

HOPE FOR DEMOCRACY

25 YEARS OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING WORLDWIDE

THECNICAL FILE

“HOPE FOR DEMOCRACY – 25 YEARS OF PARTICIPATORY
BUDGETING WORLDWIDE”

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To In Loco Association, for their 25 years.

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PRE

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CE

(English version)

Good governance begins at the municipal level, and participation by citizens in municipal processes is an important element in this. These are two good reasons why the Service Agency Communities in One World is supporting participatory budgeting processes since 2003. Our work is focussed on ensuring that participatory budgeting is practised in as many German municipalities as possible and in supporting the exchange of experiences both between the German municipalities practicing participatory budgeting, and with their partners in the Global South. Interested municipalities are provided with information and initial specialist advice. They are also able to attend our annual network meetings in order to exchange ideas and compare notes with other municipalities.

Together with the Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb) we run the information portal www.buergerhaushalt.de. From current information, to FAQs, to the map of participatory budgeting in Germany – you can now find everything worth knowing about PB and more also in English by visiting www.buergerhaushalt.de/en. Moreover, the Service Agency has also supported the dissemination of participatory budgeting as an example of ‘learning from the South’. An international conference held by the Service Agency and bpb in January 2010 in Berlin, and an international comparative study commissioned by the Service Agency, testify to the strong interest in stepping up international exchange to promote good local governance in the North-South dialogue at municipal level.

This festschrift – ‘Hope for democracy – 25 years of participatory budgeting worldwide’ – matches the work of the Service Agency extremely well, and is an ideal companion to the mentioned study. Its numerous articles highlight the different forms, types of procedure, trends and objectives of participatory budgeting in all regions of the world. They not only document the current status of participatory budgeting, but also identify trends and dynamics in the various countries. International aspects of networking, mutual exchange and joint learning are also given due coverage.

The international authors that contribute to the book are not only experts on issues of participatory budgeting in their country. They

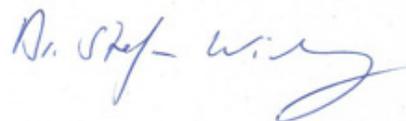
are also ambassadors of an idea that emerged from Brazil 25 years ago to sweep across the world, leading to more democracy and improved governance at the local level, and thus ultimately to sustainable development too. We would like to thank all the authors for their efforts and their commitment, which made this book what it is.

We also owe our thanks and appreciation to Nelson Dias, who is not only the author of several articles himself, but also had the idea for this book, motivated the other authors to be part of it and coordinated the work.

Through this translation of the Portuguese original into English, we would like to play our part in ensuring that the wealth of experience and knowledge it contains reaches even more interested readers around the world. We trust the book will encourage them to pursue international dialogue, and inspire and support them as they implement their own participatory budgeting processes.

We hope you gain plenty of useful ideas from reading it.

Yours,



*

DR. STEFAN
WILHELMY

* DIRECTOR OF THE SERVICE AGENCY COMMUNITIES IN ONE WORLD

PRE

FA

CE

I was very honoured by the invitation from Nelson Dias, coordinating editor of this book, which commemorates 25 years of Participatory Budgeting in the World, to preface it by looking over some ideas by way of reflection on the exciting process that the Participatory Budget (PB) is and that I experienced intensely in three distinct circumstances: as Mayor of Porto Alegre (1989/1992), Governor of the State of Rio Grande do Sul (1999/2002) and Minister of Cities of Brazil (2003/2005).

This preface is not the appropriate place to go over the three dimensions of this experience. I am very grateful to the teams that worked with me at these three government levels, men and women committed to the social struggles of the past few decades in my country, which brought dreams of freedom and democracy to the administrative action and that gave momentum, from its origin in social movements, to the Participatory Budget.

We all learnt from this process and we certainly still have much to learn. Hence the importance of this book to create awareness about the experiences of Participatory Budgeting, its dilemmas, challenges and limits, as it is being executed worldwide, and to intensify the exchange of such experiences. Another World is Possible if, in a joint effort, we persevere in widening and paving the way to Popular Participation across the globe.

The 32 authors that have enriched this book with their articles express the diversity of learning and teaching experiences that the PB provides everyone who consciously engages with it. I interacted with some of them sharing the day-to-day of this journey. Just like the poem of Carlos Drummond de Andrade:

“Among them, I consider the enormous reality.

The present is so great, let us not go far.

Let us not move away, let’s go hand in hand.”

To read them here, helter-skelter, will be very pleasurable.

The Participatory Budget started in Porto Alegre, in the 80s, originating in social and community movements. It was born as a counter-action to the hegemonic current that then pushed for the State’s privatisation and the reduction of its core functions. It became consolidated under the Popular Front government in 1989 as a tool for ensuring citizen participation in the construction of that year’s proposed public budget, setting priorities for government action and, after approval by lawmakers, monitoring its execution. It became a valuable tool in the fight for public control over the State (at a local scale), the government and its members.

The Participatory Budget arises with the aim of democratising the State at a local

level, in the hope that it would also act at a state and federal scale. Democratisation stood for the struggle for decentring wealth and decentralising power, empowering people as individuals and not political pawns.

In the early days of the Participatory Budget – we did not have an executive mandate yet – I remember when we were once, a committee of workers, demanding from a local authority, the addressing of old claims. The authority justified the government’s difficulties to meet those claims with due promptness because “the municipal budget was like a short blanket; if pulled up it would uncover the feet, if pulled down it would uncover the head.” A textile worker among those present remarked: *“Of making blankets I understand a little. At the factory we know the width, length and thickness of each blanket that needs to be done. But that blanket you are speaking about never passed through our hands. I suspect that if we could help, it would come out better.”* There arose the basic idea of popular participation in the budget proposal. Its implementation unfolded gradually, through meetings and gatherings in different places of the municipality, rural and urban areas, some organised by the City Council and many summoned by the communities themselves. From a planning stage, the need to link the debate on demands made for so long came about, and the inability, up to then, of public power to meet them, with the issue of the income generated in the city by the people’s work and its appropriation and the government’s role on this issue. Who pays taxes? Why? How? How are the City Council’s Revenue and Expenditure constituted? Are the tax indices for the calculation of Urban and Rural property tax (IPTU) fair? And the City Code? The Master Plan? What about Landholding Regulation? How are relations with Federal Agencies State and Union and with the other branches of government, the legislative and the judicial powers? There was a constant demand for more information on these and other topics, and that they be comprehensible to the largest number of participants in the process, that by knowing the reality could, by exercising full citizenship, lead to its transformation.

The concern was with the increased and qualified involvement of popular participation in the PB process, from the preparation of the

budget proposal through to its delivery to the lawmakers, monitoring its progress and discussion so that the end result was not a negotiated disfigurement of the initial proposal, to the implementation under the supervision of residents’ committees and delegates of the Participatory Budget. By guaranteeing fairness and transparency in various elective processes on which the PB was dependent, ensuring democratic inclusion of sectors that, at first, opposed the process, they gradually began to participate. As such there was a consolidated understanding that the State under effective public control works better and in everyone’s interest.

An ever-present problem was the necessary relationship with members of parliament. Some of them felt neglected in their representation by the work by the PB’s advisors. Far from discrediting lawmakers, the PB invited the local councillors to participate in all of the phases and equipped each lawmaker and House with elements that would empower them to exercise with autonomy and responsibility for their irreplaceable task of transforming the proposed budget into Law. A trait of traditional political culture always permeated the PB process: the speech of *“ote for me and I will solve everything for you”* enforces the idea of occasional and incidental citizenship, restricted to the act of voting and that the elected, instead of representing, replaces the voter. This contrasts with the way of thinking promoted by the PB: a reinvigorated representative democracy strengthened through participatory democracy, giving rise to citizenship exercised daily and consciously by all people. Another exciting challenge is the use of instant information technology by the PB notwithstanding the pedagogical and educational richness of meetings and assemblies where people collectively reflect on the problems of their community and the city and build supportive solutions. The risk of fragmentation of representation and the intensification of individualism exists and its solution should be dealt with creatively. Democracy’s problems are solved with more Democracy. The Participatory Budget must continually enhance its completeness and consistency without ever abdicating its democratic radicalism.

The preservation and deepening of the radicalism of the PB process is a political and cultural challenge with no magic solution and much less in the short-term. But it is through this path that *another world is possible*. The exchange of different experiences of the PB's implementation helps improve processes of public control over the State in all its dimensions, democratising power, fighting inequalities and injustices and preventing, from the start, any process of private appropriation of public affairs. It is in areas of intense citizen participation, as propitiated by the PB, that the utopia of a radically democratic society and therefore socialist, can thrive and, like a dream dreamed by many, become a reality.

Our PB experience, in different settings, spaces and times, in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, a Federal State with 496 municipalities, was exciting and challenging. It was inspired by it that the first three editions of the World Social Forum took place in Porto Alegre/RA/Brazil. What we need most is that processes like the PB spread and consolidate in all continents as conquests of citizenship and not as gifts from rulers.

*

OLÍVIO
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PSYCHOLOGICAL *EMPOWERMENT* IN PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

Summary

Although participatory budgeting aims different goals, which have been studied with a certain depth, its psychosocial dimension has been forgotten. This document tries to contribute for the preparation of a theoretical framework of the psychological *empowerment* provided by the participatory budgets, and at the same time it stresses out the issue of knowing in which circumstances these processes can stimulate the same. The analysis of two studies helps to illustrate that the population who actively participate strengthens itself, and the same happens with the part of the population that knows it can participate. This result tell us how it is possible to break the feeling of defencelessness and the consequent political apathy, valuing the political initiatives of this type besides the number of direct participants they are able to mobilize.

1. Introduction

From all psychosocial effects of participatory budgets, the strengthening, the potentiating or *empowerment*¹ s possibly the most relevant one, since it includes one of the ultimate goals of the process: democratize democracy through the transformation of the citizen into a political player. But this complex theoretical framework requires a comprehensive analysis of its conceptualisation and dimension before being able to be studied within participatory budgets.

Communitarian strengthening was defined as the process through which the members of a community (interested individuals and organized groups) develop capabilities and optimize resources together, by means of controlling their life situations, acting with a sense of commitment, consciously and critically, with the purpose of transforming their means, according to their needs and expectations, transforming themselves at the same time (Montero, 2003, p. 72). This is a process associated to the territory and that involves mutual respect, critical reflection, collective participation, as well as access and control of resources (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989), inclusive for people and collective associations traditionally excluded from public decision-making. In participatory budgeting, citizens collectively identify their needs, evaluate their resources, establish priorities and decide on the needs to be fulfilled in the first place. As such, participatory budgets are a democratic participation instrument, which can become a formal mechanism of *empowerment* [formal is defined as the process that is built by an administration institution and not by the citizens (Rich, Edelstein, Hallman and Wandersman, 1995)]. Nevertheless, to check if in reality there was strength generation, it is necessary to deeply analyse the processes in which this participation tool is used.

¹ For an updated perspective on the concept of empowerment versus potentiating or strengthening, see Montero, M. (2010). Strengthening of citizenship and social transformation: meeting point between political psychology and communitarian psychology. *Psyche*, 19, 51-63.

Rappaport (1987) proposed three levels of process analysis that can lead to strengthening: individual, organizational and communitarian. In individual terms, it is necessary to study the experiences that change the knowledge, and the emotions and the behaviour of a person, making them take control of their own life and what happens in its context. At an organisational level, we have to analyse the dynamics within organized groups that share common interests or goals. In the community, the ways of acting of the institutions, the organizations and the citizens should be studied. Finally, we cannot forget that these three levels are interdependent and influence each other.

Rappaport proposal points to the “socio-segmentation”, and the evaluation of the strengthening from which any one of these levels is extremely complex, due to the fact that: a) potentiating is a construction determined by context (age, sex, socioeconomic resources, etc.) and local culture (needs, forms of organization, values, etc.) and, therefore, the measurement instruments, whether quantitative and/or qualitative, should be cultural and contextually adjusted (Hombrados and Gómez-Jacinto, 2001); b) its value is not stable in time, and so longitudinal evaluations are recommended (Zimmerman, 1995); c) similarly, there is no single set of competencies, perceptions and behaviours indicating the potentiating capability in different people (Zimmerman and Rappaport, 1988). Therefore, there is no single and unique measure to assess the strengthening level of a person and /or location (Zimmerman, 1995).

This voluble characteristic of strengthening places it in the area of the open-ended² theoretical frameworks. These theoretical constructions depart from the theory and are built as of empiricism. The open-ended theoretical frameworks require the development of a *nomological network*³ consistent in a framework system that gathers the relations between empirically verifiable abstract concepts (Cronbach and Meehl, 1955). This would be a framework able to describe the concept of empowerment and to guide its mediation, and it should be broad enough to include all its diversity, but also sufficiently specific to allow to evaluation the *empowerment* in a concrete population (Zimmerman, 1995).

From those three levels of analysis, the individual level was the most studied, since the psychosocial process occurring in this level, also happens in an intra-subject level, in the citizens that are part of an organization, as well as in a given community inhabitants. As such, understanding *empowerment* at the subject level helps to understand it in the other levels.

From the above, we understand that measuring and evaluating strengthening implies the observation and analysis of the learning and experiences of people within the processes that can lead to

the *empowerment*, the so called *empowering processes* (in our case participatory budgeting), as well as the substantiations and definition of the concepts present in the *nomological network*, in order to be able to assess if those experiments lead to potentiating, what we usually call *empowered outcomes*.⁴

Zimmerman (1990), possibly one to the theoretical that contributed the most for the study of potentiating capability improvement, has studied in depth the *empowered outcomes* of psychological strengthening. According to Zimmerman, this variable has three main components: intra-personal, interactional and behavioural (Zimmerman, 1995). The inter-personal component concerns auto-efficacy and the capability to influence the socio-political context – what other authors have named as “sense of control” (Bellamy and Mowbray, 1998). The interactional component indicates the person’s capability to understand the context in which it lives in and identify the causes and consequences of the events, as well as to understand the power of a relational concept. This is therefore the development of a critical consciousness, the acquisition of competences for decision-making, the knowledge of the resources (Montero, 2006) and the ability to collaborate with other people (Bellamy and Mowbray, 1998). At last, the behavioural components would be the set of specific actions performed with the purpose to act in the socio-political future of their context (Zimmerman and Warschausky, 1998).

In the scope of rehabilitation, Zimmerman and Warschausky (1998) presented the construction of the *nomological network* per levels of analysis, and the differentiation between *empowering* and *empowered outcomes*, and this network was also used by several authors in processes framed within the investigation-action-participation (Brown, 1993; Chesler, 1991; Elden and Chisolm, 1993; Hall, 1992; Rappaport, 1990; Whyte, 1991; Yeich and Levine, 1992). The most recent proposal was presented by Zimmerman (2000), which we used for the first time adapted to the participatory budgets in the Parlocal Project (García-Leiva and Paño, 2012). Below, we present an improved version of the same, duly updated with the theoretical revisions and empirical data.

According to this theoretical framework, several studies of the quantitative and qualitative profile were performed, trying to assess up to what extend participating in a participatory budget process leads to psychological potentiating. In this text we selected two studies to illustrate the manner to measure the psychological potentiating, using quantitative and qualitative techniques, and to shown how far the promotion of participatory processes by the administration institutions can increase the psychological potentiating of the inhabitants of a given location. The first study we will

present is the quantitative evaluation of the psychological *empowerment* in the municipalities with participatory budget of Malaga province (Spain); the second one shows the qualitative analysis of psychological potentiating of the participants in participatory budgeting processes in the Dominican Republic, in Spain and in Uruguay.

LEVEL OF ANALYSIS	PARTICIPATING IN PARTICIPATORY BUDGET PROCESSES (EMPOWERING PROCESSES)	OUTCOME (EMPOWERED OUTCOMES)
Individual	<p>Acquiring competencies to intervene in the socio-political environment: collective decision-making, participation and organization of the citizens.</p> <p>Understanding the origin of public resources and learning to manage them.</p> <p>Identifying the distribution and inequality of resources.</p> <p>Understanding the functioning of the institutions.</p> <p>Strengthening the relations between the community members.</p> <p>Participating in decisions that affect their lives.</p> <p>Working with others.</p>	<p>Psychological strengthening</p> <p>Intra-personal component: Sense of control and self-efficacy; Development of beliefs, competencies and motivation to intervene in the municipality.</p> <p>Interactional component: Critical conscience; Understanding the socio-political environment and the relations of power; Capacity to collaborate with other people; Collective vision of power.</p> <p>Behavioural component: Actions influencing political life.</p>
Organisational	<p>Provides their members opportunities to participate in decision-making.</p> <p>Shared leaderships.</p> <p>Shared responsibilities.</p>	<p>Management and mobilization of resources according to the organization goals.</p> <p>Increasing competencies for decision-making and teamwork of its members.</p> <p>Political influence.</p> <p>Working networks: coalitions</p>
Communitarian	<p>Access to resources by all the population strata.</p> <p>Open and participatory government structure.</p> <p>Inclusion and diversity.</p>	<p>Organizational coalitions and generation of new collectives.</p> <p>Pluralistic leadership</p> <p>Collective work to keep quality of life.</p> <p>Participation competencies of the residents.</p>

Table 1 The strengthening *nomological network* in participatory budgeting.

^{2, 3, 4} As such in the original

In Malaga province, between 2005 and 2011, 22 experiments of participatory budgeting were implemented. This political wage came from the Participatory Budgeting Office of the Provincial Deputation of Malaga. The main function of this Office is to provide technical and financial resources, as well as advice of all kinds to the municipalities wishing to implement this new manner of policy making. The leading role of this Office in boosting of participatory budgeting in Andalusia – and in Spain – is endorsed by the fact that it was the promoter of the Declaration of Antequera. This political document is the guideline for the implementation of participatory budgets in the province. The three goals to be achieved with the implementation of participatory budgets were, according to the Declaration of Antequera, strengthening citizenship, ensuring social inclusion and defending public management. This Declaration, which was signed in the same day as the creation of the State Network of Participatory Budgeting in Spain, became the political base document to define what are and how to implement participatory budgeting in the province of Malaga. According to the dispositions set forth in the document, participatory budgets should be self-regulated, binding, universal and deliberative, besides having a monitoring, control and accountability system.

⁵To access data on the strengthening of people who participate in the open house meetings, see García-Leiva, P., Domínguez-Fuentes, J.M., Hombrados, M. I., Palacios, M. S. Marente, E. y Gutierrez, V. (2011). Evaluación de los presupuestos participativos en la provincia de Málaga. En M. A. Morillas, M. Fernández y V. Gutierrez (Coord.) Democracias participativas y desarrollo local (pp. 145 - 196) Málaga: Atrapasueños. ISBN: 978-84-615-0380-3

⁶For more information on this subject, see García-Leiva, P., Domínguez-Fuentes, J. M., Hombrados-Mendieta, M^a. I.; Morales-Marente, E. y Palacios-Galvez, M^a. S. (2009). Los presupuestos participativos y el fortalecimiento comunitario. Presented at the National Congress of Social Psychology, between 1 and 3 October, in Tarragona.

⁷ANOVA is, in short, a collection of statistical models in which the variation of the sample is divided in components due to different factors (variables), that in the applications are associated to a process, interest, product or service. (Translator Note)

⁸See Ganuza, E. (2007). Tipología y modelos de presupuestos participativos en España. Córdoba: IESA Workingpaper series. N^o 1307. See IESA-CSIC to consult the models of participatory budgets in Spain.

⁹For further information, see Allegretti, G. (comp.) (2012). Estudio comparativo de los presupuestos participativos en República Dominicana, España y Uruguay. Málaga: Cedma. Diputación de Málaga. Proyecto Parlocal. ISBN: 978-84-694-7156-2

Study of the psychological strengthening perception in Malaga province (Spain).

Quantitative methodology

In this framework, in 2009, a study was conducted to measure the level of *empowerment* of citizens in general in nine municipalities of the province of Malaga.

The purpose of the investigation was to go beyond the evaluation of the strengthening of people participating in the open house meetings⁵ and analyse if starting a formal *empowering* process can lead to a change in the perception of the potentiating capability in intra-personal and interactional terms, that is, if the change into a more participated political model can lead citizens, although not actively participating, to acquire a more strict perception of the sense of control and greater critical awareness. The hypothesis presented was that citizens from municipalities with implemented participatory budget, who are familiar with these processes, even if they do not actively participate, will increase they perception of potentiating capability, at an inter-personal and interactional level, when compared to the citizens from municipalities alike but with no participatory budget.

Method⁶

Sample

A group of 600 people of Malaga Province, divided in 300 from locations where the participatory budget had been implemented and another 300 resident in similar locations, but without participatory budgeting.

The chosen criteria to determine the similarities of the municipalities were the following: inland vs. coastal, main economic activity, number of inhabitants, number of organized local communities and political tendency. In order to identify these characteristics we used the National Institute of Statistics (2009), the Andalusia Institute of Statistics (2009) and the records of the municipalities' associations. As for the political trend, the used outcome was the percentage of votes in the different parties in the general elections. We chose this criteria as this is a better indicator of the variable of the ideological positioning than the colour of the party in the local government, since the behaviour in local election is influenced by other types of variables, such the personal knowledge of the candidate.

Given that the population of each one of the levels of the independent variable (participatory budgets) is about 24.000 inhabitants, the 300 people sample presupposes an error rate of about 7%. The sample was randomly stratified, and we included every strata existing in the municipalities.

Instruments

In order to assess the psychological strengthening we used the relevant sub-scales of the *empowerment* scale by Speer and Peterson (2000). The adaptation to Spanish was done by the method of translation and re-translation. The reliability of the resulting whole scale was $\alpha = 0.81$, the sub-scale of the intra-personal component was .92 and the interactional component was .83.

Procedure

After the implementation process of the participatory budgets, the strengthening of these communities was measured, comparing to the potentiating capability of the similar commu-

nities in which there was no participatory budget.

Data collection was performed via telephone with three prepared questionnaires and the citizen participation was voluntary and anonymous.

Results and discussion

By performing one factor ANOVA⁷ in a first analysis there were no significant differences. As such, and as there were three municipalities that implemented processes that were not opened to the entire population, that were not self-regulated and were non-binding (participatory model⁸), we decided to eliminate them from the sample; then, with this sub-sample, data showed significant results.

As presented in the table 2, there were significant differences in the perception of both components.

Next we will show the averages of each component in both conditions (implementation of participatory budgets vs. non-implementation of participatory budgets): as the table above shows, the averages were significantly higher in the municipalities with participatory budgets.

These results corroborate the first hypothesis, that is, that the implementation of this instrument of participatory democracy improves the perception of psychological *empowerment* of the citizens. Particularly relevant is the fact that the results are significant if the process is executed including the citizens participation in the preparation of the rules and if the decisions are compulsory for the whole municipality.

Nevertheless, it is not possible to provide an absolute value to this result, unquestionably interesting, since the sample has a high error rate; if we add the amount of factors that influence this theoretical framework, we will have to be cautious in drawing conclusions. In future investigations, in order to establish a clear cause-effect relationship between the participatory budget and the perception of strengthening, we will have to conduct longitudinal studies, and as far as possible we should prepare pre-post schemes.

Table 2 Results of one factor ANOVA after eliminating the municipalities that do not correspond to processes of participatory type (Implementation/non implementation of participatory budgets)

(*) $p < .05$;
 (**) $p < .001$;
 (+) $p < .06$ (marginally significant)

PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT	DEGREES OF FREEDOM	F	SIG.
Intra-personal component	1, 348	4,342	,038*
Interactional component	1, 348	3,579	,059+

Table 3 Averages and typical deviations of the intra-personal and interactional component of psychological strengthening in municipalities with or without participatory budgets

PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT	MUNICIPALITIES WITH PB PARTICIPATORY MODEL	MUNICIPIOS COM OP
Intra-personal dimension	3,21 (1,23)	2,94 (1,16)
Interactional dimension	3,64 (0,76)	3,44 (1,00)

Parlocal Project is a cooperation Project financed by the European Commission and promoted by the Provincial Deputation of Malaga (Spain) with two partners: Paysandú Stewardship (Uruguay) and the Dominican Federation of Municipalities (Dominican Republic). This Project was prepared according to three axes: training, investigation and network construction in participatory budget processes. The European Commission recently selected the programme Non-State Players and Local Authorities as an example of good practices.

¹⁰ To access the full interview, see the publication of the Parlocal investigation stated in the previous note.

Strengthening of the citizens participating in open house meetings in the Dominican Republic, Spain and Uruguay study. Qualitative methodology⁹

Parlocal Project is a cooperation Project financed by the European Commission and promoted by the Provincial Deputation of Malaga (Spain) with two partners: Paysandú Stewardship (Uruguay) and the Dominican Federation of Municipalities (Dominican Republic). This Project was prepared according to three axes: training, investigation and network construction in participatory budget processes. The European Commission recently selected the programme Non-State Players and Local Authorities as an example of good practices. In the scope of this project (Parlocal), a study was conducted comparing the participatory budget processes in the Dominican Republic, in Spain and in Uruguay. Among other dimensions and the use of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the strengthening of the people participating in open houses meetings in those countries was evaluated. Below we partly reproduce the qualitative results from the participant citizens.

Method Participants

150 people (85 from Dominican Republic, 38 from Spain and 27 from Uruguay) were interviewed, in an attempt to X-ray the different sectors of participants in the processes. The used criteria to obtain those profiles were the following: sex, age, to be or not to be a member of an organized collective association and the different territorial division of the municipalities or departments. In each territory, the presence of all participants' sectors was ensured until the saturation speech was attained.

Instruments

The used instrument was a comprehensive interview. Specifically, they were asked on the strengthening at an individual, organizational and communitarian level, according to the *empowered* outcomes developed in the theoretical introduction.¹⁰

Procedure

The design of the interview followed the strengthening network. In this process all the members of the scientific committee collectively participated.

Once drawn the instrument, the data collection was made, and all respondents participated in a voluntary and anonymous manner. The interviews were conducted in private and in an individualised manner by staff duly trained for that purpose.

As last, the analysis of the speech was made, using the method of detection of axes or interpretative themes, which represent the speech skeleton from the production of each participant. The exposure of the results included the literal quotations that illustrate the qualitative analysis, highlighting some of the most representative of the speech answers or expressions.

Results and discussion

In order to expose the results of the speech analysis, tables were prepared to register the identified themes. In the cases where there were different data between countries, these were

stress out through the initials of the country in brackets (RD, ES and UR).

Speeches on psychological strengthening were common in the three territories. Mainly, all the expected results are acknowledgeable after an empowering process, except for a Spanish municipality that has the youngest process. Therefore there seems to exist a certain relation between the municipality participatory budget path and the strengthening perceived by citizens.

MAIN THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Intra-personal component	Learn to manage resources from the institution (RD, ES and UR) Acquiring skills of participation to intervene in the municipality's future (RD, ES and UR) Participation skills already existed, but were improved (ES and UR) Goes beyond traditional by providing the opportunity to opine, propose, debate, decide on public issues (RD, ES and UR) Motivation for competency: desire to keep behaviours able to keep the results (RD, ES and UR)
Interactional component	Working with others: the power is build from the community (RD, ES and UR)
Behavioural component	There are actions of participation without political influence (RD, ES and UR) Contribution for the creation and consolidation of active citizenship (RD, ES and UR)

Table 4 Citizens' perception on strengthening, at a individual level, in the three countries.

1) Intra-personal component

The first identified result was learning how to manage resources. Citizens, men and women, know the origin of the economic resources, their amount and how these are distributed among different areas. They also know the mechanisms created to manage the same.

Yes, of course they do. This was one of the main benefits I had, as such we know how to manage. Because, in the end we can accurately see the amount that was spent with all those works. (Citizen from Pimentel)

This theme has very interesting arguments, since some citizens underline that they have learned a lot on resources management, but they are not the ones deciding which is the payment, from the budget, that goes into discussion, nor the amount. Therefore they have learnt a lot on the institution management of their resources, and at the same time they realize that the citizens do not have full access to decision-making.

As for the skills to intervene in the municipality's future, most respondents in the three countries stress out their increasing capability (potentiating ability) for that purpose. Nevertheless, and although less frequent (only in Spain and Uruguay), was

the speech of the respondents who participated in the process and already had those skills, as they are people with a personal journey of participation, what provides information on the profile of those citizens. In the case of the Dominican Republic, although it is obvious that most respondents have a journey of participation, they previously did not have those skills.

“I already knew, as I already was a member of other associations, I have experience.” (Citizen from Algeciras)

Regarding the development of participation skills, there are also references to the collective efficacy:

“...Because, from the humblest of all, a child, a youngster, an elderly, a bricklayer up to a milliner, all had ideas, and those ideas were weaving up, and the final result was that project. Which was not envisaged by only one head, but by the whole set of capacities of the residents...” (Citizen from Florida)

The perception of the sense of control and self-efficacy are part of the dominant speech:

“...We can achieve purposes that often seemed impossible...” (Citizen from Cerro Largo)

“...And well, I believe it helped all the involved players to strengthen their motivations, personality, and the ability to think...” (Citizen from Rivera)

2) Interactional component

Another of the conclusions in the three countries was the assumption of the collective power.

“... In those open meetings we spoke with one single voice, and this was how the people from Pueblo Nuevo and Martín Alonso, communities that are part of La Sabana, joined together to defend the budget of these communities ...” (Citizen of Luperón)

3) Behavioural component

Most respondent citizens acknowledge the weight that their decision has on the municipal day-to-day. Nevertheless, and also in the three countries, in spite of participation action there is no influence on municipal politics. Although this is not the main speech, we find it useful to register it due to its major implications, given that it can even limit the strengthening of some municipalities. This speech is usually built upon an error argument, given that people confuse politics with political party.

“That is not important to me; politics ruins everything.” (Citizen from Santiago)

“Everyone should participate, as we use to say, there is no politics, no religion, no one, this is a participatory budget of the community, that is the reason I am confident and I always participate.” (Citizen from Bani)

“No, not politics, absolutely not. In here we absolutely mix one thing with the other.” (Citizen from Archidona)

Now the citizens from the Dominican Republic, Spain and Uruguay acknowledge that they better understand the operation of institutions, they know in what context of inequality they live in and they learnt to identify their needs. Citizens who participated in PBs have improved their participation and collective decision-making capabilities. Besides, they have gained a broader vision of the power from the common construction, therefore gaining a democratic awareness that goes beyond the right to vote and they assumed to have the leading roles in what happens in their municipality. In short, they grew stronger.

As we have just said, the three countries present a higher degree of convergence than of divergence. There are more common elements and repeated visions than differentiated experiences. All comes together to allow us to conclude that, in general, the participatory budgeting process studied in the Dominican Republic, in Spain and in Uruguay present high similarity as to the process of citizenship construction, even if there is a multitude of particularities in each different experiment. It is necessary, nevertheless, not forgetting that the selected municipalities (except the Uruguay departments) are not representative of the diversity of processes in each country and that, as such, the conclusions we reached correspond to the reality of the municipalities being studied and not the reality of the country as a whole.

Final thoughts

Participatory budgets are an instrument designed to commit citizens with decision-making relating to the budget of a given territory. Several studies were performed to understand its effects on the resources' redistribution, advancing the social fabric, the transparency in governance, the profile of the participants, communications, re-legitimizing public institutions, the modernization it causes in the institutions' machine or increasing the financial autonomy of the institutions that implement it. Nevertheless, there have been scarce efforts to understand in depth the psychosocial dimension of those processes. From all the social and psychological features present in participatory budgets, empowerment is, undoubtedly, the most important one, as it raises the human being to the condition of political player vs. the user and consumer role. From the focus in their strengthening, citizens start to know the context in which they live in and they consider themselves able to assume control of their life conditions.

Strengthening, as we mentioned in the Introduction, is an open-ended theoretical framework for which we contribute from the experience of participatory budgeting. This contribution aims to understand the changes that occur in potentiating the people directly involved in participatory budgets, and also to analyse the manner these processes should work, by means of reducing the defencelessness of the population in general – with or without the active participation of the later.

Declaring that direct participation in decision-making in public issues strengthens participants (in certain circumstances) seems to be a statement of a virtually guaranteed fact; at least, this is documented by the second of the herein presented studies⁴⁴ Nevertheless, what happens with the other citizens, in terms of empowerment? And makes it sense to invest a large amount of resources – both economic and human – to radically transform the way of doing politics, if those who strengthen themselves are a minority of the population? We could answer negatively to those questions, as we could also obtain similar results using less expensive mechanisms. This argument seems to be usually reinforced by the difficulty to assure the participation of all the population sectors. Nevertheless, what would happen if, by the fact of knowing that, even not participating, one can directly intervene in the decisions of a municipality, a person could change the very own perception of itself, minimizing its defencelessness and fostering its sense of strengthening? The first study presented in this paper tried to answer to this question, and results match the empowerment theory: the perception of strengthening is stronger whenever the citizens can participate in the development of the rules of the game and decision-making is binding. Even that, due to several reasons, the citizen chooses not to be present in the different participation spaces, he knows that what his fellow citizens decide shall be executed increasing his perception of control over what happens in this municipality and raising the degree of probability of his direct participation. The change in the political structure originates the change in the citizens' beliefs.

In a moment of particular political and social apathy, this data has a special value. That is why initiatives of this type can be one of the influent minority weapons to transform the current political scenario. Not forgetting, of course, that it is necessary to go deeper in this finding and that new studies in the same direction have to be designed.

⁴⁴To see other studies on the participants' strengthening, see Talpin. J. (2011). *Schools of Democracy: How ordinary citizens (sometimes) become competent in participatory budgeting institutions*. Colchester: ECPRpress.

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**BUILDING A
DEMOCRATIC PEDAGOGY:
PARTICIPATORY
BUDGETING AS A “SCHOOL
OF CITIZENSHIP”**

PEDRO PONTUAL

**PARTICIPATION AS OF THE
GENDER PERSPECTIVE
FROM THE ANALYSIS OF
SPECIFIC PARTICIPATORY
PROCESSES**

**CRISTINA SÁNCHEZ
MIRET
JOAN BOU I GELI**

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**PSYCHOLOGICAL
EMPOWERMENT
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PATRICIA GARCÍA-LEIVA

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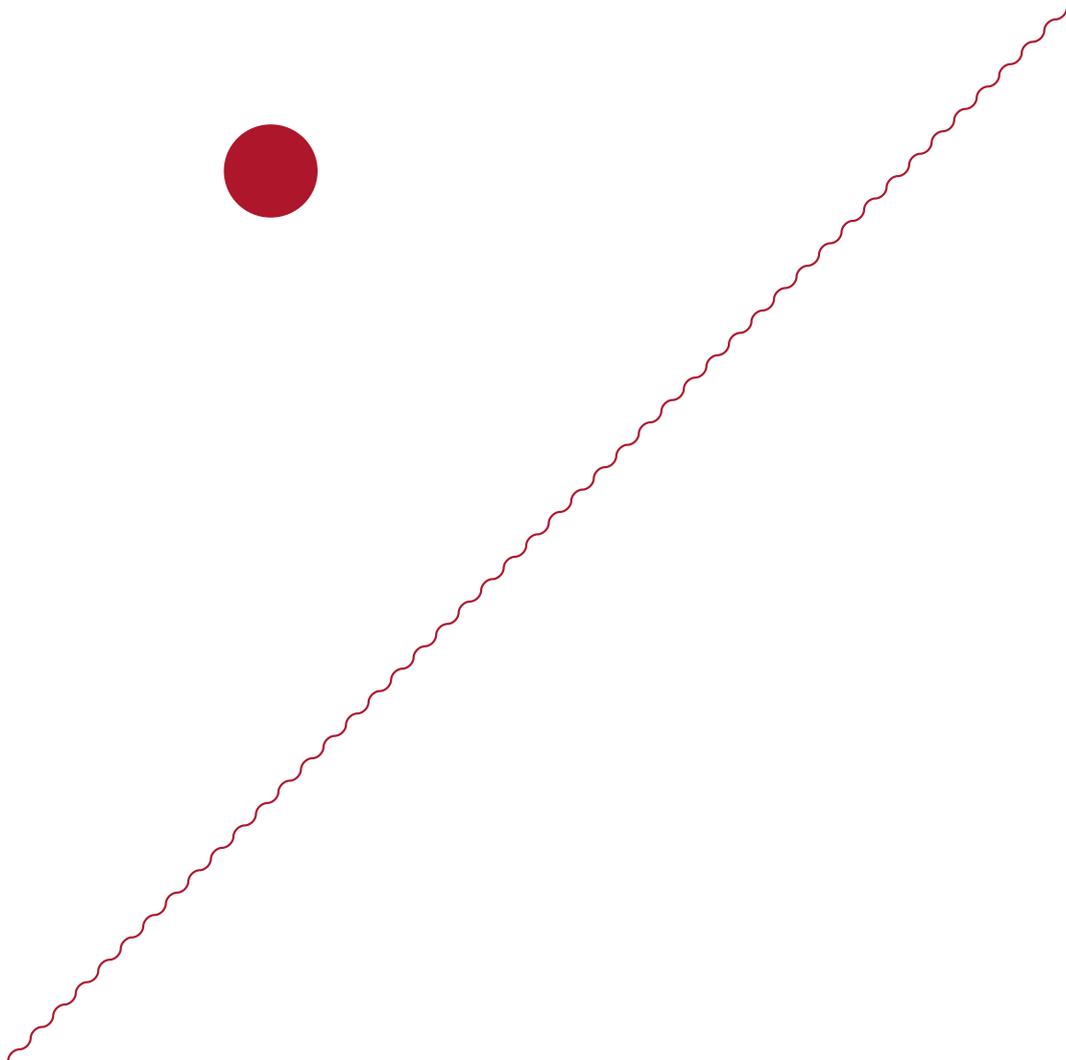
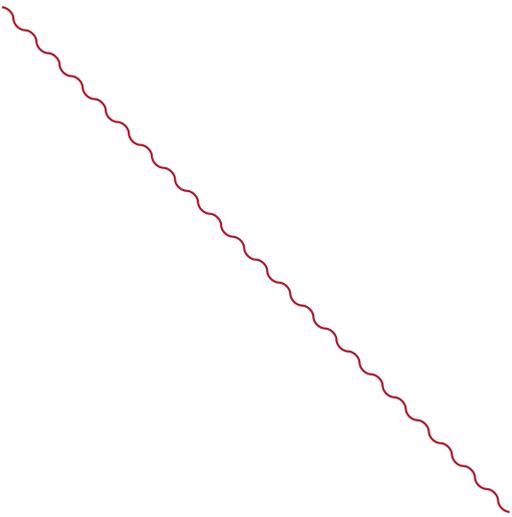
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This book represents the effort of more than forty authors and many other direct and indirect collaborators that, spread throughout different continents, aim to provide a wide vision of Participatory Budgets around the World.

The pages of this piece are an invitation to a fascinating journey along the paths of democratic innovation in diverse cultural, political, social and administrative contexts. From North America to Asia, Oceania to Europe, Latin America to Africa, the reader will find many reasons to believe that other forms of democracy are possible.

“Hope for Democracy” catches and reflects a state of mind that is searching for new solutions, the constant quest for action and transformation which encompasses the unconformity of many people and organizations from around the world.

The representative democratic system crisis is something that is common to all continents and countries depicted in the book. That being the departure point, the different authors seek to show how Participatory Budgets have been causing changes in the manner of exercising democratic power, in public administration transformation, in building stronger and more organized civil societies, in fighting territorial and social asymmetries.

“Hope for Democracy” is therefore a title, but also a wish and a call for action to all the readers, so that in their families or communities they endeavor to build other forms and more intense and active models of living democracy.

