

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

and

THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

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1

INTRODUCTION

The call for “the right to the city” was formulated several years ago by Henri Lefebvre as an expression of criticism against the Fordist-Keynesian urbanism and demand for a fundamental social, political and economic change. Today it can be heard again, resounding in response to the multifaceted crisis of the post-Fordist, neoliberal age. In the hope that its theoretical contribution might once more prove constructive, actors as diverse as academics, grass-roots activists and international institutions (e.g. UN and World Bank) have embraced Lefebvre’s theoretical idea, emphasising the necessity to find a practice that could realise it. This work, however, builds on Harvey’s (2012) recent suggestion that the right to the city initially closely derived from struggles over the shape of urban development, rather than having been conceived as a blueprint meant to inspire them. Therefore, instead of attempting to translate Lefebvre’s call into a new practice, it proposes to look at an existing one. Furthermore, it responds to the need — recognised by Blanc & Beaumont (2005) and Sowa (2007) — for research concentrated on innovative participatory practices capable of contributing to vital systemic changes. It thus centres on participatory budgeting (PB), an increasingly popular initiative originating from Brazilian urban areas, which allows city-dwellers to participate in the decision-making process of allocation of urban financial resources. PB has been highlighted as “one of the most successful participatory instruments of the past 15 years” (Sintomer *et al.* 2008: 164) — a ‘best practice,’ the innovatory and experimental character of which has been embraced by a plethora of municipalities across the world looking for a new mechanism for reaching out to their residents, to address the problem of the loss of their administration’s legitimacy as well as profound crisis of urban participation (Friesecke, 2011; Ganuza & Nez, 2012). However, although PB “has become a central topic of discussion and significant field of innovation for those involved in democracy and

local development,” (Cabannes, 2004: 27) the question whether its expansion is “only a fashion, or a sustainable path towards a new type of urban policy” (Sintomer *et al.* 2008) remains open. Furthermore, while PB’s potential to realise the right to the city has been signalled (Harvey, 2012: xii), it has not been scientifically examined thus far.

Consequently, the aim of this work is to conduct a right to the city-inspired analysis of PB, which — building on Lefebvre’s theory as well as learning from its contemporary reinterpretations — focuses on the following research question: What is the effective capacity of PB to contribute to enforcing practically the theoretical idea of the right to the city? It thereby intends to apply the right the city as a relevant theory providing a context in which both nature and impact of PB can be understood more profoundly.

To ensure an efficient and feasible character of this investigation, it is anchored in precise (1) *ingredients* extracted from a study of Lefebvre’s founding text and its subsequent analyses (looked at in chapter 2) and (2) *elements* identified as central to the notion of participation, lying at the fundament of PB (chapter 3). PB’s capacity to realise the right to the city is sought on two levels: theoretical (chapter 4) and empirical (chapter 5). While the theoretical analysis builds on present-day literature concerning PB, the empirical one derives from qualitative field research centred on two case studies — PB projects in Cordova (Spain) and Sopot (Poland).

The study for this master thesis was conducted between March 2011 and May 2012 at Universität Wien, Københavns Universitet, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, and Universidad Complutense de Madrid, followed by fieldwork in Cordova and Sopot in May–July 2012.

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THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

The discussion of the notion of the right to the city in this chapter begins with an analysis of the initial vision of the term outlined by its author, Henri Lefebvre, followed by an examination of the literature describing a contextual change — from Fordist to post-Fordist accumulation regime — that has taken place since the 1960s when Lefebvre formulated his theory. The chapter concludes with a presentation of a selection of recent reinterpretations of the right of the city, which closely derive from this transformation.

2.1. HENRI LEFEBVRE'S VISION OF THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

[The city] ferments, full of suspect activities, of deliquescence, a hotbed of agitation. State powers and powerful economic interests can think of only one strategy: to devalorize, degrade, destroy, urban society." (Lefebvre, [1968] 1996: 128)

Thus did Henri Lefebvre refer to the anti-modernist urban movements — in particular the 1968 upheavals in Paris — that protested against a fundamental restructuring of urbanity generated by the Fordist accumulation regime and functionalist planning (Schmid, 2012). It is in their context that one should read his call for the right to the city — as an attempt to synthesise, theorise and thereby support their struggle.

What lies at the heart of Lefebvre's argument is his conviction about the city's uniqueness. For him, it is an *oeuvre*, [...] closer to a work of art than to a

simple material product” (101)¹, following the logic of not exchange, but use value. It stands for a “permanent disequilibrium, [...] dissolution of normalities and constraints, the moment of play and of the unpredictable” (129). However, as Marcuse (2009) has observed, the term ‘city’ is a synecdoche here — rather than standing for a concept limited by administrative or territorial boundaries, it should be understood as referring to the society as a whole.

According to Lefebvre, the *oeuvre* has become colonised by “economic, and productivist rationality” (131) that prioritises commercial function over quality of space — which for Lefebvre represents “the essential difference between use value and exchange value” (122-23). This causes the city’s commodification and fragmentation (Merrifield, 2006) and transformation from a malleable framework for *inhabiting* to a mere *habitat*, composed of artificially created and confined places. The spatial dimension of this change Lefebvre sees in stampeding urban sprawl and large-scale urban renewal projects of the 1960s and 1970s. The disintegration of the concept of the city as a form leads Lefebvre to focus on urbanisation seen as a process (Schmid, 2012), which, directed by the ruling class into a dialectical relationship with industrialisation, has assumed a ubiquitous character. It has reshaped the urban cores and the countryside alike, and affected the whole society “reforging everything and everywhere on the anvil of capital accumulation” (Merrifield, 2006: 67). As a result, the nature and role of urbanism have changed as well; it has acquired a new dimension as “the urban question henceforth becomes a political question: class issues are now explicitly urban issues, struggles around territoriality, out in the open” (*Ibid.*).

For Lefebvre, the city is at the centre of opposition to this crisis, as locus of an opportunity “to go beyond the market, the law of exchange value, money and profit” (124). On this ground Lefebvre believes that it is in the city that a new right — “the right to the city” — must be formulated. It is a right to appropriation of space within the city-*oeuvre*, participation in its creation, and “a transformed and renewed right to urban life [in which] the ‘urban’ place of encounter, priority of use value, inscription in space of a time [are] promoted to the rank of a supreme resource among all resources” (158). This passage has been widely interpreted as a call of a right to control how space is created and transformed (Schmid, 2012), and therefore a proposal “that radically rethinks social relations of capitalism” (Purcell, 2008: 92). Lefebvre’s concept can

¹ All references in this chapter in which the name of the author has not been indicated relate to Lefebvre ([1968] 1996)

therefore be understood as a right to utopia — it focuses not on altering an existing urbanity, but creating a new society (Marcuse, 2009).

In setting forth the right to the city Lefebvre does not suggest any ‘practical’ way of implementing it, as his idea is meant to theorise and thereby strengthen existing urban movements, rather than become transformed into the world of praxis.

2.2. A CONTEXTUAL CHANGE

The socio-economic context that prompted Henri Lefebvre to synthesise urban struggles into the notion of the right to the city has obviously changed, as Fordist accumulation regime and modernist planning principles are now long gone. The so-called neoliberal turn, analysed and interpreted by a plethora of works (most notably: Brenner, 2004; Duménil & Lévy, 2004; Harvey, 2005; George, 2000; and Peck, 2004) has given rise to post-Fordist policies and lifestyles that have challenged not only the economic, but also social and political urban order. Various scholars have demonstrated its influence on the urbanity; similarly to Lefebvre, they have identified the central role that cities play in the current accumulation regime, and recognised that it produces a multifaceted crisis that is reified in the urban space. Therefore, despite the apparent contextual change that has occurred since the 1960s and 1970s, the notion of the right to the city is brought back — reread, reinterpreted and redefined — in the hope that its theoretical contribution might once again prove constructive.

The presently recognised ‘urban crisis’ could first of all be seen as having an economic character — an urban translation of the recently erupted, ubiquitously discussed financial crisis. However, there is growing evidence that its properties should not be merely “summarised under the rubric of neoliberalism and its various permutations” (Brenner *et al.* 2012: 7), but attributed to principal features of current socio-economic system and its long-term strategies and inner contradictions (Marcuse, 2012; Schmid, 2012; Žižek, 2010). In its dependence on continuous geographical expansion, capitalism employs urbanisation as a way to temporary ‘fix’ its systemic problems regarding absorption of surplus product, and therefore makes it not only spatially and socially uneven, but also prone to recurring economic crises (Harvey, 2001; 2008). As Friedmann (1995) notes:

“particular cities are dissolved into market configurations, their history is replaced by something called the urban dynamic, people disappear as citizens of polis and are subsumed under the categories of abstract urbanisation processes, while human concerns are reduced to property, profits and competitive advantage” (145).

As a result, the urbanity has become commodified, cities have turned into spaces of consumption and consumed space, and the contradiction between exchange value and use value has been transformed into a conflict between consumption of space and its appropriation. “The entire space is sold – including people living in it [...] In the process, the people, residents and visitors alike, are reduced to mere ‘extras’ in the great urban spectacle” (Schmid, 2012: 56). Moreover, it has been indicated that recent globalisation of the urbanisation process, which is a contemporary ‘fix’ to capitalist inner crisis tendencies (Harvey, 2001, 2008), has given rise to metropolitanisation of the global economy (Veltz, 2000) and intensified the global competition between urban areas. This has triggered a shift towards increasingly entrepreneurial urban models (Harvey, 1998; Hall and Hubbard, 1996; OECD 2008) and an inter-urban circulation of practices (Gonzales, 2010; McCann, 2011; Ward, 2006) promoting fragmentation of policies and urban projects in terms of their content and scale. Consequently, an escalation of a number detrimental processes has been detected: from gentrification, disenfranchisement of city-dwellers (Purcell, 2002) and “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey, 2008: 34) to “urbanisation of poverty” (Parnell and Pieterse, 2010: 146) and “gross material inequality and at the same time [...] gross insecurity and emotional discontent and distortions” (Marcuse, 2012: 27).

The systemic character of the crisis that is increasingly apparent on the urban level implies that its outcomes are not solely socio-economical — its political facet is of equal importance. This aspect has been highlighted by a number of analyses. Some (like Blanc and Beaumont, 2005 or Fung and Wright, 2003), having observed the inefficiency of political instruments and structures, signal a crisis of local representative democracy, which impedes participation of individual (non-associated) citizens, does not allow for personalisation of issues and proposals discussed, and thus has drastically reduced legitimacy of public institutions. Others warn that while urban spaces of politics theoretically provide a framework for increased public participation, they are in fact revolving around depoliticised issues (Swyngedouw, 2007). Moreover, as Mayer (2012) demonstrates, the neoliberal paradigm has caused an evolution of urban social

movements. It enables them to mobilise and operate on a global scale, but at the same time causes a number of divides deriving from a plethora of motivations and goals, including very defensive ones. Also, it attempts to appropriate their critical discourses and arguments to “harness [them] towards the development of a revitalised urban (or regional) growth machine” (67). This leads Nawratak (2008) to emphasise that today’s urbanities, despite their spatial or economic growth, lack a political fundament, and this absence turns them into “the City’s caricature, [...] more of ‘urban area’ than the City itself” (16). The post-political character of the city entails a loss of sense of urban community, as “no political community means no community at all” (35). Consequently, the notion of citizenship is not built around loyalty to a particular institution or idea, but increased consumption, which, as Needham (2003) points out, transforms ‘citizens’ into ‘citizens-consumers,’ and continues to produce ‘one-dimensional people’ (Marcuse, [1964] 1991). In other words, “the neoliberal ethic of intense possessive individualism, and its cognate of political withdrawal from collective forms of action, becomes the template for human socialization” (Harvey, 2008: 32).

The sum of above-mentioned economic, social and political processes, Harvey (2008) continues, is “indelibly etched on the spatial forms of our cities.” (32) They have resulted in a widespread diffusion of new metropolitan paradigms, producing strikingly similar metropolitan landscapes that consist of a sets of fragmented and polarised elements — gated communities and enclaves of different sorts, from citadels concentrating economic and political power to ethnic ghettos (Marcuse and Van Kempen, 2000). They also export urbanisation processes beyond city limits, thus disintegrating the traditional urban cores and creating a number of new urban forms such as ‘metroburbia’ (Knox, 2008) or ‘edge cities’ (Garreau, 1991).

In the discussion concerning possible ways of addressing current economic, social and political crisis, not least in its urban dimension, many scholars have called for cities — home to suppressed, “alternative visions of urban life that point beyond capitalism as a structuring principle of political-economic and spatial organization” (Brenner *et al.* 2002: 1) — to assume a key role in accelerating a global, systemic reform. This “rediscovery of the urban” or “urban renaissance” (Parker and Shaw, 2008 qtd. in Schmid, 2012) is evident, as the necessity to reconstruct urbanities around social needs rather than market requirements (Marcuse, 2012) and design “a radical programme of urban citizenship” (Parnell and Pieterse, 2010: 159) has been recognised. It appears,

however, that usual tools and instruments for reform, such as urban planning, have a much decreased ability to respond to such challenge, due to their current regulatory, instrumental and visionless form (Fainstein, 2010). Therefore, a proposal has been made to transform them by the use of critical and normative tool of analysis within the field of urban studies (Marcuse, 2009).

The right to the city has recently reemerged as a concept that could perhaps act in this capacity, as it has been revived in a plethora of urban contexts by a variety of actors, often departing from Lefebvre's vision. The following two subchapters investigate a selection of most distinctive recent reinterpretations provided by grass-roots movements, international institutions and academics from the global North and South. This analysis focuses on what their proposals entail, and to whom they are addressed — a division borrowed from Marcuse (2012).

2.3. A RIGHT TO WHAT?

There appear to be two approaches to the subject matter of the right to the city: understanding it as a set of *rights*, or as *the right* to the city (Marcuse, 2012).

Scholars who perceive Lefebvre's call as dividable into separate *rights* to specific socio-economic aspects of urban life have distinguished, among others, the right to housing (Marcuse, 2008), mobility (Bickl, 2005), natural resources (Phillips and Gilbert, 2005), aesthetics (Matilla, 2005), as well as education and healthcare (Marcuse, 2012). Their approach is shared by various grass-roots movements, who often, especially in the global South, focus on struggling for access to housing, land or resources². A slightly more comprehensive *modus operandi* is proposed by movements such as the Right to the City Alliance in the USA, operating as a platform for groups and organisations whose individual issues may thus be assembled. Cataloguing rights is also characteristic of international NGOs and institutions such as Habitat International Organisation or United Nations, which have proposed legal formulations of the right to city:

² Relevant examples can be found on six continents, and in a variety of urban contexts: from Reclaiming Spaces active in Germany and Turkey, The Egyptian Centre for Housing Rights (Harris, 2010a), Isandla and Abahlali baseMjondolo in South Africa (Pithouse, 2010), the National Slum Dwellers Federation and Mahila Milan in India (Harris, 2010b), poblador movement in Chile (Mathivet & Pulgar, 2010), Urban Land Committees in Venezuela (Lajoie, 2010, Madera, 2010) and many more analysed in Sugranyes and Mathivet (2010).

most notable examples include the *World Charter for the Right to the City* (2004) and the *European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City* (2006). Along this line the right to the city has also been appropriated by municipal and state apparatuses, thereby having entered the urban legal order in Montreal (*Charte montréalaise*, 2007) and Mexico City (Zárata, 2010). Finally, it has been adopted by the national law in Brazil, under the form of the famed Law N° 10. 257 called ‘City Statute,’ leading local scholars to assert that the right to the city can be constructed using legal instruments (Fernandes, 2007; Furbino Bretas Barros *et al.* 2010).

Although these legal innovations might convey some of Lefebvre’s thoughts — for instance by emphasising the necessity for urban development to follow the principles of exchange value, social justice and participation — they have been criticised for operating as ‘toolboxes’ and ‘blueprints’ facilitating consensus-building among established urban actors, and explicitly addressing only “particular aspects of neoliberal policy; for example, in combating poverty, but not the underlying economic policies, which systematically produce poverty and exclusion” (Mayer, 2012: 75). Therefore, the inclusion into the process of urban development provided by the *rights* approach is limited to the existing urban framework, which deliberately remains driven and controlled by the urban regimes and capitalist social relations. As the right to the city becomes hijacked by neoliberal urban agendas, the structural change implied in Lefebvre’s idea is left out — and so is his proposal to radically transform the city. Instead, it provides a “bundle of rights necessary for capital accumulation and market exchange to proceed in a legally justifiable and enforceable way” (Harvey and Potter, 2011: 43) and “the right of the consumer to privatized urban space and differential commodities on the marketplace” (Keil, 2009: 237).

Hence, *the right* perspective, which is shared mostly by academics from the global North, emerges as having a much broader sense: instead of delineating specific claims within the existing system, it formulates a demand for a new system itself. The right to the city is thus understood as “a right to totality, a complexity,” (Marcuse, 2012: 35) that consists not of individual demands but intricately and crucially interrelated elements. It involves the right to participate by providing urban dwellers with a central role in the deliberation process over every decision concerning the production of urban space, thus “fundamentally shifting control away from capital and the state and toward urban inhabitants,” (Purcell, 2002: 101–102; Purcell, 2003) and inherently allowing for a non-institutional opposition to neoliberalism. It includes the right to

appropriate and produce urban space — understood not only as permission to physically occupy it (Mitchell, 2003), but ability to shape it according to urban dwellers' needs and aspirations. For Harvey (2008) this specifically means that the production of urban surplus value — which is intricately linked to the process of urbanisation and for the last decades has been increasingly privatised and controlled by urban elites — must be captured to allow for a more equal share of its use, thus allowing for creation of new forms and modes of urbanisation. Therefore, as a reading from South Africa notes, a protest against existing laws and institutions is necessary (Simone, 2005), and the right to the city explicitly implies a call for struggle against the liberal system through rejecting the domination of private property rights and profit rate, advocating “a radical restructuring of social, political, and economic relations, both in the city and beyond” (Purcell, 2002: 101). This protest has recently been embraced by several grass-roots initiatives — for instance the ‘Occupy movement’ — which, unlike many of the aforementioned ‘bottom-up’ initiatives, emphasises enough the need to question the very nature of the system, rather than to address its specific outcomes. Finally, the right to the city reaches beyond the existing city — its resources and development plans — and provides room for visions of new urbanities. “It is a right to change ourselves by changing the city,” claims Harvey (2008: 23), the right to our “utopias of spatial form” (Harvey and Potter 2011: 46).

2.4. A RIGHT FOR WHOM?

The question who has the right to the city is answered in two ways: Lefebvre's claim is treated as either an *individual*, or a *collective* right.

The former perspective is particularly apparent in the aforementioned legal translations of the right to the city, which recognise it as similar to general human rights. This view is shared by a number of scholars from both the North and South. For Attoh (2011), the right to the city should protect an individual against the majority's decisions that violate the minority's dignity or equality, thus furnishing one with a moral right to disobey the law, and suggesting the need for its redefinition. Hence, she points out numerous academics who have focused on particular social groups, such as homeless (Phillips and Gilbert, 2005; Van Deusen, 2005), immigrants (Dikec, 2005) as well as “racial minorities, [...]

the disabled, [...] women, [...] sexual minorities, and [...] political activists,” (Attoh, 2011: 675) whose individual rights might be infringed by unjust urban policies. The majority of grass-roots movements seem to follow this strategy, centring their activity upon specific social groups — from slum- or shack-dwellers and homeless to LGBTs and indigenous peoples — rather than the society as a whole.

There are, however, strong arguments for the latter perspective. For Harvey (2008) it clearly is “a common right than individual right since the transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanisation” (23). For Marcuse (2012), as the problems lies in unequal provision of the right to the city under the capitalist social relations, and their current neoliberal incarnation, it is natural that the demand for it may not come from the whole society, but first arise among economically oppressed or culturally alienated city-dwellers (Marcuse, 2012: 32). At the same time, the right to the city “opens up the definition of the political subject to include a range of different identities and political interests” (Purcell, 2002: 106). Nonetheless, their protest against discriminatory collective decisions taken by existing urban regimes, as well as demand for systemic changes, may be more effective if acquires a collective character, too. Joint action thus provides the right to city with more potential, even if in practice the comprehension of the struggle for it does not always have homogeneous character, and varies among different groups (Türkmen, 2011). Perhaps herein lies the power of the aforementioned ‘Occupy movement,’ which does not represent interests of specific social groups, but unites their struggles against systemic injustice.

2.5. THE *INGREDIENTS* OF THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

The critical analysis of recent reinterpretations of the right to the city reveals that identifying it as composed of particular rights having an individual character contributes to the overall understanding of the notion, and yet greatly limits its impact. Therefore, this work opts for a more profound reinterpretation of Lefebvre’s demand as the right: single and coherent, composed of distinguishable but closely related *ingredients*:

- the right to appropriate and produce urban space through participation and deliberation in urban decision-making;

- the right to capture urban surplus value;
- the right to challenge the system;
- the right to utopia (a new city).

Together, they allow for collective citizen control over the city. It is these *ingredients* that are further sought in participatory budgeting as a practice.

However, one more shall be identified. It should be clear that by ‘city’ Lefebvre did not mean “a city in the conventional sense at all, but a place in an urban society in which the hierarchical distinction between the city and the country has disappeared,” (Marcuse, 2012: 35) thus avoiding falling into the “local trap” — a belief in unique and superior qualities of the local (or urban) scale over others (Purcell, 2006). Hence the necessity to stipulate that the right to the city be the multi-scalar right to not merely ‘a city’ or ‘the city,’ but to space and society.

The issue of translating the theory about the right to the city into the world of praxis appears to have raised certain confusion, particularly within the academic circles. Previously mentioned international institutions that have incorporated the right to the city into their agendas claim that its practical realisation can be precisely designed, while some scholars from the South (most notably Fernandes, 2007) have enthusiastically announced its nearly completed achievement in Brazil. Even so, for a number of academics engaged in the debate, the process of fundamental change that the right the city involves cannot follow recipes designed beforehand (Schmid, 2012) — its content, form and direction have to be continuously rediscovered. Although Marcuse (2012) argues that critical urban theory should expose the origins of current systemic crisis to which it should give a “politicised response” (39), “it is hard to define the ‘processes’ for this struggle for different contextual features, for different groups with distinct orientations” (Türkmen, 2011: 12).

Consequently, this work builds upon a conviction that although an exposition of the urban deprivation is much needed, the right to the city — as historically deriving from struggles, and meaning to strengthen rather than evoke them (Harvey, 2012) — should not be applied to propose specific action that would fully embody its theoretical message, but to analyse the effectiveness of existing practices in terms of contributing to necessary structural change in (urban) societies of today. In other words, investigating the potential of PB in terms of realising the right to the city is important not for the sake of materialising Lefebvre’s call, but utilising its critical capacity to produce a more profound understanding of PB itself.

3

PARTICIPATION

The analysis of the right to the city has revealed that participation is one of its key *ingredients* — an assertion further confirmed by Busa (2009), Ascher (2009), and Angotti (2009). Indeed, participatory democracy — engaging city-dwellers in the debate over production of urban space — has been identified as playing a key role in rejuvenating today’s cities (Corijn, 2010). Therefore, the following chapter provides a brief overview of the state of the art regarding participation in urban projects and evaluate the typologies of the notion. Consequently, several ‘ideal’ *elements* of participatory processes are distinguished, and subsequently combined with previously delineated *ingredients* of the right to the city.

3.1. ANALYSIS OF CRITICAL READINGS REGARDING PARTICIPATION IN URBAN PROJECTS

Despite what enthusiastic voices heralding a “participatory boom” might be suggesting, participation is neither a recent, nor an uncontroversial notion (Sadura and Erbel, 2012). Pearce’s (2010) historical overview of its role in urban decision-making suggests that it was first applied in ancient Athens’ peculiar system of direct (urban) democracy. In modern times, however, although some political theorists, such as John Stuart Mill, emphasised its value for the integrity of society and state, it had not been practically applied until the 19th century, when in the midst of the industrial revolution the French Commune provided the working class with participatory power over the production of surplus value. As the Taylorist mode of production entailed the loss of this crucial capacity lest it should trigger dangerous vindictory movements, participation was hijacked as

an instrument of containing the worker's protest (Urbański, 2012). The Fordist regime that adopted a top-down model of decision-making was met with very open criticism in the 1960s and 1970s, when a number of participatory experiments in Europe and Americas were initiated — the “community control” movement in the US and Salvador Allende's *poder popular* policies in Chile being just a few examples. However, Pearce (2010) continues, participation seems to have gained momentum only under the neoliberal regime, which, having rescaled the state activity, prompted an ‘associational turn’ — following a belief that in order to enhance the quality of democracy, more importance should be given to the so-called ‘Third Sector.’ Although it indeed seemed more capable of providing framework for deliberation and protest than the agencies such as unions, political parties or religious organisations, it has soon become “an important player in non-state social delivery, entirely appropriate to the neoliberal age” (*Op. cit.*: 14), and in line with the principles of urban governance. In other words, one has to be wary of the ‘come back’ that participation has made in the last two decades. While being heralded as a potential panacea to the crisis of representative democracy, “an unalloyed good” (Silver *et al.* 2010: 453), and a crucial element of the restructuring of global political system, participation has often been harnessed by neoliberal agendas. At the same time, opportunities it creates “are important to the poor, despite skepticism of the motivations behind them” (Pearce, 2010: 15). Therefore, participation emerges as a theoretical term requiring a careful inspection, as it might highlight ideal characteristics that participatory practices such as participatory budgeting should follow, as well as pitfalls they should avoid.

Critical analyses of participation indicate that it should be inclusive and provide conditions for empowerment of those it involves. Participation should hence address the issue of unequal capacities between actors, related to limited time availability (for instance due to family and work responsibilities), access to resources (for instance deriving from one's low socio-economic status, information, or expertise), experience deriving from prior activism, possessed cultural and social capital, previous negative or too intense participatory experiences (so-called ‘participation fatigue’), cultural alienation, and lack of trust towards authorities, which might result in lack of confidence in project or general fatalism and scepticism (Friesecke, 2011; Silver *et al.* 2010). “Participatory processes can serve to deepen the exclusion of particular groups unless explicit efforts are made to include them” (Cornwall, 2008: 277). They can incorporate a fundamental class-bias, with certain groups (such as the most informed, educated

or organised, members of the middle-class, people who describe themselves as interested in politics, or left-wing supporters) participating more than others (such as immigrants or unemployed, or simply those who are unable or unwilling to take part in the debate due to their temporary, unofficial, or unrecognised status) and in different ways (men tending to assuming managerial roles more frequently than women) (Ganuza and Francés, n.d.; Blanc & Beaumont, 2005). On that account it has been demonstrated that an effort must be made to open the participatory process to all city-dwellers, despite their legal status (Szaranowicz-Kusz, 2012), and create projects not 'for' the city-dwellers, but 'with' the city-dwellers, who can actively contribute to the project (Malewski, 2012: 252), rather than turn to selected organisations whose accountability and legitimacy in representing citizens is often questionable (Silver *et al.* 2010). Participation should therefore base on clear rules and procedures regulating situations of conflict (Górski, 2007: 55), and use tools and language which do not exclude participants lacking expert knowledge (Martela, 2012).

Furthermore, Ganuza and Francés (n.d.) propose that participation acquires "a communicative character [...], thus incorporating elements that belong to deliberative theory" (5), since participatory processes devoid of deliberation are said to lead to an "erosion of local social capital" (Sadura, 2012b), and seem unable to include a genuine learning process (Górski, 2007: 55). Nevertheless, White (1996) underlines that participation must challenge existing power relations, and therefore involve a conflict that "may be the first condition of subsequent dialogue" (Sadura, 2012a: 199). Hence, too great a focus on reaching a consensus between parties involved, or producing a 'successful project' may lead to de-mobilisation and entail avoiding failures that often are necessary to improve its quality (Blanc & Beaumont 2005; Miessen, 2010 in Erbel & Żakowska, 2012: 263-264).

The conflict within participatory practices should enable them to question the status quo and challenge the existing power relations (Sadura and Erbel, 2012). Alas, participation often reproduces them and fails to contest neoliberal agendas, which instead apply it to offload a great variety of public services, (Charkiewicz, 2012), "defuse protest, co-opt opponents, and impose social control" (Silver *et al.* 2010: 455) in "thinly veiled attempts at securing legitimacy for and cooperation with policies already adopted that favour capitalist growth" (*Op. cit.*: 454). It thereby revolves around depoliticised issues, treated as a tool for reconciling society and elites and increasing local administrations' efficiency, instead of enabling citizens to struggle against the exclusionary urban regimes

(Górski, 2007: 48). One should be aware that “incorporation, rather than exclusion, is often the best means of control” (White, 1996: 143), and “being involved in a process is not equivalent to having a voice” (Cornwall, 2008: 278). Therefore, to avoid the aforementioned pitfalls, participatory projects should acquire an intrinsically political character, as opposed to being applied as no more than a consensus-building technique (Cornwall, 2008).

In order to embody an anti-systemic protest, participation should reconcile the institutional and non-institutional forms of activity. On the one hand, participatory process cannot be engineered regardless of the context of existing participatory practices and urban social movements (Martínez, 2010), or have an obligatory character — depending on its form, content and conditions, citizens should have a right to decide not to participate as “non-participation is also participation” (Think Tank *Niepartycypacja*, 2012: 98). Projects and “spaces that people create for themselves” (Cornwall, 2008: 275) have been demonstrated as having more quality in terms of inclusiveness and deliberation, than those following purely ‘top-down’ approach that tends to “replace people with organisations [and] support marginalization of actions reaching beyond the canon of available and imaginable practices (e.g. different forms of civil disobedience)” (Sadura and Erbel, 2012: 8) and use the process to produce “creative surplus value,” only to capture and transform it against the participants’ intentions (Sadura, 2012b: 43). On the other hand, the ‘bottom-up’ and local participation mechanisms should not be glorified, for they may be used by small, often closed and clientelistic groups (for instance NIMBY movements) to stand against majority decisions to “pursue narrow interests, exclude outsiders, express parochial identities and impose externalities on their neighbours contrary to the greater good” (Silver *et al.* 2010: 455). Therefore, participatory processes should acquire a holistic, multi-scalar dimension, and take into consideration the whole city and — beyond it — society, as opposed to creating parochial spaces and producing ‘shopping lists’ for particular groups or areas.

Finally, even the most inclusive and transformative participatory process fails to make an impact if it does not to produce concrete results (Klaman, 2012, 208-209). These, however, should be redistributed according to principles of social justice; otherwise, participation may recreate the existing division into ‘winners and losers,’ for instance by rewarding more involved communities and omitting the demobilised ones (Silver *et al.* 2010).

3.2. TYPOLOGIES OF PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES

The analysis of the notion of participation would not be complete without an overview of typologies establishing a number ideal and negative types further contributing to delineation of its key *elements*.

It was already in the 1960s that Arnstein (1969) distinguished eight levels of participation (see *Table 1* below). Four of them are particularly relevant for the analysis of participatory budgeting. The two topmost types — *citizen control* and *delegated power* — are participatory models the characteristics of which participatory budgeting can hopefully incorporate. They allow city-dwellers to hold significant, if not full power over the project or practice in question, with all stakeholders having to enter into negotiation with them. *Partnership* denotes that powerholders have as much say in the decision-making process as the city-dwellers, whereas *tokenism* provides hardly any space for negotiating, with the decision-making process beyond the citizens' control. Thus, Arnstein reemphasises that participation should lead to redistribution of power.

In another typology, proposed by Pretty (1995) (see *Table 2* below), participatory budgeting appears to have a potential to follow one of the two ideal types: *interactive participation* — in which participation is regarded as a right, rather than means to achieve certain goals, and the methodology applied facilitates expression of a variety of perspectives as well as occurrence of a learning process — and *self-mobilized process*, which allows city-dwellers to take the initiative and keep control over the distribution of resources within the project. However, Cornwall (2008) underlines that even self-mobilised, participatory initiatives are at risk of becoming part of neoliberal agendas and thus following the principles of what Pretty calls *functional participation*, which revolves around predefined goals, with major decisions having been taken beforehand.

A slightly different approach is proposed by Farrington and Bebbington (1993) (see *Figure 1* below) who look at participation in terms of its *width* (referring to the scope of participants of the process) and *depth* (referring to the level of control that participants have over the process). According to Cornwall (2008), however, seeking as deep and wide a process as possible might be too demanding for all parties involved; instead, she suggests that “it makes more sense to think in terms of optimum participation: getting the balance between depth and inclusion right for the purpose at hand” (276).

Table 1. Participation ladder by Arnstein (1969)

| Project type | | Characteristics of each type |
|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| Citizen control | Citizen power | Citizens have full managerial power over a programme or institution |
| Delegated power | | Citizens achieve significant power over a programme or plan; in order to achieve their goals, it is the powerholders that have to begin the negotiation process |
| Partnership | | Participants enter into a negotiation process with the powerholders; planning and decision-making becomes a shared responsibility |
| Placation | Tokenism | Although participants are given a voice, their position within the negotiating is weak; <i>placation</i> , even though allows for an increased participants' influence over the project, leaves the decision-making process beyond their control |
| Consultation | | |
| Informing | | |
| Therapy | Non-participation | Participation as public relations tool that helps legitimize powerholders and often aims at educating, or even curing the participants |
| Manipulation | | |

Source: Arnstein (1969)

Figure 1. Participation typology by Farrington and Bebbington (1993)



Source: Farrington and Bebbington (1969)

Table 2. Participation typology by Pretty (1995)

| Project type | Characteristics of each type |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Self-mobilisation | People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Self-mobilization can spread if government and NGOs provide an enabling framework of support. Such self-initiated mobilization may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power. |
| Interactive participation | People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, not just the means to achieve project goals. The process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systemic and structured learning processes. As groups take control over local decisions and determine how available resources are used, so they have a stake in maintaining structures or practices. |
| Functional participation | Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision-making, but tends to arise only after major decisions have already been made by external agents. At worst, local people may still only be co-opted to serve external goals. |
| Participation for material incentives | People participate by contributing resources, for example, labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Farmers may provide the fields and labour, but are involved in neither experimentation nor the process of learning. It is very common to see this 'called' participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end. |
| Participation by consultation | People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. External agents define problems and information-gathering processes, and so control analysis. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views. |
| Passive participation | People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. It involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project management without any listening to people's responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals. |
| Manipulative participation | Participation is simply a pretence, with 'people's' representatives on official boards, but who are un-elected and have no power. |

Source: Pretty (1995)

The last typology analysed here, outlined by White (1996), proposes to centre on particular interests behind participation (see *Table 3* below). It determines *transformative* projects as the ideal ones, since they approach participation both as means and end in itself. At the same time, a number of negative types are established: *representative* projects providing no more than *voice* for the citizens, *instrumental* ones perceiving participation as a *means* of increasing efficiency, and *nominal* ones serving as mere instrument of *display*. A given project usually does not belong to just one category; its character, and thus its position within the typology changes over time. Therefore, there may be a discrepancy between the initial idea behind the project, the methodology that is applied at first, and the methods and outcomes that emerge as the projects are being implemented (Cornwall, 2008). Nonetheless, White underlines that “however participatory a development project is designed to be, it cannot escape the limitations imposed on this process from the power relations in wider society” (153), and therefore participation is a notion that should be treated with great caution. As Malewski (2012) emphasises, “the mythical figure of the ‘deprived’ [...] awaiting to be engaged in the tempting whirl of participation does not exist [and] creating a holistic model tackling in relatively short time all problems [...] is impossible (250).

Table 3. Participation typology by White (1996)

| Project form | ‘Top-down’ perspective | ‘Bottom-up’ perspective | Overall function |
|----------------|---|--|--|
| Transformative | <i>Empowerment</i> through involvement in decision-making process and project realisation | Empowerment | Means / End |
| Representative | Focus on <i>sustainability</i> and thus avoiding the danger of running an inappropriate and dependent project | <i>Leverage</i> for the locals, ability to influence the decision-making process behind the project as well as its future management | <i>Voice</i> for the locals |
| Instrumental | <i>Efficiency</i> interest of the agency behind the project | <i>Cost</i> that the participants have to bear (time off work, school etc.) | <i>Means</i> to achieve cost/effectiveness as well as local facility |
| Nominal | <i>Legitimation</i> for governmental or NGO agency | <i>Inclusion</i> of the project participants | <i>Display</i> |

Source: White (1996)

3.3. THE METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The examination of critical analyses and typologies of participation has thus produced a number *elements* that a participatory project such as participatory budgeting should incorporate, which can be combined with previously distinguished *ingredients* of the right to the city, consequently forming a methodological framework for further investigation of PB (see *Table 4* below). The order of *elements* and *ingredients* is not hierarchical, as they should all be incorporated in a practice that is fully coherent with the theoretical idea of the right to the city.

Table 4. The methodological framework
for analysis of PB as a participatory urban practice,
combining the *ingredients* of the right to the city and *elements* of participation.

| <i>Ingredients of the right to the city</i> | <i>Elements of participation</i> |
|---|---|
| The right to appropriate and produce urban space = the right for participation as well as deliberation in urban decision-making | Aims |
| | The aims behind the process are <i>transformative</i> (<i>empowerment</i>), not <i>representative</i> (providing the public merely with <i>voice</i>), <i>instrumental</i> (participation seen as <i>means</i> for achieving better cost/effectiveness), or <i>nominal</i> (<i>display</i>). |
| | Process |
| | The process is <i>inclusive</i> — it is optimally ‘wide’. |
| | The process provides space for both <i>deliberation</i> as well as <i>conflict</i> . |
| | The process is <i>interactive</i> : participation is seen as a right, rather than means to achieve certain goals, it allows for <i>empowerment</i> of its participants by involving a profound, mutual learning experience and consequently address the issue of unequal capacities between actors. Thus, the process is not an example of <i>functional participation</i> ; it does not revolve around a pre-defined goals, with major decisions having been taken beforehand. |

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| | |
|---|---|
| The right to struggle and challenge the system | The process follows the <i>citizen power</i> ideal-type and is not an example of <i>tokenism</i> : it <i>objects to current neo-liberal hegemony</i> by challenging existing power relations, allowing for redistribution of power to city-dwellers, providing them with significant control over the process, and compelling all stakeholders to enter into negotiation with them. Moreover, the process is optimally ' <i>deep</i> '. |
| | The process has a political character. |
| | The process maintains balance between elements of <i>non-institutional</i> /' <i>bottom-up</i> /' <i>self-mobilised</i> and <i>institutional</i> /' <i>top-down</i> ' approach. |
| The right not merely to a city or 'the city', but the right to space and society | The process has a <i>holistic, multi-scalar</i> dimension. |
| The right to utopia? The right to a <u>new</u> city, instead of <u>existing</u> city => The right to capture surplus value (inversion of spending priorities) | Results |
| | The process is followed by tangible results. |
| | The results of the process produce a lasting change of power relations that reaches reach beyond existing institutional framework, and are distributed among the participants in an egalitarian manner. |

Source: own compilation.



PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING THEORY

The analysis of participatory budgeting (PB) within the aforementioned methodological framework is conducted on two levels: theoretical and empirical. This chapter deals with the former, and builds on critical readings as well as personal observations concerning the general concept of PB and its initial practical realisation in Porto Alegre, which by now has become a benchmark case worldwide. It distinguishes a number of aspects important for development, form and overall impact of PB, which are further sought in the next chapter — concerned with the empirical level — in which results of research regarding two case studies in Cordova and Sopot are presented.

The discussion about the theoretical facet of PB is structured in the following way: first a definition of PB is established and general aims behind it are examined, followed by a description and critical evaluation of its mechanism, typologies, and finally the results it produces.

4.1. A DEFINITION — WHAT IS PB

Numerous definitions of PB describe this practice as an innovative project enabling direct involvement (Wampler, 2000: 2) and contribution (Goldfrank, 2007: 92) of “non-elected citizens” (Sintomer *et al.* 2008: 168) who actively participate in the decision-making process organised “at the behest of governments, citizens, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society organizations (CSOs)” (Wampler, 2007: 21), and concerned with the issue of allocation of public finances. However, as Sintomer *et al.* (2008: 168) note, practices referred to as PB may at times involve very little participation, while projects that include a great number of PB elements might be presented as a

deepened participatory budgetary procedure that does not carry a PB label. Therefore, they have proposed a more convincing, methodological definition, which distinguishes specific features that differentiate PB from other participatory practices: (1) cyclic character, (2) deliberation at special forums and meetings about (3) limited amount of financial resources, (4) reaching beyond the scope of a neighbourhood or district, and (5) liability for the results. This definition underpins the following analysis of PB.

4.2. HISTORY AND INITIAL CONTEXT OF PB — AIMS AND MOTIVATIONS BEHIND PB

PB was officially held for the first time in 1989 in Porto Alegre, the capital of the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul. Górski (2007) shares Baierle's (2008) belief that prior traditions of civic activism in the city were a key factor for PB's development, and thus suggests that its roots can be traced as early as in 1945, when the first neighbourhood associations (*associações de bairro*) were created. In their everyday struggle against the authoritarian regime that ruled Brazil between 1964 and 1985 over the pattern of urban development, local communities had developed crucial skills and strategies. In mid-1980s activists began to form associations on the district, city and regional level, which led to the establishment of the Federation of Neighbourhood Associations of Porto Alegre (*União das Associações dos Moradores de PoA – UAMPA*). The collapse of the dictatorship further enabled UAMPA to intensify their activity, and transform their prior knowledge and experiences into new participatory initiatives; one of them was PB, which UAMPA officially proposed to implement in 1985.

The socio-economic context in which this idea emerged was quite peculiar, and certainly different from Northern American and Western European urban realities in which PB is applied today. When the Worker's Party (PT — *Partido dos Trabalhadores*) won the 1989 elections and consequently decided to implement PB, Porto Alegre was experiencing “one of the worst decades in [its] history”— facing a dire housing crisis, as 28% of its population inhabited substandard dwellings, and a fiscal chaos, with “98% of municipal budget [...] allocated to payment of municipality employees' salaries, and all investments suspended” (Górski, 2007: 68-69). Moreover, the city constituted a highly segregated urban area incorporating vast slums. The aftermath of the elections

allowed for a number of other key factors to occur. First, various community movements expect to receive with more decision-making power, which was to be obtained through PB. Second, the political administration (now controlled by PT) also became willing to implement PB, as they could not afford to oppose widespread citizen support for the project, and further saw PB as “a way of translating the grass-roots self-conception of the party into municipal politics [to] construct a wider base of support than its original union membership” (Sintomer *et al.* 2008: 167). Thus, the result of the popular vote allowed for “a conjunction of top-down and bottom-up processes,” (*Ibid.*) and productive synergy between government and civil society leaders (Abers, 1998), without which the proposal for a transformative ‘inversion of spending priorities’ reversing the long-standing policy pattern favouring middle- and upper-class areas (Wampler, 2007) would not be feasible, and thereby a large part of the population would not be enabled to capture the urban surplus value. In other words, the potential of PB in terms of realising the right to the city largely depended on the convergence of pragmatic aims of actors behind the development of PB, as well as their agreement that both the procedure and results of PB would be respected by all parties involved.

It is interesting to explore how aims behind the conception of PB in Porto Alegre relate to general objectives it follows elsewhere, as in the last three decades it has been embraced by a plethora of municipalities worldwide. In the first place, PB appears to work towards combatting social and political exclusion, and attempts to incorporate traditionally excluded political actors into the policy-making process by creating a framework for deliberation in which non-expert citizens can be engaged. It thus intends to provide access to not only information, but also the decision-making process (Ganuza & Nez, 2012), by allowing individuals to participate whether they act as representatives of some groups or not, and without imposing any criteria for participation (Ganuza & Francés, n.d.). Thus, the aims behind PB can be transformative, and largely correlate with the idea of providing city-dwellers with the right to appropriate and produce urban space. Moreover, local authorities have been observed as engaging in PB to bring the administration closer to the people in the light of deepening individualisation of lifestyles and fragmentation of civil organisations, as well as their supposedly reduced legitimacy among city-dwellers (Comas Arnau, 2010). Consequently, PB has intended to challenge existing power relations, redistribute control over urban development to citizens, and invert spending priorities in spatial as well as social terms — it has endeavoured to

direct investment to peripheries rather than urban cores, and to low-income groups rather than middle- or upper-class (Cabannes, 2004). It thus may attempt to “transform clientelistic, vote-for-money budgeting arrangements into a publicly accountable, bottom-up, deliberative system driven by expressed needs of city residents” (Fung & Wright, 2003: 11) and can be seen as aspiring to provide a right to struggle against existing urban regimes and growth patterns, and to further capture urban surplus value.

However, transformative aims behind PB must not be taken for granted; as in the instance of Porto Alegre, they depend on a number of decisive factors. PB has been indicated as emerging only in certain political context — lack of political driving force behind this project greatly limits its impact, as it was the case in Florianopolis and Sao Paulo (Baiocchi, 2003). Co-operation between local administration and urban social movements is also crucial, as are prior participatory traditions. Therefore, “participatory budgets do not exist in an isolated way. [...] They require a mobilized citizenry as a precondition for success. To a certain extent, this feature protects against technocrats, international agencies and some NGOs that see PB as a recipe for “implanting” participation and transparency” (Cabannes, 2004: 40). Inability to satisfy the aforementioned conditions may allow for hijacking of PB by actors whose motives behind implementing it have little to do with Lefebvre’s demands. Indeed, the World Bank rather uncritically depicts how politicians, international development agencies and businesses approach PB as an efficiency-building tool that helps combat corruption, foster transparency, and increase tax collection, utilising this practice to strengthen their position at the expense of potential political rivals (Shah, 2007; Wampler, 2007). Consequently, unless the aforementioned context for the emergence of PB is present, instead of proposing a profound systemic change, transformation and empowerment, PB may assume a purely functional character, employing participation as a means, rather than ends.

4.3. PROCESS

— DESCRIPTION OF GENERAL MECHANISM OF PB

Although participatory budgeting may follow a variety of models, most of them to a greater or lesser extent build on the mechanism that functioned in Porto Alegre from the 1990s to 2004. Therefore, to explain how PB works, it

seems most relevant to describe this benchmark case, which in this paper is based on contributions by Baierle (2008), Baiocchi (2003), Górski (2007), UN Habitat (2004) and Wampler (2007).

PB has an annual character, and is held in rounds composed of a year-long series of meetings anchored in two main dimensions: territorial (meetings in neighbourhoods) and thematic (meetings regarding city-wide priorities and visions) (see *Figure 2* below). The first stage of the process begins with open plenary meetings at the district level, the aim of which is to provide basic information concerning the procedure, and to attract new participants. The attendees review the results of the previous round of PB, rules and regulations for the new round, as well as projects that the municipality would like PB to discuss and approve in the following months. In their light city-dwellers are encouraged to establish initial needs regarding investments. Moreover, the meetings elect delegates — representatives of particular neighbourhoods — to territorial and thematic fora. These bodies mobilise citizen participation throughout the process, monitor the development of PB, and facilitate the dialogue between particular thematic or territorial areas, the PB Council, and the local administration. All delegates participate in workshops thus gaining technical knowledge and skills related to their further activity within PB.

At the second stage of PB, intermediary meetings at the territorial and thematic level are held. At territorial meetings the needs of particular districts are discussed with their citizens. At thematic meetings projects concerning the whole city, rather than particular district, are deliberated. It is these intermediary meetings that are responsible for determining and prioritising specific proposals for investment; therefore, they attract the greatest number of participants, and host most controversial and intense debates. Importantly, until this stage all meetings within the PB are fully open to citizens, as no participation criteria are applied, and no participants (for instance representatives of civic associations) are privileged over others. Crucially, necessary expertise is provided by assistance of experts from different departments of the municipality, as well as visits to the sites of potential investments (so-called ‘bus-caravan of priorities’).

The third stage of PB consists of another round of plenary meetings focusing on projects selected through prioritisation carried out by the intermediary fora. At these assemblies councillors for a city-wide PB council (in Porto Alegre called Conselho do Orçamento Participativo) are chosen from each territorial and thematic meeting. Interestingly, the councillors do not receive any salary, can be elected only twice, and their mandate can be at any time cancelled

by the city-dwellers. The council organises investment proposals by creating district and thematic lists that are then reconciled with available resources (which are controlled by the council having the capacity to plan and decide upon the local tax policy) and technical criteria (regarding financial and legal feasibility of each project), which is accomplished through weighting city-wide priorities established in the previous stage (in Porto Alegre called the ‘Quality of Life Index’). The final draft of the municipal budget is then publicly consulted with the citizens, officially passed to the local administration, and transformed by the PB council into an investment plan, the implementation of which is closely monitored by the citizens.

4.4. BEYOND PORTO ALEGRE — DIFFUSION AND TYPOLOGY OF PB

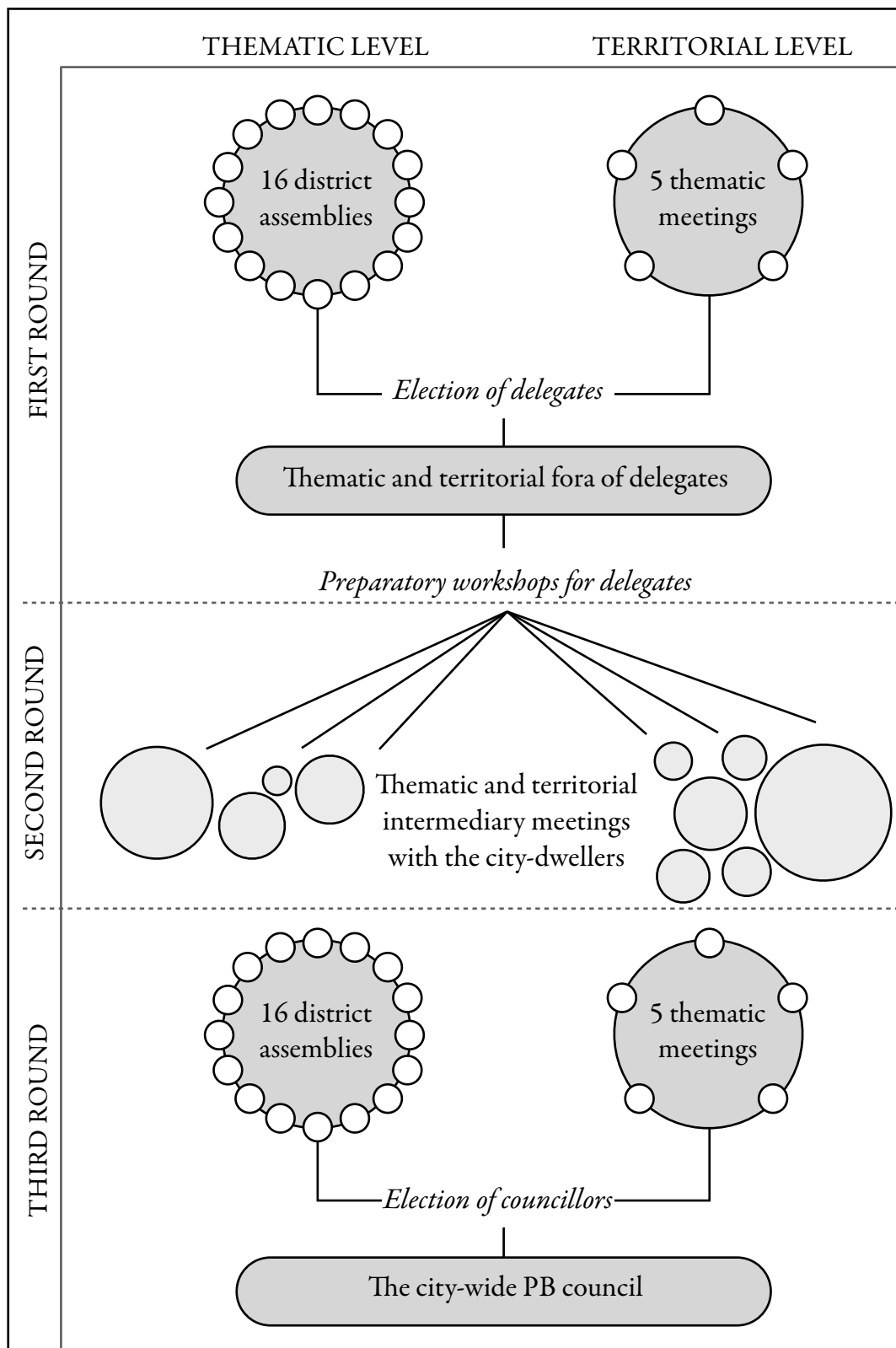
Already by the mid-1990s, when participatory budgeting went beyond the experimental phase in Porto Alegre, it had been adopted by other municipalities and had expanded on the level of the state of Rio Grande do Sul. It first spread across Brazil, in which by 2004 “43 per cent of the population from cities with more than 100 thousand inhabitants lived in cities with a PB” (Baierle, 2008: 54), and other Latin America countries (Cabannes, 2004). PB’s mobility was not be limited to the global South — in early 2000s it entered North America and Europe, (Cordova being the first city in the Old World to have implemented the project), where by 2008 around 100 PB initiatives had been realised (Sintomer *et al.* 2008), and finally reached Africa and Asia. Today, PB is present in all global regions, and in a variety of national and municipal contexts. Although the task of cataloguing worldwide all practices that carry the PB label (and, crucially, verifying their convergence with the definition of PB) has not yet been undertaken, the development of PB worldwide is apparent, as “local governments are adopting participatory budgeting from Albania to Zambia (Shah, 2007: 6).”³

This widespread mobility has resulted in a gradual departure from the original Porto Alegre model. In order to further develop the framework for analysis of the case studies presented in this work, it seems essential to observe different patterns of implementation of PB. The most extensive PB typology is

³ A general idea of the worldwide scope of PB may be provided by a map available at <http://goo.gl/tMxwj>. However, it should be noted that it clearly has neither official, nor exhaustive character.

provided by Sintomer *et al.* (2008), who have examined the origins of particular PB initiatives, methodology they apply, type of deliberation they involve and the role that civil society plays in the process they initiate (169). Sintomer *et al.*'s classification (see *Table 5* below) of six ideal-types provides an interesting insight into the capacity of particular PB models to provide the right to participation as well deliberation in urban decision-making. This capacity seems particularly high in PB initiatives processes following either of the two models praised for their transparency — *Porto Alegre in Europe* or *Participation of organised interests*. However, the former, which remains under direct influence of the Porto Alegre case, appears more inclusive, since instead of basing on informal rules and participation of organised actors, it formally commits the local government to realise the citizen's proposals and involves citizens more directly. *Community funds at local and city level* and *The private/public negotiating table* are two models which depend on financial resources external to the municipal budget, coming from benefactors such as international institutions or private companies. Thus, although they may provide space for deliberation, they are unable to embody struggle against existing power relations, even though *Community funds at local and city level* directly engages citizens in realisation of investment that have emerged from PB. The least deliberative and inclusive models are *Proximity participation* and *Consultation on public finances*, in which deliberation is narrowed down to a dialogue between administration and citizens, who are individually invited to participate in PB.

Figure 2. Key structural elements of the PB mechanism in Porto Alegre.



Source: own compilation based on Górski (2007)

Table 5. A typology of participatory budgeting models by Sintomer *et al.* (2008)

| | Origin of the process | Potential for deliberation | Potential for inclusion |
|---|--|--|---|
| Porto Alegre adapted for Europe | Under direct influence of the Porto Alegre model (as ‘best practice’) | High <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on general guidelines. • The framework is (a) diverse: provides a number of scales on which the process takes places, from large assemblies to small meetings; (b) transparent: establishes clear rules and creates space for dialogue | High <p>The government committed to realise the citizens’ proposals => citizens having high capacity within the decision-making process</p> |
| Participation of organised interests | Based on the tradition and contribution of civic society organisations to public policy-making. | High <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on general guidelines. • The framework is (a) diverse: provides a number of scales on which the process takes places, from large assemblies to small meetings; (b) transparent: establishes clear rules and creates space for dialogue | Medium <p>Fairly informal rules: the process may acquire a merely consultative character.</p> |
| Community funds at local and city level | PB process as part of particular policy programme, with most (if not all) of the funding provided by sources outside of the city budget. | Medium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework often provides an opportunity for dialogue within small enough groups. • However, “a radical shift towards more social justice is improbable” (172), since priorities are delineated by an assembly gathering a number of actors and interests, but with very weak (if any) relationship with the political administration. | High <p>Citizens directly engaged in realisation of projects evolving from the PB process.</p> |

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| The public/ private negotiating table | PB as an initiative of international organisations (e.g. UN) or private companies; most (if not all) of the funding is provided by sources outside of the city budget. | Medium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework often allows for dialogue within small enough groups. • However, “a radical shift towards more social justice is improbable” (172), since priorities are delineated by an assembly gathering a number of actors and interests, but with very weak (if any) relationship with the political administration. | Medium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens directly engaged in realisation of projects evolving from the PB process. • The level of citizen’s contribution directly depends on the level of private investors’ contribution, and is inversely proportional to it. |
| Proximity participation | Based on previous participatory practices, for instance “neighbourhood funds or councils” (172) | Medium or Low <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberation is narrowed down to a direct dialogue between administration and citizens, the results of which are summarised by the municipality, not citizens (‘selective listening’). • As the model regards physical proximity as its fundamental principle, the discussion mostly focuses on investment at the neighbourhood level, with only general priorities debated with regard to the level of the city. <p>The process is controlled by the municipality: it “may induce a discussion between citizens and the administration/council members, but hardly produces modernization effects at the city level” (173);</p> | Low Citizens unable to propose or vote on projects/ proposals. Civic organisations excluded from the process, with citizens individually invited or summoned to participate in PB. |

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| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Consultation on public finances | Related to the New Public Management strategies | Low • Deliberation is narrowed down to a direct dialogue between administration and citizens, the results of which are summarised by the municipality, not citizens ('selective listening'). | Low Citizens unable to propose or vote on projects/proposals. Civic organisations excluded from the process, with citizens individually invited or summoned to participate in PB. |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---|

Source: Sintomer *et al.* (2008)

4.5. PROCESS — CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Thus far PB has been demonstrated as likely to incorporate transformative aims and intending to provide the right to city, although on the condition that a number of factors are involved. However, to answer the question whether PB can be seen as effectively realising Lefebvre's call, it is crucial to look beyond its objectives, and critically analyse it as a process.

PB may appear as a practice which through opening up of the process of deliberation about urban development (especially in its first stages), to an unprecedented extent allows city-dwellers to appropriate and produce urban space. Nonetheless, there exists strong evidence that it tends to incorporate socio-economic bias, which is typical for participatory projects, even if over time its influence on deliberative capacities of participants decreases (Górski, 2007: 89). PB initiatives have too often been demonstrated as creating a divide between "articulate and non-articulate actors, new participants and 'professional citizens,'" or under-representing certain groups (for instance women, the low-educated, or the poor) (Baierle 2010: 57), which has been clearly observed in Porto Alegre, where the members of existing civic associations dominated among territorial and thematic delegates (Górski, 2007: 75). Even though PB may attract new participants, few of them come from marginal groups or remain involved for long (Sintomer *et al.* 2008). Furthermore, despite being founded upon an elaborate system of fora providing framework for deliberation between not only

participants and the local administration, but also among participants themselves (Shah, 2007), PB often fails to incorporate tensions deriving from plurality of views represented at the negotiation table (Ganuza, n.d.) — conflicts are regarded as having a limiting, rather than productive quality.

Finally, there is no guarantee that PB is interactive process. As it combines elements of direct and representative democracy, it may enable participants to adjust their involvement in the project to their individual capacities. It can also work towards empowerment of city-dwellers, provided that it engages them in a profound learning process. Therefore, coherent and widespread information campaign should be followed by technical and thematic meetings allowing for mutual deliberation between participants and representatives of specific departments within the local administration, facilitated by professional mediators and providing city-dwellers with key skills and competences. PB projects should therefore act as so-called “citizenship schools” (Wampler, 2000: 2). However, there is doubt concerning PB participants’ interest and ability to enter the policy-making arena and grasp the complexity of overall urban agendas, beyond the level of neighbourhoods and districts. (Wampler, 2007: 22) They may too excessively depend for information on the local administration, and therefore act as ‘rubberstamps’, or propose strategies reaching beyond PB’s financial and legal capacities (Górski, 2007: 92–94). Hence another essential reason for incorporating a comprehensive and deliberative learning experience within PB: should city-dwellers attempt to shape urban space beyond existing political visions — for instance by redefining priorities behind each PB round — their knowledge and technical expertise cannot be questioned too easily. Otherwise, the process is likely to acquire a purely functional character, and become preoccupied with serving particularistic aims of local administration, civic associations or city-dwellers, rather than creating a more holistic urban vision.

The interactive character of PB is closely related to entitling citizens to struggle against current neoliberal hegemony shaping urban development; PB appears as having a high capacity in this regard. First, it may challenge existing power relations as a uniquely horizontal and open practice that directly encourages and empowers city-dwellers to participate in urban decision-making process vis-à-vis the usual protagonists of urban politics, who are compelled to enter into the reconfigured negotiation process.

Second, it indeed can redistribute power to city-dwellers who are able to control the process, as before each PB round they determine rules and regulations behind it, compose a list of general subjects for discussion within PB, and

establish city-wide criteria for selection of particular investment proposals (Cabannes, 2004). Moreover, key responsibilities with regard to allocation of public finances are delegated to new, directly elected bodies. It is the neighbourhood meetings that are in charge of monitoring PB at all its stages — deliberation, prioritisation, selection and finally implementation of proposals for investments — thus “moving the locus of decision-making from the private offices of politicians and technocrats to public forums” (Wampler, 2000: 2). The city-wide PB council (such as Conselho do Orçamento Participativo in Porto Alegre) becomes the main venue for negotiations between local officials, representatives of civic associations and city-dwellers.

Third, PB’s direct focus on non-expert citizens may bring them into a conflict with civic organisations and thus initiate debate on its (post-)political nature. Often associations perceive PB as not only repositioning them at the negotiating table, but also explicitly diminishing their role as actors with essential knowledge about the urban decision-making process, who today tend to be blamed for having gained too political a character and therefore having detached themselves from citizens and their actual needs (Ganuza and Nez, 2012: 79-80). Their line of argument is related to general concern that city-dwellers may be deliberately involved in PB as apolitical actors prone to manipulation and lacking experience in political struggle with urban regimes. Even so, Francés García and Carrillo Cano (2008) hope that a conflict of such nature can be productive, as it forces actors to establish a dialogue on priorities and modalities of participation. There indeed is evidence that PB may have “renewed leadership in civil society and ‘scaled up’ activism from neighbourhoods to municipal and district levels” (Baiocchi, 2003: 58), thus having contributed to empowerment of associations having served as a platform through which they may voice their demands and concerns. Furthermore, grass-roots traditions have been recognised as vital catalysts of PB (Sintomer *et al.* 2008). Consequently, its experimental, ‘bottom-up’ character should not be overshadowed by ‘top-down’ focus on final results and efficiency in achieving them. PB seems to have potential to embody necessary balance between institutionalisation and a more informal approach to participation, since it involves elements of both direct and indirect democracy, and each member of the community is empowered to become its representative in later stages of PB. Also, flexibility of the PB framework, which is subject to changes proposed by the city-dwellers themselves, emerges as a very important feature.

Although PB involves debates on multiple scales — that of neighbourhood, district, and city itself — its holistic dimension appears restricted to the urban realm, as it usually fails to provide space for discussion about more universal issues, be it in spatial or social terms. Górski (2007) demonstrates that “projects related to small infrastructure [awake] more interest among city-dwellers than long-term urban policy” (89), and “there are [...] no guarantees that participants will make the leap from addressing their communities’ lack of basic infrastructure to understanding and challenging the broader socioeconomic forces that shape their lives” (Wampler, 2007: 47). National, international or global issues have seldom been the subject of PB, while endeavours to implement it on a regional or national level have posed a number of related problems related to its overall productivity and quality (Shah 2007). Nonetheless, PB’s ability to reconcile the aforementioned scales — which are made compatible at thematic meetings, proceedings of the PB council, and at so-called ‘bus caravan of priorities’ allowing participants to visit locations of proposed PB projects and assess their needs — is indeed impressive. For this to be achieved, Wampler (2007) notes, PB has to focus on finding balance between addressing specific projects and broad urban policies. Even so, it appears that the rights that PB provides to the city-dwellers are limited to the urban context.

4.6. RESULTS — CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The question whether PB can contribute to a systemic change embodied by the right to the city requires an investigation of the results it produces. Whether PB plays a part in creating new urbanities by following entirely different principles than those advocated by the recent permutation of capitalism, or merely allows for alterations within existing urban regimes, emerges as a key question.

For the former to be achieved, the effects of PB must first of all be visible. Swift realisation of investment proposals emerging from PB can have direct influence on increased legitimacy of the project, leading to higher tax revenues which can consequently be translated into more funds directed back to PB (Baiocchi, 2003). The Porto Alegre case confirms this observation; according to Górski (2007), PB helped significantly improve the quality of life in the city, having remarkably improved access to resources (water, electric energy), waste

management system, health, education, transport, housing, sport and cultural facilities. In 1999 the average lifespan in Porto Alegre was four years longer than the Brazilian average, and the local infant mortality was twice lower. Moreover, immediate outcomes of PB can reinforce participation levels as “citizens realise that there is a direct connection between the time they dedicate to participatory budgeting and changes in policy outcomes” (Wampler 2007: 50).

The main issue, however, concerns socially just redistribution of these results. The ‘inversion of priorities’ that stood behind the very emergence of PB Porto Alegre is accomplished by applying an ‘allocation formula’ (which in Porto Alegre was called “the Quality of Life index”) taking into consideration the number of residents and the quality of the infrastructure available, as well as the local list of priorities (Sintomer et al. 2008: 167). This system indeed ensures that most vulnerable areas receive more investments than the more advantaged ones. Thus, a more balanced growth of the city can be achieved. However, as Wampler (2007) points out, the “allocation formula” does not solve the problem of unequal spatial distribution of deprived areas, the smallest of which may fail to benefit from PB. Also, the surplus value that PB allows city-dwellers to capture — and thus its overall impact — is limited to “new capital investment expenditures” (35). Until now the majority of PB projects have not, unlike in the case of Porto Alegre, allowed city-dwellers to decide upon the whole investment budget; the debate is restricted to its fragment (Górski, 2007: 45).

Finally, the achievements of PB in terms of generating a transformation of power relations that would rise above existing institutions are even less impressive. The impact of PB on local administration is a subject of scholarly disagreement. On the one hand, Wampler (2007) claims that PB may result in an important administrative reform entailing decentralisation of administration and the decision-making process, obliging various administrative agencies to establish a lasting co-operation within the PB scheme and establishing a more transparent relationship between government and business. Sintomer et al. (2008) confirm that good deliberation has in some cases initiated modernisation of the administrative apparatus: “an improvement of public services based on the citizens’ proposals, better cooperation between individual administrative departments, a speed-up of internal administrative operations and greater responsiveness on the part of public administration” (174). In Porto Alegre, PB had an impact on the increase of the tax collection rate, thus enabling administration to plan higher expenditures and transform the city into one of the most wealthy urban areas in Brazil (Baicocchi, 2003). On the other hand, Baierle

(2010) claims that it “did not achieve a reform of the State and a planning and development model effectively able to underpin and nurture the new participatory dimension. That is, the participation expansion in Porto Alegre in the 1990s was possible thanks to the infinite increase in the number of participatory arenas rather than to structural transformations of the administrative machinery.” (57) Indeed, a change of political priorities after local elections lost by PT in 2004 resulted in new administration remarkably decreasing the scope of the project through its centralisation and neoliberalisation. The ‘new’ PB, while openly supported by the World Bank and European Union, has been heavily criticised by local associations and trade unions (Górski, 2007: 99); the conflict around the practice has led to a drastic fall of the number of participants — from 20,000 in 1999, 30,000 in 2002, and 50,000 in 2004, to a mere 14,000 in 2005.

Thus, the examination of the theoretical facet of PB has revealed its substantial potential to enable city-dwellers to appropriate and produce space, as well as to struggle against existing power relations. Also, the capability of PB to transcend the urban scale, or produce urbanities reaching beyond current systemic dispositions has been observed as significantly smaller. More importantly, though, the analysis of PB guided by the theoretical idea of the right to the city has highlighted the importance of a number of aspects of PB — delineated in *Table 6* below — that can be seen as catalysts, if not conditions for its convergence with *ingredients* of the right to the city and *elements* of participation. The following chapters seeks their presence in two case studies: PB projects in Cordova and Sopot.

Table 6. Aspects of PB matched with previously delineated *ingredients* of the right to the city and *elements* of participation.

| Summarised <i>ingredients</i> of the right to the city | Summarised <i>elements</i> of participation | Aspects of participatory budgeting that may function as catalysts for its convergence with <i>ingredients</i> and <i>elements</i> |
|--|--|---|
| The right to appropriate and produce urban space | Aims | |
| | <i>Transformative</i> aims — not <i>representative</i> , <i>instrumental</i> or <i>nominal</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior participatory traditions; • Political will to implement PB; • Conjunction of top-down and bottom-up processes and pragmatic aims. |
| | Process | |
| | <i>Inclusive</i> character | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No divide between ‘articulate’ and ‘non-articulate’ actors, professional and new participants; • Ability to attracting and involving new participants in the long term. |
| | Space for <i>deliberation</i> as well as <i>conflict</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporation of an elaborate system of fora: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – providing framework for deliberation between not only participants and the local administration, but also among participants themselves; – incorporating tensions deriving from plurality of views represented at the negotiation table. |
| | <i>Interactive</i> character | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of representative and direct democracy elements; • Inclusion of a profound learning process that allows city-dwellers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – deliberate about not only specific projects, but also overall urban agendas; – consciously define priorities behind each PB round, and thus possibly reach beyond existing political vision; – become independent of local authorities in terms of access to knowledge. |

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| The right to struggle and challenge the system | <i>Citizen power objecting to current neo-liberal hegemony</i> —political character | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowerment of city-dwellers enabling them to determine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – rules behind PB, – subject for discussion within PB, – city-wide criteria for selection of proposals, • Delegation of key responsibilities regarding allocation of public finances to new, directly |
| | Balance between elements of 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' elements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimental, 'bottom-up' character of deliberation on urban development not overshadowed by 'top-down,' administrative focus on efficient arrival at final results. |
| The right not to space and society | <i>Holistic, multi-scalar dimension</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconciliation of various scale involved in the process (neighbourhood, district, city): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – at thematic meetings – within the PB council – during the so-called 'bus caravan of priorities' • Balance between addressing specific projects and broad urban policies. |
| The right to a <u>new</u> city. | Results | |
| | Tangible results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swift realisation of investment proposals |
| | Lasting change of power relations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socially just, egalitarian distribution of results — social and spatial inversion of priorities • Administrative reform (including e.g. decentralisation, re-designing of co-operation among different department and actors of local administration) leading to increased transparency of the urban decision-making process. |

Source: own compilation.



PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PRACTICE

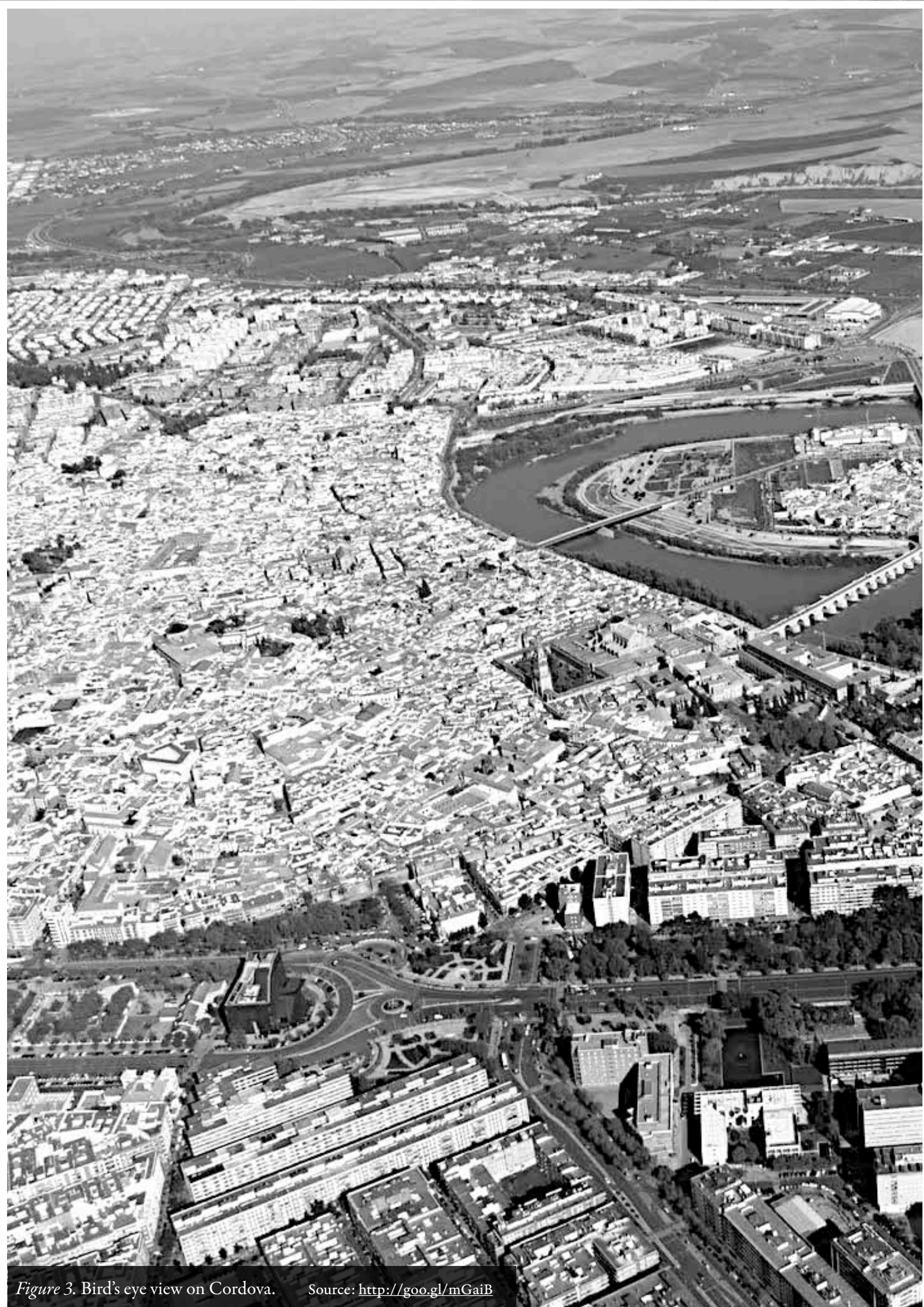


Figure 3. Bird's eye view on Cordova. Source: <http://goo.gl/mGaiB>

In order to provide a more global view on PB as a practice, this study intentionally centres upon Cordova and Sopot as very dissimilar cases. Thus, on the one hand it focuses on a Western European, Mediterranean city, which is one of the first European municipalities to have implemented PB, and is located in Spain as the country with the greatest number of PB projects realised in the Old World (Ganuza and Francés, n.d.). On the other hand, it examines one of the first Eastern European, post-communist towns (and the first Polish one) to have experimented with PB. In Cordova, PB was discontinued in 2007 and ever since this case has been analysed by a number of academic studies, which have recognised as closely following the *Porto Alegre in Europe* model (Sintomer *et al.* 2008). In Sopot, PB emerged only in 2011; therefore, it is still developing, and has not been scientifically examined yet. Moreover, there exist several vital contrasts between geographical, social, and political characteristics of the two urban contexts, which are briefly delineated by *Table 7* below.

The research on case studies is chiefly based on (1) analysis of official documents depicting PB procedures and results they generated in each city, as well as (2) semi-structured interviews with key actors behind PB, such as local officials, politicians and participation experts involved in PB, and members of civic groups and associations. Unless a precise reference is indicated, information concerning particular actor's viewpoint or contribution to the debate on PB comes from one of the interviews, the synthesised transcripts of which can be found in the appendix. Furthermore, in the case of Cordova a number of publications (including academic analyses) have been examined; these, however, have not been available in Sopot. In Sopot, the actual process of implementation could be witnessed, as two meetings of the Committee on PB (responsible for the implementation of PB) have been attended, allowing for a number of relevant

Table 7. A comparison of basic geographical, social and political characteristics of Cordova and Sopot.

| | Cordova | Sopot |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Population and surface | A middle-sized city covering the surface of 1255 km ² , (most of which is not urbanised) ^a with 328.659 inhabitants (2011). ^b | A small-sized town covering 17.31 km ² (incl. 9.34 km ² of forests) ^c with 38,141 inhabitants (2010) ^d Together with Gdańsk and Gdynia, its two immediate neighbours from the south and north, Sopot belongs to a large agglomeration area called Trójmiasto (Tricity) gathering 742,432 inhabitants. ^d |
| Population structure | Cordova has a relatively young population: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15.8 % of its citizens are aged 0–14; • 9.59% are aged 60–69; • 11.80% are aged over 70.^e | Sopot has a relatively older population: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9.61% of its citizens are aged 0–14; • 14.10% are aged 60–69; • 15.36% are aged over 70.^f |
| Wealth | GDP per capita (2008) in the province of Cordova amounts to only 69% of GDP for Spain. ^g | GDP per capita in Tricity (in 2008) amounts to as much as 135% of GDP for Poland. ^h Moreover, Sopot is one of the richest Polish municipalities in the country, with second highest level of municipal income ⁱ and expenditures ^j and per capita in Poland. Also, its inhabitants have the highest average personal income per capita in the country ^k . |
| Unemployment | Very high — 33.75% (July 2012) ^l | Very low — 3.4% (May 2012) ^m |

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| Political makeup | Known as “the red caliphate,” ever since first free municipal elections in 1979, Cordova has been almost continuously led by left-wing local governments, formed by the United Left (IU – Izquierda Unida), who ruled the city alone or in coalition with the Spanish Socialist Worker’s Party (PSOE – Partido Socialista Obrero Español). However, since 2011 the city has been governed by the right-wing People’s Party (PP — Partido Popular). | Centre-right and right-wing parties enjoy the majority in the local administration who is dominated by politicians supporting urban entrepreneurial agendas. Ever since 1998, Sopot has been governed by a conservative mayor, Jacek Karnowski, who is now in his third term. In 2009, due to corruption charges Karnowski’s dismissal was put to a popular vote, in which he managed to gather support of 62% of electors, and consequently still remains in office. |
| Local governance system | Citizens elect members of the City Council, in which the party with largest number of councillors chooses the city mayor, who is at the same time the chairman of the council. | Citizens separately elect the City Council and the mayor of the city in two individual popular votes. |
| Municipal budget within the framework of local administration | The municipal budget is approved by the City Council chaired by the mayor. | The municipal budget is prepared by the mayor who is at the same time responsible for its execution. The City Council can amend the mayor’s budgetary project. |

Sources:

^a Wikipedia: <http://goo.gl/oL3fg>

^b Instituto Municipal de Desarrollo Económico y Empleo de Córdoba: <http://goo.gl/yy5go>

^c Urząd Miasta Sopotu: <http://goo.gl/uXoPQ>

^d Główny Urząd Statystyczny (2011).

^e Ayuntamiento de Córdoba: <http://goo.gl/IovCL>

^f Główny Urząd Statystyczny: <http://goo.gl/zcXYf>

^g Instituto Canario de Estadística: <http://goo.gl/0M35q>

^h PricewaterhouseCoopers (2012)

ⁱ Główny Urząd Statystyczny: <http://goo.gl/3OVPm>

^j Główny Urząd Statystyczny: <http://goo.gl/jEHhH>

^k trojmiasto.pl: <http://goo.gl/x4lKn>

^l diariocordoba.com: <http://goo.gl/VOOsQ>

^m Główny Urząd Statystyczny: <http://goo.gl/wo0LW>

observations to be made. In both cases the actual participants of PB proved impossible to be reached — in Cordova, due to termination of PB in 2007; in Sopot, due to legal restrictions regarding collection of personal data of citizens partaking in the process. Instead, in this regard the examination of the Cordova case relies on existing studies on PB participants (for instance Ganuza, n.d.; Ganuza and Francés, n.d.), and the Sopot case — on other actors' (particularly SIR's) observations concerning PB participants. Therefore, this work should not be expected to have a sociological or ethnological character, as it embodies a "key witness" approach by centring upon representatives of main actors involved in implementation and development of PB in each city.

5.1. CORDOVA

5.1.1. HISTORY OF PB IN CORDOVA — MOTIVATIONS AND AIMS

Although the first PB round in Cordova was held in 2001, Delgado Castillo (2006), Ganuza (n.d.) and Ganuza & Nez (2012) demonstrate that participatory traditions in the city — the crucial character of which for implementation and character of PB has been demonstrated in the previous chapter — were established much earlier. They emerged out of strategies of various urban social movements that throughout 1970s struggled against general Franco's authoritarian regime. Translated into political agendas after his fall and resultant first free municipal elections in 1979, they prompted Cordova to create an elaborate participatory framework, based on officially delineated Rules and Regulations of Citizen Participation (Los Reglamentos de Participación Ciudadana). The Town Hall (Ayuntamiento de Córdoba) convened 14 District Councils (Consejos de Distrito) embracing all community associations from a given district, the presidents of which formed the Citizen Movement Council (Consejo del Movimiento Ciudadano). This structure allowed for a "consolidation of organised citizen movement" (Ayuntamiento de Córdoba 2007: 7), whose members were encouraged to partake in urban politics. In 1991, the municipality further developed this mechanism by initiating the Network of Municipal Civic Centres (la Red de Centros Cívicos Municipales) operating at the district level, with an aim of addressing the city-dwellers even more directly

and improving communication between civic actors within each district. Consequently, throughout 1990s and the beginning of 2000s the Civic Centres launched a large number of participatory projects. The participatory system in Cordova was designed to reinforced “the process of co-management and co-responsibility” (Ayuntamiento de Córdoba, 2007: 7) over the urban development and made the city a benchmark for citizens’ participation nationwide, even before it considered implementing PB. However, Ganuza & Nez (2012) point out that participation in Cordova always had a consultative character, and was too a direct a process, continuously mediated by various civic organisations united within the Federation of Community Associations called ‘Al-Zahara’ (Federación de Asociaciones Vecinales ‘Al-Zahara’).

The idea to launch PB in Cordoba emerged in response to a general crisis of citizen participation that was observed across Spain at the end of 1990s, with no more than 10% of the country’s city-dwellers participating through various civic activities (Ganuza, n.d.). The problem was recognised by both local civic association led by ‘Al-Zahara’ and the local government formed in 1999 by United Left (IU — Izquierda Unida) and the Spanish Socialist Worker’s Party (PSOE — Partido Socialista Obrero Español). It is ‘Al-Zahara’ and the IU-PSOE government that emerged as two actors main actors that soon expressed their interest in applying PB and throughout the following years stood behind the process of its implementation. The associative and therefore institutional character of ‘Al-Zahara’ suggests that no purely ‘bottom-up’ pressure was involved in the conception of PB in the city. Moreover, although in 2000 the Community Associations organised a conference on PB which featured a number of actors from Porto Alegre, the actual translation of PB into Cordova’s context was prepared by the local administration instead of the civic organisations, with the Town Hall having designated an expert in participatory techniques to precisely design the PB mechanism.

The Town Hall’s objectives behind engaging in PB — as demonstrated by Ayuntamiento de Córdoba (2007) — can be seen as genuinely transformative. The administration hoped to address the aforementioned crisis of participation by redefining its relationship with the city-dwellers and creating a more transparent and empowering participatory framework that could enhance people’s capacities to “propose, take decisions and act in the public sphere” (9). To allow for a learning process and a “school of active citizenship” (18) to occur was therefore was of their key intentions. Furthermore, inspired by the Porto Alegre case, the IU activists “were enthusiastic about an opportunity of bringing a

visionary project to their city” that could “democratise participation,”⁴ the framework of which they perceived as too dependent on civic associations as representatives of city-dwellers. PB thus emerged as a highly inclusive method of involving citizens more directly, and providing them with significantly more control over urban development. It was also to constitute a part of large socio-political project aimed at redefining priorities behind the urban decision-making process, preventing socio-spatial polarisation by redistributing municipal resources in a socially just manner (Aguilar Rivero, 2007). As the Town Hall claimed, “cities [...] cannot become better if the citizens, men and women, do not have more direct mechanisms for taking part in decisions that affect their lives” (Ayuntamiento de Córdoba, 2007: 8). Therefore, the Town Hall clearly perceived participation as a right provided to the citizenry, rather than means of achieving particular political goals; even if some local politicians hoped to gain popularity through PB, “there is no relation between implementation of PB and results in local elections.”⁵ Thus, the local administration approached PB as a potentially deeply transformative project was meant to trigger a redesigning of the social and political model of the city (Aguilar Rivero, 2007), and what one of the local participatory experts calls a “democratisation of democracy.”⁶

For the civic associations, as the interviews with member of ‘Al-Zahara’ have revealed, PB represented an opportunity to improve the methods of representing the citizens’ interest in negotiations with the local political class. Ganuza & Nez (2012) note, though, that to achieve this by demand ‘Al-Zahara’ expected to be granted more power in the participatory mechanism.

Consequently, the intersection of interests of two main actors involved in creating the framework for citizen participation — the Town Hall and civic associations — lied at the conception of PB in Cordova, thus confirming its importance indicated by existing analyses of PB.

⁴ Interview (B1) with a Town Hall expert.

⁵ Interview (B3) with an IESA expert.

⁶ *Op. cit.*

5.1.2. PROCESS (2001–2003) — DESCRIPTION

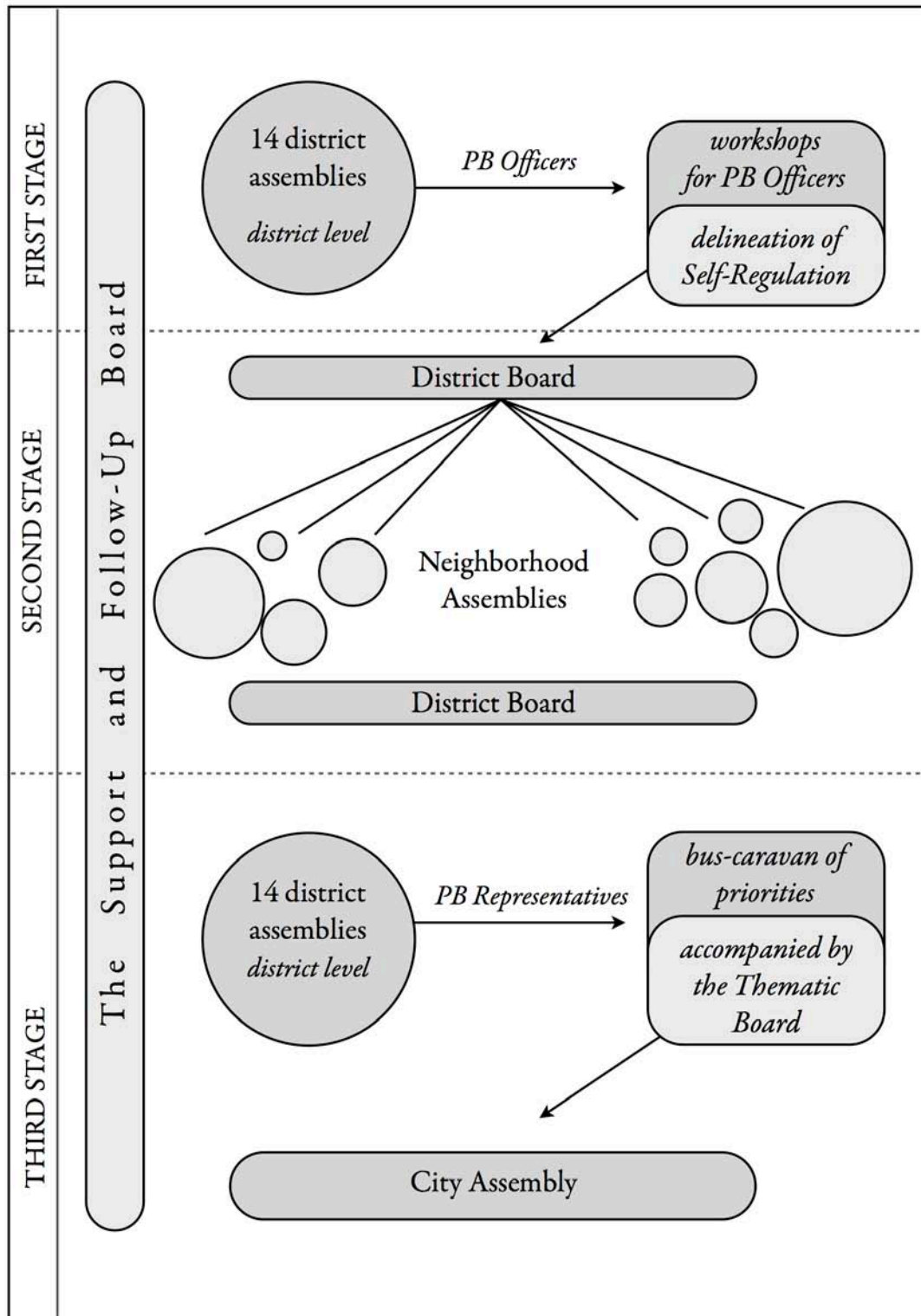
As far as the mechanism of PB in Cordova is concerned, two phases (2001–2004 and 2005–2007) can be distinguished, within which PB followed significantly different methodologies. This work looks particularly closely at the first phase — described and critically analysed in the following two subchapters — as it appears to have had a much greater potential in terms of realisation of the right to the city. The second phase is examined in subchapter 5.1.4.

Ayuntamiento de Córdoba (2007), Delgado Castillo (2006), Ganuza (n.d.) and Nez (2010) distinguish three stages of the process (see *Figure 4* below). The first one (January–February) began with 14 District Assemblies (Asambleas de Distrito) summoned by the City Council to inform the public about the results of the last year's round of PB, and choosing PB Officers (Agentes) directly from their attendees. The Officers then took part in a training preparing them to facilitate and monitor PB, and discussing the Self-Regulation (autorreglamento) — an official document outlining in detailed the PB framework: responsibilities of all bodies and actors involved in PB, the structure of municipal budget and city-wide thematic priorities that PB was to centre upon, as well as the criteria for prioritisation of investment proposals.

In the second stage (March–June) at the District Boards (Mesas de Distrito) PB Officers, at together with representatives of all associations operating in a given district, and aided by a participation expert from the Town Hall, prepared organisational framework for further Neighbourhood Assemblies. These Assemblies went on to define each neighbourhood's needs and accordingly formulate and prioritised actual investment proposals — both key steps in the PB process — with each attendee carrying only one vote. The lists of proposals would then be reconciled by the District Board with the thematic priorities to ensure that different Assemblies from the on would take into account the same priorities. Crucially, the Assemblies had to agree with the results of the Board's deliberation, and at no point could the order of proposals established within a given Neighbourhood Assembly be altered.

The third stage (July–September) commenced with District Assemblies, gathering again to focus, unlike in the first phase, not on the district, but city level. Co-ordinated by freshly-trained PB Officers as well as representatives of civic associations that had attended the District Boards, each Assembly discussed the lists of priorities from each district and elected two PB Representatives (Representantes) and their two substitutes, with PB Officers eligible to apply for

Figure 4. Key structural elements of the PB mechanism in Cordova in 2001–2003.

Source: own compilation based on Llamas *et al.* (2006) and Ganuza (n.d)

this position. Unlike PB Officers, PB Representatives had a decision-making power, although limited by the Self-Regulation — for instance, they could not change the order of prioritised proposals from districts. From then on the PB Representatives were accompanied by the experts from the Technical Board providing advice concerning legal and financial feasibility of particular proposals.

Moreover, PB Representatives partook in a ‘bus caravan of priorities’ similar to the one in Porto Alegre, as well as workshops concerning the structure of the municipal budget, thematic areas included in this round of PB, and the framework of the Self-Regulation (without a possibility of modifying it). Finally, the PB representatives gathered at a one day’s long City Assembly (Asamblea de Ciudad) to apply the priorities delineated by the Self-Regulation to proposals from all districts, thus creating a priority list for the whole city. This list was then passed on the municipal government to be incorporated into the city budget.

Along this PB mechanism operated the Support and Follow-Up Board (Mesa de Apoyo y Seguimiento) consisting of representatives of the Citizens’ Movement Council and the Community Associations, PB Officers who had been elected in the Neighbourhood Assemblies, and experts representing technical areas that PB dealt with in a given year. The Board monitored the process its initiation to completion to ensure that the agreed priorities and decisions are not violated, and in this capacity had the right to summon any PB Officer for consultations.

5.1.3. PROCESS (2001–2003) — CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The transformative and empowering character of the objectives behind Cordova’s PB have naturally influenced the nature of its mechanism, which in the 2001–2003 period can be observed as having a fairly large capacity to realise nearly all *ingredients* of the right to the city.

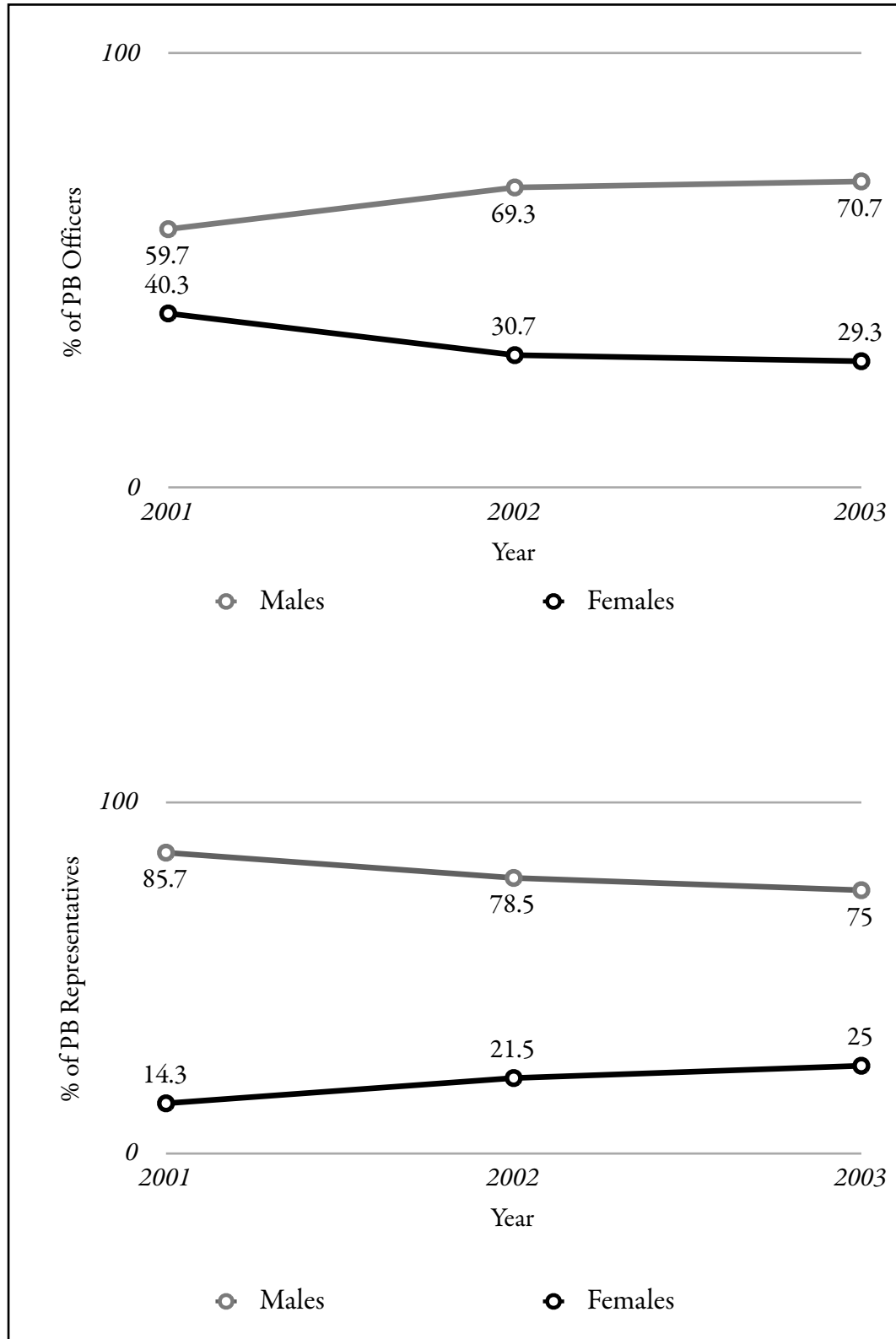
First of all, it seems to have provided the city-dwellers with a transparent and inclusive framework for appropriation and production of urban space. No participation criteria were applied, and so the participants were in no way officially divided according to their official positions and interests. Crucially, all meetings were open to the public. Moreover, as Delgado Castillo (2006) notes, participants were able to chose the extent of their involvement — from attending one or several meetings, to applying to assume the role of a PB Officer or

Representative. The necessity to prioritise proposals emerging from the discussions required that Neighbourhood Assemblies always had a compact internal structure, and rarely lasted longer than two hours, which made attending them not overly time-consuming. The methodology attempted to address specific personal limitations — for instance by organising *ludotecas*, in which parents could have their children taken care of during the meetings. As a result, around 1% of the total population of Cordova were engaged in PB every year, which, according to Ganuza and Francés (n.d.), “compared to any other regulated participatory process that seeks to influence the decision-making process [...] is an appreciable figure” (13). However, together with Ayuntamiento de Córdoba (2007) they prove that it included a bias recognised by the participation theory — the process to a large extent over-represented the age groups between 30 and 60 years old, educated persons, members of existing civic associations (in particular those belonging to the ‘Al-Zahara’), and, to a lesser extent, women. In the first editions of PB, its participants expressed much stronger interest in politics (particularly supporting left-wing parties) than the Spanish average. However, this bias partially faded away with every PB round. For instance, the methodology applied in the process over time helped change the initial perception of PB as the IU’s political project, and encouraged different views and interests to enter the process over time. Even more importantly, despite usual tendencies recognised by theory of PB, it proved very efficient in terms of attracting new participants, as “more or less one in four [of them] had never participated before,”⁷ with experience in PB itself having relatively low impact on participation patterns in subsequent rounds.

Furthermore, Cordoba’s PB enabled high quality of deliberation, as its multi-staged framework incorporating an impartial prioritisation mechanism “in which citizens not only bargain[ed] for their own interests, but also [had] to evaluate the distribution of scarce resources in the best possible way within a general scenario: the municipality.” (Ganuza and Francés, n.d.: 8). Crucially, since participants were included in the process on equal terms regardless of their professional backgrounds, the debate among them was not structured along divisions usually functioning in the public debates, for instance drawing a line between ‘the city-dwellers’ and ‘the administration.’ At the same time, all interviewees — regardless of their role in the process — have asserted that this deliberative process provided space for a conflict in which a polarity of opinions and proposals could be presented. Moreover, its simplicity limited the influence

⁷ *Op. cit.*

Figure 4. PB Officers and PB Representatives in Cordova according to their gender in years 2001–2003.



Source: Ayuntamiento de Córdoba (2007)

of ideological or socio-economic biases — although “the deliberative procedure requires participants to understand it, [...] no way can this be interpreted as an obstacle for individuals with greater or lesser personal resources” (Ganuza and Francés, n.d.: 29). Nonetheless, the impact of gender on the extent of one’s deliberation had been observed (see *Figure 4* above).

Inclusive and deliberative character of Cordoba’s PB enabled the process to become interactive, as it was built upon a comprehensive learning experience continuously empowering citizens, which Town Hall experts responsible for PB recognise as one of the greatest achievements of the whole initiative. First, prior to the beginning of each PB round, directly elected PB Officers were responsible for delineating city-wide priorities behind PB, thus preventing the process from becoming an instance of a purely functional project revolving around goals predefined by other protagonists of urban decision-making. Second, through workshops organised at the very first stage of the procedure participants had the opportunity to acquire a profound understanding of the potential and limits of PB, as well as investment needs beyond the level of particular neighbourhood or district. A change of viewpoint on urban development was observed among participants, as in each round they were seen voting for proposals they did not initially submit or support (Ganuza, n.d.). Thus, PB enabled them to grasp the complexity of urban policy-making at its many levels, and “[become] resistant to manipulation” from usual actors in urban politics⁸ — an aspect that theoretical readings on PB consider crucial.

Actors involved in Cordova’s PB agree that it not only provided citizens with a genuine opportunity to participate and deliberate about the city’s development, but also incorporated a number of features that granted them a right to struggle against local decision-making patterns. Delgado Castillo (2006) points out that their political will allowed PB to be built upon new political bodies following the principles of direct democracy (applied at District and Neighbourhood Assemblies, in the process prioritisation of proposals, election of PB Officers and Representatives, and creation of the Self-Regulation) and representative democracy (with the District Board, City Assembly, as well as the Support and Follow-Up Board acting on behalf of the citizenry) that gave participants, regardless of their socio-economic or professional status, key responsibilities with regard to allocation of public finances — from determining rules and regulations behind the process, composing a list of general subjects for discussion within PB, establishing city-wide criteria for selection of particular

⁸ Interview (B1) with a Town Hall expert.

investment proposals, to supervising their realisation. Moreover, it involved an elaborate division of power and responsibilities preventing any actor from gaining too much power within the process; thus, PB Officers, although could alter the Self-Regulation, could not change the content or order of proposals the emergence of which they facilitate at the Neighbourhood Assemblies, while PB Representatives, responsible for creating the final proposal for the city, had to adhere to previously established priorities, unable to alter neither the order nor the content of proposals. Civic associations and technical personnel facilitated the process and provided advice, but were not privileged in the debate, while the local politicians's role was reduced to mere promotion of PB and counselling within their particular area of activity within the local government, with no decision-making power over PB and obligation to respect and implements its results. Hence, as members of the local administration underline, PB appeared as a uniquely transparent and horizontal practice giving city-dwellers unprecedented control over urban development. As a member of local administration enthusiastically declares, "PB gave people an opportunity, power, and it did try to change the world, to challenge the political system — and people used this opportunity, and they did participate!"⁹

However, this profound transformation, and realisation of a key *ingredient* of the right to the city did not trigger a unanimously positive reaction. Despite their initial declarations, reaching beyond existing structures of representative democracy triggered protests of usual actors of urban decision-making. A particularly strong opposition was voiced by 'Al-Zahara', who accused PB of deliberately ignoring the experience and expertise of civic associations in partaking in political negotiations and reconciling parochial interests of particular citizens groups; they declared as a result of PB "too much power had been given to the people [*sic*]." ¹⁰ The local administration, though, who perceived 'Al-Zahara' as an actor operating at too large a distance from 'everyday life,' and "very much influenced by different political parties,"¹¹ intentionally used PB to facilitate a change of their *modus operandi*. Moreover, it in this aspect of PB that the experts from the Cordoba's Department of Citizen Participation perceive its refreshed political dimension — instead of relying on existing, excessively representative framework for participation, PB transformed the urban milieu by

⁹ *Op. cit.*

¹⁰ Interview (B4) with a member of the board of 'Al-Zahara.'

¹¹ Interview (B1) with a Town Hall expert.

forcing local politicians to share their decision-making power with the city-dwellers, technical experts — to loose some of their influence, and ‘Al-Zahara’ — to redefine their position vis-à-vis citizen’s direct involvement in urban politics. Therefore, PB in Cordova, although institutionally designed by the Town Hall, aimed at channelling power from institutions to city-dwellers, who were given a right to continuously design and adjust its flexible mechanism.

Furthermore, despite ‘Al-Zahara’s accusations that it was concerned with only a few aspects of urban development (in 2001 only infrastructural investments were debated, while in 2002 and 2003 PB involved four ‘areas’: Infrastructure, Citizen Participation, Co-operation, and Education & Children — Ayuntamiento de Córdoba, 2007), it did have a holistic character as it reconciled different scales involved in the project while remaining focused on the needs of the city as a whole, and balanced between discussing specific projects and broad urban policies. Additionally, it attempted to transcend the urban scale, as the Co-operation ‘area’ involved almost solely projects implemented directly in Third World countries.

5.1.4. PROCESS (2005–2007)

— DESCRIPTION AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Thus, the PB model applied in Cordova in 2001–2003 had produced a process that can firmly be seen as having granted citizens the right to the city. This, however, was not entirely the case with the final results it produced. The profoundly transformative character of the PB procedure soon became feared by not only ‘Al-Zahara’, but also the IU and PSOE politicians who, although stood behind the very idea of bringing it to the city, only now began to come to terms with actual loss of political power. Consequently, despite city-dwellers having actively defended the process in numerous unofficial publications as well as formal petitions, PB was suspended for a year (the 2004 round was cancelled), during which a new mechanism was developed by representatives of the Town Hall and the Citizens’ Movement Council, whose crucial role in this process indicated that the local administration thus decided to return to participatory mechanisms that had functioned prior to implementation of PB.

As a result, the last two rounds of PB (in 2005 and 2006) followed a different model. Theoretically, it had been just slightly altered and “tidied up”¹² in response to past errors and inconsistencies in the system, as the Town Hall’s official publication (Ayuntamiento de Córdoba, 2007) asserts. Indeed the fundamental aspects of PB — focus on the neighbourhood, district and then the city level, the mechanism of creation and prioritisation of proposals, technical support and advice provided by experts from the Town Hall — as well as the majority of bodies, such as Neighbourhood Assemblies, District Boards, and the City Assembly, remained part of the process. Moreover, its scope was expanded to nearly all municipal “areas,” with the exception of the city’s internal and operational expenses, thereby to an extent increasing its potential to acquire a more holistic dimension.

However, as Llamas *et al.* (2006: 185–204) inform, the ‘new’ PB deliberately incorporated prior participatory mechanisms, such as the Citizens’ Movement Council, the Network of Civic Centres, and the Community Associations — all of which were given significant control over the process. First, the rules behind the new mechanism of PB were created not directly by the city-dwellers, but the Town Hall and the Citizen’s Movement Council, which then presented the document to the citizens for possible alterations — the Self-Regulation of PB had been replaced by the Regulation of PB (Reglamento). Second, at the very beginning of each PB round, the Community Associations were in charge of drawing up a Neighbourhood Plan (Plan de Barrio) delineating the areas’ needs and immediately giving proposals for its development — a process that placed emphasis on involving associations and collectives from the neighbourhood and relating the plan to the global vision of the city, at the expense of citizen participation. Instead of co-designing the plan, city-dwellers were merely consulted about it, which crucially meant that they were denied the access to a learning process enabling them to independently create proposals for urban development; in other words, education and creation had been replaced by mere consultation. Third, through their presence at the Neighbourhood Assemblies, the Community Associations would now be able to control the crucial process of prioritisation of proposals. Fourth, the process of forming joint proposals for the whole city now took place in a newly-established City Committee (Consejo de Ciudad), in which the majority of seats had been allocated to members of local associations and the Citizen’s Movements Council, and only $\frac{1}{3}$ given to representatives of District Boards that did not represent any

¹² Interview (A2.5) with a member of the board of ‘Al-Zahara.’

organisations or institutions. Meanwhile, the role of the City Assembly was reduced to just inform the city-dwellers about the final results of each PB round. Finally, the Citizens' Movement Council and the associations dominated a newly-established Follow-Up Committee (Comisión de Seguimiento) that controlled the implementation of PB projects and was responsible for creating a priorities for subsequent PB rounds.

Thus, the actors that in the previous framework held an advisory position, became in charge of establishing the rules of the process, acquired significant control over deliberation within its realm, and hence results it generated. The city-dwellers' rights to appropriate and produce urban space, and to challenge the systemic power relations, were significantly reduced, as organised actors were given priority over individual citizens. In other words, following the theoretical findings about the participation presented by Cornwall (2008), both *width* and *depth* of Cordova's PB had been diminished over time.

5.1.5. RESULTS (2001–2007) — CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Despite profound changes proposed by the PB in Cordova between 2001 and 2003, the overall aftermath of PB — be it when observed in 2007, or at the time of completing this work (August 2012) — is not as impressive in terms of its convergence with the right to the city.

Theoretically, between 2001 and 2007 a variety of investment proposals were made. The Town Hall's official publication (Ayuntamiento de Córdoba, 2007) explains that, as mentioned before, until 2003 they related to the following 'areas': Infrastructure (with projects concerning paving streets and installing streetlights, redeveloping roads, eliminating of 'architectural barriers,' and creating infrastructure for cycling), Citizen Participation (aiding Civic Centres by supplying them with greater financial help, improving their equipment, extending their opening hours, establishing new units, and organising new activities), Co-operation (addressing the needs of immigrant residents of Cordova, supporting local NGOs engaged in projects in the Third World countries, establishing international cooperation with the cities of Nazareth and Bethlehem in Palestine), and Education & Infancy (increasing the capacity of Cordova's kindergartens, educating of youth and children through a variety of extracurricular activities such as workshops or sports events, extension of working

hours of educational centres, and launching several projects during school holidays, as well as focusing on education of adults). In 2005–2007 the variety of issues involved in PB was extended, and thus the projects also concerned ‘areas’ such as ‘social services,’ ‘urbanism,’ ‘culture,’ ‘traffic,’ and ‘equality.’

Very importantly, between 2001 and 2003 PB followed the principle of redistribution of resources, with focus on spatially and socially deprived areas, as well as urban peripheries, regularly receiving more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of financial resources within PB (Ayuntamiento de Córdoba: 2007). The analysis of proposals made at that time reveals that they did follow the urban entrepreneurial agendas, and thus “were clearly different from what the local administration usually proposed.”¹³ However, although one could be tempted to discern ‘inversion of priorities’ on both thematic and territorial level of Cordova’s PB, its limited overall impact has to be acknowledged. PB constituted a very small share in the municipal budget (see *Table 8* below), and was centred upon very specific areas, with “vital issues such as mobility, security, and public services left aside, even though these are areas that people are most concerned with.”¹⁴ Moreover, after 2004, PB was officially not to alter policies “considered of prime concern for the [local] government to realise their electoral programme” (Ayuntamiento de Córdoba 2007: 62), further disabling it from reaching beyond established urban programmes and proposing a different set of values behind urban Cordova’s development.

Furthermore, the majority of actors interviewed admit that both in the 2001–2003 and 2005–2007 periods the effectiveness of realisation of proposals was far from satisfactory, as projects were usually not completed on time and thus “PB could not actually be seen as composed of yearly rounds,”¹⁵ therefore having become difficult for the participants to be comprehended. A number of investments, particularly those concerning infrastructure, indeed took (or are taking) years to be completed — five years after the termination of PB, “[the local administration] are still engaged works deriving from the PB.”¹⁶

Moreover, as PB appears to have failed to produce changes within the administrative apparatus, which never considered it as a priority project and simply “did not pay enough attention to PB,”¹⁷ as a local expert responsible for

¹³ Interview (B1) with a Town Hall expert.

¹⁴ Interview (B2) with a Town Hall expert.

¹⁵ Interview (B1) with a Town Hall expert.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*

¹⁷ Interview (B3) with an IESA expert.

Table 8. Financial resources included in PB in Cordova compared to the overall municipal budget.

| Year | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2005 |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Financial resources included in PB | €5,109,401 | €9,016,590 | €9,016,590 | €8.422.738 |
| Share (in %) of PB in the overall municipal budget | 2.32% | 4.47% | 4.2% | 3.6% |

Source: Llamas *et al.* (2006)

technical supervision of PB asserts. Thus, apart from triggering limited co-operation between department within the Town Hall, it did not change the internal administrative mechanisms, and towards its end was increasingly considered as posing organisational problems, rather than proposing structural solutions.

Consequently, PB generated a lot of frustration that even today leads the local administration and the board members of ‘Al-Zahara’ to regard the project as inconclusive. Indeed, it appears that its impact was much greater in qualitative than quantitative terms, as it enabled to raise the city-dwellers’ awareness about the Cordova’s political discourse, and effectively engage them within it (Ganuza, n.d.). As Aguilar Rivero, who served as Cordova’s mayor throughout the 2001-2007 period, admits (2007), PB did not accomplish alone a creation of wholly new urban society or reality; it did, however, contribute to this creation. Alas, this contribution was disrupted as PB lacked political support, “just like a plant lacks watering.”¹⁸

General disappointment with results of PB as well as the aftermath of the local elections in 2007, which enabled PB-sceptic PSOE to gain more power the local government, led to the abortion of the project. Today, with the right-wing People’s Party (PP — Partido Popular) running the city, their political priorities standing sharp opposition with those that stood behind the conception of PB,

¹⁸ Interview (B1) with a Town Hall expert.

the come-back of PB to Cordova seems less likely than ever before. As a member of the official municipal unit responsible for urban planning asserts, “there is no justification for pursuing the PB path,”¹⁹ and the expertise of experts employed by the local administrations should have “the final word”²⁰ in deciding upon the direction of Cordova’s development.

5.2. SOPOT

5.2.1. HISTORY OF PB IN SOPOT. MOTIVATIONS AND AIMS.

PB emerged in Sopot very recently and thus only one PB round has been completed so far (in 2011), while the second one is currently²¹ being held. The idea of bringing PB to Sopot came from Sopot Developmental Initiative (SIR — Sopotcka Inicjatywa Rozwojowa), an informal citizen group promoting sustainable urban development, who had theoretical knowledge about a number of PB cases; moreover, one of their members had gained practical experience from working with PB on a district level in Gdańsk. However, SIR had to face a number significant challenges deriving from the particular context in which PB was to be applied. As in other parts of Poland and Eastern Europe, the interest in civic activity in Sopot is very low, and so is the role of the so-called “Third Sector” (Sadura, 2012b). This is mostly the result of the communist rule until late 1980s, which greatly discouraged citizen involvement in public debates, and drastic post-1989 transformation, which dismantled or significantly weakened the civic movements that contributed to the fall of the regime. Therefore, unlike in Cordova, except for budgetary consultations held by the Town Hall, which had a purely informative character, there were no participatory traditions on which PB could be established. Equally importantly, as Sopot is to the first city in Poland to have implemented PB on a scale higher than that of a neighbourhood

¹⁹ Interview (B6) with a representative of the Municipal Town Planning Board.

²⁰ *Op. cit.*

²¹ As of August 2012.

or district, SIR could not use any existing patterns for adjusting PB model from abroad into the Polish social, legal and political framework.

Moreover, the aims of the main actors involved in the process of establishing PB are far from converging. Three groups could be identified here: (1) SIR; (2) pro-PB city councillors from political parties Law and Justice (PiS — Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) and ‘I Love Sopot’ (KS — Kocham Sopot), and (3) the Town Hall administration led by the mayor and supported by the anti-PB councillors from two political parties: Civic Justice (PO — Platforma Obywatelska) and Self-Governance (Samorządność).

SIR’s objectives appear genuinely transformative — they perceive PB as way of reaching out to city-dwellers as actors whose perspective on the city is not limited by electoral terms (Leszczyński, 2011). In this perspective, PB is therefore hoped to empower citizens in public deliberation about urban development, and providing them with significant decision-making power, which, SIR assert, belongs “not to politicians, but to regular people, who merely grant it to their representatives” (Gerwin & Grabkowska 2012: 102).

The pro-PB councillors (from PiS and KS) seem to have a similar motivation, expecting PB to help build relations among city-dwellers, promote profound participation as well as civic values. Some of their visions go further — PB is envisioned as part of a platform allowing citizens to decide on virtually any urban issue, and thus initiating a systemic change involving redistribution of power; as one councillor declares, “even if PB was to reduce the power of some politicians, so be it, all the better.”²² However, deliberation is not an objective here — citizens are supposed to merely express their support or disapproval regarding projects prepared beforehand by the local administration. Therefore, the councillors’ aims should not at all be viewed as transformative, but representative; their focus is on providing voice for as many citizens as possible, disregarding the quality of the discourse in which they are to participate. One of the pro-PB councillors admitted having approached PB in a purely instrumental manner, and abused its mechanism to obtain municipal funds for a project that, although presented as coming from the citizens, was entirely designed by himself, and concerned parochial, rather than city-wide interests.²³

The mayor and the councillors sceptical of PB (representing PO and Samorządność) appear to have purely nominal objectives. When as a result of the

²² Interview (C3) with a PiS councillor

²³ Interview (C2) with a KS councillor

local elections in autumn 2010 the pro-PB PiS and KS gained majority in the City Council, the mayor and the anti-PB councillors were forced to partake in an initiative that they opposed from the start, for fear that their political opponents would gain popularity through PB. Thus, the Town Hall reluctantly agreed to engage in PB, but continues to officially call it “budgetary consultations,” strongly indicating that it is by no means a new initiative, and one that should centre on just raising awareness and providing information. PB is intended to sustain existing power relations, and, as one of the mayor’s representatives confessed, involve city-dwellers only to show them that in the debate over urban development “nothing is for free.”²⁴ Consequently, it is meant to co-opt them, allowing politicians to “rescue themselves from a lynch.”²⁵ In line with the Town Hall’s entrepreneurial orientation, participation is approached not as a right in itself, but a means of increasing overall effectiveness of urban policy making. PB is seen “a technology that Sopot, like a company, has to invest in,”²⁶ which should focus on quantity (high numbers of participants and proposals for investments) rather than quality (of the process and projects implemented).

As by the Polish law the mayor has significant power over the Council (*Ustawa o samorządzie gminnym*, 1990), PB in Sopot not only cannot benefit from mutually reinforcing objectives of institutional and non-institutional actors, but had to develop despite the lack of support from the key player in local politics. The process of establishing PB officially began in May 2011 when the Council launched an informational campaign on PB and officially recommended that the mayor allocated €750,000²⁷ to the project (Rada Miasta Sopotu, 2011). Also, the Council created a separate Committee on PB, joined by the mayor’s representative, in which pro-PB councillors had a small majority. It is at its eight heated meetings that the mechanism of PB in Sopot was discussed. SIR observed the discussions, and attempted to provide advice and, if needed, criticism; even so, it has be underlined that no unassociated citizens participated in the Committee’s proceedings. According to SIR, due to very poor to access to information and lack of precious participatory experiences, Sopot’s residents — even though would like to have impact on the urban development — are not

²⁴ Interview (C6) with the Town Hall’s representative

²⁵ Interview (C3) with a PiS councillor

²⁶ Interview (C6) with the Town Hall’s representative

²⁷ All figures in € in in subchapter 5.2 have been converted from original ones in PLN (Polish zloty); €1 = PLN4.

aware of the necessity and possibility to participate and thereby hold politicians accountable for their actions.

However, at one crucial meeting of the Committee several of its pro-PB members were absent, and thereby the mayor's representative the councillors sceptical of PB managed to change its mechanism. A significantly different vision was thus voted through — most importantly removing a city-dwellers' forum divided in thematic groups that was to provide space for deliberation. Consequently, SIR claim that the PB procedure in Sopot was conceived under too great an influence of the mayor. Instead of focusing on their transformative objectives that could realise the right to the city, SIR are forced to defend the legitimacy and capability of PB to represent city-dwellers against actors whose aims are purely representative, if not nominal.

5.2.2. PROCESS — DESCRIPTION

Thus far, two PB rounds have been held: in 2011 and 2012. Both of them followed similar procedures, with this description and the following critical analysis highlighting most significant differences between them (for a comparison of timeline of PB in Sopot in 2011 and 2012 see *Table 9* below). Sopot's PB model is much simpler than Cordova's, being described by two concise resolutions of the City Council (Rada Miasta Sopotu, 2011; Rada Miasta Sopotu 2012b). Each PB round begins with an informational campaign launched by the Town Hall upon the request of the Committee on PB (as one of committees operating aside the City Council). City-dwellers are hoped to learn about PB from informational materials (to which a proposals submission form is attached) sent to every household in the city, as well as public posters. This is followed by meetings in each of Sopot's four electoral districts (a division borrowed by PB), facilitated by the mayor's representative, at which citizens briefly discuss their ideas about investment needs, and most importantly, create actual proposals by filling in a form prepared beforehand by the Committee.

Once the proposals are gathered, the Committee assesses their legal feasibility and financial cost, as well as accordance with existing urban development plans and regulations. The Committee divides the proposals into district-wide and city-wide ones; in 2011, they chose a limited number of proposals that city-dwellers further voted on, but from 2012 onwards no

administrative selection is applied. Thus, the voting ballots sent to all households in Sopot are designed by the local administration and include a list of proposals for the particular district (the number of which in 2011 varied from 9 to 16, depending on the district) and the whole city (22 on the 2011 ballot).

The voting ballots are to be returned to polling stations (located in the Town Hall and several municipal libraries) during one specifically designated week in autumn, during which meetings in each of four districts are held, with an aim to initiate a citizen debate on the proposals. The ballots are then collected by the Town Hall which passes them on to the Committee, who determine most popular district- and city-wide proposals, the implementation of which is further monitored by the City Council, with no citizen involvement.

Table 9. The timeline of PB in Sopot in 2011 and 2012.

| Timeline in the 2011 round | Timeline in the 2012 round | Stage in the PB mechanism |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| May | | Resolution of the City Council officially launching the PB procedure |
| 1st – 10th September | 1st – 21st June | Meetings on the district level (in 4 electoral areas of Sopot) between local administration and the city-dwellers |
| 1st September – 14 October | 1st June – 15th August | Submission of proposals (at special meetings with the local administrations or via e-mail) |
| until the end of October | 16th–31st August | Verification of proposals by the local administration |
| <i>Stage absent in the 2011 round</i> | 1st–31st September | Information campaign (meetings with citizens, internet announcements) concerning proposals placed on the voting ballot as well as the voting procedure |
| 2nd–7th November | 1st – 14th October | Public vote over proposals |
| Until 15th November | | Proposal from PB are included in the official draft of the municipal budget presented in front of the City Council by the mayor |

Source: own compilation.

5.2.3. PROCESS — CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Limited character of aims behind PB in Sopot naturally influences the profundity of its mechanism, which SIR calls a “hopeless,” “rotten compromise.”²⁸ Indeed, a number of aspects of the PB process in Sopot appear to prevent it from reifying the right to the city.

To begin with, unlike in Cordova, it is far from providing the right to appropriate and produce urban space. Although one could point out that in 2011 as many as 2448 PB voting ballots were cast, (which means a 9% turnout of eligible residents), it should be underlined that no more than several dozens of city-dwellers participated in meetings at which needs and proposals for investment were discussed. There appear to be three main reasons for this low attendance. First, poor information strategy: city-dwellers are notified about the beginning of each PB round and receive their voting ballots via mass mailing rather than direct mail. Although less expensive, this method is also much less effective, since PB-related leaflets are often taken for advertisement, and consequently ignored; mass media, including internet, are barely used. Second, the lack of participatory traditions translates itself into low interest and belief in participation as such. City-dwellers are said to “feel like they cannot change anything”²⁹ and participate *post-factum*, expressing their disappointment with decisions taken without their involvement. Also, the accessibility of PB is limited by a small number of polling stations (2 in each district). However, as it is further demonstrated, the methodology applied in Sopot does not help address the crisis of participation, as the process of PB has very little to offer to the few citizens embraced by it.

Furthermore, PB in Sopot appears nowhere near having reached the wide social spectrum of the city. Although the socio-economic profile of participants cannot be precisely established as no data concerning the meetings attendees and — for obvious reasons — the voters can be collected, nearly all interviewees have pointed out that too few young people were involved in the process, and local deprived groups were not at all represented. The narrow character of PB in terms of its inclusiveness reflects the emphasis of the local administration on reaching out to a high numbers of voters, rather than great variety of participants.

²⁸ Interview (C1) with SIR

²⁹ Interview (C3) with a PiS councillor

Lack of profound deliberation further limits the possibility for urban-dwellers to appropriate and produce urban space within Sopot's PB. Unlike in Cordova, its model does not provide an opportunity for a city-wide debate at whichever stage of the process, since all PB-related meetings — at which deliberation is theoretically taking place — are held only at the district level. As SIR and most of the councillors interviewed have reported, the quality of methodology used at these assemblies is very poor. They are usually facilitated by a mayor's representative, and do not serve as fora for interaction between participants and members of local administration let alone building relations among citizens. Furthermore, they do not provide space for productive conflict; although SIR, the councillors and the Town Hall regularly debate about the form of the project, this discourse occurs only within the formal environment, within the Committee on PB, which many city-dwellers' undoubtedly find exclusive.

Lack of deliberation is justified by the members of the Committee on PB by the necessity to create a PB procedure that is not "too demanding for participants."³⁰ Indeed, apparently local politicians do not believe in citizens' capacity, be it intellectual or material, to create and express proposals for urban development; as the Town Hall's representative claims, "we can't have a situation in which a student, nurse, vegetable vendor, dentist and academic teacher plan our roads and streets[...] — we have professionals hired to do this."³¹ Therefore, simplifying the PB process by "offering citizens a template and [...] dragging them to the meetings"³² is preferred over improving its quality by providing participants with technical knowledge, be it in the form of workshops or consultations — in other words, establishing a profound learning process that could make PB more attractive and empowering an experience for city-dwellers. Thus, the level of interaction within PB in Sopot can hardly be compared to that in Cordova; instead, it has acquired a functional character, explicitly failing to approach the city-dwellers as equal partners in discussion about urban politics, and to a great extent including ideas and projects submitted by the local administration, rather than the citizenry.

Consequently, the lack of inclusive, deliberative and interactive features limits the ability of the PB project in Sopot to provide the right to challenge the existing socio-political system. Crucially, while its procedure is formally delineated

³⁰ Interview (C2) with a KS councillor

³¹ Interview (C6) with the Town Hall's representative

³² Interview (C2) with a KS councillor

ted by the local law (Rada Miasta Sopotu 2012b), the respect for its outcome is a question of “social contract” (Czajkowska, 2011) and a “gentlemen’s agreement” (Gerwin, 2010; Gerwin, 2011b). Indeed, the mayor, who by the Polish law is responsible for design and execution of the municipal budget (*Ustawa o samorządzie gminnym*, 1990), has the right to dismiss investment proposals deriving from PB. Therefore, although the City Council may nonetheless attempt to include them through an amendment, implementation of PB relies entirely on good will of actors it involves, especially since the social pressure on the local politicians to abide by the established rules behind PB appears very low.

Thus, instead of challenging the existing political framework — one of the the fundamental aims behind Cordoba’s PB — the Sopot case depends on it, and has consequently become dominated by the mayor as the actor holding most political power, with whom “every year a separate agreement has to be made.”³³ As one of the pro-PB councillors reports:

“there has been a discussion within the Committee [on PB], whether we play it ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ with the mayor; both solutions are good and bad at the same time — if we play it ‘soft’, the mayor will impose his rules; if we play it ‘hard’, he will ignore our rules and manipulate the process anyway.”³⁴

However, the lack of formal rules behind PB clearly allows the local administration to exclude city-dwellers from negotiations over key issues. Sopot’s PB does not build upon new political bodies, such as territorial and thematic boards, or a city-wide PB council, which through a combination of elements of representative and direct democracy could allow for more inclusive debate. Instead, there is no discussion about general ‘rules of the game’ behind each round of PB, including the “unjust”³⁵ division into four unequal districts, or about priorities behind Sopot’s development — they are perceived by the Town Hall “correct and obvious.”³⁶ In 2011, the city-dwellers had no influence over the selection of proposals that emerge from PB; instead, they were chosen by the Committee on PB. Along with verifying which of the numerous ideas (around 160 in 2011) submitted by the citizenry violate the existing legal regulations, the councillors, guided by their particular views and political interests, openly admit

³³ Interview (C2) with a KS councillor

³⁴ Interview (C3) with a PiS councillor

³⁵ Interview (C1) with SIR

³⁶ Interview (C6) with the Town Hall’s representative

to have rejected or altered the content of proposals that reach beyond existing development strategies. This obvious manipulation of the course of PB could not have been prevented by the city-dwellers who, previously denied a genuine learning experience, were judged incapable of grasping the technical and legal context of the process. For the same reasons the citizens are not allowed to supervise the popular vote over proposals, and as SIR points out, there was no control over how many ballots were cast by each citizen, therefore allowing for double voting to occur. From 2012 onwards, there is administrative selection of proposals; nonetheless, citizens are not invited to participate in the process of designing the voting ballot, which remains an administrative task.

Furthermore, the mayor has clearly been able to distort the outcome of PB, since he deliberately refuses to specify the amount of funds allocated to PB each year — although in 2011 this flexibility meant increasing the scope of PB from €750,000 to €1,750,000, in the next rounds it may as well be used to decrease its importance. Thus, PB in Sopot is nowhere near redistributing power to city-dwellers, as they are ignored by the usual protagonists of urban decision-making. Interestingly, it is not only the residents that are belittled by the Town Hall — the councillors are often excluded from the decision-making process over PB as well, and have complained about the Town Hall repeatedly failing to inform them about important decisions concerning PB taken by the mayor. As mentioned before, the resultant political conflict is not constructive, since it does not include the citizens.

Finally, PB in Sopot has a fully institutional character. It was initiated by an informal citizen group (SIR), which although regularly attempts to inspire a critical debate on the project, does not seem powerful enough to lead to any effective changes in the methodology of PB. Local administrations' preference for offering 'top-down' templates does not leave space for 'bottom-up' activism. Thus, the potential of the project in terms of challenging existing power relations and urban agendas is minimal.

Consequently, Sopot's PB does little to reach beyond discussing 'urban' affairs and tackle issues concerning the society and space in general. Although the difference between projects concerning the district and city scale is recognised, there is no transparent criterion for this division. Equally importantly, lack of deliberation about city-wide priorities prevents PB from acquiring a holistic dimension.

5.2.4. RESULTS — CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The results produced by PB in Sopot are more tangible than in Cordova — in the 2011 round around 160 proposals were gathered, and 9% of eligible voters cast their ballots, which SIR calls a “decent result” (Gerwin, 2011a). Seven city-scale projects were chosen (from the most to the least popular ones): installation of public recycling bins, allocation of extra funds to the municipal pound, redevelopment one of the city’s main streets, financial support for housing co-operatives and small companies, maintenance of the bus line connecting Sopot with Gdańsk, and establishment of inter-district bicycle path as well as a large leisure area. The 26 projects on the district level (coming from 4 districts) were mostly concerned with redevelopment of road infrastructure (road surface, pavements, light system, street furniture, rubbish bins), and recreation areas (for instance playgrounds and parks). A number of projects have already been completed, and several more are underway.³⁷

However, several indicators suggest that PB in Sopot is unable to rise above the existing urban regime. First, its results are not equally distributed; although as a result of a ‘top-down’ decision more financial resources within PB are provided to Sopot’s most populous district, this cannot be perceived as a ‘inversion of priorities,’ since involved here is an arbitrary ‘top-down’ decision, rather than a transparent system for allocation of funds. Hence, the urban surplus value cannot be captured by the city-dwellers. Second, PB constitutes merely 2% of the municipal budget (Rada Miasta Sopotu, 2012a) and therefore cannot produce a substantial improvement in the quality of life. Third, the implementation of proposals for investment is not monitored by the participants, but the Committee on PB. Fourth, PB does not entail an administrative reform — nearly all councillors and Town Hall representatives interviewed admit that PB has not fostered a change in the way they operate; instead, it is increasingly perceived as an organisational burden. Consequently, it fails to challenge power relations, and its outcome is not fully respected by local actors — after the 2011 round the mayor, although having declared that the PB experiment “worked out well” (Gerwin, 2011a), decided to omit several proposals chosen by the voters.

Nonetheless, it has to be emphasised that, as in Cordova, the proposals that emerge from PB in Sopot do not follow the neoliberal pattern of urban growth. As SIR highlights, PB allows to focus on “projects that have for years been

³⁷ trojmiasto.pl, [@:] <http://goo.gl/Sc3qP>

neglected, for they are not too spectacular” (Wybieralski, 2012) for the local political class to pursue them. The city-scale proposals are particularly interesting in this regard, since they reveal that Sopot’s citizens choose to promote socially and environmentally just initiatives, instead of reinforcing urban entrepreneurial agendas of the Town Hall, as for instance the idea to create a €10m modern art museum has been rejected. Even so, 90% of the proposals overlap with the existing plans for redevelopment of roads and parks, which indicates that the share of alternative urban visions within PB is not too significant.

SIR claim that “the experiences from Sopot demonstrate that PB can be successfully implemented in Poland, and is not limited to the Brazilian context” (Gerwin, 2011a). As the process continues (at the moment of finalisation of this work, in August 2012, verification of proposals is being conducted by the Committee of PB), SIR propose a number of structural changes in the procedure, ranging from extension of its timeframe, establishment of a network of territorial meetings work at the fundament of PB, to organisation of a ‘bottom-up’ city-dweller’s forum discussing city-wide priorities and examining investment proposals before they are put to a popular vote. SIR further calls for creation of a learning process empowering PB participants, thus putting forward a vision that could significantly increase local PB’s quality in terms of its inclusiveness, deliberation, empowerment, and allow it to provide much more power to the city-dwellers.

The perspective of the local administration is entirely different. Although low participation in PB is identified as the main problem to be addressed in the future, all councillors interviewed prefer to see the blame in citizen’s limited capacity to deliberate, rather than the quality of methodology applied in Sopot. Moreover, the Town Hall, fully content with both the process and results of PB, emphasising the number of voters and proposals it manages to gather, suggests that procedure could be further simplified by a reduction of the number of public meetings it entails, “so as not to tire the city-dwellers.”³⁸

Therefore, there is no political will to significantly change the format of PB in Sopot which, to refer to previously presented typology of PB, is alarmingly close to the model identified as *Proximity participation*. Consequently, the future increase of its potential to realise the right to the city is unlikely. Thus, its major weakness is revealed: although meant to challenge powerful protagonists of urban politics, it paradoxically depends on their approval to propose systemic changes. SIR suggests that PB could become recognised by the national law as the

³⁸ Interview (C6) with the Town Hall’s representative

urban form of an existing and increasingly popular rural participatory budgeting practice — ‘the rural community fund’ (‘fundusz sołecki’) (Ustawa o *funduszu sołeczym*, 2009; Kraszewski, 2012), yet as the previous discussion on the right to the city and participation has revealed, such institutionalisation may generate counterproductive effects.



Figure 5. Bird's eye views on Sopot.

Source: <http://goo.gl/pAuHK>



CONCLUSION

The frequently expressed need for discovering praxis that could address the widely recognised, multi-faceted ‘urban crisis’ by utilising the theoretical concept of the “right to the city” has prompted this work to centre upon participatory budgeting (PB) as a possible translation of Henri Lefebvre’s idea. However, in the belief that the right to the city should be approached as a method of analysis that is meant to reinforce rather than stimulate action, instead of merely examining to what extent it may be effectively realised by PB, an attempt has been made to produce a more comprehensive understanding about the impact of this practice on today’s cities.

Therefore, a variety of interpretations of the right to the city have been studied and, as a result, key *ingredients* of the term have been established — the right to appropriate and produce urban space through participation and deliberation in urban decision-making; the right to challenge the system; the right to capture urban surplus value; the right to more than ‘a city’ or ‘the city,’ but to space and society; and the right to utopia (a new city) — the combination of which enables for collective citizen control over the urban space. These *ingredients* have consequently been matched with a variety of *elements* recognised by the critical literature on participation — a key notion that appears to lie at the fundament of both the right to the city and PB.

The investigation of the theoretical facet of PB within this methodological framework has demonstrated that PB practices have a high capacity to incorporate the aforementioned *ingredients* and *elements* — on the condition that they include a number of vital aspects concerning their rationale and methodology. The theoretical findings have then been confirmed by the examination of two case studies (PB projects in Cordova and Sopot), that enabled an observation of the practical level of PB.

As a result, PB has appeared as a practice embodying most transformative aims when anchored in prior traditions of civic activism and participatory

initiatives, and supported by strong political will. The lack of these aspects in Sopot's case has resulted in its instrumentalisation, while their presence enabled PB in Cordova to propose a profound social and political change. Furthermore, PB seems to grant city-dwellers with the right to appropriate and produce urban through participation and deliberation, on the condition that is based on an elaborate system of fora that attract a number of new participants, undivided into 'articulate' and 'non-articulate' actors, thus providing framework for deliberation among all participants and incorporating natural tensions deriving from plurality of views represented. The absence of these aspects in Sopot's PB has resulted in its exclusiveness, while their fundamental role in Cordova allowed to gradually diminish the influence of the usual ideological and socio-economic biases observed in participatory projects. Moreover, this work has confirmed the crucial character of the so-called 'learning process,' which — clearly present in Cordova between 2001 and 2003 — enabled city-dwellers to not only deliberate about specific projects, but also define priorities behind broad urban agendas. In Sopot, on the other hand, its absence continuously prevents PB from addressing the issue of unequal capacities of actors involved, and fails to introduce city-dwellers as equal partners in the debate over urban development.

The empowering features of PB have also been discerned as essential for its capacity to create a political framework in which a struggle against existing socio-economic system can take place. Urban regimes can be challenged by PB only when its participants are in charge of establishing the rules behind the process, delineating the subjects for discussions it initiates and elaborating criteria for selection of investment proposals. PB further has been observed as possibly granting city-dwellers with significantly more political power in their cities only when delegating key responsibilities regarding allocation of public finances to new, directly elected bodies, particularly the city-wide PB council, and thereby creating a more transparent, alternative framework for deliberation. This was the case in PB in Cordova in 2001–2003, as indeed the empowerment of city-dwellers enabled them to control PB. The Sopot's case, on the other hand, proves that the absence of a 'learning process' naturally results in citizen's insufficient knowledge about urban development, and thus may actually provide the local authorities with an excuse for choosing not to involve residents in the decision-making process. In these circumstances, PB may be used for entirely different purposes than it is theoretically meant to, becoming a purely instrumental tool for improving the efficiency of local governance and, most importantly, co-option of local inhabitants. Balance between 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' objectives and modes of operation have been denoted as another key aspect regarding the

potential of PB to challenge urban regimes. In both case studies, the character of PB seems rather institutional, as its methodology has been designed by the local administration and formalised actors at the centre of the debate on the shape of PB. In Cordoba, this allowed for the ‘top-down’ pressure to stop the process from evolving, and to consequently redesign it in a much less innovative manner. In Sopot, it keeps preventing transformative changes in PB methodology from being introduced.

Moreover, it has been indicated that in order to make an impact on the whole city, PB must attempt to reconcile various scales involved in the process, and enable deliberation about city-wide policies, rather than spatially or socially limited projects. This was partly achieved in Cordoba, where PB operated on the scales of neighbourhood, district and the entire city, yet at the same time never concerned the whole spectrum of urban development, but its specifically delineated areas. In Sopot, although the thematic dimension is open, PB is spatially restricted to the district scale. Therefore, the former case came much closer to acquiring a holistic dimension than the latter.

Finally, it has been determined that effective realisation of the right to capture the urban surplus value requires that investment proposals emerging from PB be realised swiftly, and follow the pattern of spatial and social inversion of priorities. The inability to meet these conditions resulted in widespread disappointment about the results produced by PB in Cordoba, and consequently gradual decline of the project. Last but not least, the potential of PB in terms of reaching beyond the existing urbanity and proposing a new urban order appears to partially depend on its ability to initiate an administrative reform leading to increased transparency of the urban decision-making process. The modernisation of local administration was not achieved in any of the two case studies — both in Cordoba and Sopot PB appeared too weak to influence the administrative apparatus. Moreover, in the former case study, it is precisely the pressure from PB to transform the political structures that resulted in drastically reduced will to continue the project. In the latter one, PB’s incapacity to create such pressure reduces to minimum the probability that its methodology and impact significantly improve in the future.

In other words — to direct answer the research question posed at the very beginning of this work — provided that a number of conditions concerning its rationale and methodology are satisfied, PB does have a high capacity to practically realise the right to the city. Nonetheless, its overall impact on the urban development is relatively small and it has to be understood as a very fragile process, overly dependent on the political will to maintain its

transformative dimension and respect the results it generates. Thus, paradoxically, it is a practice that in order to change the systemic relations on the urban level, requires the support of the system itself, and therefore cannot ‘change the city’ on its own. Therefore, this work on the one hand has confirmed that, as Sintomer *et al.* put it, although “participatory budgeting can be a powerful process for achieving more democracy, social justice and transparent administration, it is surely not the only one” (2008: 176). On the hand, though, it has hopefully contributed to a more profound understanding of aspects of PB that help increase its capacity to provide the right to reach beyond the existing urban agendas, vis-à-vis the ubiquitously discussed ‘urban crisis.’

This knowledge appears particularly relevant today, as PB is rapidly gaining momentum — Sopot being just one example of its new ‘frontiers’. In Poland alone, over the last twelve months six cities (Białystok, Chorzów, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Łódź, Poznań, and Radom) have declared their willingness to implement PB (Ciepelak, 2012, Makowski, 2012; Minorczyk-Cichy, 2012; Respondek, 2012; Wybieralski, 2012). Herein lies the necessity for future research. As this work has hopefully demonstrated, PB should not be employed without prior critical reflections. These might be inspired and directed by the right to city — applied as an analytical tool that indeed can improve our comprehension about practices advocating political, social, or economic change. It is in looking through Lefebvre’s lens that their potential to transform the city can be verified.



APPENDIX —
SYNTHESIZED
INTERVIEW
TRANSCRIPTS

Information obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted with actors involved in PB in Cordova and Sopot proved of significant value for the analysis of both case studies. Therefore, it is necessary to present their structure and transcripts; they are introduced in a synthesised version, including only the most relevant points. All interviews have been translated into English from either Polish (in the case of Sopot), or Spanish (in the case of Cordova). Inverted commas indicated direct quotes from the interviewees.

A. STRUCTURE OF THE INTERVIEWS

The semi-interviews conducted in research for this work were structured upon the following questions, directly deriving from the methodological framework explained in *Table 4* and *Table 6*³⁹:

Aims & motivations

- How long and in what capacity did⁴⁰ you participate in PB?
- What were the most important actors involved in PB?
- What were their respective motivations to engage in PB? Would you define them as transformative, representative, instrumental or nominal?
- What factors enabled the conception of PB? What prior participatory traditions did it built on?

³⁹ It has to be noted, however, that as the interviews had a semi-structured character, each of them naturally tended to focus on selected aspects of PB, and therefore not all the questions could eventually be posed to each interviewee.

⁴⁰ Naturally, in the case of interviews conducted in Sopot, present tenses were used.

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- To what extent was PB in your city inspired by existing PB cases in other urban areas / countries?

Process

- What were the most distinctive elements constituting the mechanism of PB?
- How did PB work towards inclusiveness? How did it avoid divides between actors deriving from their personal (in)capacities to participate, access to knowledge and information, or professional backgrounds?
- How did PB enable involvement of new participants?
- How did PB create space for deliberation and conflict?
- How did PB empower participants?
- To what extent could city-dwellers control PB? How did it challenge existing power relations in the city?
- What actors were more powerful than others within the process?
- How did PB reconcile institutional/‘top-down’ and non-institutional ‘bottom-up’ elements?
- How were different scales (neighbourhood, district, city) reconciled within PB? Was the process holistic?

Results

- What were the immediate results of PB?
- What kind of lasting economic, social and political changes did PB produce?
- To what extent did PB produce an ‘inversion of priorities’?
- Did it allow for any kind of administrative reform to occur?

Moreover, several case-specific questions were posed:

Cordova

- How do you perceive and interpret the conflict between ‘Al-Zahara,’ the local administration and the citizenry?
- What were the crucial differences between the mechanisms applied and results produced in 2001–2003 and 2005–2007?
- What were the main factors that led to termination of PB in Cordova?
- How do you assess the probability of resuming PB in Cordova?

Sopot

- How do you perceive the mayor’s role in the process of implementation of PB and realisation of results it produces?
- What changes in the mechanism of PB do you see as necessary? Why?
- How do you assess the probability of their implementation? Why?

B. SYNTHESISED TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED IN CORDOVA

B1. Synthesised transcript of the interview with a PB expert from the Town Hall (Ayuntamiento de Córdoba), co-responsible for designing the methodology of the local PB and officially supervising its implementation between 2001 and 2007.

Aims & motivations

- PB “included visible and less visible aims,” and in case of a number of politicians they could have been pragmatic. Nonetheless, the IU had a very idealistic vision, “were enthusiastic about an opportunity to bring such a visionary project to their city” and clearly felt responsible for the project as “a true left-wing party.” Their aim clearly was to share more the responsibility for the city with the citizens, to make them “more critical of urban development” through access to comprehensive information and learning process. They also wanted to “democratise participation in the city”, as its structures “were obsolete and continue to be obsolete.” Cordova had a strong tradition of civic activity on the neighbourhood level; however, “as a pioneer city in Spain in this regard, it stayed there” — its participatory structures did not develop further, and there was an urgent need for their further development.
- Over time, before PB was implemented, the use of term ‘participation’ in Cordova had become distorted, as participatory mechanism in the city was dominated by Community Associations basing on representative, rather than direct democratic instruments; therefore, they were prone to lobbying from political actors.
- PB emerged as a solution to these problems, and transformation certainly was “a logical aim behind PB.” It was hoped to engage individual citizens, provide them with information, learning process — certainly participation was seen here as a right not as a means.
- “Politicians at first saw PB as an opportunity, but later ended up seeing it as a threat.” Cordova’s political class were at first genuinely inspired by the Porto Alegre example, but when PB actually deprived them part of their political power, and channelled it directly to city-dwellers, they turned against PB.

Process

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- The learning process was crucial in making all levels of the process (neighbourhood, district, and city) related to one another. It did not take place only during workshops, but practically at every step of the PB procedure; it had a comprehensive character.
 - The process was a mix of direct and representative democracy: people made their proposals, but as there was a need to give economic, technical viability to their ideas, they were encouraged to learn about the general, city-wide needs and problems (in both spatial and social terms) that their own proposals had not considered before. “For instance, if I proposed to put a lamppost on my street, but then went and visited your area, where streets are not paved, I could not stand with my proposal anymore.” The learning process also addressed the issue of inequality between actors, as it had a high pedagogical value. “The ‘technicians’ dealing with different areas in the city (infrastructure, finances, education etc.) did a great didactic job.”
 - The participants could not really be manipulated by other actors (associations, local administration), as the methodology applied in PB empowered them by incorporating the following key elements:
 - the ‘one person, one vote’ rule;
 - space for deliberation and plurality of opinions;
 - space for conflict;
 - However, particular actors, for instance ‘Al-Zahara,’ attempted to manipulate the process by proposing to use old participatory techniques; generally speaking, the Community Associations “did not want to change their ways,” and that is why the process was suspended in the end.

In the conflict with ‘Al-Zahara’ there was a fundamental question on the definition of participation. “For me, to participate means to be able to take decisions, not just to co-operate over pre-made projects, [and] decisions that were taken beforehand.” Thus, participation should have a political character — but not in the meaning of the word that the Community Associations proposed, as “[they] are very politicised, very much influenced by different political parties, and therefore often instrumentalised by them.”

Results

- “A process like this needs some returns (like in case investment returns), tangible results” — lack of those disappointed many participants. “They are still engaged in works deriving from the PB,” which demonstrates the nature of the problem: the results were not immediate, as many investments needed time (for instance due to bureaucratic or financial problems), and yet city-dwellers would like their proposals to be realised immediately. “PB could not actually be seen as composed of yearly rounds,” as the implementation of projects that emerged from it took several years.

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- However, PB was not an inconclusive process — between 2001 and 2003 “it allowed for an open, deliberative, political kind of participation, space for decision-making process lead by people, a feeling that there is space to make real decisions, that the whole world is one.”
 - Inversion of priorities was achieved to an extent; citizens’ proposals “were clearly different from what the local administration usually proposed,” as they based on city-wide priorities delineated the citizens themselves.
 - Unfortunately, no reform of administration could be achieved within these three years.
 - Therefore, “most results regarded the learning process, the awareness that was created, but also the fact that people could actually propose their project and to an extent see it realised” — “PB gave people an opportunity, power, and it did try to change the world, to challenge the political system — and people used this opportunity, and they did participate!”
 - This was stopped, “the methodology, the framework changed, and the results could not be generated anymore.” The space for creative conflict vanished, as “the conflict was cut out, since some people were afraid of it too much.” Self-Regulation was replaced with Regulation.
 - The process clearly lacked political support, “just like a plant lacks watering.” Once the old power relations were brought back, on associations’ demand, “a great opportunity was lost,” and “a pioneer, revolutionary project” was gone.
 - Today, the Town Hall “sells the process as a success, and the change of the mechanism of PB is presented as a natural result of its flexibility, but this is obviously not true.”

Future

- There is not enough political will to bring PB back.
- Although the city-dwellers could welcome its ‘come back’, a comprehensive discussion on the rules and regulations behind it would have to be held, and it is very likely that ‘Al-Zahara’ would once again try to impose their rules over the process.

B2. Synthesised transcript of the interview with a PB expert from the Town Hall (Ayuntamiento de Córdoba), co-responsible for designing the methodology of the local PB and officially supervising its implementation between 2001 and 2007.

Aims & motivations

- Left-wing local administration has for a long time now been emblematic for the city; Cordova is still nicknamed “the red caliphate.” The main positive result of IU’s nearly uninterrupted reigns in the city could be seen in continuous development of profound participatory structures in Cordova.
- The negative results concerned too much attention given to Community Associations, who over time have become “a privileged representative of the citizenry,” provided more power in the participatory framework than any other civic actor.
- Therefore, PB emerged as a tool for changing the principles behind participation in Cordova: “to deepen participation, to include associations, and, most importantly, to reach out to non-associated citizens, which in Cordoba was a very new approach.” In other words, “to create new spaces for participation.”
- The Town Hall’s aims were never too clear — PB was most likely meant to be just another participatory project among many in Cordoba, but with time it had transformed into an umbrella-project embracing previous mechanisms and initiatives — this generated further frustration among politicians and experts.

Process

- The process was inclusive, as:
 - all meetings were open;
 - There existed *ludotecas* in which mothers could leave children to attend meetings;
 - Immigrants participated in the process; and so did handicapped people — appropriate infrastructure was provided for them.
- Moreover, the process addressed the issue inequality of capacities and power among actors involved. It based on a well-designed and well-organised learning process, which took place not only at specific meetings or workshops, but throughout the whole PB round. For the first time since the establishment of the participatory framework in Cordoba all actors were theoretically given the same share in the process of decision-making. “Symbolically, at the City Assembly, and later City Committee (after the methodological change) both institutional actors (politicians and associations) and the non-associated citizenry were present, with theoretically the same level of political and technical power.” — “The project created a physical meeting space for three profiles,” who were obliged to sit at one negotiation table.
- Problems:

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- There was no prior reference point — due to the pioneering nature of the project in Cordoba possible problems and results could not be predicted; a great deal of surprise and frustration was therefore apparent among the actors.
 - No response to the project in the Town Hall — no administrative reform followed, the Town Hall were not interested in changing themselves — no co-operation between departments.
 - PB was a genuinely challenging process, as it questioned the existing power relations, and hence produced enormous resistance. The local administration were not ready for this, and did not expect PB to become a project of such dimension, importance and transformative nature.
 - Finally, the associations could not accept having been repositioned within the new participatory framework. “[However,] it is absolutely not true that by reducing their role in PB the city-dwellers could become easily manipulated by experts or politicians; this is precisely what the learning process prevented from happening.” Furthermore, “the process made ‘new’ people participate — and this was its great value!” Al-Zahara were clearly against such an opening.

Results

- “The project established a rhythm that was very difficult to maintain,” “it was said to have an annual character, but the implementation was not annual at all. Instead, the implementation was “late and poor,” immediate needs could not be satisfied, which led to frustration among citizens, and Town Hall officials.
- Inversion of priorities did take place:
 - There was a lot of investment in peripheral districts that previously lacked investment;
 - However, PB constituted a very small % of the overall municipal budget — had a relatively small global impact.
 - It concerned only specific areas — with “vital issues such as mobility, security and public services left aside, even though these are areas that people are most concerned with.”
 - So, one could say that the inversion of priorities did occur, but on a minimal scale.

Future

- Clearly, the main obstacle for resuming PB in Cordoba is lack of sufficient political will to do so.
- The city participates in the international debate on the project (for instance through its membership in the URB-AL network.)

B3. Synthesised transcript of the interview with a PB expert from the Institute of Advanced Social Studies (IESA — Instituto de Estudios Sociales Avanzados) in Cordova, co-responsible for designing the methodology of the local PB between 2001 and 2007.

Aims & motivations

- The PB in Cordova was initiated by the local administration (politicians) when around 1999 or 2000 The Town Hall hired an “expert” specialising in participatory techniques to begin the progress towards implementing PB in Cordoba.
- The Town Hall aimed at “democratisation of democracy” — they wanted to introduce a quality, transparent participative framework. It is possible that some politicians hoped to gain more political power through PB, but scientific studies show that “there is no relation between implementation of PB and results in local elections.”
- Town Hall intentionally did not turn to existing civic associations, since it perceived them as actors that operated at too large a distance from ‘everyday life’, and ‘contaminated’ by their involvement in the political decision-making process, thereby judging them unable to act at the core of a thorough reform of the participatory mechanism. Instead, the Town Hall utilised PB as a framework specifically focusing at non-expert city-dwellers who could directly participate in urban politics, particularly regarding spending priorities and resources allocation, as actors equipped in first-hand knowledge regarding the needs and problems of their neighbourhoods and streets. So, the Town Hall deliberately “shifted the role of associations as mediators between the government and the citizens.” — Therefore, all organisation of PB, design and implementation of its framework was performed by the Town Hall, and associations had no responsibility here.
- The Community Associations (‘Al-Zahara’) hoped that PB would further empower them and strengthen their role as representatives of the citizenry.
- The city-dwellers wanted to engage in PB as an “opportunity to enter politics, opportunity to learn, to do things.”

Process & results

- PB’s inclusiveness was one of its greatest achievements. It did manage to engage citizens without prior participatory experiences, as “more or less one in four participants had never participated before.” Also, the process addressed both territorial and social divisions in the city.
- However, there was a particularly strong ideological bias at the beginning (2001 and 2002); it remained quite significant even though faded away over time. Also, at the beginning PB was strongly perceived by citizens as a political project

launched by a particular political party (IU), but methodology of PB allowed for different views and interests to gradually enter the process.

- All in all, Cordova's PB has to be praised for high quality of deliberation — this was particularly the case within the Neighbourhood Associations, which the Town Hall regarded as crucial meetings in the mechanism.
- A number of factors facilitated the process and ensured its transparent, open, and inclusive character:
 - methodology applied;
 - well-organised framework (precise rules for proposals prioritisation);
 - direct character of the process (direct democracy elements);
 - a number of employees within the Town Hall were specifically designated to work with PB.
- The protest from Community Associations against the transformative character of PB (as the they were reluctant to change their methods and role within the redesigned participative framework) initiated in 2004 a reform of PB. City-dwellers actively defended the usual methodology in numerous publications and petitions submitted to local politicians. Despite this protest, PB was temporarily suspended in 2004 and resumed a year later, following a very different mechanism.
- After 2004, the role of citizen participation became marginal, and so was PB's general impact on the Town Hall and its internal mechanisms. The only aspect that could have been observed in this regard was a slight increase in co-operation among different departments within the Town Hall.
- Also, PB was not perceived as a priority project: "The Town Hall did not pay enough attention to PB," as it posed a lot of organisational, structural problems that required a greater effort on the part of the local administration; this meant increased workload for certain employees, who naturally became disappointed with PB.
- "Lack of money could not be seen as a limitation — there was money!" — it was rather the question of priorities of the local government and inability to achieve compromises within Town Hall. "The internal problems were more important than external ones." In other words, the process proved very fragile.

Future

- It seems that "people would like it to come back."
- The Community Associations are quite skeptical — they would probably welcome PB only on their terms.
- However, there is no political will to implement PB — in 2007 IU lost majority in the local parliament, and formed a government with PSOE, which are in principle against PB. The perspective of resuming PB has become even less probable with the victory of a right-wing party (PP) in the local elections in 2011.

B4. Synthesised transcript of the interview with a member of the board of the Federation of Community Associations ‘Al-Zahara.’

Aims & motivations

- The Community Associations were the first local actor to propose implementation of PB in Cordova. They wanted to adapt the project to Cordova’s context, but finally it was the Town Hall that designed its mechanism. “The process was meant to be much more direct, but finally it was the Town Hall’s project, not ours”
- There existed a contextual problem regarding adaptation of PB in Cordova: the political, social and economic reality was very different from that in Porto Alegre.

Process

- PB gave space to particular, individual interests instead of promoting project directed to all citizens.
- The process was “unethical”, and began to “degenerate” after the initial three years. Crucially, it worked against existing mechanisms of representative democracy, as it gave people decision-making power, outside existing representative structures. Although there is a clear need for political agendas that would bring local governments closer to citizens, these changes have to be in recognition for the legitimacy of existing participatory and democratic instruments.
- PB was too open — people would “come from the street, vote and leave,” even though they had “little knowledge about their neighbourhood.”
- Moreover, citizens could enter representative roles themselves — as a result, “several citizens represented the whole district,” and “less than a hundred citizens represented the whole city.”
- Thus, the process neglected the experience of Community Associations, which “work 365 days a year” critically examining the urban development — “we are not there for nothing.”
- However, it has to be admitted that the process was inclusive — a variety social groups participated.
- The mechanism was changed in 2004, and it “turned out relatively good.”

Future

- With the political composition of the local government changed in 2007 and, only recently, in 2011, there is no chance for PB to return to Cordoba. In principle, ‘Al-Zahara’ is not against the ‘come back’ of PB, but first a detailed discussion on its framework and priorities would have to be held.

B5. Synthesised transcript of the interview with a member of the board of the Federation of Community Associations ‘Al-Zahara.’

Aims & motivations

- The Town Hall wanted to refresh the participatory framework in the city. However, they failed to recognise contextual differences between Porto Alegre and Cordova — completely different needs and problems present in the two urban areas.
- The ‘Al-Zahara’s experience was completely disregarded — “we were voiceless.”

Process & results

- The main problem behind PB lied in its “inconclusive character” — “if you create a budgetary vision, you need to make room for realisation of what is proposed.” The lack of visible results was too apparent, the hopes were much higher.
- “If you cook for just cooking, you’re going to stay hungry” — the process might have been inclusive, open, maybe even effective, and it had a great potential, but the final results “were not satisfactory at all.” And yet, although PB did not bring projected results, it was continued over years, despite “waste if time, effort, work, illusion,”
- The change of methodology in 2004 “tidied up” the whole process — it “made more sense,” as it included experienced actors of the decision-making process.
- Another fundamental problem concerned the fact that PB forced politicians to loose some of their power, which in the end surprised IU.
- There is no chance to resume PB in the future — with PP in power and economic crisis having drastically reduced Cordoba’s fiscal capabilities, PB is not a priority.

B6. Synthesised transcript of the interview with a representative of the Municipal Town Planning Board (Gerencia Municipal de Urbanismo).

- There is “no justification for pursuing the PB path.” Citizens are more than welcome to participate in the process of developing the city, and there is a number of tools that facilitate their involvement (for instance the existing participatory structures).
- The expertise of experts employed by Gerencia Municipal de Urbanismo should not be neglected — it is their technical knowledge that must have the “final word” in the process of urban planning.
- “A little too much effort was put in PB, and few tangible results actually emerged from it.”

C. SYNTHESISED TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED IN SOPOT

C1. Synthesised transcript of the interview with a representative of the Sopot Developmental Initiative (SIR — Sopotcka Inicjatywa Rozwojowa).

Aims & motivations

- Why engage in PB — it is a participatory practice allowing to reach out to city-dwellers' as actors whose perspective on the city is not bound by electoral terms, and empowering them vis-à-vis the local administration by redistributing to them the actual decision-making power on urban development.
- The aim behind the 2011 round was “to test the procedure basing on a small amount of funds, and verify whether city-dwellers be interested in this form of making decisions regarding urban issues,” hopefully gathering 500–1000 participants.
- Residents are interested in partaking in PB as they would like to have impact on the urban development. However, their awareness about PB and the opportunities it offers is very low (due to lack of access to information, lack of previous participatory experiences, lack of general awareness that city-dwellers should hold politicians accountable for quality of their performance).
- The budgetary consultation were the only participatory practice in Sopot prior to PB. However, their character was purely informative and they did not engage citizens into the process of decision-making.
- SIR (or at least one of their members) had experience from working with PB on the level of one district in Gdańsk. Also, they were acquainted with a variety of PB cases from across the world.
- Initially there was not enough political support for the idea of launching PB, but the local elections in autumn 2010 changed the political context.
- During the process of designing the PB procedure in Sopot SIR observed the discussions, and attempted to provide advice and, if needed, criticism.
- However, at one of the last meetings of the Committee on PB, several of the pro-PB councillors were absent, and therefore the anti-PB members of the Committee (including the mayor's representative) managed to change the procedure. The following elements were altered or rejected:
 - City-Dwellers' Forum, which, divided into thematic groups, SIR wished to organise at the before and after the submission of investment proposals, so that space for deliberation could be provided. This idea was continuously opposed by the mayor and when in the end the Forum was to be held against his will, he deliberately scheduled another meeting at the very same time, and as a result “the councillors got scared and cancelled the Forum.”

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- The voting procedure, which was to be based on a scale system; instead, the mayor, as the one ordering the voting ballots for print, included a completely different system that would have the voters mark a simple cross as a sign of support. Luckily, the 2012 round now includes a scale system.
 - The design of the voting ballot, which was not consulted with the Council, and as a result, invited residents to “help the mayor” and the Council, rather than to participate in debate over Sopot’s development.
 - The establishment of a special section on PB on the Sopot’s website (which has not been realised until today; PB is listed as “public consultations”).
 - With these crucial elements rejected, the first round of PB followed the rules provided by the mayor, rather than councillors supportive of PB, SIR or citizens.

Process & results

- PB in Sopot is based on a “hopeless,” “rotten compromise.”
- The main flaws in the PB mechanism in Sopot are as follows:
 - Lack of technical help for city-dwellers in terms of preparation of proposals, which leads to no learning process offered to participants.
 - Insufficient number of ways of submitting proposals.
 - Inappropriate methodology at meeting with citizens: they are moderated by city councillors or Town Hall representatives, rather than city-dwellers themselves.
 - Insufficiently detailed proposal submission form, which for instance does not include a cost estimate.
 - No existing participatory network at the base of the project.
 - Lack of sufficient citizen control over the process. In 2011 a number of proposals “disappeared” from the process in “simplifying” the voting ballot, as the selection of proposals did not take place at open meetings. Also, there was no control over how many ballots were cast by each citizen, therefore allowing for double voting to occur.
 - No debate on general priorities behind Sopot’s development at the beginning of each PB round.
 - Too small number of meetings with citizens. SIR proposed to have citizens meet regularly to discuss/monitor implementation of particular projects, but councillors felt this should be their responsibility.
 - Too few young people participating in the process.
 - The process “is not building relations between people,” as it supports realisation of particular interests more than consideration of the city’s general needs.
- The mayor, even though less critical of PB over time, clearly wants to hold full control over the budget; for him, any redistribution of power to citizens is out of the question. It basically seems as if he was afraid of losing control over proposals given by the citizens, especially that “these ideas would simply prove to be better than his own.”

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- Moreover, “the mayor does not want to announce a concrete amount [designated to PB], as he wants to continue to manipulate the results.”
 - Good will is necessary for PB’s efficient and respectful implementation — “The councillors recognise the results of PB as binding not because this is what a resolution says, but because this what they want to do themselves. It is therefore a ‘gentlemen’s agreement’ between the councillors and city-dwellers.”
 - However, this means that there is no legal guarantee that citizens’ proposals will actually be realised.
 - While the mayor prepares the budget (he is legally obliged to complete its draft until 15th November each year), it is the Council that officially accepts it, and has a possibility of amending it. However, this was not needed after the 2011 round — once the mayor realised that over 2000 votes were cast, he probably decided not to oppose the project so openly anymore.
 - Clearly, PB did not produce any significant changes in the way the local administration functions.
 - SIR’s positive remarks concerning results of PB in Sopot:
 - PB in Sopot has proved that citizens can choose projects that bear in mind the needs of the city and its environment (since the installation of public recycling bins emerged as the most popular city-wide proposal).
 - City councillors were initially suspicious of the project, but towards the end of the 2011 round declared their readiness to ensure the implementation of proposals that emerged from voting.
 - Citizens began to feel more responsible for the city.
 - The idea of dividing PB into districts, and to have district- and city-wide separated turned out as a productive one, since the ballot included a “bearable number of proposals,” rather than a list of all proposals from the whole city and therefore the local, small-scale proposals received enough attention.

Future

- In 2012, the PB procedure has been slightly different, but is far from proposing a radical social or political transformation of the city.
- SIR propose a number of structural changes in the procedure, ranging from extension of its timeframe, establishment of a network of territorial meetings work at the fundament of PB, to organisation of a ‘bottom-up’ city-dweller’s forum discussing city-wide priorities and examining investment proposals before they are put to a popular vote.
- Although good will of all actors involved is crucial for gradual changes in the mechanism to be implemented, PB could be legally organised similarly to rural “fundusze sołeckie”, which are basically parts of rural community’s budget that citizens decide upon themselves, and, according to Polish law, their decisions are legally binding; a similar mechanism should be organised in cities.

C2. Synthesised transcript of the interview with a KS (Kochan Sopot) councillor of Sopot, member of the Committee on PB.

- PB can help attract the Town Hall's attention to various problems on the neighbourhood, or even street scale. PB can therefore be used as an instrument of obtaining municipal funds for particular projects. The project proposals, however, have to be prepared by "people who have an idea how to do this", rather than "regular citizens," who usually have very low capacities to participate — lack of time and little interest in taking an active role in development of their street or neighbourhood are the main reasons behind low participation in PB in Sopot and Poland in general. Clearly, a number of social groups do not take part in PB, most notably the young city-dwellers and university students who reside in Sopot temporarily.
- Clearly, administrative reform is not the aim behind PB: "PB should change the city-dwellers, not us!"
- Therefore, PB has to be built on a procedure that is not "too demanding for participants." It should be simplified, by "offering citizens a template, so that they don't have to learn about the intricacies of some complex system of meetings and discussions, and consequently dragging them to the meetings." Providing participants with technical knowledge, and engaging them in a learning process is "out of the question — it would only further reduce participation rates, as the meetings would be longer, and people would be discouraged even more from attending them."
- Thus, there is no need for holding meetings at which city-wide priorities or proposals are discussed — this is the task for professionals and technicians equipped in relevant knowledge and skills.
- "I admit, last year [in 2011] I used PB for my own purposes, gathered a lot of support, managed to organise people around my proposal; we used our five minutes, and this year I offer the city to gather similar support for a project that has a city-wide character — last year we helped ourselves, this year we can help the city."
- Regarding the mayor's influence on PB, the Town Hall purposely does not provide precise amount, to manipulate the final financial scope of PB.

Future

- PB should first focus on creating networks of citizens, as although crucial for success of any participatory project, they simply do not exist in Sopot.
- The main aim for now should be to reach out to city-dwellers and motivate them to become aware about the city's development.
- In the end, however, PB might one day help build relations among city-dwellers, promote profound participation as well as civic values. For now, it has to remain a 'top-down' project.

C3. Synthesised transcript of the interview with a PiS (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) councillor of Sopot, member of the Committee on PB.

- Sopot's city-dwellers "feel like they cannot change anything" and participate *post-factum*, expressing their disappointment with decisions taken without their involvement. Yet PB does not aim at empowering them; instead, it is used to make them co-responsible for the controversial business of policy-making, and co-opting them; thus, politicians are "rescuing themselves from a lynch."
- PB should give citizens a genuine opportunity to decide about urban development. — "if PB was to reduce the power of some politicians, so be it, all the better." However, citizens should not be responsible for neither deliberation about urban development, nor monitoring of how proposals emerging from PB are being implemented — this should be the role of the councillors and other democratically-elected bodies that possess relevant collective expertise and knowledge.
- Low participation in PB derives from poor diffusion of information. That is why not all social groups attend meetings, and so many young people are absent in PB. In order to attract more people to PB, it should take the form of elections — "last not a couple of months, but one, maybe two days." PB should therefore be more about decision-making, not deliberation.
- Political co-operation and will is crucial for the effectivity of this process — "if there are political quarrels about PB, people will not be eager to join it." The political conflict behind PB (the mayor opposing the project only because it is not his own idea) disables distribution of power to citizens — the co-operation between political actors involved in PB (Committee on PB and the Town Hall) is very poor.
- "There has been a discussion within the Committee, whether we play it 'hard' or 'soft' with the mayor; both solutions are good and bad at the same time — if we play it 'soft', the mayor will impose his rules; if we play it 'hard', he will ignore our rules and manipulate the process anyway." So, PB should remain as "gentlemen's agreement", and "creating a complicated mechanism just to have it on paper" is futile.
- In 2011, there were no clear criteria for verification and selection of proposals — "common sense" of members of the Committee on PB was the main criterion. As a result, "a lot of ideas got lost" when received by the Town Hall, right before the voting ballot was designed. This is clearly frustrating for all actors involved; "it's as if we were pretending we were doing something that in fact we aren't."
- Finally, in the Polish political framework, the mayor is a dominant actor in urban politics, and the City Council has very little power. Unfortunately, the idea of implementing PB came from the Council; therefore, a change of mayor is needed for the PB to be supported. For now, there is no sufficient will to implement significant changes in the project.

C4. Synthesised transcript of the interview with a PiS (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) councillor of Sopot, the chairperson of the Committee on PB.

- Crucially speaking, PB should be seen as a ‘social agreement’ guaranteed by the city councillors.
- The procedure of PB in Sopot is still developing — the mechanism has many flaws and could certainly be improved. It is very different from the one applied in previously held “budgetary consultations” — here, the city-dwellers’ opinion is much more valid.
- The Committee on PB attempted to create a PB model that would be simple and therefore easy for the city-dwellers to understand, since their capacity to participate is not too high. The learning process might not be interesting for city-dwellers — they do not seek being engaged in elaborate framework: simplicity is key.
- Ideally, the rules of PB should be defined by one resolution, passed “once and for all.” “We should not be changing the rules ever year; they should be accepted once, and remain the same for years.”
- The quality of deliberation is improving — there is significant quality difference between the 2011 and 2012 rounds.
- Diffusion of information is poor — a number of media (particularly internet) are not sufficiently used. This influences the social composition of the process — young people are not at all seen at meetings.
- Also, the time in which PB is implemented (end of spring and summer holidays) is not most appropriate for such an initiative to gather many participants.
- The lack of clear rules among the political actors involved (the councillors and the Town Hall) is a great weakness — both minimum and maximum amount of financial resources involved in PB should be clearly defined; otherwise, PB can be easily manipulated.

C5. Synthesised transcript of the interview with a PO (Platforma Obywatelska) councillor of Sopot, member of the Committee on PB.

- PB emerged in Sopot as “a natural extension of previously held [budgetary] consultations.” The consultations were effective and enabled the local administration to learn about the city-dwellers’ problems and proposals for investment; PB is not much more effective in this regard.
- There is a lot of pressure from the citizens to “transform the project into some sort of anarchy,” allowing it to disregard existing democratic institutions, such as the City Council and the Town Hall. Their expertise must be recognised and used — “citizens know how to articulate their complaints, but not how to create something productive, how to make the city develop.”
- PB should not, however, be expected as a project that has a capacity to change Sopot. The priorities behind urban development have long been established, and there is no need to amend them in any way.
- The current mechanism of PB is satisfactory — no major changes should be introduced. “PB has already produced great results — please look at how many people voted in the elections, even though, it has to be admitted, the information campaign was very poor.”

C6. Synthesised transcript of the interview with the Town Hall’s representative, member of the Committee on PB.

- First of all, PB is not a new initiative. As a form of “budgetary consultations,” it derives from a similar project that was “repeatedly held in the city.” PB is “a fun game” that through its playful character “may help activate Sopot’s city-dwellers a little.”
- PB can also be approached “a technology that Sopot, like a company, has to invest in,” to increase the effectiveness of local administration.
- Providing citizens with decisive power in the city is out the question; the power should stay with the legally elected representatives (city council and mayor). “We can’t have a situation in which a student, nurse, vegetable vendor, dentist and academic teacher plan our roads and streets[...] — we have professionals hired to do this.”
- The role of PB is to centre on raising awareness and providing information about Sopot’s development. It can be used to demonstrate to the city-dwellers the intricacies of the decision-making process, to show them that in the debate over urban development “nothing is for free,” and “convince them that running a city

is not exactly how they usually think it is — many decision simply cannot be taken.”

- The results produced by PB should be analysed in terms of their quantity — the number of proposals submitted and votes cast has been impressive so far. The Town Hall is therefore almost entirely satisfied with both the process and results of PB. “It is not really important how many people come to the meeting, as long as the message goes to the media” and the voter turnout is high. However, indeed not many young people were involved, and the whole social spectrum of the city was present at the meetings. “At the same time, we shouldn’t forget that 9% of eligible voters cast their ballots — that’s a large sample!”
- PB did not produce any administrative changes, but it was not meant achieve this from the beginning.
- The rules behind PB are “correct and obvious” to everyone, but to further improve them, they could be slightly simplified (for instance by reduction of the number of meetings and stages of PB), “so as not to tire the city-dwellers,” whose capacity of participate (because of lack of time and/or interest) remains low.

C7. Synthesised transcript of the interview with the Town Hall representative co-responsible for establishing Sopot’s financial plan and annual budget, member of the Committee on PB.

- PB is an interesting initiative, and certainly can “help teach the residents how the city’s budget is created, and what responsibilities are involved in this process.” Apart from the learning element, however, it should not engage the city-dwellers into a decision-making process — the decisions should be made by elected members of existing institutions of representative democracy. “My colleagues and I aren’t here for nothing.”
- Interestingly, PB has produced “very good results” — it is surprising that most of them “overlap with the plans we developed before.”
- “This means that the citizens make sense, and learn from PB.”
- However, the methodology applied by PB should be made more efficient — it appears that the information is not provided to city-dwellers on time — “we can be more efficient in terms of implementing the current model of PB.”



APPENDIX — REFERENCES

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