, including: a) one representative of the Development Units for each of the 51 rural village communities (*unidades comunais*); b) one

representative from the Development Units from each of the 10 urban districts/neighborhoods (often social workers and educators); and c) community leaders, religious leaders, youth and women's mass organizations, as well as influential public figures and economic actors. This Consultative Forum was involved in PB but was created primarily for planning purposes. Finally, the governance logic at the heart of Dondo's PB is evident in its institutional anchoring: PB in Dondo is coordinated by two different administrative bodies, the Office for Studies and Councils, and the Section of Community and Territorial Affairs. Both bodies fall under the Administration and Institutional Development Secretariat, in charge of supporting and enhancing the effective management of the city.

In Dondo, PB has played a central role as a process with significant distributive outcomes *and* as a participatory channel opener. The small projects formulated, selected and implemented through PB have become the glue that sealed and buttressed the complex and challenging (post-conflict) PB governance model. And indeed, the impact of PB has gone beyond mere budgeting: the increased confidence communities have gained through participation in PB and the marked improvement in relations between varied PB actors have translated into enhanced communication flows between municipal employees and the population generally. Issues as diverse as HIV/AIDS and security are now being tackled through more participatory channels as a result of PB's successful implementation. In that sense, PB has acted both as a catalyst and as an incubator of participatory planning practices, aimed at improving the coherence and effectiveness of "good governance", as well as, and especially, its accountability in a post-conflict context.

c. Technocratic logic: The case of Solingen, Germany⁽¹⁵⁾

Our final case exemplifies a radically different logic for PB – a very specific and strict reading of PB as a technocratic instrument. Initiated in 2009, Solingen's participatory budget is probably one of the most successful German examples – in terms of a logic of finance optimization. In that sense, it exemplifies the dominant trait amongst PB experiments in Germany, many of which emerged as a novel governance tool in the early 2000s. Significantly, German PBs have tended to be influenced by the participatory components of New Public Management⁽¹⁶⁾ and the experience of Christchurch, New Zealand, rather than the iconic case of Porto Alegre and other Latin American experiences. Early 2000s research on PBs across Europe describes German PBs as "consultations on public finances", providing innovative solutions for the modernization of local bureaucracies, but with little or no citizen impact on local politics.⁽¹⁷⁾ One of their key contributions has been to render the budgetary process more transparent and accessible to citizens.

Ten years down the line, a comprehensive overview of German municipalities provides an accurate vision of the evolution of these "consultations on public finances":⁽¹⁸⁾ out of 440 municipalities researched, including all German municipalities with a population of more than 40,000, 274 were engaged in some sort of PB process. The majority of these are *savings-based*, meaning that participants are invited to submit and/or comment on proposals to *cut costs or improve municipal revenues*;⁽¹⁹⁾ or they represent a mix of cost savings with some possibilities of expenditure-based proposals. Channels of participation are in most cases online. German PBs are thus illustrative of an emphasis on finance optimization, with a degree of participation. They clearly endorse a managerial logic, with a focus on technocratic management solutions. As such, they depart quite vigorously from most of their peers in Latin America and other parts of the

world whose foundations are more political and which place deliberation at the core of the process. This being said, German PBs are unique in that the great majority of them (74 out of 96 researched) deal with the entire municipal budget, in that cuts can be proposed and made on any part of the budget. It is more often the case that PB deals with just a portion of the capital budget, which, in many cases, can represent less than 5 per cent of the overall budget.

Solingen's PB is one of the most successful cases in Germany so far – both for its capacity to address an unstable budgetary situation, and for its ability to identify the 45 million euros of potential savings requested by the Regional Government of Düsseldorf.⁽²⁰⁾ Starting in 2009 and reproduced on a yearly basis since then, “*Solingen's focus was exclusively on reduction of spending and increase of revenues*”.⁽²¹⁾ Spurred by important budget cut imperatives, the municipality fostered the mobilization of citizens to help identify target areas for spending cuts; 248 savings proposals developed by the City and organized into specific categories were posted online, and citizens were given the opportunity to comment on the cuts package.⁽²²⁾ More than 20,000 citizens visited the platform in 2010 and nearly 3,600 participated actively, a number never reached before in a city of approximately 160,000 inhabitants.⁽²³⁾ After consultation, the total savings derived from citizens' votes reached about US\$ 44 million – below the US\$ 63 million target,⁽²⁴⁾ so further cuts had to be introduced. Since 2009, various cities in Germany have followed a similar path.

III. PB AS A DRIVER OF STATE MODERNIZATION: BETWEEN “GOOD GOVERNANCE” AND TECHNOCRATIC LOGICS

The three examples provided above highlight the significant diversity of PB experiences. In practice, many experiments with PB display characteristics of one or several of the three highlighted logics – political, good governance and managerial/technocratic. This reflects the internal tensions that exist at any point in time within any PB process. Moreover, these logics are prone to change over time. Porto Alegre's PB, for instance, has gradually shifted towards a “good governance” logic since 2005, when PT rule was replaced by a wide coalition of parties spanning the centre and right of the political spectrum.⁽²⁵⁾ In the latter instance, the shift to a good governance logic was carried by a new governing coalition, competing with the political logic still championed by citizens.

A noteworthy trend in more recent experiences of PB relates to the growing managerial anchorage of PB. As we illustrate below, this has to do with PB's comparative advantage in terms of supporting the effective modernization of administrations and its capacity to “actualize” decentralization (or rather deconcentration) imperatives. These two aspects are important components of the “good governance” agenda internationally. Below, we turn to an analysis of PB's contribution to these state modernization projects, inherent in both the good governance and technocratic logics of PB.

a. PB's contribution to transformation of local government

One key to understanding PB's uptake and expansion globally relates to its contribution to the “good governance” agenda, promulgated by such institutions as the World Bank, UN-Habitat, the EU and GTZ. The concept remains undoubtedly rather fuzzy and subject to interpretation.

One attempt to define its contours has been through the development of an Urban Governance Index (UGI).⁽²⁶⁾ The composite index, aimed at incentivizing and measuring good governance practices at the city level, tracks achievements in terms of five dimensions: effectiveness, equity, accountability, participation, security.⁽²⁷⁾ On most of these dimensions, PB was found to perform “highly” – and in terms of participation, effectiveness and accountability specifically.⁽²⁸⁾

Effectiveness is defined by the UGI base document as follows: “*An effective local government has a budget that is sufficient for its operational and development needs. It has control over the collection of a significant part of its budget. It assigns a fair part of its revenues to basic services to respond to the needs of the residents and business.*”⁽²⁹⁾ Concretely, this effectiveness is measured in terms of five indicators: “*major sources of income, predictability in transfers from the central government; published performance delivery standards, customer satisfaction survey and existence of a vision statement*”.⁽³⁰⁾ What is particularly striking from the report’s findings⁽³¹⁾ is that PB was found to have a positive impact on financial autonomy and on municipal revenues: a number of municipalities claim that the PB process coincides with an increase in fiscal collections and a reduction in tax arrears, tied mainly to improved transparency in public administration and visibility of works and services in the short term. The report further highlights how PB tends to channel the participation and mobilization of communities at the moment of execution of the financed works. While this contribution is usually non-monetary (as in the case of Dondo), it allows for a significant increase in the value of investments in the city, even if it does not add to the municipal budget. The willingness of the communities to maintain the infrastructure projects that result from the PB, additionally, represents an important avoided cost that can be quantified (as has been done in Cuenca, Ecuador).⁽³²⁾ These findings provide a noteworthy counterpart to analogous efficiency claims made by proponents of New Public Management.

Effectiveness, however, goes beyond better use of public funds. Other notable elements that pertain to both the UGI’s effectiveness and accountability principles relate to *transparency*. And indeed one of the clearest contributions of PB to good urban governance concerns transparency in delivery standards, formal publication of contracts and tenders, budgets and accounts, and codes of conduct.⁽³³⁾ Porto Alegre Observatory (ObservaPOA) is a good example of PB’s positive contribution to the modernization of the administrative apparatus, and was indeed set up by the new governing coalition primarily as an instrument of good governance. In many PB processes, transparent communication and information channels have been further reinforced by the development of formal complaints procedures and monitoring and evaluation processes. As the 2004 UN-Habitat review report indicates, these “*are powerful instruments to eliminate the chance for corruption when the budget is implemented, in particular during the execution of public works and services [...] The strength and integrity of [anti-corruption] commissions is such that they can lead to the removal of corrupt officials.*”⁽³⁴⁾

Finally, increased effectiveness of public administration also contributes to improved planning. The same report found that “*in those cities where PB has come after development plans [...], PBs are an important mechanism to realise the long-term vision of the city in the short-term. [...] Whereas for] those cities in which there are no Strategic Plans or Urban Development Plans, or where these are obsolete [...], PB is a first step towards a participatory planning process for the city.*”⁽³⁵⁾ Improved planning and administrative modernization as a result of PB is arguably the outcome of PB’s positive effects in two dimensions: on the one hand, horizontal integration and improved coordination across sectors; on the other, vertical integration of city governance, evidenced in most successful experiments of PB. In Dondo, for instance,

PB's anchoring within the Department of Administration and Institutional Development has facilitated good relations and planning practices between the municipal government and neighbourhoods. In that sense, PB has acted as a vehicle for the integration and modernization of a coherent developmental public administration in Dondo.

b. Deepening decentralization

Another facet and contribution of PB to the “good governance” and state modernization agendas relates to PB's participatory credentials – specifically, PB's ability to deepen or give substance to decentralization

policies that are a cornerstone of good governance recommendations.

Most PB experiments have indeed emerged on the back of prior waves of decentralization, as in the case of Dondo.⁽³⁶⁾ Yet, as numerous comparative studies have highlighted, decentralization *in practice* has often failed to live up to expectations with regard to a range of policy and social objectives, including improving information regarding citizens' wants/needs, increasing citizen voice and enhancing government accountability.⁽³⁷⁾ Part of the issue is that widely different experiences and institutional arrangements have been lumped under the general term of “decentralization” (from delocalization, to delegation, to devolution), despite their radically different real-life implications in terms of resources and decision-making power. As well, decentralization at the city level has encapsulated an array of institutional experiences. Yet, in those cases where the political and administrative intention has been to bring decision-making “closer to the people”, an important practical break has often been, literally, figuring out a workable means of devolving decision-making power at a lower territorial scale. This is where PBs have, in their most advanced instances, provided a remarkably effective tool for meeting that challenge.

In particular, PBs have generally facilitated a process of *administrative deconcentration*, as PB units of deliberation tend to be more numerous than administrative regions. We saw how in Dondo, the PB process allowed deliberation and decision-making over public resources to be brought to the historically forgotten rural areas (the 51 rural village communities or *unidades comunais*) of Dondo. This was well beyond the 10 official urban districts/neighbourhoods that came to compose the city after decentralization was introduced. Importantly, this administrative deconcentration has been accompanied, in some cases, by a decentralization of power to areas increasingly distant from traditional bodies of power. In the URBAL base document on PB, it is suggested that “PB is not only contributing to participatory democracy but to ‘neighbourhood-centred participatory democracy [...] as well.’”⁽³⁸⁾ This goes a long way in explaining the concrete material effects of PB in remote and/or previously excluded parts of cities and villages: PBs have given meaning to the most expansive understanding of decentralization, in terms of both bringing administration physically closer to the people and lowering the scale at which decisions are made. We would argue that PB's role in such “deep decentralization” also reflects the more political underpinning of PBs.

The above discussion points to the spectrum of ambitions and practices under the banner of state modernization and the varied role that PB has played in actualizing such ambitions. The managerial streak that underpins most of the “good governance” agenda has found in PB a useful vehicle for state modernization – in terms of efficiency, transparency, accountability and, indeed, some components of participation. This explains much of PB's current uptake and promotion by institutions such as the World Bank and UCLGA.⁽³⁹⁾

However, the cases of Dondo and Solingen also point to two different practices of PB, underpinned by two different logics for apprehending how PB is conducive to state modernization. In the case of Dondo, PB has acted as a vector for building up and strengthening relations within a beleaguered governance system (within institutions of the state and between different scales of state administration and society) – this, in a particularly complex post-conflict environment. In Dondo, PB has contributed to the integration and modernization of a coherent developmental public administration by emphasizing and supporting the (local) government’s ability to engage with, and consult, a wide variety of governance actors within and outside the state. In Solingen, the focus of PB, and its motivation, has been more restricted, targeted at improving the functionality of the state’s budget. Innovation, in this instance, has centred on ways of tackling financial streams and budgetary processes – through some form of public consultation. We argue that the Dondo and Solingen cases exemplify two opposing sides of a growing managerial/state modernization logic for PBs.

IV. PB AND THE DEEPENING OF DEMOCRACY

The above incarnations of contemporary PBs stand in stark contrast with the political rationale for PB – or PB as a conduit for deepening, indeed radicalizing, democracy. Such a political logic has been at the heart of PB’s original development and contributed to its early diffusion. As we describe below, this political logic underpins PB’s ability to reverse key developmental priorities in cities – no doubt explaining its attraction for the millions of people involved in PB year after year. In particular, the reversal of spatial and social priorities enabled by some PBs, is intimately related to political attempts to nurture, extend and strengthen citizens’ ability to shape their own city through an active involvement in decision-making. Below we propose four key components that both help to distinguish political PBs, and require ongoing innovation if PB is to live up to its democratic promise.

a. Reversing priorities

The notion of “reversal” or “inversion” originates from PB experiments in Brazil where the objective was “a shift in the order of priorities” understood both in *territorial* terms (i.e. traditionally investments did not reach poor neighbourhoods or rural areas and now they do) and in *political* terms (i.e. those who previously never exercised power can now make decisions concerning the budget).⁽⁴⁰⁾

The most explicit example of this achievement comes from Belo Horizonte (Brazil), where a sophisticated tool to measure “inversion” was developed through a set of composite indicators of “*access and perception by the population of projects financed by PB*”.⁽⁴¹⁾ The indicators focused on the distance separating residents of Belo Horizonte from the 816 PB-financed projects completed between 1994 and 2006. The results showed that “99% of the population lives less than 1km from a completed project, 84% less than 500m away and 40% live less than 200m”.⁽⁴²⁾ That is, PB-financed projects were highly accessible and close to people, underlying the *material* impact of PB in improving the living conditions of the population. Moreover, the findings clearly demonstrated that the population *closest* to PB projects – those most likely to benefit from PB-financed projects – were indeed the poorest families in the city.

The Belo Horizonte PB experiment exemplifies in the most concrete fashion how PBs can contribute to upholding what Ed Soja terms “spatial justice” – that is, “*the fair and equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them*”.⁽⁴³⁾

Importantly, these examples of spatial inversion have been the fruit of participatory processes intent on broadening, and indeed universalizing, the participation of citizens. However, a caveat seems necessary here. For indeed, Dondo’s PB arguably fits the above depiction: in Dondo, PB has facilitated the channeling of public resources towards traditionally excluded areas and (peri-urban) neighbourhoods. Yet in Dondo, the inverting of spatial priorities has been the effect of administrative deconcentration, facilitating an extended form of consultative participatory governance around public services. It is not (at least yet) the result of a deep decentralization process characterized by substantive redistribution of decision-making at lower levels of the political and social systems.

Critical to a *political* logic for PB has been an expressed intention to open up decision-making processes to citizens, beyond consultation, so that they can actively participate in the production of urban space. The figures from Belo Horizonte show how powerful PB can be in enabling spatially and socially vulnerable groups to act out their right to the city. Other cities have pushed this attempt to democratize participation further still, by developing additional mechanisms of participation, aimed at circumventing the structural conditions that impede the participation of vulnerable or excluded groups *in practice*. Seville is a case in point, where parallel actor-based assemblies have been established as a vector of “political inversion”, specifically seeking and facilitating the participation of women, youth and migrant communities in PB processes. Other cities have targeted excluded groups through a thematic focus: in Campinas (Brazil), PB has a specific committee on “citizenship”; in Caxias do Sul (Brazil), the thematic committee addresses “social exclusion”.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Such an approach to PB, facilitating a “reversal of political priorities”, echoes profoundly the Lefebvrian concept of the “right to the city”. Below, we turn to further critical components of such a political logic for PBs.

b. “Voice” and the deliberative quality of PB

The first relates to the deliberative nature of PB. One of the limits of representative democracy, conventionally summarized as “the right to voice and the right to vote”, is that it has essentially been reduced to the latter; public debate among citizens has become the exception rather than the rule. The added value of *some* PB processes – PBs underpinned by a political logic – lies precisely in their ability to re-open the agoras as public physical spaces able to provide a platform for citizens’ deliberation (most of the time heated deliberation) over what they would like to see for the immediate future of their city/their neighbourhood. The fact that financial resources and concrete outcomes are tied to the debate (“your project or my project will be selected and implemented”) has provided material incentive for deliberation.

However, opening up the future of the city (or the village or region) to citizen participation admittedly remains a challenge – even in the most advanced and radical forms of PB underpinned by a political logic. Few studies have explored the *deliberative quality* of PB processes, so that the work carried out a decade ago by the Porto Alegre PB team in this regard, is of unique value.⁽⁴⁵⁾ What this research showed is that, 20 years down the line, citizen presence in PB forums and assemblies remained impressive, with well over 10,000 citizens participating in PB deliberation every year, tempering criticisms of “participation fatigue”. However, questions remained as to the turnover of participatory input (i.e. were there new participants or

did the same people always participate?), as well as the quality of participants' inputs (i.e. what was the active role of participants during the fora and assemblies?). On the latter issue, Fedozzi highlighted that the number of participants who never spoke in assemblies was, and remains, extremely high: 62.8 per cent in 1998; 49.8 per cent in 2000; 51.8 per cent in 2002 and 57.3 per cent in 2005.

For proponents of PBs as means of democratic deepening, such observations provide food for thought. If democracy is about voice as much as vote, an important challenge for political PBs remains encouraging more active participation from those who are present in PB assemblies. On that front, and speaking from a Spanish vantage point, José Molina Molina⁽⁴⁶⁾ proposed a series of tools – potential “indicators of deliberation” – to help monitor and improve the deliberative value of PB processes, including:

- 1) Look out for the fundamental ideas in others – do not get stuck in the details
- 2) Analyse priorities and preoccupations
- 3) Accept answers provided by each citizen
- 4) Avoid undermining your opponent
- 5) Work towards a common understanding
- 6) Disseminate the content of agreements
- 7) Strive towards collective consensus

Interestingly, many of these rules are identical to those developed by the Chengdu authority in its training and information PB manual,⁽⁴⁷⁾ and widely disseminated to citizens participating in PB. Deliberative values are at the heart of successful PBs.

c. Citizens' education

The above reflection points to citizen education as a critical dimension of PBs inscribed in a political logic of democratic deepening. This kind of citizen education relates to the *process* of deliberation per se, such as knowledge about democratic rules, daring to speak in public, etc. Indeed, evidence shows that PB processes are most likely to develop and be sustained where a participatory culture is in place such that citizens can, in assemblies, express themselves on the same level as city officials. Crucially, the need for civic education lies not only with citizens but, more importantly still, with city officials who are not used to and not equipped for dealing with horizontal ways of engaging citizens. This is the case in old established democracies, and more challenging and necessary still, in authoritarian contexts or those marked by top-down party-political traditions, such as China. From our direct observation, cities that have invested efforts and resources in “software” – such as awareness raising on gender roles, project formulation or participatory techniques – have usually done much better in terms of the long-term sustainability of the process and its appropriation by citizens. It is here that actor-based PBs reveal their comparative advantage. Projects tailored to the expectations of specific groups, and that empower these groups, tend to have less political visibility than brick-and-mortar projects. However, they have had, in practice, far longer-lasting effects.

Civic education in PB experiments driven by a political logic have extended to a number of areas including: budget literacy and the collective unpacking of what constitutes a budget, where resources come from and why they may vary; the responsibilities of municipal governments and, therefore, the types of projects that might be eligible for PB deliberation; and

the interconnectedness between various territorial divisions within a locality. In a nutshell, if a PB process is not from the outset and primarily a massive education project, where PB acts as a pedagogical framework, the governance and technocratic logics inherent in PB will tend over the years to supersede the potential for a deepening of democracy. At the same time, the risks of political co-optation and populist uses and misuses will become more entrenched.⁽⁴⁸⁾

Such concerns have not been lost on various citizen organizations in different cities that have called for a broadening of projects eligible for PB resources, to include civic training in the broad sense (e.g. El Alto, Distrito 8 in Bolivia or Cuenca in Ecuador). The experience of Guarulhos, a municipality of one million inhabitants in the São Paulo Metropolitan Region, illustrates the transformative results that can be achieved when education becomes a central component of PB. In this case, the municipality saw PB as a means to foster “*the emergence of new community leaders, able to participate in an independent way to the building of a city of justice and solidarity*”.⁽⁴⁹⁾ To this end, it took the rather unique initiative of contracting the Paulo Freire Institute to support its PB process.⁽⁵⁰⁾ The training, initiated in 2005 and running for four consecutive years, was targeted at the hundreds of PB delegates elected during assemblies, the PB councilors elected among the delegates, the supporters of people’s education and the members of the various sector-based city councils.⁽⁵¹⁾ In line with the legacy of Paulo Freire, training built on the diverse knowledge and know-how brought by the various participants and sought to facilitate the development of collective knowledge on each of the issues debated.

d. Institutionalizing power of the participants

Finally, a major dividing line between PB processes underpinned by a political logic and more managerially inclined PBs (good governance and technocratic) is the institutionalization of PB. The degree to which the PB process is institutionalized through a decree, municipal ordinance or other legal instrument, or is instead regulated through annual deliberated revisions, reflects different logics at the heart of PB. In short, for PBs to act as vectors of democratization, citizens themselves must be able to define the rules of the game, rather than engaging in PB on the basis of rules defined by the authorities.

Porto Alegre set the trend of citizen-led approach to PB ‘reglementation’ with its *regimento interno* overseeing most of the key aspects of the PB process, including: rules regarding the election of delegates and councilors that compose the PB Council at the municipal level, as well as their responsibilities and power; criteria for the allocation of resources and priority criteria for selecting the projects proposed by citizens; the venues and the number of plenaries; the dates of the whole cycle; and the rules of transparency and accountability. Importantly, in Porto Alegre, the budgetary cycle from the start has included a specific period dedicated to the collective revision of such rules.

These self-determined rules – *autoreglamento* in the case of Seville – represent a decisive devolution of power to the community sphere, setting in place the conditions for the emergence of a fourth power, alongside the legislative, executive and judiciary. For those delegates and councilors who have been involved in PB processes for the last 30 years, and who are more passionate about its potential for democratic deepening, the definition of the rules and the conditions for implementing PB are just as important as the amount of resources put under debate. While the latter is obviously key for PB to have meaning, these participants point to the qualitative dimension of the process for long-term transformational change. To date, however,

the development of such self-determined PB rules remains rare in most countries.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The development of PB experiments globally and their diversification poses a challenge to any neat, linear reading of PBs, or indeed to the equation of PBs with innovative practices in the field of participatory democracy. As illustrated by this paper's examples of PB in Solingen, Dondo and Seville, radically different projects underpin contemporary practices of PB, and the innovative label ascribed to PB must now extend to good governance and technocratic practices and the ambition of modernizing the state.

An interesting debate, stemming from this broad-brush taxonomy of PB, relates to the linkages between these divergent practices of PB. Is there a route or a trajectory leading from, say, a technocratic logic to a "good governance" and finally a political logic for PBs? Does the commitment to participation inherent in PB eventually lead to some form of democratic deepening, even when its primary imperative is efficiency and local resource mobilization? Our experience does not lend credence to such a teleological reading. Instead, practices of PB can and do oscillate between different logics according to the whims of political coalitions, and such differences can persist in the form of competing logics at the heart of governance systems.

One important conclusion from this analysis, however, relates to the transformational nature of each of the logics underpinning cases of PB. The technocratic approach to PB provides interesting innovations, and the Solingen case is particularly spectacular for opening up the whole budget to citizen consultation. However, the effects of this practice have been restricted to decision-making on budgetary cost-cutting. PBs driven by a good governance logic, on the other hand, can have (and have had) a positive impact on reorienting spending priorities towards neglected spaces in the city and its periphery. Additionally, good governance imperatives have often encouraged PB practices to seek the engagement of broad categories of social actors, such as youth or traditional leaders – but rarely more contentious groups whose social identity may reframe the meaning of citizenship (e.g. migrants or refugees).

We contend that only politically motivated PBs can bring life to a more radical and open refashioning of urban possibilities. With their emphasis on targeting excluded groups, on connecting neighborhood and citywide considerations (often through a focus on the social value of the city), and especially on supporting the development of autonomy and solidarity amongst citizens through deliberative processes, political PBs offer concrete pathways towards enacting Lefebvre's right to the city.

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ENDNOTES

¹ Tarso, G and U de Souza (1998), *Presupuesto Participativo: La experiencia de Porto Alegre*, Universidad de Buenos Aires.

² The Poitou Charentes region of France has experimented with a form of PB, whereby the regional budget was debated in secondary schools.

³ Cabannes, Y (2003), *Participatory budgeting and municipal finance, Base Document*, Launch Seminar of URBAL Network No 9, Municipal Government of Porto Alegre, page 28.

⁴ PB is not a one-off event but rather a yearly process, bound by the budgetary cycle. Its effective “real-life” cycle spans two years: in the first year, budget allocations and priorities are decided (Cycle 1); in the second year, agreed-upon priorities are implemented (Cycle 2).

⁵ In Belo Horizonte (Brazil), for instance, over 1,000 projects were financed through PB over 15 years (Prefeitura Belo Horizonte (2009), *Participatory Budgeting in Belo Horizonte 15 years 1993 – 2008*). In Porto Alegre (Brazil), over 5,000 projects prioritized and voted for through this people’s process have been implemented since 1989. And in Chengdu (China), over 40,000 projects were funded between 2009 and 2012 (Cabannes, Y and Z Ming (2013), “Participatory budgeting at scale and bridging the rural–urban divide in Chengdu”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 26, No 1, pages 257–275).

⁶ Baiocchi, G (2001), “Participation, activism and politics: The Porto Alegre experience and deliberative democratic theory”, *Politics and Society* Vol 9, No 1, pages 43–72.

⁷ Porto de Oliveira, O (2017), *International policy diffusion and participatory budgeting: Ambassadors of participation, international institutions and transnational networks*, Palgrave Macmillan.

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⁹ This section is indebted to Virginia Gutierrez Barbarussa, who brought her firsthand knowledge of the process and clarified some of the key points of the Seville experiment; and Vincente Barragan and his colleagues from Pablo Olavide University, who kindly shared the results of their research on the process.

¹⁰ With an average of US\$ 14.5 million being earmarked for debate for the years 2007 to 2009, this represents between 2.6 and 3.7 per cent of what is locally labelled the “non-bound municipal budget”. (Barragán, V, R Romero and J M Sanz (2011), *Informe sobre los Presupuestos Participativos en la Ciudad de Sevilla, 2004-2009*, Ayuntamiento de Sevilla and Universidad Pablo Olavide.)

¹¹ Lefebvre, H (1968), *Le droit à la ville*, Anthropos, Paris.

¹² The information below relies on Cabannes, Y (2010), “Participatory Budgeting in Africa”, in *Villes et Développement*, ISTED Bulletin No 88, pages 4–5; and Cabannes, Y and B Lipietz (2015), “The democratic contribution of participatory budgeting”, Working Paper Series 2015, International Development, LSE, No 15-168. Primary data were provided by the municipality of Dondo (Cambezo, M (2008), “Experiência do orçamento participativo no município de Dondo: Ficha de experiência”, Paper presented at the International workshop, *Démocratiser radicalement la Démocratie* in Lyon; and Figueira,

A M (2010), *Planificação e Orçamentação participative, exercicio de democracia participative*, Unpublished mimeo).

¹³ Half of the US\$ 2.6 million came from local government and half from international aid. With a value of over US\$ 12 per inhabitant per year debated, Dondo's PB sits at the top end of African PBs so far.

¹⁴ These include: (a) the socio-political structures inherited from FRELIMO, the Marxist party that spearheaded the war of liberation and came into power after independence; (b) chieftaincies and traditional organizations, many of which had joined or supported the opposition party, RENAMO, during the post-independence civil war; and (c) more recent organizations, religious and non-religious, that can roughly be grouped under the term "civil society".

¹⁵ The case builds on the contribution of Mandy Wagner and other colleagues from Engagement Global (GmbH) involved in the support of the German PB network. They have kindly facilitated contacts with officials from Solingen and generally assisted in the writing up of the case. Mr Koch from the Solingen local authority provided detailed information on PB results. Finally, Martin Lichtenegger, a Master's student at the Bartlett Development Planning Unit, kindly translated material in German and discussed results with the authors. This case borrows from Cabannes and Lipietz (2015); see reference 12.

¹⁶ New Public Management (NPM) is an approach to running public service organizations and state institutions that borrows from the private sector. The introduction of business principles is made on the assumptions that these are more efficient.

¹⁷ Sintomer, Y, C Herzberg and A Röcke (editors) (2005), *Participatory Budgets in a European Comparative Approach*, Hans Böckler Stiftung.

¹⁸ Schröter, N (2013), *6th Status Report: Participatory Budgeting in Germany*, Engagement Global, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung.

¹⁹ See reference 18, page 5.

²⁰ Solingen Stadt (2011), *How citizens help their mayor save money!*, Application for the European Political Sciences Association.

²¹ See reference 20, page 3.

²² Proposals included: renting out the theatre to increase income; getting rid of festivities related to the national day; reducing the interest rate on outstanding public loans by shortening the reimbursement period; and generating electricity as an income source (the proposal could not be implemented as energy was privatized).

²³ <http://www.solingen-spart.de>.

²⁴ See reference 20, page 4.

²⁵ See reference 12, Cabannes and Lipietz (2015).

²⁶ This is the work mainly of the UN's Global Campaign on Urban Governance. UN-HABITAT (2002), *Global Campaign on Urban Governance – Concept Paper*, 2nd edition, Nairobi.

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- ²⁷ UN-HABITAT (2003), *Global Governance Index Guidelines*, Nairobi, page 26.
- ²⁸ UN-HABITAT (2004), “Participatory Budgeting: Conceptual Framework and Analysis of its Contribution to Urban Governance and the Millennium Development Goals”, Working Paper 140, Nairobi, pages 44–46.
- ²⁹ See reference 27.
- ³⁰ See reference 28, page 27.
- ³¹ The report bases its findings on a study of 103 Brazilian municipalities, which practised PB between 1997 and 2003. (See reference 28, page 28.)
- ³² See reference 28, page 28.
- ³³ See reference 28, page 37.
- ³⁴ See reference 28, page 39.
- ³⁵ See reference 28, page 30.
- ³⁶ However, it is interesting to note that in some cities, PB has anticipated and enriched processes of decentralization. See reference 3, page 61.
- ³⁷ Verdesoto, L (1999), *Los Conceptos de la Participación y Descentralización: Miradas desde el Caso Boliviano*, Cuaderno de Trabajo No 48, Programa de Gestión Urbana, Quito.
- ³⁸ See reference 3, page 62.
- ³⁹ See reference 7.
- ⁴⁰ Cabannes, Y (2007), *Instruments and Mechanisms Linking Physical Planning and Participatory Budgeting: A synthesis based on the experiences of Ariccia (Italia), Belo Horizonte and Guarulhos (Brazil), Bella Vista (Argentina) and Cordoba (Spain)*, CIGU and URB-AL, page 27.
- ⁴¹ Carvalho e Camargo, U (2007a), *Nota de Síntesis sobre los Indicadores de Medición de Inversión de Prioridades*, Prefeitura Municipal de Belo Horizonte, URBAL project; also Carvalho e Camargo, U (2007b), *Manual Metodológico sobre el indicador de medición de inversión de prioridades*, Prefeitura Municipal de Belo Horizonte, URBAL project.
- ⁴² See reference 40, page 29.
- ⁴³ Soja, E (2010), *Seeking Spatial Justice*, University of Minnesota Press.
- ⁴⁴ See reference 3, page 55.
- ⁴⁵ Fedozzi, L (2007), *Observando o orçamento participativo de Porto Alegre. Análise histórica de dados: perfil social e associativo, avaliação e expectativas*, Tomo Editora.

⁴⁶ Molina Molina, J (2011), *Los Presupuestos Participativos: Un modelo para priorizar objetivos e gestionar eficientemente en la administración local, Segunda Edición*, Aranzadi/Thomson Reuters Editorial, Navarra.

⁴⁷ Chengdu Bureau of Integrated Rural–Urban Development (2012), *Village Training Manual, illustrated comics in Chinese*.

⁴⁸ This is a danger for instance in the Dominican Republic, where PB has been legislated whereas civic education is poorly developed.

⁴⁹ UN-HABITAT (2010), *72 frequently asked questions on PB*, Nairobi, page 85.

⁵⁰ The Paulo Freire Institute in Brazil maintains the legacy of the educator who wrote *Pedagogy of the oppressed* and introduced literacy and education methods that have played a decisive role in Brazilian social transformation over the last 50 years.

⁵¹ The training syllabus was adapted to each constituency and included:

- For PB delegates: training on the function of PB delegates, history of social movements; people's education; rights and duties of citizens; budgetary processes; democracy; etc.
- For PB councillors: public budget; public-community commissions; conflict negotiations; role and functions of a PB councillor.
- For Guarulhos community educators: gender relations and affirmative policies; ethnic relations and affirmative action policies; inclusion policies; participatory observation.