

SCALING UP PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY
Citizen Engagement in Budgeting in Brazil and Norway

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Summary

Can participatory democracy only occur at the local level? What happens when participatory democracy goes to scale? The view that modern societies are too big and too complex to be governed by ordinary citizens is ingrained in the social sciences. Even supporters of participatory democracy often assume that it works best in relatively small communities or cities. In the state of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil, however, politicians and activists have for several years tried to scale up what they call ‘participatory budgeting’ (PB) to the state level. Their experience has been called the world’s largest experiment in participatory democracy. This dissertation draws together evidence from two periods of state PB, and compares this with local level PBs, as well as examining what happened with PB when it came to the Nordic countries. It offers a rare systematic discussion of the challenges of scaling up participatory democracy, as well as an analysis of how PB is translated when it is scaled out. Through four separate articles it makes use of a diverse set of theories – from normative theories of the city and deliberative democracy, to theories of collective action, translation and institutional change – and a combination of methodological approaches including quantitative analysis, original opinion surveys, interviews, comparisons, and text analysis. The dissertation questions the view that participatory democracy only can work at the local level, and makes the argument that scale is not an insurmountable barrier to participatory democracy although there are challenges to ‘scaling up.’ Among these are how to balance representation and grassroots participation, how to include low educated groups in deliberations addressing complex political issues, and how to get politicians and bureaucrats at higher levels of government to delegate power to lay people. There are different ways of confronting these challenges each associated with its own advantages and disadvantages. One novel approach, analyzed here, is the ‘systems turn’ in the practice and theory of participatory democracy. Finally, the dissertation emphasizes that ‘scaling up’ and ‘scaling out’ are intertwined phenomena, and stresses the importance of translations and institutional factors when PB is spread to new localities. At a time of growing disillusionment with the institutions of advanced industrial democracies, there is increasing interest in new ways of involving citizens in the political decisions that affect their lives. An understanding of the challenges involved in scaling up PB should therefore have significance beyond Rio Grande do Sul, and for those who wish to scale up similar participatory endeavors elsewhere.

List of articles

Article I

Legard, S. (2016): Is the city the appropriate scale for participatory democracy? Some answers from Brazil. *Tidsskriftet Politik*, 19 (3), 84-104.

Article II

Legard, S. & Goldfrank, B. Scaling up Participation — Consequences for Voice, Vote, Oversight and Social Justice (status as of May 2018, to be revised and resubmitted to *Journal of Development Studies*)

Article III

Legard, S. & Goldfrank, B. The Systemic Turn and Participatory Budgeting: The Case of Rio Grande do Sul (status as of May 2018, under review in *Journal of Latin American Studies*)

Article IV

Legard, S. (forthcoming) Translation and institutional change: What happened when participatory budgeting came to the Nordic countries? (Accepted for publication in Engelstad, Holst and Aakvaag (eds.): *Democracy and Institutional Change: A Nordic Perspective*, De Gruyter Open 2018)

1. Introduction

‘Italo’ is a 46 year old public servant from the state of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil. Almost every day he is out in his car driving from meeting to meeting with local officials, hospital staff, head masters, union representatives, constructors and community groups. The day I am scheduled to follow Italo, he picks me up at a train station and takes me to a rural, hillside town called *Dois Irmãos*. We first visit a fire station where the brigade officers explain what type of equipment they will need in the coming years to serve the needs of their town and the neighboring municipalities. Next, we go to an event at the town hall where the mayor, municipal staff and local council members meet the local newspaper to show off a brand new police vehicle that the municipality has just received. Soon, we are back on the road again, driving down the hills while Italo constantly makes and answers phone calls. We go to *Universidade Feevale* where we attend a conference for secondary school teachers, and have lunch with the secretary of the Regional Council for Development (COREDES). Before I am dropped back at my train station we pass by *Novo Hamburgo*, a center for German immigrants in the 19th century and today the location of the largest shoe manufacturing plant in Brazil, and where Italo has to solve some problems with the city’s administration. It is only 4 p.m. but we have already travelled around 100 kilometers, and Italo has more miles and meetings to cover before his workday is over.

Italo’s job is to organize something called *Participação Popular e Cidadã* (Popular Citizen Participation), from here on referred to as ‘participatory budgeting’ (PB) — a statewide process, that according to the state’s government is a “participatory democratic space that allows the citizens to select their priorities” for the budget (Governo, 2014, p. 6). When I ask Italo to describe it he replies that “the major characteristic of the process is that the state gets closer to the community to discuss what it is most important to do. The state has to listen to the community, because no one is better suited than the people — who confront difficulties in their everyday life — to evaluate what is most important for the government to do.”

Rio Grande do Sul’s PB constitutes one of the world’s largest experiments in participatory democracy, both in terms of the number of participants it mobilizes and the size of the territory it comprises. Of Rio Grande do Sul’s 11 million inhabitants, around 8.1 million are eligible to participate in the budget process. In 2014 — the year I followed Italo — 87,000 people attended

the regional forums and municipal assemblies, and 1.3 million voted in the budget referendum. While Italo's region is densely populated and fairly small, most regions are much larger. The state's total territory (281,748 km²) makes it bigger than many European nations and comparable in size to countries such as the Philippines or Ecuador.

Italo is responsible for the process that goes on within his region, *Vale do Rio dos Sinos*, one of 28 regions in the state. His work largely follows the calendar year. Shortly after carnival season in February, he calls for a regional forum to inform the municipal administrations and community leaders about the amount of investment funds, and the status of what was decided the previous year. He addresses pressing budget issues, and facilitates the discussion between the attendees. The regional forums result in a list of 10 general areas (such as health, public security and civil defense, habitation, sanitation and urban development, etc.) that will be prioritized in the coming year, as well as in the formation of a committee that will oversee the implementation of the remaining process. Next, Italo summons public assemblies in the municipalities and invites everyone over the age of 16 to participate. Once again, Italo informs the public of the status of the current and previous budget, and addresses specific issues for the municipality. He facilitates a short round of presentations of residents' demands and the assemblies are allowed to select up to 10 concrete proposals within the regionally prioritized areas. The assembly participants also elect delegates to represent them at the regional level. Some weeks after all the municipal assemblies have been held, Italo finds a place to gather all the delegates. At this meeting he and the delegates formulate a budget ballot. This contains both a summary of the proposals of investments in the municipalities (*campo 1*) and proposals for investments at the regional level (*campo 2*). Italo sends the ballot to the central government, and it is both printed and posted online for a vote. He makes sure that the municipalities install and staff the ballot boxes over two to three days, and that they follow procedures to make sure that nobody can vote both online and off. The number of votes relative to the population, as well as the criteria that give extra funding to poorer regions and municipalities, determine what kind of investments will be made in Italo's region over the coming year.

His job, however, does not end here. After the participatory budget is approved by the legislative assembly, Italo oversees its implementation in his region. He visits municipalities to make sure that they actually apply for the funding they are eligible to receive, and helps them solve technical issues and problems with the state administration. He also spends time with the citizens who proposed the investments that received funding, answering their questions and

passing on their complaints and appraisals to the responsible authorities. He frequently communicates with the central office of the *Secretary of Planning and Administration* (Seplag) that has overall responsibility for the participatory budget, and informs them of potential problems he cannot solve on his own. Moreover, he keeps in touch with the regional representatives of schools, hospitals, agricultural services, public housing companies and others who will deliver the works and services that have been agreed upon. These are tasks he has to do throughout the year, and when next February comes around, he initiates the process all over again. Italo is not alone in facilitating the process within his region. He co-organizes it with COREDES, and is dependent on the active support of the municipalities. In addition, most state agencies and semi-public enterprises are expected to contribute to the process in various ways: such as answering questions from the public, showing up at assemblies if asked, providing data and technical assessments of proposals, and executing the projects under the supervision of local residents.

2. Research questions and structure of the dissertation

The collective efforts of Italo and all of these groups and organizations, is a departure from pessimistic view of participation and scale that permeates the social sciences. Hegel, Hume, Weber, Michels, Schumpeter, Olson and many others have argued that modern societies are too big and too complex to be governed by ordinary citizens. Even supporters of participatory democracy often assume that it works best in relatively small communities or cities. The very existence of PB, on the other hand — a phenomenon found in major cities like São Paulo, New York and Paris — has been highlighted as demonstrating that the direct participation in decision-making by those affected by them is still viable in the modern world (Barber, 2013, pp. 307-308; Fung & Wright, 2003b). A range of studies suggest that such participation is much more effective than representative institutions in solving many issues. In Brazil, for example, municipalities with PBs are better at increasing social spending, reducing infant mortality rates and combating corruption than non-PB municipalities (Boulding & Wampler, 2010; Gonçalves, 2014; Touchton & Wampler, 2014; Zamboni, 2007).

According to Wampler (2012), participatory budgeting is based on four core principles. 1) Active citizen participation in debating how to spend public funds, with an emphasis on participation from disadvantaged and disenfranchised communities (*voice*). 2) The granting of real decision-making authority to participants over how public funds are spent (*vote*). 3) Redistribution of public resources to disadvantaged sectors of the population (*social justice*) and 4) The transformation of the public administration to make it receptive to citizen inputs (*oversight*). It is the combination of these principles, and not each in isolation, that has led observers like Wright (2010) to classify PB as a “real utopia.” Whereas ‘voice’ gives disadvantaged and disenfranchised communities the possibility to formulate investment proposals based on their needs, it is ‘vote’ that ensures that these proposals can become actual policies. And whereas ‘social justice’ makes it easy for poor citizens to understand that their participation will result in public goods, this does not matter if administrative agencies reformulate, undercut or otherwise refuse to execute the participatory budget.

There is a wealth of studies explaining why and how these principles have been realized or distorted in PBs at the municipal level (see for example Avritzer, 2009b; Baiocchi, Heller, & Silva, 2011; Goldfrank, 2011; Wampler, 2007), as well as what has happened to them as PB has spread to other municipalities both inside Brazil and to the rest of the world (see for example

Baiocchi, 2015; Dias, 2014; Gilman, 2016; Goldfrank, 2012; McNulty, 2011; Peck & Theodore, 2015; Sintomer, Herzberg, & Allegretti, 2013; Sintomer, Herzberg, & Röcke, 2008). As I explain later, this phenomenon can be referred to as *scaling out*. There are, however, very few studies of attempts to *scale up* PB above the municipal level, and even fewer that explicitly discuss what challenges the increase in scale poses to the intrinsic qualities of PB. My dissertation attempts to fill this hole with a systematic discussion of the challenges involved in scaling up participatory democracy, and a set of comparative case studies of attempts to do so.

The overarching questions that guide this thesis are as follows:

- What are the challenges to scaling up participatory democracy? Is it possible realize the principle of ‘voice,’ ‘vote,’ ‘oversight’ and ‘social justice’ on a large scale, or does participatory democracy thrive best in towns and cities?
- Did the scaling up of PB in the state of Rio Grande do Sul infringe on the core principles of PB? Do the differences in Rio Grande do Sul’s PB over time show that some forms of ‘scaling up’ are better suited to realize these principles than others?
- What is the difference between ‘scaling up’ and ‘scaling out’ of participatory budgeting? What can a study of the spread of participatory budgeting tell us about the challenges to scale up PB?

I answer these questions at the end of this introductory chapter, as well as in the four papers that this dissertation consists of. The papers are collected in part II of the thesis, and the structure of this introduction is as follows. In section three of this introductory chapter, I present my theoretical point of departure that has been crucial to developing the analytical frameworks in my papers and being able to answer my overarching questions. In section four, I review previous research on this topic, and relate my dissertation to this literature. In section five, I give a detailed presentation of the cases I use in my papers. In total I use four cases. These are 1) the municipal PB in Porto Alegre (1989-), 2) the state PB in Rio Grande do Sul (1999-2002), 3) the state PB in Rio Grande do Sul (2011-2014), and 4) the municipal PB in Fredrikstad (2009-). I have gone into depth in the third case, but the others are important for comparative

purposes. In section six, I describe the data I have collected and the methods I have used to analyze it. In section seven, I give an overview of the main findings and the contributions of each paper, before I proceed finally to section eight where I give a coherent answer to my research questions.

3. Theoretical perspectives

3.1 'Participatory democracy'

There exists an immense variety of definitions of democracy, and of adjectives that describe the kind of democracy one has in mind. In an ongoing — and perhaps never-ending — research project, Gagnon, Chou, Ercan, and Navarra (2014) have catalogued more than 500 terms that describe different forms or models of democracy. Among the more well-known adjectives describing participatory forms of politics are radical-, direct-, assembly-, immediate-, deep-, grassroots-, deliberative-, strong-, deliberative- and of course also *participatory* democracy. I do not aim to give a new definition of democracy, or to contribute with yet another and presumably improved adjective that correctly describes the form of democracy I am treating here. Instead, I largely agree with Warren's (2017) critique of the model-thinking on democracy, which, he argues, leads to dead ends because it foregrounds certain problems (e.g. inclusion), solutions (e.g. deliberation) or norms (e.g. non-domination) to the exclusion of others. I also share Warren's view that a polity needs to perform certain functions in order for it to classify as democratic:

- *Empowered inclusion*: Those affected by collective decisions must have a say, or a chance to have a say, over the decisions that are made. The empowerment aspect means that affected citizens have the power to speak, vote, represent and dissent.
- *Collective agenda and will formation*: Citizens need to be able to communicate and form their values, perspectives and preferences into collective agendas and wills. These agendas and wills constitute the basis of self-government.
- *Collective decision-making*: In addition, citizens must also have the collective capacity to make and impose binding decisions upon themselves — to get the things that they decide done.

This functional definition of democracy does not privilege a specific model but can involve multiple forms and practices. However, I still use the term 'participatory democracy' in this dissertation, for three different reasons. First because the adjective 'participatory' emphasizes that the above-mentioned functions are not possible unless citizens do more than just elect

representatives; they must also actively participate — or have the chance to participate — in collective decision-making. Behind this argument is the view that there is an institutional logic or dynamic to representative institutions, one that removes power from ordinary citizens and concentrates it at the apex of government. Unless representative institutions are balanced by, minimized, or strictly controlled and mandated by participatory institutions where citizens can *directly* discuss and vote on policies, the functions that Warren describes will, over time, inevitably be weakened or undermined (Arendt, 2006 [1965]; Barber, 1984; Bookchin, 1995; Wainwright, 2003).

Second, the concept of participatory democracy does not only refer to an academic discussion or intellectual line of thinking, but also to a whole democratic *tradition* — comprising a set of historic and contemporary movements with participatory democracy as a central part of their vision of a better society (della Porta, 2013, chapter 3). These movements include: the Levellers in the English Civil War (1642–1651), American revolutionaries during the War of Independence, the sans-culottes of the Great French Revolution (1789-93), the Communards of the Paris Commune in 1871, the Worker’s Opposition to Bolshevik power in the Soviet Union, and the worker’s council movement in Germany and Austria in the inter-war period, the Spanish anarchists and syndicalists in the Spanish civil war, the urban-based movements of 1968 in Paris, Chicago, Mexico City and Bangkok, what was called the New Left more broadly, the neighborhood associations in Madrid that fronted the anti-Franco movement, the recent anti-austerity movements in Greece, Spain and France, and the so-called Pink Tide in Latin-America — to name but a few examples in this diverse tradition.

My third reason for using the concept of participatory democracy is that this notion is widely used within Brazil itself. It is, for example, used by the governments that developed the state PB in Rio Grande do Sul. The origins of its use come partly from a reference to the traditions mentioned above, but also from a very particular combination of ideological inspirations. Participatory democracy in Brazil has a lineage that embraces the libertarian socialist tradition, the engagement of the progressive Catholic Church in urban and rural struggles under Brazil’s military government (1964-1985), the intense discussion of the relationship between social movements and the Workers’ Party (PT) and experiments with forms of grassroots organizations such as ‘popular councils’ and ‘ecclesiastical base committees’ (Teixeira, 2013).

3.2 Scale and participation in the social sciences

According to dominant views in both classical and recent social science, the question of whether participatory democracy can be scaled up or not has a clear-cut answer. A range of theorists argue, with Hegel (1999 [1798-1802], p. 21), that the size of modern polities makes it “impossible to realise the ideal of giving all free men a share in the discussion and resolution [*Bestimmung*] of universal political issues.”

One central claim has to do with *communication*. It is impossible to engage a very large number of people in a discussion that resembles what can take place in a small town. Dahl, calls this the ‘law of time and numbers.’ He uses the example of “a village of two hundred persons where the entire adult population consists of, say, one hundred persons, all of whom attend the meetings of an assembly. Suppose each is entitled to a total of ten minutes. That modest amount would require two eight-hour days — not impossible but surely not easy to bring about! Let’s stay for a moment with our assumption of just ten minutes for each citizen’s participation. As the numbers go up the situation becomes more and more absurd. In an “ideal polis” of ten thousand full citizens, the time required is far beyond all tolerable limits. Ten minutes allotted to each citizen would require more than two hundred eight-hour working days” (Dahl, 2000, pp. 106-107). He nuances his example by saying that even in an assembly democracy most probably only a few people will do most of the talking, and others will refrain from it. Furthermore lots of discussion and inquiry may take place elsewhere, so that many of the hours in the equation above will be used in discussion in informal settings (ibid pp. 107-108). Still, for Dahl, this does not invalidate the law of time and numbers. Since all human beings have a limited amount of time, this makes it valuable and “you will want your association to have a system for making decisions that economises with your time” (Dahl, 1990, p. 37). Any association that does not do so will either be terribly ineffective or lose the support of its members. The conclusion, therefore, is that it is necessary to move away from what Dahl calls ‘primary democracy’ to a representative form of government: “The more citizens a democratic unit contains, the less that citizens can participate directly in government decisions and the more they must delegate authority to others” (Dahl, 2000, p. 109).

Another claim is associated with *organization*. Weber rejected what he called ‘immediate democracy’ because large-scale polities inevitably develop administrative bureaucracies that are incompatible with the government of laypeople found in small communities. The growing

complexity and scope of administrative tasks will eventually result in the superiority of experts: “The conditions of administration of mass structures are radically different from those obtaining in small associations resting upon neighbourly or personal relationships. [...] As soon as mass administration is involved, the meaning of democracy changes so radically that it no longer makes sense for the sociologist to ascribe to the term the same meaning as [immediate democracy]” (Weber, 1978 [1922]-b, p. 951). R. Michels (1962 [1915], pp. 71-72) elaborated on this argument in *Political Parties*. When an organization grows larger, its tasks become more difficult, and thus there arises the need for an extreme form of specialization that excludes the involvement of ordinary members. The rank-and-file has to “give up the idea of themselves conducting or even supervising the whole administration, and are compelled to hand these tasks over to trustworthy persons specially nominated for the purpose.” In terms of influence they have to be content with summary reports or occasional oversight committees that investigate specific issues. In any large organizations, therefore, democratic control “undergoes a progressive diminution, and is ultimately reduced to an infinitesimal minimum.”

Problems of *collective action* are also frequently attached to scale. Hume (1888 [1738], p. 538), for example, wrote that “two neighbours may agree to drain a meadow, which they possess in common [...]. But it is very difficult, and indeed impossible, that a thousand persons should agree in any such action [...]”. One reason given is that the complexity and heterogeneity of large-scale modern societies make it difficult to come to agreement. Schumpeter argued that is technically feasible for ‘people’ to rule small and primitive communities with a simple social structure where there is not much to disagree about. As the number of people grows, however, and different interest groups arise, such consensus is unattainable. That is why we must drop the idea of government by the people and accept that, at most, democracy means government approved by the people (Schumpeter, 2010 [1943], pp. 220-221). Similarly, Olson (2002 [1965]) argued that unless a group is quite small, rational and self-interested individuals are not able to act in concert to achieve their common interests. Public choice- and game theory have incorporated the view that free-riding and defection cannot be handled without either top-down state intervention or pure market strategy — both of which exclude the possibility of participatory democratic solutions.

3.3 Objections to the 'default position'

Democratic theory has moved beyond this essentially elite-oriented and technocratic vision of democracy. Many social scientists point to the limits and fallibility of expert rule and centralized government (Callon, Lascoumes, & Barthe, 2009; Fischer, 2000; Fung & Wright, 2003a; Scott, 1998). Nonetheless, there are few if any competing notions of scale and democracy in democratic theory. The classical view, therefore, remains the 'default position' that many revert to in the absence of alternative perspectives. Take a recent textbook of university-level courses in political science in Norway where the editors state that "it is commonly agreed that modern democracies hardly can be based on anything else than mainly representative forms of government" (Rasch, 2004, p. 13). Similarly, a well-known scholar in the field of development studies writes that "'strong' participatory processes can never displace the need for hierarchical public and private bureaucracies, market competition, and representative democracy which severely constrains direct control over the way decisions are made and implemented. Those who claim that these participatory methodologies can fundamentally alter the nature of the power structures that sustain complex societies are simply ignoring the well-established insights of modern social science" (Brett, 2003, p. 11).

My objection to the default position is twofold. Firstly, that it relies on an overly simplistic view of a specific historical expression of participatory democracy. Critics tend to see participatory democracy as a mere public meeting where all members of a community discuss and vote on all common matters. Mansbridge (1983) uses the concept 'unitary democracy,' because she sees it as a phenomenon based on friendship, equality and the pursuit of consensus. Weber (1978 [1922]-a, p. 289) framed participatory democracy as 'immediate democracy' because the community's members could meet physically in a single space, like a city square, a town hall or a church. This image, however, conflates the ideals of participatory democracy with the forms it has taken historically. For all its virtues, a local assembly is not necessarily the best space for conducting discussions or even taking a vote in a participatory fashion. Indeed, a plenum discussion does not guarantee that all opinions will be heard – the time frame of a public meeting can favor those with good oratory skills, and it is not the ideal setting for finding the best technical solutions to common problems. Even though for centuries the assembly may have been the best available space for inclusive and democratic decision-making processes — taking the other non-democratic alternatives at the time into consideration — this does not mean it is the terminus of the participatory democratic vision. Arendt makes the point that the ideal of the

polis did not have to be tied to a physical location; rather, it is a spatial organization that arises from people acting and speaking together — something that can be realized almost anytime and anywhere. The “space of appearance,” as she called it, “predates and precedes all formal constitution of the public realm and the various forms of government, that is, the various forms in which the public realm can be organized” (Arendt, 1998 [1958], p. 199).

Furthermore, the image of ‘unitary’ or ‘immediate’ democracy leaves the impression that the assembly is the only unit in this form of government. Contrary to this impression, however, most examples that the classics frequently referred to — such as the New England Town Meeting or Ancient Athens — has or had multiple other governing institutions. The New England Town Meeting has its own board of selectmen that makes decisions in between assembly meetings, and has multiple other elected committees and individuals such as clerks, assessors, tax collectors, treasurers, school committees, constables, etc. (Zimmerman, 1999). The government of ancient Athens did not solely consist of the *ekklesia* or the Assembly of the People, which we normally think of as Athens’ direct democracy. It had a range of other governing institutions as well. Among these were the *boulē* – a council of 500 citizens that acted as an executive committee of the assembly – law courts of selected citizens, and a council of magistrates whose task was to prepare the decision-making processes of the assembly and to oversee the implementation of the decisions (Hansen, 1999).

My second objection is that the classics assign undue explanatory power to the large-scale character of modern society. For classical theorists, this scale explains not only the all pervasiveness of bureaucracy, but also why huge populations, vast territories and technocratic rule are inseparable. It endows ‘large scale’ with certain pre-existing qualities – such as organizations with oligarchies of experts – that naturally will distort any attempts to scale up participation. The problem with this view, however, is that it overlooks the contentious nature of scales – and how elites shape scales to expand their realm of domination. Geographers, for example, operate with the notion of a ‘politics of scale.’ Scales do not have a natural or neutral existence; they “do not just exist, waiting to be utilized, but must instead actively be brought into being.” There is “a politics to their construction.” They are “created and subject to conflict in their making”(Herod, 2011, p. 14). Certain groups and individuals have interests in placing certain resources, rights and authorities at specific scales. Far from being a natural phenomenon, capitalist industry and elites have forged the scale of the nation-state. The distinct differentiation of the modern world into the urban, the global and the national scale, is an inner necessity for

capital, and the “impetus for the production of [the national] scale comes from the circulation of capital, more specifically from the dictates of competition between different capitals in the world market” (N. Smith, 2008, p. 189). Far from being the quintessence of ‘large scale’ itself, the modern society to which Weber, Michels, Schumpeter and Dahl refer is a very particular ‘large scale’, endowed with certain qualities that would not necessarily be found on any other ‘large scale.’ Although this counter-point does not invalidate the default position per se, it challenges the essentialist views of ‘large scale’ and the social forms seemingly inexorably tied to it.

3.4 The elasticity of scale and its multiple possible configurations

To move beyond the blatant rejection of the possibility of participatory politics on a large-scale, I choose a point of departure that starts with Barber’s (1984) notion of the ‘elasticity of scale’ and Jessop’s (2010) ‘multiple scalar configurations.’ Barber initially states that scale is a challenge to strong democracy, but he successfully problematizes what size and scale means for democracy. For example, he writes that a relatively small “lynch mob may well constitute a ‘mass’,” whereas “a million of anonymous New Yorkers riding out a blackout or a blizzard together may act like a community of neighbors.” He furthermore describes what he calls *the elasticity of scale* by claiming that “if, in Aristotle’s time, the self-governing polis could extend no further than the territory of a man could traverse in a day (so that all men could attend any assembly), the ultimate permissible size of a polis is now as elastic as technology itself” (Barber, 1984, p. 246). The importance of using the examples of communication is that “once it is understood that the problem of scale is susceptible to technological and institutional melioration and that political communities are human networks rooted in communication, scale becomes a tractable challenge rather than an insuperable barrier” (ibid p. 247). Barber writes that technologies can facilitate direct communication across scale barriers (he uses interactive television as an example since this was before the days of the internet) and thereby surmount some of the problems that previously were associated with scale. “Or, to put it more directly, the problem of scale is the problem of communication, and to deal with the second is to deal with the first” (ibid p. 248). As a case in point, consider Bobbio’s (1987, p. 54) chief argument against large-scale direct democracy: “No one can imagine a state that can be governed via continuous appeals to the people: taking into account the approximate number of laws which are drafted in Italy every year, we would have to call a referendum on average once a day. That is unless we take seriously the science-fiction scenario whereby citizens could transmit their

vote to an electronic brain just by pressing a button in the comfort of their own homes.” Just 30 years after these words were written, they are already an anachronism. Due to the development of new technologies — especially constantly connected smart phones — the scenario that Bobbio writes about is today a possibility. This does not necessarily mean that such a form of government is desirable, but it illustrates the problems of pointing to the inherent limitations associated with larger scales.

Jessop (2010, p. 89) warns against ‘scalar essentialism’ as one potential trap when engaging in scalar thinking. This essentialism occurs when scale “is treated as the primary aspect of all social relations without regard to circumstances,” or “when scale is considered as an ontologically distinct phenomenon that exists independently of its instantiation as a moment of natural and/or social relations.” Above, I have provided some reasons for why I think that the classic view of scale and expert rule illustrates such essentialism. Another similar claim is that large scale is inexorably associated with complexity. This claim disputes that size needs to combine with other factors in order to arrive at increased complexity. As Grønhaug (1978, p. 79) argues “a small society unit may be structurally highly complex (modern Luxemburg), and one of large scale structurally simpler (the Mongol Empire). The Mongol Empire displayed a considerable number of kinship, ethnic, military rank, economic and other roles; but at the same time it produced only a limited range of social person types, each type tending to display a standard combination of a certain number of roles.” The point here is that there are no pre-existing arrangements that naturally arise on larger scales, but in fact a vast number of possible social configurations at different scales. And the ones that are realized depend on historic – social, cultural, political and economic – circumstances. As Jessop (2010, p. 96) puts it: “The number of scales and temporalities of action that can be distinguished is immense, but relatively few (although still many) get explicitly institutionalized. How far this happens depends on the prevailing technologies of power that enable the identification and institutionalization of specific scales and temporalities.”

3. 5 Scaling up vs. scaling out

The question of scaling up participatory democracy is essentially a question of reaching ever more people with a certain participatory arrangement. There are essentially two ways of ‘going to scale.’ It can either be what Snapp and Heong (2003) refer to as ‘scaling-up’ or ‘scaling-out.’ *Scaling-up* is what most people refer to when they write about the challenges of scale. By this

is meant how a certain arrangement can be inflated to encompass a greater number of people and often a wider territory. As Snapp and Heong (2003, p. 67) write: “One definition [of ‘scaling-up’] involves enhanced geographic cover — the scaling up of an intervention or technology to serve a wide area. Another spatially based view involves extrapolating from a small, field or plot-sized, experiment to estimate the impact on a larger area, such as a region [...] A third definition focuses on the growth of a small-sized organization to a large-sized organization.” In terms of scaling up PB this either means that it is implemented in a bigger municipal unit — it can be scaled up from a neighborhood to a whole city; or it means that it is implemented at higher levels of government — as in province/regional/state level, national or even international levels of government. In the second article in this dissertation, I affirm that scale has three dimensions: 1) *group size* (the number of people involved in the participatory process), 2) *territorial extension* (the distances between potential participants) and 3) *power order* (the power dynamics at the governmental level at which the participatory process is implemented). Scaling up describes the movement along these three dimensions. Scaling out, on the other side, refers to the spread of a certain arrangement to a greater number of units on a similar scale. For PB this implies the spread of PBs to a greater number of municipalities.

The literature on participatory development and participatory governance has little to say about scaling up along the dimensions. One reason is that it frequently confuses ‘scaling up’ with ‘scaling out,’ and mixes the issues mentioned above. Another reason is that discussions of scale easily fall into what Jessop (2010, p. 89) calls ‘scalar conflationism’: the failure to distinguish between scale as a spatial phenomenon, phenomena that are conditioned by scale, and non-scalar factors that are involved in shaping phenomena at specific scales. In a report on community-driven development, for example, Binswanger and Aiyar (2003) summarize the main obstacles to ‘scaling up’ participation as follows: the lack of cost-effective, carefully designed, pre-tested scaling-up logistics; and a social environment riven by inequalities, conflicts and class divisions that make participation difficult. Logistics, however, is not a challenge that is uniquely associated with large scale, but rather is conditioned by the scale at which it is implemented. Cost-effectiveness, careful design, and learning from failures are general challenges regardless of scale. Social inequality and class division should properly be understood as non-scalar factors that influence the ability to achieve participatory ideals at any level. One of the contributions of this thesis is to try to clarify the challenges of scaling-up – to separate them from scaling-out and avoid the scalar conflationism which often mars such discussions.

As I show in the empirical background section, scaling-up and scaling-out are both found in the world of PB. The most notable example of the scaling-out of PB is Peru, which adopted a law that mandated that all municipalities conduct their own PB (Goldfrank, 2006; McNulty, 2012). The rapid worldwide diffusion of PB after the turn of the century also fits into this category (Oliveira, 2017; Sintomer et al., 2013). There are fewer examples of the scaling-up of PB. One can argue that PB was up-scaled already at its inception, as it was introduced in Porto Alegre — a city with more than 1.2 million inhabitants, and hence not a typical example of the ‘primary’ or ‘immediate’ democracy of the classics. It has also been introduced on a city-wide level in even bigger cities. The largest city to implement PB was São Paulo in Brazil, and more recently Paris has adopted a PB project. There is only one example of a nation-wide PB, which is Portugal. Although it might seem bold to experiment with PB at the national level, this experiment gives only €3 million to the process and is quite small in nature. The most notable example of upscaled PB is therefore my case, the state PB in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil that has been going on in one form or another since approximately 1998.

Although the scaling up and the scaling out of participatory democracy appear similar, they pose very different questions. Scaling out deals with topics found in the literatures on policy diffusion, transfer and translation. Among these are mechanisms, such as learning, competition, coercion or imitation, through which local reforms such as PBs diffuse (Shipan & Volden, 2008; Simmons, Dobbin, & Garrett, 2006), the structural forces underlying the transfer of PB such as globalization, legitimacy crises, and ideological changes (Peck & Theodore, 2015), or how the PB concept and implementation is altered as it moves from one place to another (Mukhtarov, 2014; Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008; Wæraas & Agger Nielsen, 2015). Some of the questions are: Who is driving the diffusion of PB and for what reasons (Oliveira, 2017)? What happens with PBs in different contexts and which factors work best for their implementation (Avritzer, 2009b; Goldfrank, 2011; Wampler, 2007)? How does PB look in different places inside and outside of Brazil and what explains the variation (Avritzer & Vaz, 2014; Cabannes, 2004; Sintomer et al., 2008)? Scaling up, on the other hand, deals with the classic issues of communication, organization and collective action, as well as reform of existing political and economic structures, or the process of constructing alternatives to them.

3.6 *Two forms of scaling up — narrowing down the analysis*

The participatory democratic tradition is not unitary. There are highly disparate intellectual views, forms of organization and social and political demands within the tradition (Wright, 2010, section III). It contains at least two different versions of scaling up. One version focuses on creating participatory institutions outside of the state — through workplace committees, neighborhood assemblies or intentional communities — and uniting them through network or confederal structures (see for example Arendt, 2006 [1965]; Bookchin, 2015). Such spaces are often referred to as ‘invented’ (Miraftab & Wills, 2005) and the scaling up strategy as ‘organic’ (Mansuri & Rao, 2013). The other version aims at transforming state institutions from within, by opening up ever more arenas of policy-making and the exercise of state power to the population through participatory spaces (see for example Harnecker, 2015; Teixeira, 2013; Wainwright, 2003; Williams, 2008). The notion of scaling-up in this line of thinking consists of initiating and expanding participatory spaces to ever more areas and levels of government. Such spaces are often referred to as ‘invited’ (Cornwall, 2004) and the scaling up strategy as ‘induced’ (Mansuri & Rao, 2013).

There are overlaps between the invented/invited spaces and organic/induced scaling strategies. The experiment of Italo and his colleagues, for example, bases itself on spaces where the state *invites* the citizens to participate and decide over budget funds. However, the state PB has a long history, in which civil society organizations and municipal governments interactively created participatory spaces and negotiated what they would do. Even though state PB in Rio Grande do Sul was induced by the governor, it was originally lifted to the state level by a coalition of movement organizations —landless peasants, rural and industrial workers, and feminist and communitarian organizations — as well as the Workers’ Party in the early 2000s.

Nonetheless, the state PB project is based on a strategy of transforming the state from within. This narrows down the scope of my analysis to challenges posed by the second version – the ‘invited’ and ‘induced’ strategy – of scaling up participatory democracy. Some of these challenges, however, are general. The challenges of organizing a participatory process with millions of people spread across a large territory overlap whether the strategy is ‘induced’ or ‘organic.’ Other challenges are distinct and incomparable. One of the main challenges of the induced strategy is how to balance the interests represented through the state with the wish to democratize the state’s institutions through participatory forums. Such interests can be political

and judicial institutions with constitutional claims to specific powers, administrative organs that possess significant resources to execute policies, non-governmental organizations with a significant say over public priorities such as deliberative and representative councils, arenas for negotiations, political networks etc.

4. Previous research

Few empirical or conceptual studies address how to scale up participatory experiments like PB. Most studies that conceptualize scale and participation have concentrated on Rio Grande do Sul's PB (Faria, 2005, 2006; Goldfrank & Schneider, 2002, 2006; Haikin, Sjoberg, & Mellon, 2017; Sobottka & Streck, 2014; Streck, Eggert, & Sobottka, 2005), and the national policy conferences at the federal level in Brazil (Avritzer & Ramos, 2016; Faria, Silva, & Lins, 2012; Pogrebinschi, 2013b; Pogrebinschi & Ryan, 2017; Pogrebinschi & Samuels, 2014). One reason why there are not more such studies is that there have been relatively few attempts, outside of Brazil, to scale up new participatory institutions. Brazil is one of a small number of countries that have moved such institutions beyond the local level — to the state and federal levels.

There are some recurring scale-topics in this literature. One is an emphasis on the *possibility* of large-scale participation. Both Pogrebinschi (2013b) and Goldfrank and Schneider (2002) use these experiments as examples of the viability of participatory democratic innovations in the modern world. Goldfrank and Schneider (2002, p. 3) write that the very existence of state PB should surprise theorists of democracy who postulate that participation is impossible on the large scale. Pogrebinschi (2013b) argues that the experience of Brazil's national policy conferences shows that participation is scalable up to even the national level and can be done without forfeiting deliberation. The conferences demonstrate how one can organize a country-wide system of citizen deliberations on national policy issues, by both accommodating direct participation at the municipal level and the election of delegates at the state and federal levels who weigh, merge and consolidate without infringing on the lower level proposals. With Samuels and Ryan in particular (Pogrebinschi & Ryan, 2017; Pogrebinschi & Samuels, 2014) she argues that participants in these conferences were also given a vote at the federal level by being included in the strategy documents of the various ministries. This claim is debated, however, and other researchers argue that, whereas the outcome of the policy conferences may have resulted in policies in low-profile secretaries, the final decision-making on the most prestigious policy areas was done by the government itself (Baiocchi, Braathen, & Teixeira, 2013; Bruera, 2015a).

Another topic in this literature is whether there is an *optimal size* for participation. Avritzer and Ramos (2016) argue that the intermediate level — e.g. medium-sized cities and the state level — works best for participatory institutions in Brazil. In small towns and cities, the local

government rather than civil society organizations tends to control the participatory apparatus. The state, on the other hand, is sufficiently close enough to ordinary citizens to allow for diversity of participation and, at the same time, to address policy issues that are of importance to the citizens. This helps the quality of deliberations and therefore seems to be an appropriate level for participation. This follows from previous work on municipal PBs done by Avritzer (2006). He finds that PBs seem to work better in large and even metropolitan areas compared to small towns and cities, even though participation rates may be higher in smaller units. The mechanism that helps PBs in large cities is that metropolitan areas have a more active public life at the neighborhood level. Large municipalities also tend to have strong civil society associations that can mobilize against municipal administrations and mayors who might wish to weaken the vote aspect of the citizen participation (Wampler, 2007).

The literature also emphasizes how the PB underwent *design alterations* as it scaled up to the state level. One of the adaptations was to reduce the frequency of meetings. Instead of two meetings per district as in Porto Alegre, it was only one meeting per municipality and district in Rio Grande do Sul, and also fewer representative organs (Goldfrank & Schneider, 2002, p. 4). According to Faria (2005, pp. 201-2014), a consequence of this was that information sharing between participants decreased. A survey of PB delegates conducted by Faria, showed that 1/3rd of the delegates reported that the population had difficulty in understanding the issues at the state level. Faria implies that this was because participants had less time/fewer opportunities to absorb information about the issues. Another design alteration involved an extra layer of representation. Regional delegates were elected at the municipal assemblies, and the delegates in turn elected representatives to the state level (Goldfrank & Schneider, 2002, p. 4). For Faria (2005, pp. 204-206) this meant a further distance between the grassroots and its representatives in the PB process. She labels the state representatives a ‘strong public’, since they had most of the power to elaborate the budget, and describes participants at the municipal level as a ‘weak public.’ A third design alteration that occurred over time at the state level, was the use of an offline and online budget referendum to decide the allocation of budget resources. The use of the online tools is not unique to the state PB, but also used in many municipal PBs. What was new, however, was that the organizers of the state PB separated budget discussions (that took place in assemblies and delegates meetings) from the budget vote (the offline and online vote). This separation – and especially the use of online voting – led to higher turnout than what would most likely otherwise have been the case (Haikin et al., 2017). On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of the voters (around 87.5 per cent) had not participated in any PB

assemblies or meetings before the vote, and voters often did not hear about the PB-process until the moment they actually voted (ibid p. 283). Analysis of the online voters also showed that this tool increased turnout among a very particular group of citizens, specifically those who were young, male and had higher education (Mellon, Peixoto, & Sjoberg, 2017; Spada, Mellon, Peixoto, & Sjoberg, 2016).

This is related to a fourth theme in the literature – that the increase in scale *aggravates and creates challenges* to organizing a well-functioning participatory process. These challenges include a lack of information or distance between participants and delegates. According to Sobottka and Streck (2014, p. 166), the territorial expansion of the process meant that the topics for discussion became more distant from people’s everyday lives. Local budgets deal with local issues such as street paving, running water and the regularization of land ownership, whereas the state budget deals with issues such as the development of a whole municipality, support schemes to family agriculture, or the construction of a hospital to serve the entire region. Many citizens consider these topics too complicated. Another aspect of territorial expansion is that people have to travel greater distances to come to meetings. This is costly and time-consuming, and might favor public employees who get time off from work and can count on transportation provided by their employers (ibid p. 176). Goldfrank and Schneider (2002) see resistance from the political opposition as the greatest obstacle to the realization of PB at the state level. They point out how PB in Porto Alegre and other municipalities developed beneath the radar of the right-wing opposition. In Porto Alegre, the opposition had less political support and was less united. At the state level, however, the opposition was more cohesive. In addition, it was terrified that the popularity of PB could keep the Workers’ Party in power for a very long time. The result was that they managed to partly sabotage and restrain the PB from acquiring the seminal role that it had in Porto Alegre. Faria (2005, pp. 214-214) also emphasizes how the size and autonomy of the bureaucratic agencies at the state level give them more power than in a municipality. She shows how bureaucrats involved themselves in the PB process to get people to choose their programs, which gave the bureaucracy a disproportionate amount of influence over the budget outcome. At the same time, however, the participatory process restricted the bureaucracy. They could not run their affairs autonomously since they needed to convince the public that their programs were important.

There is a much larger literature on *scaling out* of PB, i.e. the spread of PB inside and outside Brazil. This stems from the fact that PB is more scaled out than up. Scaling-out studies deal

with the reasons for the spread of municipal PBs (Goldfrank, 2012; Oliveira, 2017; Peck & Theodore, 2015), the huge variations in the outlook of these PBs (Dias, 2014; Ganuza, Baiocchi, & Summers, 2016; Gilman, 2016; McNulty, 2012; Sintomer, Röcke, & Herzberg, 2016), and what kind of local political, social and economic conditions are favorable for their implementation (Avritzer & Vaz, 2014; Goldfrank, 2011; Wampler, 2007). My fourth paper in this dissertation (“Translation and institutional change: What happened when participatory budgeting came to the Nordic countries?”) deals with scaling-out of PB, and the topic of *translation*. This topic has already been introduced into the PB-literature by Baiocchi (2015) and Ganuza et al. (2016), but what I have done in my paper is to develop the translation-perspective even further and use analytical tools found in what is called ‘Scandinavian institutionalism.’

Scaling-out studies are nevertheless relevant to understand the process of scaling-up, even though they deal, strictly speaking, with different phenomena. When PB is scaled up to the state level, it is also *spread* – or at least attempted to be spread – to hundreds of municipalities and state agencies. How these units respond to, interpret and implement these practices are of major relevance to the realization of the core principles of PB. At this point, the previous work of Montecinos (2009) is relevant. He points out that when participatory processes are rapidly spread on a massive scale they are often subordinated to traditional elites and representative institutions. His main argument derives from the PB experience in Peru, where many mayors and local administrations were uninterested in PB even though they were required to conduct PB processes by national decree. Local leaders, for example, captured funds set aside for PB, and the politicians and technical staff set the process agenda. In addition, local governments often lacked the technical competence to execute the investments. Similarly, Mansuri and Rao (2013, p. 98) show that positive outcomes from large-scale government induced projects easily can be captured by local elites, or end up as what they call ‘shallow interventions’. The latter can result if local agents are not ready to confront existing power structures and change their political culture.

I do not depart in any significant sense from these studies. Instead, I try to synthesize them and incorporate their main findings into my discussion. On a theoretical level, my contribution is to *systematize* the discussion of challenges to scale up participatory democracy. I use several of the elements found in this literature, but nonetheless lift them into a more coherent framework. From an empirical perspective, my articles – taken together – contribute a more comprehensive

and solid study of Rio Grande do Sul's state PB, in that they don't focus solely on one period or one aspect of the PB process as is the case with previous studies.

5. Background and cases

5.1 A large, relatively affluent, unevenly developed, class divided and indebted state

Rio Grande do Sul is Brazil's southernmost state, bordering with Argentina and Uruguay in the west and south. It was the fifth most populous state in Brazil in 2014 with around 11.2 million inhabitants. In 2000 it had 10.2 million inhabitants. The number of potential participants in the state's PB is therefore much higher than the typical city experiments with PB. Of all PBs in Brazil up to 2012, only 2 per cent had occurred in cities with more than one million inhabitants, and nearly 60 per cent had occurred in municipalities with less than 50,000 inhabitants (Fedozzi & Lima, 2014, p. 159). Since everybody above 16 years of age can vote in Rio Grande do Sul's PB, this meant that 6.8 million citizens were eligible to participate in 2000, rising to 8.1 million in 2014.

Rio Grande do Sul's population lives in 497 municipalities scattered over a vast territory of almost 282,000 square kilometers. This makes the state the ninth largest in Brazil. Even though PB has been attempted in megacities like São Paulo with an even larger population than Rio Grande do Sul (Lavalle, Acharya, & Houtzager, 2005), no single PB has ever encompassed a greater territory than this state. The size of its territory is comparable to Ecuador or the Philippines. In practice, this means that the state has more space to govern, and the distances between the various administrative centers are long. For participants this means that they have to spend many hours to reach a regional meeting, and to travel by airplane or perhaps be away for several days to attend a meeting in the capital. However, the population is not scattered evenly across the territory, but largely concentrated in the urbanized regions of the north-east. According to the state's Secretary of Planning, 85.1 % of the population lives in urban areas, and even in the most rural region 53.6 per cent live in urban areas (Seplag, 2017). This relative proximity between people may ease the organizational strains on, for example, municipal and regional assemblies.

Rio Grande do Sul makes a huge contribution to Brazil's economy as a whole and is one of the states with the highest GDP. Although its GDP cannot be compared to rich, Northern countries — in European terms it would have the same GDP as Hungary — it still has the 5th highest GDP of all of Brazil's states (357.8 billion reais in 2014) and the 6th highest GDP per capita (31,927 reais in 2014) (Seplag, 2017). This is one reason why Rio Grande do Sul also scores

high on social indicators. It has the second lowest infant mortality rate in Brazil, and the third longest life expectancy. Ninety-five per cent of its population know how to read or write fairly well (Seplag, 2017), while 61.3 percent of them belong to a household where at least one person has internet access, which is slightly more than the average in Brazil (IBGE, 2015). These two indicators are especially relevant for this study, since literacy is a prerequisite for understanding the materials used in the PB process, and internet access is important to be able to vote online – as has been possible in the later years of Rio Grande do Sul’s PB.

Like the rest of Brazil, however, disparities in wealth are considerable. The state scored .465 on the Gini coefficient in 2013, which gives it an inequality level similar to other Latin American countries like Bolivia and Ecuador. These class divisions are especially relevant for a process like PB, because they cause unequal access to education or the internet, which again affects people’s opportunity to influence political decision-making. The state is also unevenly developed. Four of the state’s 28 administrative regions produce more than 50 per cent of the state’s gross added value, and only the metropolitan area around the state capital Porto Alegre has a ‘very high’ level of human development. Fourteen of the 28 regions ranked ‘medium’ on the same index in 2010. Life expectancy varies greatly. It is over 75 years in the richest regions and less than 70 years in the poorest regions. Similarly, infant mortality rates, and education and income levels vary between the richest and poorest regions (Seplag, 2017). Since its inception, Rio Grande do Sul’s PB has been tuned to alleviate these inequalities, and they provide an important context for its redistributive principles.

Even though Rio Grande do Sul has one of the biggest economies among the states, it is also the most indebted government in Brazil. In 2014, it had a debt of 55 billion reais, which was more than twice its annual income. The debt has accumulated from administrations dating back to the 1950s (Borowski, 2012), and has been aggravated by new index regulations and pension commitments (Caldas, Stein, Colombo, Bartels, & Sulzbach, 2015). In both the government periods I have studied the state had negative margins for investments — which means that the government had to borrow money to fulfill its PB commitments (Santos, 2016).

5.2 Brazil’s recent political history

Rio Grande do Sul’s PB has to be understood in light of Brazil’s recent political history. Since the late 1980s, the country has been at the epicenter of a wave of new participatory institutions

that have swept across Latin America (Avritzer, 2009a; Cameron, Hershberg, & Sharpe, 2012; Pogrebinschi, 2013a). PB is one part of this wave, but it also includes a raft of other institutions such as participatory councils (Barth, 2006; Touchton, Sugiyama, & Wampler, 2017) and policy conferences (Pogrebinschi, 2013b). According to Cornwall and Shankland (2013, pp. 311-313), there are a four main reasons why this participatory wave has been so strong in Brazil. One is Brazil's experience with the military dictatorship. The denial of civil and political rights in this period produced a 'burst of social energy' once the dictatorship was dismantled in 1985. This found expression in a growth in associational life and social mobilization. A second reason was that the 1988 constitution guaranteed Brazilian citizens a 'right to participate' in state affairs, and mandated that all state institutions engage citizens in their governance through participatory spaces. A third reason was the role that social movements played in animating these new institutions. They shared the participatory vision of the constitution, and managed to draw marginalized groups into these spaces. A fourth important reason was that the Workers' Party (PT) and its associated movements provided an ideological thread that connected these institutions and provided them with a political-social ethos. In contrast to other left-wing parties at the time, the PT was founded on a rejection of the notion of a cadre organization. Internally, it was built on a conglomerate of political factions, social movements and trade unions. A commonality among the many factions in the PT was a belief in electoral participation as a way to get into positions that made it possible to redistribute public funds, and a vision of a socialist system based on people's councils (Abers, 2000, pp. 47-52). The PT piloted and expanded many of Brazil's participatory institutions the late 1980s, and continued its sponsorship until this process culminated in an attempt to create a 'national system of social participation' in 2014.

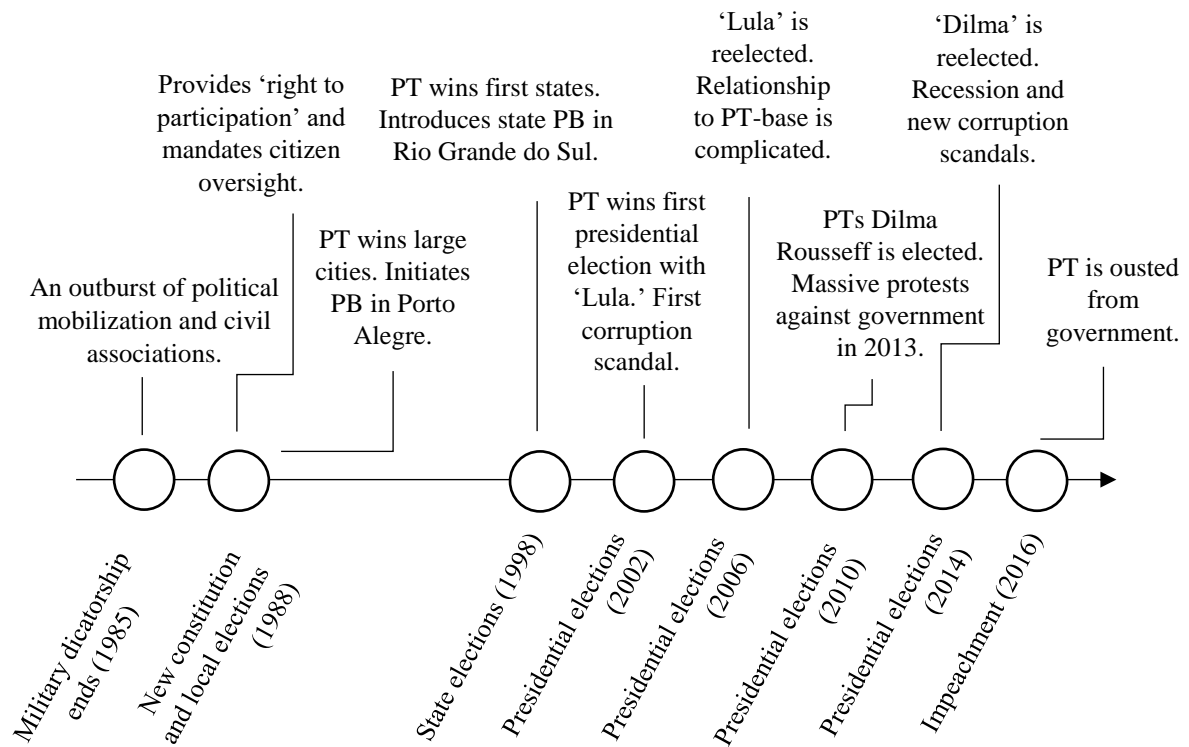


Figure 1: Timeline of central political events in Brazil 1985-2016.

During the 1990s and early 2000s the Workers' Party championed what it called the '*petista* way of governing,' which was based on a combination of redistribution, transparent government and public participation (Baiocchi et al., 2013; Goldfrank & Wampler, 2008). The economic policy orientation of the PT at this time can be described as neo- or '*renewed developmentalism*. It discarded privatization and deregulation, and believed that state interventions were necessary to boost international competitiveness, national innovation and achieve full employment (Hochstetler & Montero, 2013). The radical base of the PT hoped that 'Lula' – who was elected president in 2002 – would advance '*petismo*' at the national level. Instead, the Lula- and subsequent PT-governments focused on gradual reforms for the poor and conservative pacts with the rich – often called '*Lulismo*' (Singer, 2012). The party's advocacy of socialist neo-developmentalism of the 1990s was replaced by a 'liberal neo-developmentalism' under Lula. The overall goal was macroeconomic stability instead of full employment. Although the Lula- and subsequent Rousseff-governments did not eschew privatization and deregulation categorically, they nonetheless steadily increased the minimum wage, used state funds to target high employment sectors, and actively used state-owned firms to implement welfare programs (Ban, 2013). The concept of 'participation,' however, was

diluted at the federal level (Baiocchi et al., 2013, pp. 236-237). PB was a central piece of the PT program before ‘Lula’ assumed the presidency in 2003, but it was quickly discarded as unrealistic at the federal level by the inner circles of the government (Bruera, 2012, pp. 205-210). Neo-corporatist councils that included civil society organizations, government agencies, business interests and trade unions, became the dominant form of participation (Bruera, 2015a; Teixeira, 2013, chapter 3) – even though the government also organized processes of mass participation through policy conferences (Pogrebinschi, 2013b). To some extent social movements and civil organization were also demobilized as the PT gave their leaders jobs in the state apparatus, which meant that their activities began to revolve around administrative tasks instead of pressure and protests (Bruera, 2015b). Corruption scandals that involved central cabinet members from the Workers’ Party such as the ‘*Mensalão*’ – the vote-buying scheme in the Federal congress exposed in 2005 – also alienated some of the leftist supporters of the PT.

This context is important in order to understand the differences between the early PB in Porto Alegre and the state PB in Rio Grande do Sul from 1999-2002, on the one hand, and the state PB under the Genro government on the other. The PB in Porto Alegre and the first state PB were expressions of ‘*petismo*.’ Olívio Dutra, who was the governor that instituted PB at the state level in 1999, was also the Mayor of Porto Alegre when it first implemented PB at the municipal level in 1989. Under both these administrations, PB was seen as a way to achieve redistribution of the state’s resources to the poorest segments, and to give power to ordinary citizens, social movements and civil organizations. The neo-developmentalism under the Dutra-government at the state level resulted in a halt to privatization schemes, and an attempt to raise revenues for the PB’s interventions through closing holes in the tax net and renegotiating interest payments with the federal government (Schneider, 2006, p. 412). Dutra lost the elections in 2002 and it took almost ten years before the PT came into state government again in Rio Grande do Sul. The approach of the Genro-government from 2011-2014 was more akin to ‘*Lulismo*’. Its participatory endeavors sought to create a pact where all elements of Rio Grande do Sul’s society – rich and poor – would develop the state together (Unidade, 2010). Neo-corporatist councils played a central role in its participatory system, and mass participation through PB was put on a par with other channels of engagement. The more complicated relationship between the Workers’ Party and social movements meant that different means were sought to include the movements in political processes, and new channels – like digital participation – were established to encompass new forms of social activism that came about after the ‘old’ activists had become part of the government. The Genro-government nonetheless

followed a neo-developmental agenda, with a strong focus on increasing state investments and facilitating federal growth programs (Secom, 2014).

5.3 The PB in Rio Grande do Sul's capital

CASE 1: PORTO ALEGRE (1989-)

Name in Portuguese: *Orçamento Participativo (OP)*

Population: 1,263,403 (1991) - 1,409,351 (2010)

Territory: 496.827 km²

Time of introduction of PB: 1989

Political context: Leftist Workers' Party (PT) dominated governing coalition (1988-2004), various Center-Right coalitions (2004-)

PB-funds: Up to 100% of total investments and about 10% of total funds (budgeted funds and not real/executed investments)

Number of participants: Minimum 630 (1990), maximum 17,240 (2002)

My data: Secondary sources (previous case studies, comparative analyses) and surveys of delegates (2003, 2009)

Even though Brazil's participatory wave embraced the whole country, there are some reasons why PB developed *first* in Rio Grande do Sul. According to (Avritzer, 2006, pp. 624-625), the state's relatively egalitarian culture and Porto Alegre's strong civic associations made it more susceptible to developing PB than other places. The differences between civic associations in Porto Alegre and other Brazilian cities were that in the former they organized a large share of the population, had formal structures (membership fees, written minutes and election of leaders), and an umbrella organization that demanded participation in discussions of budget issues. They were thus able to increase their brokerage power in the city's political system (Avritzer, 2009b, p. 34). Many of the activists in these associations came from the Workers' Party. It was the combination of the party's willingness to delegate power, and the neighborhood associations' desire for, and ability to make use of, this power, that led to the introduction of PB in 1989 (Abers, 2000; Baiocchi, 2005).

Through the PB, all citizens were invited to participate directly in allocating the municipality's investment funds. Typical investments ranged from connecting neighborhoods to the running water network, paving roads, upgrading sanitation systems, renovating schools, or establishing

a health clinic, computer lab or kindergarten. The process contained elements of direct participation as well as representation (as shown in Figure 2). The direct element consisted of two rounds of open assemblies in the city districts where residents could come forth with proposals on what kind of projects or services the budget money should be spent on. In these assemblies the participants also voted on which investment areas they wanted to prioritize and they elected people to represent them at the city level. A similar process was held for different thematic areas such as education, health, sanitation, and transportation. The representative element consisted of elected delegates who determined whether local proposals were feasible or not based on such criteria as available resources, the type of demands in other districts and thematic areas, and the technical requirements of public works and services. Also elected was a budget council whose delegates, with the help of city officials, drew up a complete investment proposition based on the local proposals and priorities. Importantly, the citizen delegates and councilors also decided the rules of the process. The participatory budget never formally supplanted representative political institutions in Porto Alegre, but it undermined the authority of the local legislative assembly. Although the result of the budget council's work was delivered for approval in the municipal chamber at the end of the cycle, the chamber members rarely proposed changes to it. One of the reasons for this was that the participatory budget was perceived as more transparent and just than the clientelist system that had previously dominated the city's politics. The opposition was also weakly organized and was not able to veto the outcomes of the budget process (Abers, 2000; Baiocchi, 2005; Goldfrank, 2011; Gret & Sintomer, 2005).

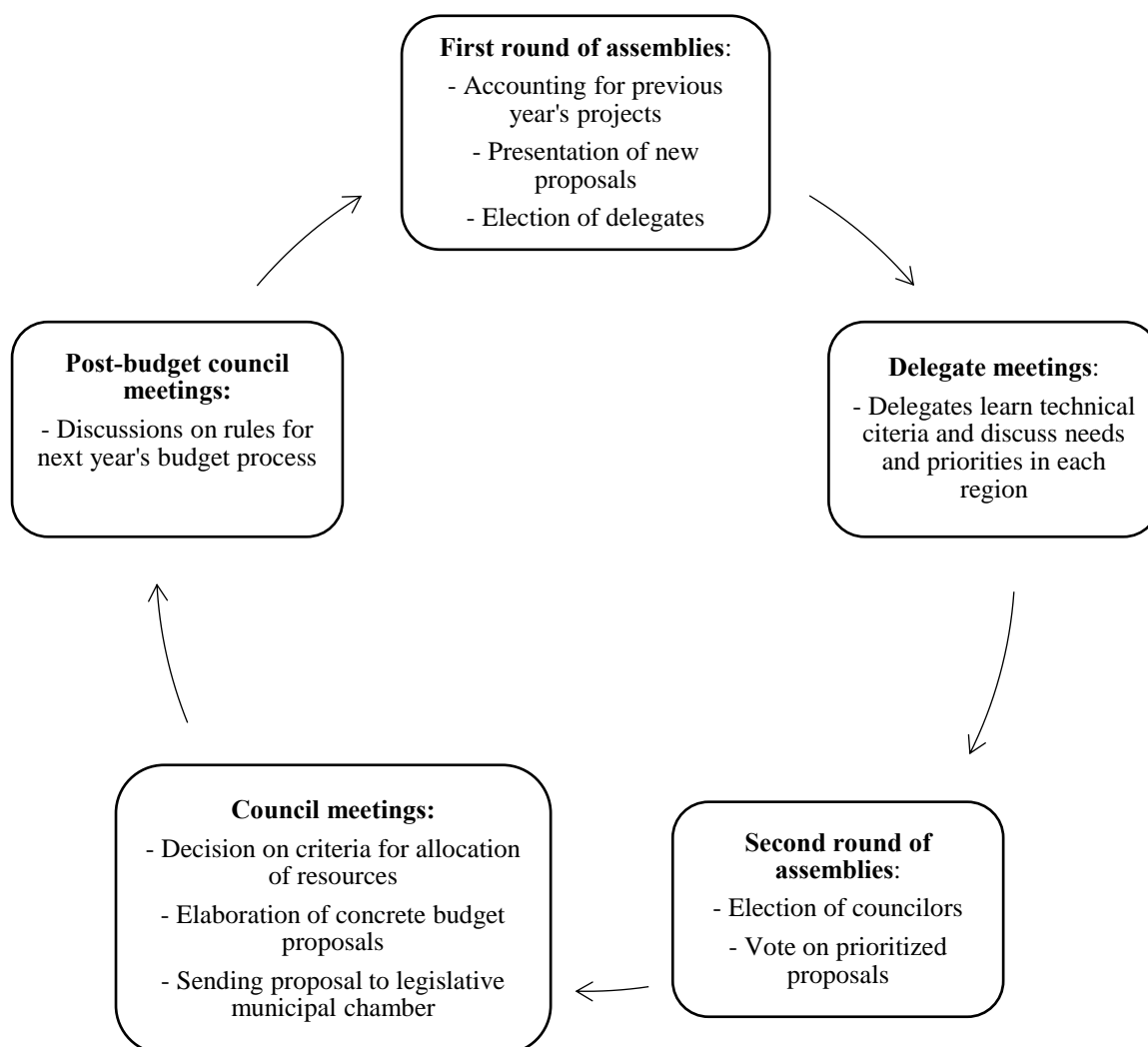


Figure 2: Decision-making cycle in Porto Alegre’s PB-process (without separating district and thematic assemblies). Adapted from Baiocchi (2005, p. 75).

The PB altered municipal life in Porto Alegre. It improved government transparency and reduced corruption (Goldfrank, 2011, pp. 231-237), and redirected public resources to working-class neighborhoods and marginalized sections of the population (Marquetti, 2008). The participants were not primarily males with high social and cultural capital – as is often found in participatory processes in richer countries (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004) – but came from marginalized parts of the population that used to be disengaged from politics. Surveys show that the majority of them were women with lower incomes and low levels of education (Fedozzi et al., 2013). Due to the scale of the process and its outcomes, the ‘Porto Alegre-model’ quickly received worldwide attention. Development agencies such as the U.N. and the World Bank

adopted it as an example of best practice in urban governance. The global social movement gathering known as the ‘World Social Forum’, first hosted by the city of Porto Alegre, made it known on the international Left. In academia it has been widely studied and disseminated as one of only a few examples of participatory democracy, and been described in positive terms as a ‘redistributive democracy’ (de Sousa Santos, 1998), a case of ‘empowered participatory governance’ (Fung & Wright, 2003a), a type of ‘empowered participatory regime,’ (Baiocchi, 2005) and even a ‘real utopia’ (Wright, 2010). The literature on Porto Alegre has been criticized for being idealistic and sometimes exaggerating the participatory and deliberative qualities of the process (Junge, 2012, p. 421), but most observers tend to agree that it “set in motion new forms of civic participation and citizen identity, promoted government transparency and accountability, and benefited low-income neighborhoods through the transfer of capital investments funding” (ibid p. 408). It is therefore an important reference point in contemporary discussions of participatory democracy, and serves as a basis of comparison in the first article of this dissertation.

5.4 From the city to the state

CASE 2: RIO GRANDE DO SUL (1999-2002)

Name in Portuguese: *Orçamento Participativo Estadual (OP-RS)*

Population: 10.187,798 (2000)

Territory: 281.737,888 km²

Political context: Leftist coalition led by the Workers’ Party (PT), minority in state legislative assembly

PB-funds: 100% of investments, 7.48% of total expenses (budgeted funds and not real/executed investments)

Number of participants: Minimum 179,209 (1999), maximum 378,340 (2002)

My data: Secondary sources (previous case-studies), archival data, surveys of participants and delegates

In 1998, the Workers’ Party headed a coalition of left-wing parties in the gubernatorial elections. They won and took over the state government the following year. One of the main promises of the coalition was to open up for social movements to influence the government’s policies, and to create spaces where citizens could plan and decide on the budget (Frente Popular, 1998). A central reason for doing so was to redistribute public funds to the poorest

sectors of the population. The newly elected governor, Olívio Dutra, was mayor in Porto Alegre during the establishment of PB in 1989, and his government took its model for participation from the state capital.

As in Porto Alegre, the popular assembly became the basis of the state's PB. The government invited citizens to participate in both municipal and regional assemblies in order to debate and vote on social policies, infrastructure and economic development projects. Municipal assemblies mainly discussed local demands, but also voted on regional and state-wide issues. Regional assemblies had a greater emphasis on services and public works that affected two or more municipalities, and they provided a list of policies and projects that the local assemblies could choose from. Both sets of assemblies elected delegates to the regional level, and these delegates in turn elected councilors for the whole state. These representatives had an important task in compiling and prioritizing all the local and regional budget proposals. They negotiated with both the government and other delegates in order to draw up a list of priorities. In addition they discussed and modified the rules of the process each year (Faria, 2005). The role of the state government was then to make an investment and service plan based on the delegates' work. This plan included a distribution formula which directed investment towards the poorest regions in Rio Grande do Sul (Goldfrank & Schneider, 2002). Finally, the governor sent the plan to the state's legislative assembly, where the elected politicians debated it and took a vote. Once it had passed there it was sent back to the delegates and councilors again, who used the document to monitor the execution of the budget (see Figure 3 for a model of the decision-making cycle of the Dutra-governments' PB).

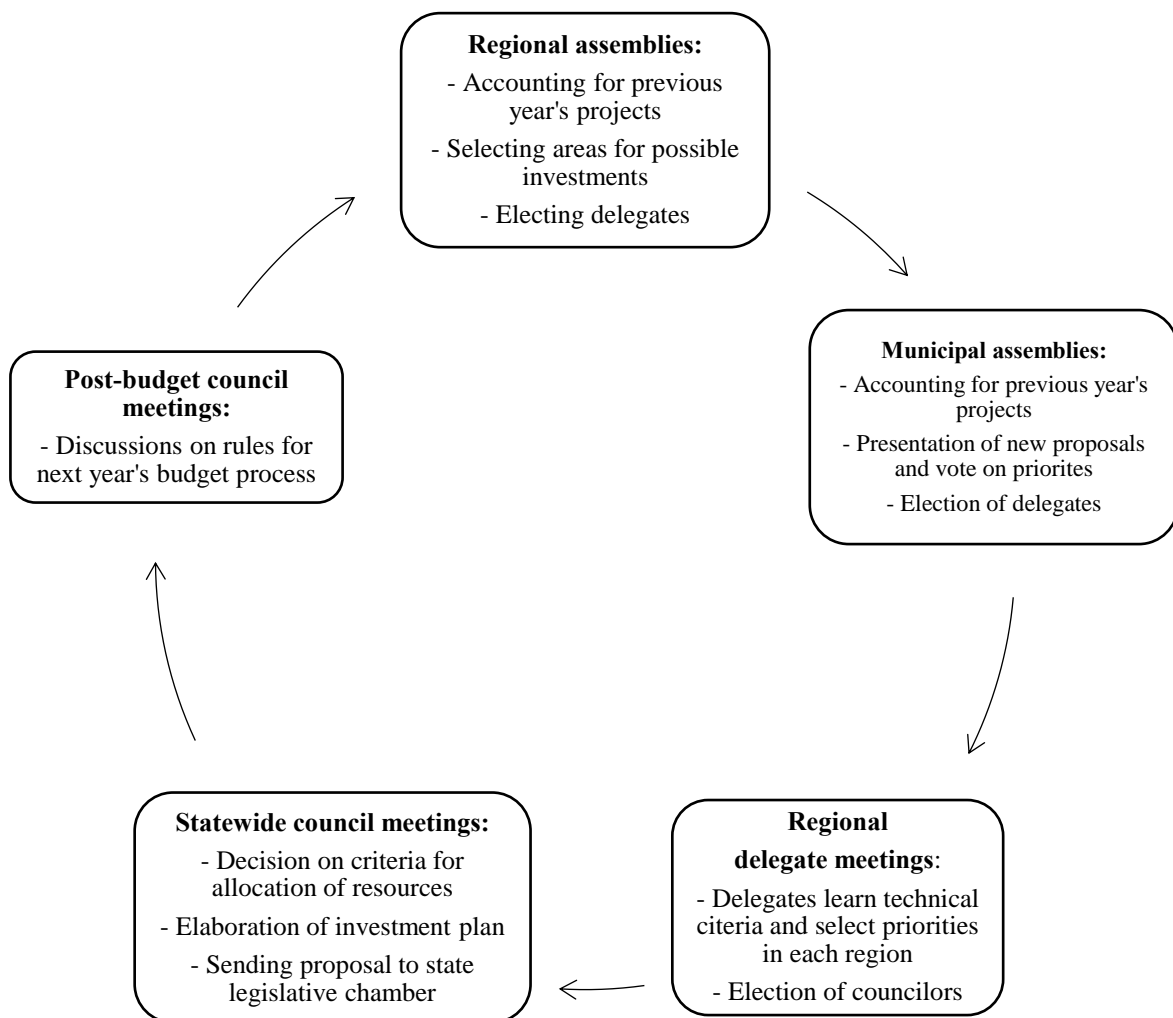


Figure 3: Decision-making cycle in Rio Grande do Sul's state PB under the Dutra-government (1999-2002)

Although the state government modelled its version of PB on the local PB in Porto Alegre, it was notably different in some aspects. In Porto Alegre the local government invited the citizens to two rounds of open assemblies. The first round discussed the previous year's budget, came up with new proposals and elected delegates. The second round discussed the delegates' work and voted on priorities. At the state level, there was just one round. Furthermore, two levels of representation were created to tie all the regions in the state together (regional and state-wide level), as opposed to only one level in Porto Alegre (city-wide level). Another important difference between PB in Porto Alegre and the state, was the prior existence of an organization, with branches in every region of Rio Grande do Sul, who already oversaw a participatory

process. These were Regional Development Councils (COREDEs) who were given a certain amount of money to use in a state-wide referendum called *Consulta Popular* (Popular Consultation). Unlike the PB initiated by the new Popular Front government, these councils did not hold open assemblies but rather decided the proposals that the public could vote on themselves. The Left perceived these councils to be a political instrument for the right-wing, as they typically consisted of state and federal deputies, mayors, city council presidents, representatives from universities, unions and organized civil society with ties to the Right (Goldfrank & Schneider, 2006, pp. 11-12). The government ignored these councils and created forums where government supporters, social movements as well as unorganized citizens could participate. In the words of Goldfrank and Schneider, the PB “provided a direct link in between the executive and the population, bypassing both the legislative branch, where the [Workers’ Party] again was a minority, and those preexisting organizations favored by prior administrations” (ibid p. 13).

The PB provoked an intense reaction from both the parliamentary opposition and the COREDEs. The latter did not want to have anything to do with the participatory budget and effectively boycotted the government. To counter the legitimacy of the participatory budget, the Right-wing in the legislative assembly established a series of public hearings called the *Democratic Forum* where various opposition groups and institutions criticized the PB proposal. A former state governor sued the Popular Front government for improper use of funds. This resulted in a court order that halted the government’s plans to run the participatory process for almost one year (a coalition of social movements instead organized the PB process until another court reversed the order). It also led to attacks in the media, which presented the participatory budget as an illegal, parallel power to the democratic state, which the Workers’ Party was using to undermine and eventually supplant legal representative institutions (Faria, 2005; Goldfrank & Schneider, 2006). It was not possible to continue the PB amidst these reactions, and the government made several concessions to be able to continue the process. The COREDEs, for example, got a quota of 25 per cent of the councilors in the state-wide PB-council. In addition, the COREDEs were able to restrict the scope of the municipal assemblies’ decision-making powers through regional assemblies that provided guidelines for local discussions. Finally, the government had to execute projects selected in the previous government’s *Consulta Popular*. The conflict, however, did not discourage participation. The number of people attending the assemblies rose through the government’s term of office, to a peak of 378,340 in the third year of government. This amounted to 6 per cent of the electorate. The PB-rules automatically

allocated more funding to poorer regions in the state. Municipalities that lacked basic services in health and education received more investments than relatively affluent municipalities. The number of participants in the municipal assemblies also influenced the allocation of the funds. Since social movements connected to the Workers' Party were best organized and most positive about the process, municipalities with a high number of members from the governing party got more resources than others (Goldfrank & Schneider, 2002, p. 19).

Unlike Porto Alegre, where the popularity of the PB partly explains why the Workers' Party got re-elected for four consecutive periods, the Workers' Party gubernatorial candidate – Tarso Genro – failed in the 2002 election. It is a saying in Rio Grande do Sul that no party wins the gubernatorial elections twice in a row, but research also attributes the loss of the Workers' Party to unmet expectations in the PB-process. The 2002 election was very tight, and it might be that the inability of the government to deliver on its investment promises, swung the vote in the opposition's favor (Goldfrank & Schneider, 2006, p. 24).

5.5 *The integration of PB in a 'participatory system'*

CASE 3: RIO GRANDE DO SUL (2011-2014)

Name in Portuguese: *Participação Popular e Cidadã (PPC)*

Population: 10.693.929 (2010)

Territory: 281.737,888 km²

Political context: Left-center coalition led by the Workers' Party (PT), majority in state legislative assembly

PB-funds: 0.4% of total state expenses

Number of participants: Minimum 1,134,141 (2011), maximum 1,315,593 (2014)

My data: Observations, interviews, archival data, survey of delegates, budget- and municipal level data

The Workers' Party did not regain the state government in Rio Grande do Sul until 2011. With Tarso Genro, twice the mayor of Porto Alegre, as its gubernatorial candidate, the PT headed an alliance of left-wing parties called *Popular Unity for Rio Grande* (Unidade, 2010). The alliance won in the first round, and formed a government with two other center-right parties which gave it a majority in the legislative assembly (Terra, 2010). Although this was an advantage for the

new government — as compared to the paralyzing opposition experienced by the first PT government — it also meant that it began its term as a compromise with less radical partners. Another early compromise was made with the COREDEs. While the PT had been out of government, the *Consulta Popular* had increased in popularity. The number of votes in the referendum had nearly doubled from 2003 to 2009. To avoid a more severe conflict than Dutra had suffered, the Genro-government gave the COREDEs a prominent role in its new participatory scheme and kept the *Consulta* intact. The government and the COREDEs now *shared* the responsibility for organizing the budgeting process. At the regional level, committees of government and COREDEs representatives convoked the assemblies, facilitated the work of the delegates and oversaw the referendum as well as the implementation of the chosen works and services.

Because of the cooperation, the relationship between the COREDEs and the government was mostly harmonious. There were some frictions at the local level. Since the Genro-government interfered in some of the tasks that used to be the sole responsibility of the COREDEs – like mobilizing participants, facilitating assemblies, and overseeing the execution of selected demands – not all local COREDEs representatives appreciated the government’s involvement. Some COREDEs agents complained that the government coordinators played a political, rather than merely administrative, role. Indeed, at one point the COREDEs threatened to boycott the process. Their reason was not to undermine it, but rather to force the government to give it higher importance. They complained about slow execution of the selected projects, and that the government was unwilling to increase the funding for the process. After a prolonged stalemate, the parties came to the negotiating table with a compromise whereby the government found more – albeit not sufficient – funds for unrealized projects.¹

Even the Right-wing opposition in the legislative assembly took a relatively passive stance toward the government’s PB. One of their main objections was that the government risked undermining the *Consulta* by promising more investments than they could deliver. Another was that the Workers’ Party was exploiting the process to mobilize support for the government.²

¹ Interview with “Lucas”, President of the Forum of The Regional Development Councils (COREDES), Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil 08.04.2014. Participant observation of Forum of the COREDES, Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul 13.03.2014.

² Interview with “Willian”, Deputy for Partido Progressista (PP) in the State Legislative Assembly, Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul 05.03.2014, and “Eduardo”, Deputy for Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (PMDB) in the State Legislative Assembly, Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul 23.04.2014.

One member of the opposition proposed a constitutional amendment that would compel the government to prioritize budget demands from the *Consulta* before others (Polo, 2011). If realized, this would have forced the government to reduce funds for the *Consulta* to a minimum so that they knew for sure that they would be able to execute what was decided. Twenty-five out of 49 deputies rejected this motion, however.

The most crucial difference from the Dutra-governments PB, was that the Genro-government no longer saw PB as the main participatory channel. Under the Dutra-administration it had been the most significant channel, but in 2011 a *System of Popular and Citizen Participation (Sistema)* was established and the budget process became only one of several avenues for participation. The *Sistema* included a range of other participatory forums at the state level, such as sectoral policy councils, oversight committees, thematic conferences and advisory deliberative organs. Some of these had developed over time in Rio Grande do Sul, and some were established by the Genro-government. The main point of the *Sistema*, however, was to try to integrate the different forums in one coherent participatory governance model. As I show in article 3 in this dissertation, one of the unintended consequences of this integration – combined with poor PB funding – was that social movements migrated to other places where they could affect public policies more effectively. Under Dutra, such movements were vital to mobilizing disadvantaged citizens to attend the PB process, but under Genro this was no longer the case.

The Genro-government also excluded important investment areas from its PB. In contrast to the Dutra-government's PB, participants could not discuss or vote on issues that concerned more than one region. This meant that infrastructure projects such as electric transmission lines, ports, airports and highways were discussed in other forums. This was also the case for state-wide investments such as universities, central sports or cultural venues, or specialized hospitals. The PB share of the budget shrank correspondingly. Under Dutra, all investments were subject to discussion, whereas this was so for only about 10 per cent of them during the Genro-government. This did not mean that there was mostly nothing to talk about. Since most public works and services are delivered locally or regionally, PB participants under Genro could propose investments within the majority of government areas such as education, health, rural and economic development, sanitation, public security, social services, poverty reduction, irrigation, sports, culture, tourism, human rights and environmental sustainability. Typical demands raised at the assemblies were buying medical equipment for health clinics and hospitals, renovating schools or providing them with computer and lab gear, updating the

vehicle fleet of fire brigades and police departments, or giving financial support to peasant-run dairies and other agricultural cooperatives (Haikin et al., 2017).

It is worth noting that the participants in the municipal assemblies could not choose these investments freely. Their demands came at the end of a chain of discussions, which provided a set of guidelines for all subsequent demands. The main event in this chain was the multi-annual budget plan that was held during the first year of government. Around 6,000 people from public institutions, social movements and community organizations met in nine parallel preparatory meetings (Seplag, 2014). Here they discussed the main content of the budget for the next four years and elected representatives to formulate the thematic areas and government programs in the plan. All demands in the subsequent PB process had to come from one of the programs that were identified in this plan (Governo, 2014).

Before the annual municipal assemblies could take place, regional assemblies were held that gathered local leaders, provided information about the status of the previous year's budget and the present year's funding, established rules on how to distribute these resources within the region, and appointed those who were to coordinate the process. Next, local assemblies took place in nearly all of the state's 497 municipalities. These meetings agreed on up to 10 local demands and five regional demands. They also elected delegates to represent the municipality at the regional level (see Figure 4 for the decision-making circle).

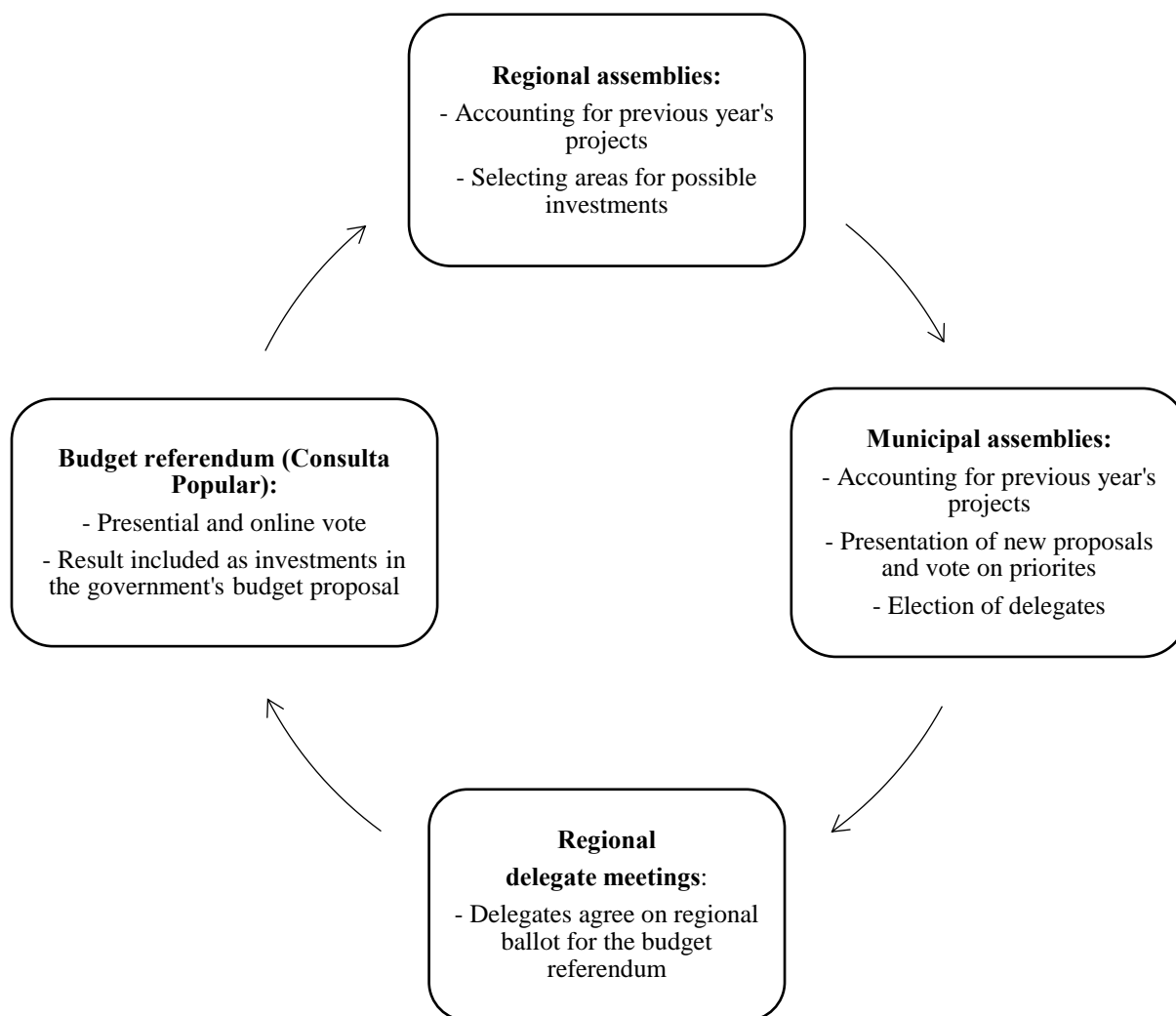


Figure 4: Decision-making cycle in Rio Grande do Sul's state PB under the Genro-government (1999-2002)

The Dutra- and Genro-governments' PBs are compared in article two and three in this dissertation, but it is worthwhile pointing at some crucial differences here. The role of the delegates under the Genro-government was narrower than it had been under the Dutra-government's PB. Under Genro their job was not to make decisions but mainly to condense the demands from the municipal assemblies into 10-20 items that would be printed on the budget ballot. The referendum finally decided the proposals that would be prioritized. In this sense, participants in the municipal assemblies could directly influence the outcome of the process, since their delegates normally did not alter the local proposals. On the other hand they could not propose projects for the whole state, and had very limited opportunities to vote on regional

investments. Even though the ballot contained a field where voters could choose between a few large regional projects called ‘*Campo 2*’ – such as establishing a new hospital or a new educational program in schools – this was only suggestive and not binding for the government.

As in the early 2000s, the redistributive dimension was also central to the participatory process of the Genro-administration. The bylaws of the process dictated that regions with higher poverty rates and lower social development scores would get a larger share of the funds than richer regions. The poorest municipalities within these regions also got more people to go out and vote in the referendum, which in turn increased their share of the resources (Goldfrank, 2014). The execution rate, however – meaning how much of the budgeted money was eventually realized as projects and services — was only 49 per cent for the whole period.³ The government attributed the low execution rate to poor planning and technical expertise in small municipalities, as well as a general difficulty for the whole government to raise as much revenue as expected.⁴

This did not discourage people from coming to the meetings or voting in the referendum. The number of people directly involved in regional and assemblies increased from 60,000 in the first year to 87,000 in the last year of the government. The number of voters increased from 1.1 million to 1.3 million in the same period. In 2014, as much as 16 per cent of the electorate ‘participated’ in deciding the budget priorities, as opposed to 6 per cent in the early 2000s.⁵ The type of participation was very different between the Dutra- and the Genro-government, however. Under the Genro-administration it was enough to vote to be counted as a participant, but under the Dutra-government one had to physically go to a meeting and stay for at least as long as it took to listen to the discussions. In many low-density municipalities, this constituted a significant effort. The share of the electorate that physically came to the budget meetings was just a little above 1 per cent under the Genro-government.

³ Source: Portal da Transparência (<http://www.transparencia.rs.gov.br>)

⁴ Interview with “Leonardo”, Secretary of the Department of Planning, Administration and Citizen Participation (Seplag), Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil 22.04.2014, “Felipe”, Director of the Office for Citizen Participation in the Department of Planning, Administration and Citizen Participation (Seplag), Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil 16.01.2014, and “Rafael”, Coordinator in the Office for Citizen Participation in the Department of Planning, Administration and Citizen Participation (Seplag), Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil 28.01.2014.

⁵ Original data from the government.

5.6 Excursion: The scaling out of PB inside Brazil and to the rest of the world

CASE 4: FREDRIKSTAD (2009-)

Name in Norwegian: *Deltakende Budsjett*

Population: 80,207 (2017)

Territory: 286,72 km²

Time of introduction of PB: 2009

Political context: Right-wing coalition (2008-2011), Center-left coalition (2011-2015), Center-left coalition (2015-2019)

PB-funds: From 0 % to 0.07% (max 800,000 of around 1,000,000,000 NOK)

Data: Archival documents

During the 1990s and 2000s PB rose in popularity. During the period from 1989 to 1992 there were only 13 PBs inside Brazil, mainly in the south of the country. In 2000 the number had risen to 120, and by 2011 it had more than doubled to 353 municipalities and they could be found all over Brazil (Avritzer & Vaz, 2014; RedeOP, 2013). Outside of Brazil the Porto Alegre model rose to fame when it was recognized by UN-Habitat as a best practice in urban government in 1996, and especially with the World Social Forum in 2001. This constituted a tipping point in the worldwide diffusion of PB. With the help of transnational networks connected to the World Bank, the U.N. and the EU it has reached a mass number (Oliveira, 2017) Sintomer et al. (2013, p. 14) estimated that there were as many as 2,778 PBs across the world 2012. It has even reached the Nordic countries, and the city of Fredrikstad in Norway, which is the subject of the fourth article in this dissertation.

As PB has travelled the world, however, it has proved difficult to replicate the relative success of the Porto Alegre experience. Even in Brazil the number of cases that have been able to boast similar outcomes are few (Avritzer & Vaz, 2014; Baiocchi, Heller, & Silva, 2011; Wampler, 2007). The preconditions for a working participatory budget of the kind found in Porto Alegre are thought to be a combination of the decentralization of fiscal powers to local government, an ideological commitment among leading political parties to establish a participatory form of government, the willingness to delegate authority to participatory institutions, a strong mayoral government able to counter the veto power of elected politicians, and strong civil society

organizations who are able to educate and mobilize citizens to become empowered participants in the new institutions (Baiocchi et al., 2011; Goldfrank, 2011; Wampler, 2007).

When some or many of these preconditions are absent, the very notion of what PB is has a tendency to change. Today, there is a rich flora of arrangements that are called ‘participatory budgeting’. In Europe, Sintomer et al. (2008) have identified six types of PB. They call them: a) Porto Alegre adapted for Europe, b) Participation of organized interests, c) community funds at local and city level, d) the public/private negotiating table, e) proximity participation, and f) consultation on public finances. Since they wrote this article, more types have emerged. Fredrikstad, for example, partly fits into the community funds and proximity participation definitions, but it also has element of what I would call ‘target group engagement.’ This is a form of participation where the government tries to mobilize particular groups – such as students, skateboarders, immigrants, public housing tenants etc. – by giving them the opportunity to decide over a small sum of money. The fourth article in this dissertation provides one interpretation of why Fredrikstad’s PB has turned out to be very far from the original model in Porto Alegre.

6. Methodological approach, data and theorizing

I base my dissertation on a comparative case-study approach. Partly, this choice arose from an analytical interest in questions about similarities and differences between small and large scales, between different models and contexts for scaling up, and between ‘scaling up’ and ‘scaling out.’ Partly, this methodological choice also arose naturally given the opportunity to compare PB at the municipal and state level, as well as state PB over time. During and after my fieldwork in Rio Grande do Sul in 2014, I established contact that gave me access to previously collected data about other cases (case one and two), and I began a cooperation with Benjamin Goldfrank who had already studied the state PB (as well as many other local PBs). In this section, I elaborate on this approach, the methods I have used to gather my data as well as their reliability and validity in answering my questions. At the end of the section I explain the reason for including the paper on Fredrikstad (which is not based on comparison), and how I use it to add something to the dissertation that the study of Rio Grande do Sul alone may not have provided.

6.1 Methodological approach

6.1.1 Case-oriented comparison

The advantage of the case-oriented comparative method is that it allows for a combination of interpretative- and causal analysis as well as concept formation. This fits well with the overarching questions of my thesis, which seek to interpret the PB processes studied, to suggest causal explanations for different case outcomes and to provide content to concepts such as scaling up and scaling out. The comparative approach has several features that make this possible. Case-oriented comparativists try to uncover causal patterns, but unlike quantitative investigators, they do not look for the net effect of single variables, but rather the combined effect of several causal conditions and process (Ragin & Sonnett, 2005). The case-oriented comparative approach makes it possible to do interesting analyzes with only a small number of cases, because the researcher is not looking for representative populations but rather a variation of meaningful patterns. Case-oriented comparison compels the investigator to examine cases as a whole, and to view the different parts or conditions of interest in relation to each other. Finally, the method stimulates a rich dialogue between theory and evidence. The aim is not to make simplistic claims about causes and effects, but rather to show how causes combine in different

ways in different contexts – in what may be called complex causal configurations (Ragin, 2014, pp. 51-53). These explanations are used to develop or nuance concepts and theories.

There are – to borrow a classification from Skocpol and Somers (1980) – at least three different ways to make comparisons through case-studies. One is *parallel demonstration of theory*, where the aim is to demonstrate the validity of a hypothesis or theory by illustrating how it explains common characteristics or outcomes in two or more cases. Differences among cases are highlighted to show how general propositions are valid despite different contexts. The *contrast of contexts* approach, on the other hand, is concerned with the opposite logic — namely to show how putatively general propositions are either invalidated by or affected by particular features of different cases. The *causal analysis* approach uses comparisons to test the validity of various theoretical hypotheses and to develop new theoretical generalizations about causal patterns. Although these approaches are distinct, it is often normal to combine several of them in one study (ibid pp. 187-191). At a certain level, these approaches are part of a cycle of comparative case-study research. A study can, for example, first seek to apply a certain theory to two more cases, only to find that the differences between them pose questions about the scope or the appropriateness of the theory, and then seek new explanations to account for these differences. In my articles, I combine these ways of comparison as follows:

In the first article (“Is the city the appropriate scale for participatory democracy?”), I compare PB at the city and the state level. The aim of the comparison is to see whether the scale of the governmental level at which the PB is implemented alters the participatory quality of the PB process. The analysis is based on a mostly similar case design (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 252), where the ideal is to see if the change in one value of the independent variable (from the city to the state level) affects the outcome of the dependent variable (participatory quality of the PB process). It is impossible in real societies, however, to find cases that are equal on all dimensions bar one. In the article I therefore account for some of the differences on the dependent variable that may be attributable to factors other than scale. There are at least two other reservations with this type of comparison. One is that there are many more rival explanations to assess than there are cases to observe – the ‘many variables, small N’ problem (Collier, 1993; Lijphart, 1971). Another problem is *equifinality* – that there may be several different pathways that lead to similar outcomes (George & Bennett, 2005, pp. 20-22). Thus, I do not say that this comparison validates or invalidates the theoretical claims listed in the article,

but rather that the case-findings nuance them and may cast doubt on the overall assumptions among some theorists of democracy.

In the second article (“Scaling up participation: Consequences for Voice, Vote, Oversight and Social Justice”), Goldfrank and I compare case number two (state PB 1999-2002) and three (state PB 2011-2014). These cases are similar in some aspects, but differ in others. The most important similarity is the scale of the process. Ideological and political commitments are also comparable. Crucial differences, however, encompass the governments’ support base, strategy for achieving change and choice of institutional design. The article is based on a contrast-of-context approach. We begin by identifying some key social science predictions about how scale affects voice, vote, oversight and social justice, and then proceed to test these against our two cases. The conclusion is that some of these putatively general propositions hold true in both cases or are invalidated or moderated by particular features of one or both of them, which lead us to search for alternative theoretical explanations that the general propositions do not account for. This resembles what George and Bennett (2005, chapter 9) call the *congruence method* — where an investigator begins with a theory and tests its ability to explain or predict the outcome in a particular case or a set of cases. However, due to the scope conditions of the analysis, the possibility of multiple causal pathways and the absence of very strong theories about scaling up, the article only refines or questions some assumptions and cannot prove or invalidate them.

In the third article (“The Systemic Turn and Participatory Budgeting: The Case of Rio Grande do Sul”), we treat case two and three as distinct configurations of attempts to scale up democratic participation. The two cases are of equal scale, but one seeks to unify all participation in one channel (*unification*) and the other tries to spread it out over several channels (*diversification*). These represent opposite extremes in a possible space for realizing large-scale participatory schemes. This article is less comparative than article two, in the sense that we concentrate on the Genro-government’s participatory system and keep the Dutra-government as a reference point. From a theoretical point of view, it deduces the possibility of displacements as a prevailing risk in a participatory system, but finds that it is the combination of altered relationships between social movements and the Workers’ Party, as well as the minimal funds for PB, that causes the displacement (a combination of factors/complex causal configurations). We found these additional variables inductively through the case study, but we could not properly place them without a comparison. It was necessary to contrast the Genro-government’s diversification approach with the Dutra-government’s desire to unify all

participation in one channel, the fact that the Dutra-government dedicated major funds to the PB, and the tight relationship between social movements and the Workers' Party, to distinguish these factors as important.

6.1.2 Multimethod research

Another central research strategy in this thesis is to use multiple qualitative and quantitative methods to answer the research questions. Such combining of methods is not novel to case studies. As Yin (1999, p. 1217) argues, case studies “may — and should — involve a broad variety of techniques, not just a single technique such as conducting a case visit. Surveys can be invaluable in case study evidence, but so can archival analyses, documentary searches, and direct field observations. [...] The more all of these techniques are used in the same study, the stronger the case study evidence will be. [...] In fact, a well-executed regression analysis might even be part of a case study.” The reason why case-study researchers frequently combine methods is that they analyze cases holistically. Even when the researcher focuses on one part of a case — for example participation rates in a certain case of PB — these data are analyzed in relation to other aspects of the case, such as the purpose of the PB, the available funding, distribution rules etc.

Some examples from my own fieldwork in Rio Grande do Sul in 2014 illustrate this. One afternoon I did an interview with a Mayor about his view of the PB and how his administration related to it. In the interview he was very positive about the process and explained that it was a crucial for his municipality that otherwise received very few investments. He also told me that the administration made great efforts to encourage the area's inhabitants to participate. The very same night I attended the assembly in the municipality, but almost nobody showed up. There were so few participants that they were not even able to elect a single delegate. The meeting spontaneously developed into a discussion of why the administration did so little to mobilize people to come, and when the mayor finally showed up late for the meeting he was criticized for it. Another example is how the state organizers talked about how the PB process encouraged widespread *popular* participation, but when I did a survey of the delegates the majority of them turned out to be public servants. The state organizers also frequently referred to the discussions taking place at the assemblies. When I observed the meetings there was virtually no space for having debates.

As these examples illustrate, multi-method research can be useful in studying both words and deeds, and how they may differ (Hunter & Brewer, 2015, pp. 9-10). By this I do not mean that multiple methods should be combined to expose misrepresentations — although this is important in order to evaluate political processes like PB — but rather that different methods provide different kinds of data that are crucial to understand both the totality of the case as well as the aspects that I am interested in. Following Bryman (2006, pp. 106-107), my research benefits from combining methods for the following reasons:

- *Triangulation increases validity.* The combination of methods to triangulate findings makes them more valid for the phenomenon I study. The conclusions generated by the research questions of this dissertation could not have been reached without using multiple methods.
- *Multiple methods provide a more comprehensive account of the phenomenon.* The PB is composed of processes that only can be studied through participant observation, surveys, interviews and official data analysis. By combining methods, I have been able to study several crucial parts, and not only focus on one or two.
- *It makes it possible to answer different research questions.* Without analyzing quantitative spending data it would not have been possible to answer questions about scale, collective action and redistribution. Without interviews and participant observation, it would not be possible to ask questions about scale and deliberation.
- *One method is used to explain findings generated by another.* Interviews and observations helped me to explain findings on participants that the surveys uncovered.
- *Qualitative and quantitative methods may enhance each other.* I have several instances where the quantitative findings support and enrich the findings from the interviews and vice versa.
- *One method is applied to develop others.* My interviews and observations helped me find relevant questions and develop better wording of the questions in the survey.

Hunter and Brewer (2015, p. 5) write that the difference between ‘multimethod research’ and ‘mixed methods’ research is that the first combines two or more methods, whereas the latter combines two or more qualitative and quantitative methods. The ‘mixed methods’ approach is a subset of multi-method research. In this dissertation I do not adhere to a strong mixed methods program, but I believe that especially article two (“Scaling up participation”) fulfills the criteria

set by Tashakkori and Creswell (2007, p. 207) for a strong mixed methods article. It a) demonstrates the need for mixed methods to answer research questions, b) presents distinctly qualitative and quantitative data that are presented and analyzed separately, c) makes inferences on the basis of the results of appropriate qualitative and quantitative analyses, and d) integrates the results of two or more (qualitative and quantitative) strands of the study into coherent conclusions that are more comprehensive and meaningful than those of the qualitative or quantitative strands alone. The other comparative articles also make use of both qualitative and quantitative data, but do not necessarily follow these criteria as strictly.

6.1.3 Limitations

I have so far focused on the strengths of doing comparative case-studies and multi-method research, but like all approaches these also have their limitations. For me the main limitation is that I have not been able to go as far in-depth in each case study as I would have liked. With four cases and mostly comparative questions, the discussions in this article make broad swipes over each case. I have been restrained because I have mostly been a single researcher working on this topic, and only the contribution by Goldfrank made it possible to undertake comparisons of social justice and voting issues over time. Another limitation is that the comparative approach has not provided sufficient space for lengthy theoretical discussions or thick case descriptions. This is also a challenge of multi-method research. Because I have combined various methods, I have not been able to cultivate their strengths to the degree that I would have if I exclusively used either qualitative or quantitative research. This does not mean that this is a particular weakness of mixing methods, but that it is a limitation of one or two researchers working in a short time frame.

6.2 Data and reliability issues

In the following, I present my data and discuss their reliability for each of my cases. I present the cases in the order of their overall importance in this dissertation. Note that this is in a different order from the background section that presents them chronologically.

6.2.1 Case 3: Rio Grande do Sul (2011-2014)

The main source of data about the state PB in Rio Grande do Sul is the four months of fieldwork that I did in the state from January to May 2014. During this stay, I interviewed organizers, bureaucrats and other key PB-actors at the state level. I also observed meetings and interviewed regular participants, officials and interest groups at the regional and municipal level. In addition, I collected government documents and texts by other central actors (opposition, associations and NGOs, councils, etc.), and planned a survey of delegates in the PB-process that was conducted after I returned to Norway. Furthermore, I use a municipal level data set with PB-spending and participation, as well as socio-demographic indicators.

6.2.1.1 Qualitative data

Interviews

My data gathering strategy took place on two levels. At the state level I interviewed government officials who were central in advocating and implementing the PB-process, as well as those who worked with the details of the process and could provide a more intricate overview of how the process was facilitated. These all came from the Department of Planning, Administration and Citizen Participation (Seplag). In addition I interviewed officials and staff from several other government agencies that were responsible for executing policies decided through the process or otherwise had strong ties to it. Here I tried to find both departments that were rumored to have a smooth relationship with the process, and those who had a more fraught relationship with it. In addition I interviewed other key agents such as the COREDES, a representative from one of the most important social movement organizations in the state, state deputies from the main opposition parties and observers who are central voices in the political discussion about participatory democracy in Rio Grande do Sul. All of these interviews were semi-structured and took 1-2 hours. They were all with a single person, with the exception of one interview that had two subjects. Table 1 gives an overview of the interviews conducted at the state level.

Table 1: Interview sample at the state level (n=17)

Interview date	Role in PB-process	Institution/organization
16.01.2014	State organizer	Department of Planning, Administration and Citizen Participation (Seplag)
28.01.2014	State organizer	Department of Planning, Administration and Citizen Participation (Seplag)
28.01.2014	State organizer	Department of Planning, Administration and Citizen Participation (Seplag)
22.04.2014	State organizer	Department of Planning, Administration and Citizen Participation (Seplag)
08.04.2014	Civil society organizer	Forum of Development Councils (Fórum dos Coredes)
31.03.2014	Administrator/executor	Department of Housing and Sanitation (Sehabs)
11.04.2014	Administrator/executor	Department of Infrastructure and Logistics (Seinfra)
27.03.2014	Administrator/executor	Department of Rural Development, Fishing and Cooperativism (SDR)
27.03.2014	Administrator/executor	Department of Rural Development, Fishing and Cooperativism (SDR)
28.03.2014	Administrator/executor	Department of Health (Saude)
28.03.2014	Administrator/executor	Department of Education (Seduc)
10.03.2014	Administrator/executor	Department of Finance (Sefaz)
23.04.2014	Politician	The Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB) (opposition party)
05.03.2014	Politician	The Progressive Party (PP) (opposition party)
23.04.2014	Civil society organizer	Agricultural Workers' Federation (Fetag)
21.02.2014	Independent observer	CAMP (NGO)
21.02.2014	Independent observer	Cidade (NGO)

I also did multiple interviews at the regional and municipal level. I chose to do interviews in three regions that represented some of the demographic, economic, social and political variations in the state. Italo's region, Vale do Rio dos Sinos, is an industrial and densely populated region that borders on the state capital, Porto Alegre. It is more affluent than most other regions, and scores better on human development indicators. It is also a class-divided and politically polarized region. Several of its municipalities have or have had their own PBs. Médio Alto Uruguai is a rural, but still quite densely populated region. It has a homogeneous population that consists of many small-scale farmers. It also has a strong cooperativist tradition. Litoral Norte has both a large urban and a sizable rural population. In the summer the population of the region swells due to tourism, but many of its inhabitants struggle economically when the tourist season is over. It has weak associational traditions, and is polarized politically.

In all three regions I interviewed key organizers, as well as representatives and participants from at least two municipalities. I tried to pick one municipality that had an administration affiliated with the government and one that was affiliated with the opposition in each region,

but that was not always possible. I also attempted to interview ‘ordinary’ participants in addition to participants who represented an organization or institution. In practice, this was difficult. With two exceptions, I only interviewed participants that were members of an association or employed by an institution. This is partly due to the character of the process. Most non-representative participants either came from a core group of activists in an association or came to support an organization or institution with their presence. Such participants quickly left after the assemblies were over and were difficult to contact afterward. My interviews were semi-structured and about 1/3rd of them were conducted with two interviewees simultaneously. Except for two very short interviews of about 20-30 minutes, most lasted 1-2 hours. Table 2 gives an overview of the interviews at the regional/municipal level.

Table 2: Interview sample at the regional/municipal level (n=33)

Interview date	Role in PB-process	Institution/organization
Region: Litoral Norte		
23.04.2014	Participant	Agricultural Workers' Federation (Fetag)
16.04.2014	Delegate	Agricultural Workers' Federation (Fetag)
16.04.2014	Delegate	High school
16.04.2014	Delegate	Staff in small municipality
16.04.2014	Municipal organizer	Mayor of small municipality
16.04.2014	Regional organizer	Regional Development Council (Corede)
09.04.2014	Municipal organizer	Mayor of large municipality
09.04.2014	Delegate	Fire Department officer
09.04.2014	Delegate	Local Sports Association
09.04.2014	Delegate	Local Sports Association
Region: Vale do Rio dos Sinos		
24.04.2014	Municipal organizer	Staff small municipality
24.04.2014	Delegate	Various associations
24.04.2014	Delegate	Various associations
24.04.2014	Participant	Municipal Health Council
24.04.2014	Delegate	Fire Department officer
17.04.2014	Regional organizer	Department of Planning, Administration and Citizen Participation (Seplag)
17.04.2014	Participant	Secretary in large municipality
11.04.2014	Municipal organizer	Staff large municipality
11.04.2014	Municipal organizer	Staff large municipality
10.04.2014	Delegate	Union of Community Organizations
10.04.2014	Delegate	Union of Community Organizations
10.04.2014	Delegate	Union of Special Abilities Children
Region: Médio Alto Uruguai		
01.04.2014	Delegate	Various associations
02-03.04.2014	Regional organizer	Department of Planning, Administration and Citizen Participation (Seplag)
03.04.2014	Regional organizer	Department of Planning, Administration and Citizen Participation (Seplag)
01.04.2014	Delegate	Unorganized
01.04.2014	Delegate	Unorganized
01.04.2014	Delegate	Various associations
01.04.2014	Delegate	Various associations
02.04.2014	Delegate	Agricultural Workers' Federation (Fetag)
02.04.2014	Regional organizer	Regional Development Council (Corede)
02.04.2014	Regional organizer	Department of Health (Saude)
01.04.2014	Regional organizer	Department of Rural Development, Fishing and Cooperativism (SDR)

All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed. Several were also coded using qualitative analysis software (NVivo). Due to the large quantity of both qualitative and quantitative data in this project, I have coded interviews based on their thematic relevance from paper to paper. This means I have not coded all of them.

Participant observation

I also observed a number of meetings during my fieldwork. As shown in Table 3, I observed five municipal assemblies and two regional assemblies. With one exception, these were held in the regions where I did my interviews. This was a form of high participant observation. I was normally introduced before every meeting by a government official who used my presence to say something about international interest in the state's PB. Several times, I was also asked to speak about my research project. This helped me because it was easier to make contact with people present at the meetings. On two occasions I was even interviewed by the local press just after the meeting had ended. In general, I would say that this did not affect my ability to observe the meetings. I concentrated my notes on the agenda of the meetings, the number of speakers and the time allotted to each speaker, the main topic of those who spoke and how their topics were presented. I also tried to get an impression of who the participants were, both through my observation and in conversations before and afterward.

Table 3: Participant observation of PB-meetings

Date	Region/municipality	Type of meeting
19.03.2014	Litoral Norte	Regional assembly
27.03.2014	Vale do Rio do Sinos/Canoas	Municipal assembly
01.04.2014	Médio Alto do Uruguai/Alpestre	Municipal assembly
03.04.2014	Médio Alto do Uruguai/Vista Alegre	Municipal assembly
09.04.2014	Litoral Norte/Torres	Municipal assembly
21.03.2014	Centro Sul	Regional assembly
16.04.2014	Litoral Norte/Tres Forquilhas	Municipal assembly

Unrecorded interviews, conversations and observations

My fieldwork also consisted of multiple unrecorded interviews, conversations and observations. I spent four months in the state of Rio Grande do Sul and lived in the state capital Porto Alegre that has its own PB. Many of these days were spent in the offices of the organizers

of the PB, or with academics, students or other actors that had experiences of, or opinions about, the state PB. I went to several conferences related to the participatory system, and had the opportunity to attend internal meetings in the government administration and in the COREDEs. In the regions, I travelled around by car with the regional organizer who was appointed by the state government, and due to long distances, I had time to ask questions and discuss issues that were not covered sufficiently by my interviews. Although I do not cite or actively use this information, it has been crucial for my understanding of the PB-process and the economic, social and political context that surrounds it.

Documents

During the fieldwork I also collected documents such as pamphlets and brochures, voting ballots, evaluations, law proposals and statistical analyses. Most of the material related to the process was published at the state level, and most of it was, or is, available online. Therefore, I continued to gather this material after my stay in Rio Grande do Sul. This material has been especially relevant for understanding the organizational self-representation and official views of the various actors involved in the process.

Strengths and weaknesses

Overall, my interviews — combined with archival research, and unrecorded interviews, conversations and observations — gave a good overview of the opinions of central actors at the state level and the way they represented their practical experiences. It was a rich source of information about the ideas fueling the process, its historical and political contexts, as well as the main challenges of implementing a large-scale participatory democratic experiment from the government's perspective. On the other hand, this project could have been further strengthened by getting other perspectives from lower-level administrators, representatives from other organizations with a less pragmatic view of the PB — such as trade union federations, business organizations and political social movements — as well as participants in other channels of Rio Grande do Sul's participatory system. It would also have been very useful to trace specific decision-making processes within the PB — for example, projects that never were realized, or those that the organizers and other participants did not take seriously. My insights could have been widened by reflections on especially problematic projects, or projects with certain problems that were later resolved. At the regional/municipal level the research

would be strengthened by even more interviews with both key actors and more peripheral participants. This would not necessarily have meant engaging with more regions or municipalities, but going into more depth in each chosen municipality and getting a broader picture of the actors involved. More municipalities could have been picked as sub-cases based on other indicators, such as those with high and low mobilization, those with little and high civil society involvement, and those with little or wide-ranging disagreements. This would have required more time for the fieldwork, or a profound familiarity with the process before the fieldwork started. On the other hand, the data I have at hand has given me a fairly robust grounding with which to make comparisons in this dissertation.

I began my fieldwork with very little knowledge about the PB-process. I had heard and read a paper about it before I came to Rio Grande do Sul. I initially planned to compare PB-municipalities of different sizes, but changed the project idea shortly after I came to Brazil. Consequently, I had no contacts within the state PB, and I initially came to rely on government personnel to give me access to potential interviewees and to take me to meetings. Although this help was invaluable, it may also have created the impression that I was doing research to support the PB-process and may have pushed away some critics from my research. On the other hand, there is no shortage of critical voices in my material. I learned Portuguese when I lived in Brazil for half a year in 2002 and I have since learned and frequently practiced Spanish. These language skills helped me to conduct all my fieldwork without translation. But I am far from a native speaker and I have discovered some things in my recordings and transcriptions that I did not take note of during the interview. My simple formulation skills also helped me in asking very concrete and sometimes almost child-like questions, which elicited very informative and concrete answers with many examples. It did impair my participant observation, however, and superior Portuguese skills would have helped me to better understand the discussions taking place in the meetings I observed.

6.2.1.2 Quantitative data

Survey with delegates

I recruited a small group of students at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) to conduct a survey of the delegates. I ruled out the possibility of doing an online survey due to my own experiences of difficulties in reaching delegates by e-mail, and based on the advice of

local researchers. Due to my limited resources, I found that the most effective strategy was to circulate a questionnaire at delegate meetings, and to make sure that as many as possible of those present answered the survey. I did so in six selected regions none of which were too far away from the city of Porto Alegre but still diverse enough to represent a variety of socio-demographic and political contexts. These regions — Litoral Norte, Médio Alto Uruguai, Vale do Rio dos Sinos, Serra, Sul and Metropolitano Delta do Jacuí — encompass a variety of rich and poor, agricultural and urban, densely and sparsely populated, progressive and traditional, and left-wing and right-wing dominated regions. The main region type that I miss in this sample is the frontier region found in west and south. I cannot assert that this sample is representative of all the delegates in the regions. I believe that the background information I have about the regions, as well as the political process in the state as a whole, gives me good reasons to say that the main findings do not differ greatly in these regions from the rest of the state. In addition, a survey of PB delegates in 19 regions was conducted in 2002 (see description below). Five of my six regions were part of that survey, and these did not differ significantly from the other regions at that time. The main exception was that these regions had slightly fewer public servants in the sample (4.2 percentage point difference). This congruity suggests that my sample can be representative for the other regions as well, although I am cautious about asserting this too strongly.

My survey had 645 respondents. The delegate meetings in all six regions opened with the survey being distributed and answered in 10 to 15 minutes. Even though my assistants tell me that nearly everyone filled out the questionnaire — apart from only a few individuals at each meeting — it is nevertheless difficult to assess the actual response rate among the delegates. The reason is that more people showed up at the meetings than the number of real elected delegates. This was especially a problem in the region of Serra where there were only 77 delegates, but 145 survey respondents. The explanation is probably that there was a mobilization in the region of people associated with the right-wing opposition aimed at wresting control of the meeting from the state organizers. This has been a recurring issue in some regions and especially Serra (the richest region in Rio Grande do Sul). I have chosen to retain Serra in the sample because I do not think that the elected delegates differ much from the non-delegates who showed up and keeping it in or taking it out does not distort the overall profile of the delegates. Since I do not have access to the minutes to the delegate meetings, I do not know how many of the elected delegates were actually present. Based on information from the organizers, I am aware that some elected delegates do not attend the meetings but this is not

considered a huge problem. I suspect, therefore, that my survey has a slight under-representation of people with low incomes and education and with weak organizational ties, who perhaps got elected as delegates for arbitrary reasons.

Municipal level data set

I also have a data set with municipal level data on PB spending and participation (regular and online voters), population/geographical data (inhabitants, geographical location), economic indicators (GDP, main economic activity, access to communications), human development indicators (sanitation, income, health, education, literacy) and political indicators (votes for PT, membership in PT). Benjamin Goldfrank constructed this data set. The sources are open government data on spending and participation (received from the government and downloaded from Portal da Transparência RS and Portal da Participação), open data on elections and party membership (downloaded from Tribunal Regional Eleitoral do Rio Grande do Sul and Tribunal Superior Eleitoral), and socio-demographic data (downloaded from Fundação de Economia e Estatística). The data cover all 497 municipalities in the state. One limitation with the spending data is that they do not cover all PB spending. Some spending goes directly from the state to institutions like schools, and does not appear as transfers to municipalities. However, we only find a very small discrepancy between reported overall spending and our spending figures. Our spending data are therefore a good indication of how PB money was spent.

6.2.2 Case 2: Rio Grande do Sul (1999-2002)

Another important case in this study is the state PB under the Dutra-government. Two of the papers are based on comparisons of PB under the Dutra and Genro governments. Information about the Dutra-case is also present in the first article comparing municipal and state-level PB.

6.2.2.1 Qualitative data

The qualitative data from this case used in the comparative analysis is essentially reconstructed from previously published case studies. Some of these data was collected and analyzed by Benjamin Goldfrank, but we have not re-analyzed these data for our co-authored papers. We have instead adopted some of the main findings of these analyses (Goldfrank & Schneider, 2002, 2003, 2006), which are, in turn, primarily based on fieldwork with qualitative interviews

and archival research. Another important source of information about the inner working of the PB process was Faria's (2005) field observations.

6.2.1 Quantitative data

We have two important sources of quantitative data about the Dutra-case. One is secondary, which includes the main findings on the distribution of PB-funds during the Dutra years taken from Goldfrank and Schneider (2002). This analysis has been replicated for the Genro-period with the construction of a similar municipal level data set. For data on the profile of participants and delegates we use a survey of 1,465 assembly participants conducted in 2001 and of 1,574 delegates conducted in 2002. These surveys were conducted by a team of researchers led by Benedito Tadeu César at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). The description of the data collection procedure is found in César (2004). This paper does not discuss possible skews in the selection process or what they did to avoid this, other than acknowledging that it was based on a wide sample of municipalities and regions to represent the variety in the state. Since the participants themselves had to fill out the questionnaires, however, I expect that participants with lower education and incomes are under-represented in the survey.

6.2.3 Case 1: Porto Alegre (1989-)

Porto Alegre's PB also plays an important role in this dissertation, both as a reference point for much of the discussion on the social and democratic qualities of PBs, but also as a source of scale comparison in the paper that compares municipal level and state level PBs.

6.2.3.1 Secondary data

Most of the information about Porto Alegre, however, is taken from secondary data sources — books, articles, reports and theses published by others. As with the Dutra period this generates some crucial issues that I have discussed above. At this point it is sufficient to mention that I do not base my analysis on a single author, but rather on a diverse set of sources. A common denominator for many of these authors is that they have a positive outlook on Porto Alegre's PB, and have often upheld it as an example to follow or inspiration for a renewal of democracy. Many have even been involved in promoting PB in other parts of the world. It has therefore

been important to be particularly aware of how this has biased the selection, presentation and interpretation of data.

6.2.3.2 Quantitative data

In addition, I make use of two surveys with original data. These are a survey of participants and delegates in 2009 and a survey of delegates only from 2003. The data collection procedures are described in Fedozzi et al. (2013, pp. 129-136) and (Wampler, 2007, pp. 285-291) respectively. Both surveys followed rigorous strategies to achieve representative samples. For comparative purposes, I used the same formulation of certain questions in these surveys in the survey I did among the state level delegates in 2014.

6.2.4 Excursion: Case 4: Fredrikstad (2009-)

The fourth article on Fredrikstad is not a comparative case study and it does not use multiple methods. It is not from Brazil and does not even directly address the question of scaling up participatory democracy. Regardless, I have chosen to include this in my dissertation for two reasons. The first is that I have done this study during my PhD period to show that PB is a phenomenon that has travelled to my home-country — in fact to all over the world — and that the findings from my Brazil study can, in time, be relevant for democratic reforms in the Nordic countries or elsewhere. The second is that issues of scaling-out are relevant for understanding scaling-up. When PB was lifted to the state level in Rio Grande do Sul, it was simultaneously spread from just a handful to all municipalities in the state. When a policy reform or organizational practice spreads in such a manner, it also undergoes translation. As I argue, therefore, in the conclusion of this introductory chapter, the translation perspective taken from Fredrikstad is relevant to understanding the process of scaling-up in Rio Grande do Sul.

The data collection in the Fredrikstad-case is purely based on text sources. As I explain in the fourth article, translations in organizations are normally objectified in written documents (Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008), and people who want to change institutions mainly communicate with audiences through the production, distribution and consumption of texts (Hardy & Maguire, 2008, p. 208). In practice, what I have done to find the relevant translation documents for the analysis is to do several web-searches to find all documents that contain words such as “deltakende,” “deltakelse,” “budsjett,” “Fredrikstad,” “Fredrikstad-modellen” etc. in various

combinations. The outcome of these searches has been a variety of documents such as leaflets, brochures, newspaper commentaries, webpages, PowerPoint presentations and more. I have not been able to verify whether these constitute an exhaustive list of documents, but due to the length of my search and the relatively limited number of texts related to Fredrikstad's PB, I believe I have at least found the most central external documents. There may be some internal documents that I have not been able to acquire through this research, but as I mention in the article — my interest has been the officially produced translation, and not the possible discords concerning the presentation and set-up of the PB. This is also a limitation of this paper. It does not capture the unofficial and oral translations that go on in such settings, as well as the political and organizational play of the field actors that underlies the translation process. That would require a different kind of data — in particular interviews with those who were involved in the process at different stages of its implementation. Nonetheless, I think my paper shows that a purely textual focus reveals a lot in terms of understanding translations. Having said this, I also have additional data from other sources — such as newspaper reports, election results, public confidence surveys and an e-mail interview with one organizer — that provide important insights into the context of the process that would not have been available just from examining the official translations.

6.3 Typological theorizing

A final important remark about research strategy is that I use my cases and comparisons to make analytical generalizations through what George and Bennett (2005, chapter 11) call typological theorizing. This approach “specifies independent variables, delineates them into the categories for which the researcher will measure the cases and their outcomes, and provides not only hypotheses on how these variables operate individually, but also contingent generalizations on how and under what conditions they behave in specified conjunctions or configurations to produce effects on specified dependent variables” (ibid p. 235). The aim in my study is to specify *generalized pathways* that are abstract and theoretical – the challenges to scale up participatory democracy using a government-induced and invited-space strategy – and to describe how these pathways combined and behaved in a *specific context* – a recently democratized, neo-developmental state regime, and a highly socially and economically unequal society. These two combinations were found in a social-movement based, left wing and confrontational attempt to replace existing budgeting institutions at the state level with PB (the

Dutra-government), and in a voter-based, center-left, and compromising attempt to layer existing budgeting institutions with PB-practices (the Genro-government).

To be able to generalize from the case findings, it is crucial to ask what my cases are cases of (Ragin & Becker, 1992). I chose to study the state of Rio Grande do Sul because it represents one of very few attempts to scale up participatory democracy. I did not choose it because it is representative of all other previous or even possible cases of ‘scaling up,’ but because it was one of the places where this process could be studied most effectively (Ostrom, 1990, p. 26). As pointed out in the theory section, this narrows down the scope of my analysis. To adopt Jessop (2010, p. 96), the PBs under the Dutra- and the Genro-government are just two out of many potential configurations of an up-scaled participatory process. Yet, there is a nested logic to typological theorizing that addresses where cases are understood as subtypes within subtypes of more overarching phenomena. The potential to generalize or produce transferable knowledge from case studies lies within this typological space. Figure 5 illustrates how findings in one subtype can be generalized processes occurring in a broader type.

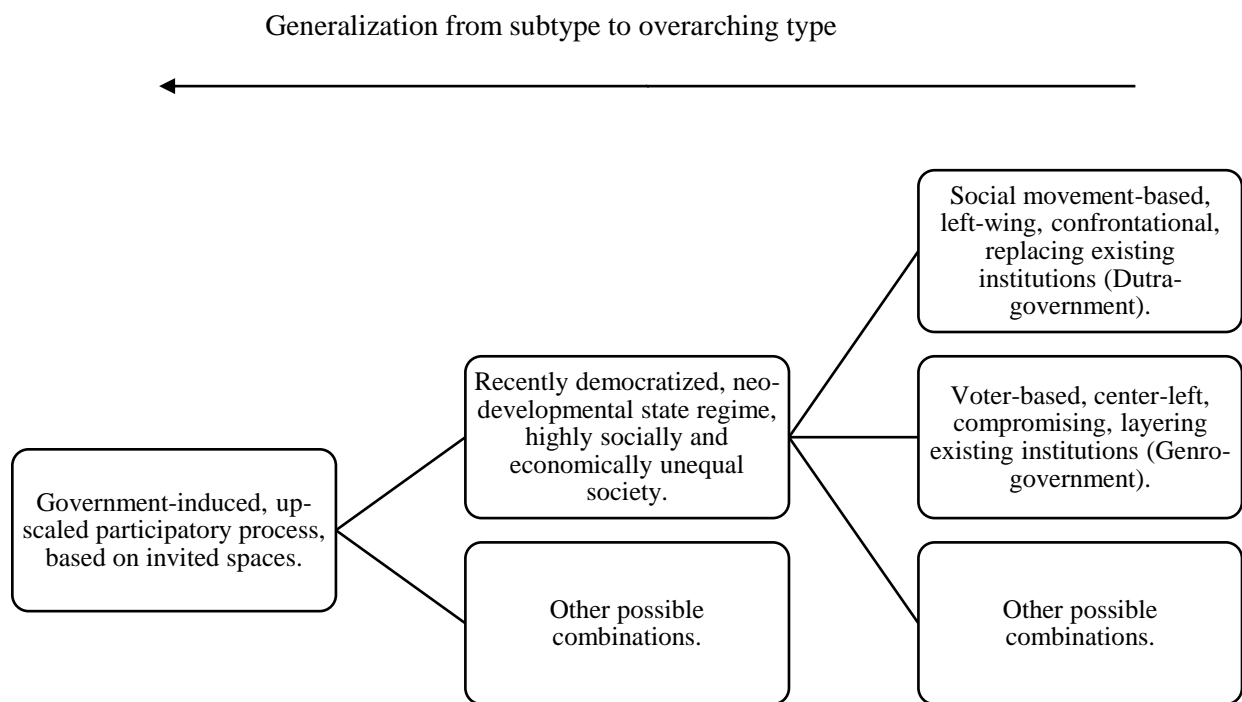


Figure 5: Illustration of how it is possible to generalize from case findings with typological theorizing.

Even though I base my findings on just a few cases out of a universe of potentially vastly different experiences, they share characteristics with other cases. These can be grouped together in certain classes of phenomena. The overall class that Rio Grande do Sul’s PB belongs to is the attempt to scale up participation. Even though I distinguish between two possible sub-strategies within this general class — one is ‘organic’, seeking to create institutions outside of existing institutions through ‘invented’ spaces, while the other is ‘induced’ through existing government institutions and based on ‘invited spaces’ — several of my findings are relevant for all attempts to scale up participatory democracy. Among these commonalities are the problem of how to balance participation and representation, the trade-offs in handling deliberation and mass participation, and the use of institutional design to prevent collective action problems. Challenges that are more specific to the induced and invited approach include the relationship with political opponents and bureaucratic administrations. There are still more differences within both the overarching class of phenomena, and within the subclasses. The exclusion of citizens with very low levels of education from large-scale participatory processes

can be expected to be strong in highly class-divided societies. The extent to which authority is delegated to participating citizens will also vary with economic conditions such as the fiscal capacity of the state, and the type of bureaucracy. The question of what can and cannot be generalized is not intrinsic in the typological scheme itself, however, but has to be analytically determined in each case. As such, this way of thinking is more of a tool to ascertain what is specific for one case and relevant for other cases, rather than a theoretical scheme to analyze the case itself.

7. Summary of the articles

In this section, I present the articles that make up this dissertation. I give a brief overview of the main arguments in each article, the theoretical perspectives I use and discuss, as well as the approach used to reach the conclusion. I also present what I think is the separate contribution of each article to the topics it addresses, as well as the contributions of each to the overarching research questions of the thesis.

Table 4: Overview of the articles

Article title and journal/book	Empirical focus	Broader theoretical context: Main argument	Relevance for the overarching research questions of this dissertation
1. Is the city the appropriate scale for participatory democracy? Some answers from Brazil (<i>Tidsskriftet Politik</i>)	Comparison of state level PB in Rio Grande do Sul and municipal level PB in Porto Alegre.	Normative theories of scale and participatory democracy: The difference between PB at the city and state level are not vast, but rather graded.	Participatory democracy may thrive best in small towns and cities, but the comparison of city and state level PB in Brazil does not support this claim.
2. Scaling up Participation: Consequences for Voice, Vote, Oversight and Social Justice	Comparison of Rio Grande do Sul's PB in 1999-2002 and 2011-2014.	Social science assumptions about scale and participatory democracy: Several dismal predictions hold true, but differences between the cases point at possibilities for scaling-up and that other factors such as institutional design, constituencies and political ideology matter.	PB principles face a range of scalar challenges such as representation, organized state power and bureaucratic agencies. Scale, however, does not tell the whole story. Other factors alter these dimensions within the scalar limitations.
3. The Systemic Turn and Participatory Budgeting: The Case of Rio Grande do Sul	Rio Grande do Sul's multichannel participatory system (2011-2014) contrasted with the state PB (1999-2002).	Theories of deliberative systems, multichannel engagement, and countervailing power: Diversification allowed for both deliberations and direct democracy. Online voting mobilized new sectors to participate. The different channels, however, undermined each other and PB was elite captured.	Different forms of scaling up face different challenges and trade-offs. The diversification approach can potentially engage more citizens and allow for deliberations and decision-making to occur in different channels. It is, however, vulnerable to forum-shopping, displacements and soft free riding.
4. Translation and institutional change: What happened when participatory budgeting came to the Nordic countries?	The interpretation and implementation of PB in the Nordic countries and Fredrikstad (Norway)	Translation theory, policy travel, institutional change: PB is given new meanings in new places. One reason is differences in the broader characteristics of the contexts, another is that established institutions limit the range of possible translations.	Translation is a central aspect of 'scaling-out.' To scale up PB to the state level one also needs to scale out PBs to multiple new institutions, which opens up for the possibility that these institutions translate and twist the participatory process. This challenges the uniformity of the process, and inevitably shapes its content.

Article I: “Is the city the appropriate scale for participatory democracy? Some answers from Brazil” (Published in *Tidsskriftet Politik*, 19 (3): 84-104. 2016)

According to city-democrats, the city has the potential of becoming a realm of participatory self-government. One cannot test such a normative claim empirically, but its assumptions about the viability and achievability of participatory democracy rest on the interpretation of concrete historical examples and which empirical merits can be studied. Benjamin Barber is a well-known city-democrat who uses the Brazilian PB to support his normative claims. Admittedly, he says that PB alone cannot prove that cities are more capable of participatory democracy than the state, but he nonetheless contends that they offer hope that this is the case. If Barber is right that PB offers this hope, PB should work significantly better at the city level than the state level. This article compares PB at the city level in Porto Alegre and the state level in Rio Grande do Sul. It finds that even though the practice of PB more closely resembles some ideals of participatory democracy at the local level, the difference between the city and state level is more a question of gradations than vast leaps of democratic merit. Some of the features considered unique to the city — neighborhood-based community associations that mobilize and discuss with citizens in local public spheres — are also important in the state PB. The evidence from this comparison does not undermine Barber’s argument, and it certainly cannot resolve the question of whether the city – or other political units on a municipal scale – has a greater *potential* for participatory democracy than the state. It implies, however, that city-democrats should be cautious about using PB to support their normative claims.

Article II: “Scaling up Participation — Consequences for Voice, Vote, Oversight and Social Justice” (co-authored with Benjamin Goldfrank)

Academics and practitioners alike tend to think that participatory schemes like PB work best in small communities or cities, and have very dismal expectations of what will happen to such schemes if they are scaled up. One assumption is that representatives, rather than ordinary participants, will dominate them, and that participants will come from privileged sections of the population. Another is that politicians and bureaucrats at higher levels of government are not willing to share their power, and that the space for such schemes is very small. A final assumption is that large-scale participatory schemes will fail to redistribute resources to disadvantaged groups, and most likely favor strong and relatively affluent minorities. This study compares the state PB in Rio Grande do Sul under the Dutra- (1999-2002) and the Genro-

governments (2011-2014) to see whether these putatively general propositions hold true. We find that some of them do, but others do not. In both cases, elected representatives dominated the PB process, and both participants and representatives had higher educational qualifications and incomes than the average population. The authority attributed to the PB institutions was quite low, and bureaucratic agencies used their resources to affect the PB agenda. On the other hand, the budget referendum held under the Genro-government shrank the authority of the representatives and gave electors the final say over budget priorities. Under the Dutra-government, participants and representatives had a more popular profile than under the Genro-government, and Dutra also gave significant formal powers to the PB process despite intense resistance from the right-wing and its capitalist supporters. In both cases, bureaucratic resistance against the PB was mild, and administrators expressed positive views of the PB. Moreover, the up-scaled scheme managed to redistribute resources to the poorest and least developed municipalities. We conclude by saying that scale matters, but so does institutional design, constituencies and political ideology. Participatory institutions can be designed to achieve a better balance between participation and representation, as well as to provide rules that ensure redistribution on a large-scale. The constituencies that are mobilized to be engaged in processes decide the profile of those who participate. Political ideology is crucial for parties and movements to withstand pressures from those who resist the implementation of participatory schemes, as well as to uphold and develop such schemes.

Article III: “The Systemic Turn and Participatory Budgeting: The Case of Rio Grande do Sul”
(co-authored with Benjamin Goldfrank)

According to Cohen and Fung (2004), the scale and complexity of modern polities limits the extent to which participatory practices can be both deliberative and participatory at the same time. The PB under the Dutra- and the Genro-government related to the complexity stemming from increased scale in different ways. In the first case, the approach was one of *unification*, where major policy issues were assigned to one institution, and where it was up to the participants to decide priorities and connect the dots between the various investment areas in a holistic manner. The second case was one of *diversification*, where the policy issues were spread across multiple offline and online institutions, granting participants the opportunity to debate the details of multiple policies. In this article, we are particularly interested in the advantages and disadvantages of the diversification approach from a participation perspective. Using theories of deliberative systems, multichannel engagement, and countervailing power,

we find that diversification allowed for in-depth deliberations in some channels while simultaneously retaining an element of direct democracy. The addition of online voting also managed to mobilize certain sectors of the population that otherwise would not have participated in the process. The disadvantage was that the different channels of the participatory system undermined each other. Since power was distributed across the system, no channel had more authority than any other, which forced citizens to prioritize specific areas in order to influence state policies. Social movements, always vital for a well-functioning PB, migrated to other spaces and left the budgeting process open to control by well-established powerful groups. High-ranking politicians and allied public sector workers essentially displaced lower-class social movements. In sum, we argue that one eventual outcome of the *Sistema* was a kind of elite capture of participatory budgeting.

Article IV: “Translation and institutional change: What happened when participatory budgeting came to the Nordic countries?” (Forthcoming in Engelstad, Holst and Aakvaag eds.: *Democracy and Institutional Change: A Nordic Perspective*, De Gruyter Open 2018)

When a policy, idea or practice like PB travels from one place to another, it is not merely received, rejected, resisted or accepted — it is also translated. This article (a book chapter) looks of how PB was translated when it came to the Nordic countries and more specifically to Fredrikstad in Norway. It uses what is called ‘translation theory’ in Scandinavian institutionalism and connects with theories of institutional change to interpret and explain the Fredrikstad case. The translation to Fredrikstad did not lead to institutional change, but only added new layers to pre-existing political and administrative arrangements. The article finds that one reason for this is that the conditions that nourished PB in Brazil are absent in the Nordic countries. Another is that the settled institutions in Norway/Fredrikstad exert strong pressure on how an imported practice like PB can be translated. The article makes a contribution to the PB-literature by expanding the notion of translation that has been utilized in other studies but not comprehensively explored. It also connects two perspectives — translation and institutional change — that are rarely combined. The main strength of this synthesis, in my opinion, is that it can give the institutional change literature a richer conceptualization of the micro-level interpretations and modifications that are part of change-processes. For translation theory, it expands the notion of editing infrastructure and demonstrates why an understanding of the institutional context needs to be addressed by this. The contribution to the main topic of the thesis is that it provides powerful tools to illuminate the translation that also goes on in scaling-

up processes. When PB is lifted to a higher level of government, this also means that it encompasses lower level institutions that will translate the way the practice is implemented.

8. Concluding remarks

In the introduction to this chapter, I asked what the challenges to scaling up participatory democracy are, and whether it is possible to realize the principles of ‘voice, vote, oversight and social justice’ on a large scale or whether these values thrive best in towns and cities. I furthermore asked if the state PB experience in Rio Grande do Sul infringed on these principles, and if differences over time showed that some forms of ‘scaling up’ are better suited to realize these principles than others. Finally, I asked what the differences between ‘scaling up’ and ‘scaling out’ are, and what a study of the ‘scaling out’ of participatory budgeting to Fredrikstad in Norway reveals about the challenges of ‘scaling up’.

In this dissertation, I give four interrelated arguments that answer these questions. The first is that scale is not an insurmountable barrier to participation. To do things on a large scale does not, by itself, presuppose elite dominance or exclude disadvantaged sectors of the population from political participation. To be sure, the increase of group size or territorial extension alters the parameters of human interaction. The face-to-face deliberation that we often associate with the term ‘participatory democracy’ is inconceivable with thousands or millions of people. Nevertheless, a vast number of social and political configurations along these parameters are possible, and some of them may be very democratic and very participatory. The state PB in Rio Grande do Sul shows that the principles of ‘voice, vote, oversight and social justice’ can, to varying degrees, be realized on a large-scale. A substantial number of individuals were involved in deciding over the available budget funds and at times participants and delegates came from underprivileged sectors. They distributed funds to the most underdeveloped municipalities in the state, and the two governments at least attempted to open up the investment budget to the population. This does not mean that there are no challenges to scaling up a system like PB. To the contrary, the increase of the size of the group, the extension of the territory and the heightened level in the scalar hierarchy of power, pose specific challenges. Among these are how to balance representation and grassroots participation, how to include low educated groups in deliberations of complex political issues, and how to get politicians and bureaucrats at higher levels of government to delegate power to lay people. The Dutra and Genro governments responded to these scalar challenges with limited success. Under both governments the PB process was dominated by elected representatives, participants and representatives alike had higher education levels and incomes than the average population, the authority granted to the

PB institutions was quite low, and bureaucratic agencies used their resources to influence the PB agenda.

This seems to prove the argument that participatory democracy works better in smaller towns and cities. However, I do not think the answer is that simple. My comparison of Porto Alegre's and Rio Grande do Sul's PBs demonstrates that the differences between what is thought of as the most successful state-level and city-level processes are a matter of gradations rather than vast leaps in democratic merits. This seems to be supported by the overall PB literature. The shortcomings of Rio Grande do Sul's PB are not unique, but recognizable in most towns and cities with PBs as well (Hernandes, 2008; Junge, 2012; Montambeault & Goirand, 2016; Romão, 2011). One explanation for this is that state and municipal level PBs are not affected by scale alone, but also other factors such as economic preconditions, institutional design, the type of constituency mobilized to participate in the process and political ideology. Another explanation is that those who claim that towns and cities are better suited for participatory democracy exaggerate the potential for participation at the local level. I think that the answers lie somewhere between the two. It is easier to facilitate deliberations and establish solidary ties among smaller groups of people, and municipal institutions are physically and socially nearer to the average citizen. An ideal comparison of two identical PBs, where only the scale of the process was different, would probably reveal that the small-scale process possessed a higher degree of 'voice' and 'oversight.' On the other hand, this eschews the fact that there are significant advantages of scaling up. When more people contribute to the common pool of resources, the resources that are available to redistribute are also greater. This fact may encourage more people to participate and create a sense of being able to affect bigger political issues than merely local ones. In the ideal comparison, the large-scale process would probably fare better on the 'vote' and 'social justice' dimensions.

This brings me to my third argument. There are advantages and disadvantages to different strategies and forms of 'scaling up'. In this thesis I have investigated some of the distinct challenges and trade-offs of the confrontational strategy of the Dutra-government and the accommodating strategy of the Genro-government. A major challenge of the confrontational strategy is that resistance from the defenders of the old institutions hampers attempts at political reform. A trade-off is that while the new institutions may have a highly participatory 'spirit,' they can become one-sided and alienate major sections of the population. The advantage is that the strategy may 'pay off' in the sense that the participatory institutions will gain a significant

amount of power. Previously disenfranchised groups may also be mobilized to take part in politics because they are motivated by a new ideological project. A major challenge of the accommodating strategy is that the participatory institutions end up powerless because of too many compromises with oppositional forces. A trade-off is that while this may ensure the sustainability of the participatory institutions, they also become politically less interesting for organized sections of the population who seek engagement elsewhere. The advantage is that the institutions may enjoy a high degree of legitimacy among the population, and that this creates a space for additional participatory reforms in the future. More importantly, I have identified and shown advantages and disadvantages of the *unification* and *diversification* approaches, which represent two extremes of how to handle the complexity of political processes on a large scale. The unification approach gives citizens the opportunity to deliberate on a vast range of issues by attending only one process. However, it becomes more representative than participatory. There is not enough time to deal with the whole range of issues in a local assembly, and representatives are needed to coordinate the participants' decisions across hundreds of municipalities. The advantage of the diversification approach is that it allows in-depth deliberations to occur in some channels while retaining an element of direct democracy. The disadvantage is that the different channels of the participatory system can undermine each other and there is no space – except for conventional elections – where citizens can have at least a minimum level of influence over the political matters they deem most important.

My fourth argument in this dissertation is that the analytical distinction between 'scaling up' and 'scaling out' is important. Whereas 'scaling up' deals with classic questions of communication, organization and collective action, 'scaling out' deals with question of diffusion, transfer and translation (Marsh & Sharman, 2009; Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008; Shipan & Volden, 2008). However, 'scaling up' and 'scaling out' are intertwined. Scaling up entails a double-scaling process: First, a scaling up from a local practice to a higher level, and then a scaling out to multiple institutions at the lower level. In this process a double translation occurs. The relevance of my Fredrikstad study, in this regard, is that it shows why and how PB undergoes translation as it scales out from one place to another. What is perceived as meaningful PB practice at the municipal level, first has to be translated into something that can also be implemented at the state level. Next, this translation has to be operationalized and translated again to the municipal level. These are crucial challenges of scaling up PB. The adaptation of a small-scale practice to a large-scale territory requires a lot of trial and error and

adjustments. The subsequent diffusion to the lower level opens up for multiple new translations that may be very different from what the central organizers consider as valid participatory practices. Even though I have not elaborated on these challenges in the articles on Rio Grande do Sul, I observe these challenges in my material. On one hand there is a conflict between those who think that the state level PB is merely a poor copy of the original version in Porto Alegre, and those who believe that a state level PB has to be different from municipal level practices. On the other hand, there is also a conflict between local authorities who have their own interpretation of what PB is – who needs to be involved, how to organize assemblies etc. – and central organizers who think that the authorities are trying to appropriate the process for themselves and benefit politically from potential projects that are initiated this way.

These four main arguments can have repercussions both theoretically and practically. The decline in electoral turnout, low levels of trust in politicians and political institutions and decreasing membership of political parties, has led many academics, activists and politicians to see ‘democratic innovations’ – such as deliberative mini-publics, citizen initiatives and digital engagement tools – as means to reinvigorate, reform or radically deepen democracy (Geissel & Newton, 2012; A. Michels, 2011; G. Smith, 2009). PB has achieved a paradigmatic status in this literature. Porto Alegre frequently represents a central reference for trends as diverse as anarchism (Ross, 2011), ‘commoning’ (Bollier, 2017), deliberative democracy (Cohen, 2009) and participatory development (Mansuri & Rao, 2013). Archon Fung — a central figure in the field of participatory and deliberative governance — has stated that the significance of PB for the theory of participatory democracy is akin to the discovery of the quark in theoretical physics (Fung, 2011, p. 859). An understanding of the challenges involved in scaling up PB should therefore have significance beyond academic curiosity and for those who wish to scale up similar participatory endeavors. Moreover, despite the interest in how to scale up these innovations, there are very few alternative theoretical accounts to the ‘default position’ when it comes to scale and participation. There are some developments in this direction, especially in the fields of collective intelligence (Landemore, 2013; Lee, Goel, Aitamurto, & Landemore, 2014), and with the systemic turn in deliberative democracy (Mansbridge et al., 2012; Pogrebinschi, 2013b). This dissertation makes a contribution to this small, but flourishing, theoretical discussion. I also think it adds some preliminary notes to what could be broader research program on scale and participation. A new branch of study that goes beyond the nation-state, and the classics that were written within this framework, has only just begun.

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Is the city the appropriate scale for participatory democracy? Some answers from Brazil

Sveinung Legard

The city used to have a prominent place in political theory, but as the nation-state became the dominant political form in the 18th century, the city largely disappeared from political philosophy (Dahl and Tufte 1973, chapter 1). Nevertheless, the city lingered on in democratic theory, especially among thinkers who criticized representative government and maintained that some kind of participatory politics should be put in its place. Two of the most outspoken bearers of this tradition are Murray Bookchin and Benjamin Barber. They see the city as a potential realm of the citizens' collective management through face-to-face assemblies (Bookchin 1995), and as a natural venue for citizen participation (Barber 2013). Even Robert Dahl, considered by some the father of modern political science, argues that the medium-sized city is the optimal unit for democracy: it is both big enough to deal with the most vital aspects of our environment, yet at the same time small enough for citizens to participate extensively in determining the ways in which power should be used (Dahl 1967; Dahl 1990, 126-135).

City-democrats like these do not present empirical theories that can be tested through observation and experiment. They make normative claims of what democracy *should* be like. Nonetheless, their claims are based on assumptions of the viability and achievability of the alternatives they present, which in turn are informed by empirical cases (Wright 2010, 21-25). Some of the historical examples they use include classical Athens, city republics in medieval Italy, or rebellious cities like Paris during the Great French Revolution. The contemporary case probably most used to support the city democratic view, is participatory budgeting in Brazil (Pateman 2012). There, municipalities have given citizens the opportunity to decide the budget through an open, participatory

process. Archon Fung has written that the significance of participatory budgeting for the theory of participatory democracy is akin to the discovery of the quark in theoretical physics (Fung 2011, 859).

One way to think of such empirical examples is that they constitute one of many building blocks or ‘provisional fixed points’ of normative theories. Both these points and the general theory itself are open to continual revisions, and if the points are incompatible with the general normative theory, we might consider either revising the fixed point or the theory, or vice versa (Thacher 2006, 1647-1648). I doubt that any city democrats would discard their view if participatory budgeting in Brazil did not turn out to be as good as many think, but it could spark revisions of their theories. The fixed point that I will discuss in this article is the assumption that the city is a more appropriate scale for participatory democracy than higher levels of government. Barber relates this directly to participatory budgeting. He writes that participatory budgeting cannot prove that urban government is more capable of ‘strong democracy’ than the state, but it at least “offers hope for those who believe there may be a little less distance between mayors and citizens than between voters and state authorities” (Barber 2013, 308). I ask whether the experience of participatory budgeting in Brazil warrants this hope. Does participatory budgeting work better at the city level than at larger scales? And what does this tell us about the assumption that the city is the appropriate scale for participatory democracy?

In this article I compare participatory budgeting in the city of Porto Alegre (a city with about 1.5 million inhabitants) and the state of Rio Grande do Sul in southern Brazil (a state with about 11.2 million inhabitants). This limits the scope of the answer. I do not, for example, compare participatory processes at the municipal and the federal level. I also eschew comparisons such as those between the city and the countryside, between cities of different sizes, or of the type of conditions that promote or impede participatory processes at different levels. These are undoubtedly important for a broader evaluation of the city as a site for participatory democracy, but are not the focus here. Notwithstanding these limitations, the comparison in this study provides a partial but interesting answer. Even though the practice of participatory budgeting more closely resembles ideals of participatory democracy at the city level, it does not mean that participatory democracy is impossible at larger scales. On the contrary, the difference between participatory budgeting at the city and state level is more a question of grades than leaps in

terms of democratic qualities. Furthermore, some of the features that are considered unique to the city – neighborhood-based community associations that mobilize and discuss with citizens in local public spheres – are also important in participatory budgeting at the state level. The experiences of participatory budgeting at the city and state level in Brazil suggests that it is both wrong to overemphasize the uniqueness of the city as well as to downplay the possibility that it might play a special role in both local and larger participatory processes.

Participatory democracy and the city

There exists a diversity of versions of ‘participatory democracy’ (see for example Pateman 1970; Mansbridge 1983; Bachrach and Botwinick 1992; della Porta 2013). Most define it as a type of organization (here a form of government) that is based on the direct participation in decision-making processes by those that are affected by such decisions. These processes have to possess real decision-making powers, and empower previously excluded and marginalized groups. A participatory democracy does not exclude the election of some individuals to perform certain tasks or take certain decisions, but it shifts the authority in the organization from the representative organs to the participatory channels.

Barber, Bookchin and Dahl have different takes on participatory democracy and the city, but share the view that *proximity* between residents and between residents and their government makes the city suited for a participatory form of government. Bookchin emphasizes, for example, that face-to-face encounters in the local communities of a city are the foundation for forums where common affairs can be discussed and decided upon among neighbors. Such forums are potentially open to all adult community members (Biehl 1998; Bookchin 2015; Bookchin 1995). The city is a *public* association. It favors public spaces and a vision of the city as a public common, and as such also a democratic culture derived from the close yet impersonal and free city life (Barber 2013, 68-71). Moreover, the relationship between citizens and the city government is more direct than with central governments. Whereas the government of the nation-state normally unfolds at a distance, the city administration regularly appears in the spaces where citizens convene (Barber 2013, 93). Although cities require experts and administration to solve their

problems, these problems are fairly comprehensible to the average citizen (Dahl 1967, 967).

The state – both at the national/federal and the state/provincial level – is seen by city-democrats as too big to allow for extensive participation. Whenever the number of citizens grows large they must resort to representation. This eliminates the possibility that every citizen can engage in a discussion with the authorities. The channels of communication from the citizen to the top political leaders are long and indirect, and communication is asymmetrical. A leader of a state can speak directly to millions of voters, but only a tiny fraction can ever speak directly back (Dahl 1967, 957). The centralization of power creates a dynamic whereby citizens and communities are separated (Barber 1984, 248-249) and by which local public spheres are contained, controlled and manipulated by elites that are afraid to see their authority undermined (Bookchin 1995, 221). Instead of being active participants in politics, citizens become followers of leaders in representative institutions (Barber 1984, 224). That is why Barber does not ascribe much hope to attempts to democratize them. “On the whole,” he writes, “attempts at democratization within the confines of thin democracy work only to further polarize elites and masses while cloaking oligarchic manipulation in a mantle of popular sovereignty” (Barber 1984, 206).

An idealized image?

A number of criticisms can be levelled against this view. One is that the city-democrats present an idealized image of the city; one not rooted in how cities actually work. Murray Low (2004), for example, argues that cities are far more complex than suggested above. Urban dwellers do not primarily interact with each other in neighborhoods, but in multiple settings that are not necessarily tied to the local community. Nor do they talk directly to each other or with the city government. Rather, their communication is mostly mediated by an array of technologies, institutions and organizations (2004, 133). Moreover, city inhabitants don't have uniform knowledge of the city's issues and its political affairs. Instead they have a lot of knowledge about some areas and very little about others, which means that their political competence varies. Barnett (2014) echoes this view and argues that the ideal of participatory democracy is not tied to a specific location. Sometimes the principle that everyone who is affected by a decision should

have a say in it, leads groups of citizens to recognize themselves as affected by common urban issues, become organized through local public forums and to work directly with the city government in ways that are participatory and democratic. At other times, however, this principle might lead them to identify with citizens from other cities, become organized through representatives that build networks across cities, and to indirectly link up with governments and other institutions at a variety of scales. For Low it is not only wrong, but also dangerous, to view the city as a unique place for participatory democracy. It might lead us to overlook the potential for democratization in other settings, or even worse to underestimate the possibilities of democratizing governments and social relations at a larger scale (2004, 137).

The city-democrats concede that they present the image of an ideal city, but not that it is an idealized image of contemporary cities. Both Bookchin and Dahl use words such as ‘non-city’ or ‘anti-city’ to describe the modern megalopolis. They are more concerned with the democratic possibilities in the city, as opposed to those in state institutions at larger scales. But in order to realize this potential, the city’s institutions and social life have to be reorganized and sometimes refashioned. Ultimately this is seen as part of a broader social transformation that deals with several structural impediments such as uncontrolled urban growth, the subversion of local autonomy by the state, entrenched political and economic elites and persistent social inequalities (Dahl 1990, 89-96; Bookchin 1995; Barber 2013, chapter 7-9; Barber 1984, 251-260). This is why Bookchin and Barber argue that participatory democracy is best suited to smaller cities, and that today’s megacities have the same problems as nation-states. Dahl places the number of inhabitants in an ideal democratic city as somewhere between 50,000 and 200,000. This does not mean that participatory democracy has to be postponed until all cities are of this size. In large metropolises, for example, this ideal can be pursued by breaking it up into smaller administrative units. Political decentralization can open up democratic spaces at the neighborhood level while physical decentralization processes continue (Dahl 1967, 968-969; Bookchin 1995, chapter 8 and appendix). Nor do the city-democrats renounce political institutions at larger scales, but want to see them organized differently. Both Bookchin and Barber concede that this requires the election of representatives or ‘delegates,’ but they simultaneously believe that local participatory organs can sufficiently instruct and control these representatives and prevent them from

ending up as self-serving elites (Bookchin 1995, appendix; Barber 1984, 248; Barber 2013, chapter 11).

Participatory budgeting in the city and the state

It is not only Barber who sees participatory budgeting in Brazil – and especially in Porto Alegre – as an inspiring example of participatory democracy. It has a high-standing on the international Left, and been supported by development institutions such as the World Bank and the UN Development Program (Goldfrank 2012). Over the last decades, it has spread to more than a thousand cities worldwide – including places like New York, Paris and even municipalities in Scandinavia (Gilman 2016; Sintomer et al. 2016; Dias 2014). Although the ideal of participatory democracy is less visible in the various adaptations of participatory budgeting outside of Brazil, it was at the heart of the project when it was first initiated in Porto Alegre in 1989. The left-wing alliance led by the Workers' Party (PT) that won the elections in the city in 1988, saw it as a first step toward a socialist society based on an assembly- and council-structure emanating from the neighborhoods. One of the main aims was to break down the clientelism and corruption that had previously dominated the political life of the city, another was to direct public investments to the poorer city districts (Abers 2000, chapter 2-3; Baiocchi 2005, chapter 2).

The system has undergone various phases in Porto Alegre – from an early trial and error phase, to a period of stable growth with increasing popular support and improved administrative capacity, to a phase with a shrinking budget, reduced political support and increased debt problems (from around 2002-to date) (Abers 2000; Goldfrank 2011, chapter 5; Junge 2012; Chavez 2008). Yet the basic structure of the process has remained intact since the early 1990s. The money for the participatory budget is taken from the city's investment funds and is used to initiate *new projects or services* that range from connecting neighborhoods to the water network, paving roads, improving the sewer system, renovating schools, or establishing health clinics, computer labs and kindergartens etc. Secondly, the process has elements of both direct participation and representation. It begins in open assemblies in the city districts where residents can propose what kind of projects or services the budget should fund. Here, the participants also cast votes on which investment areas they want to prioritize, and they elect individ-

uals to represent them at the city level. A similar process based on the thematic areas of the budget – such as education, infrastructure, transportation and health – also takes place. The task of the elected delegates is to knit together the proposals of the district and thematic assemblies, and to appoint the members of a budget council that write an investment proposition for the city in conjunction with the mayor's administration, based on the proposals and priorities decided through the participatory process. At the end of the budget cycle, the result of this work is delivered to the municipal legislative assembly which either alters the proposition or accepts it as it is.

Participatory budgeting has been adopted by hundreds of municipalities in Brazil (Avritzer and Vaz 2014; Fedozzi and Lima 2014). Still Porto Alegre is considered as one of the most successful examples of participatory budgeting, and the case that, at least in its stable growth phase, has been closest to the ideals of participatory democracy.²⁴ Research finds that municipal autonomy and decentralization of fiscal authority (Goldfrank 2011), the willingness of the mayor's administration to delegate decision-making powers to the citizens (Wampler 2007) and civil society organizations that both cooperate and contest with the municipality (Baiocchi et al. 2011), are particularly favorable conditions for a participatory democratic budget process in the city. However, as Junge points out, Porto Alegre is far from a fully realized participatory democracy. Only a small percentage of citizens attend meetings — usually somewhere between 2-7 per cent of the total population. Many just show up at an assembly to vote, or even because they were told to do so by a community organization or municipal representative. They do not engage in sustained discussions, monitoring and mobilization over time. Participatory budgeting is also highly dependent on the goodwill of the mayor, who has a disproportionate power over the content of the process (Junge 2012, 421).

Participatory budgeting has also been adopted at the state level. In total five states have had a form of participatory budgeting.²⁵ No other state has gone as far in imple-

²⁴ For comparisons of Porto Alegre with other Brazilian municipalities with participatory budgeting, see for example Wampler (2007); Baiocchi et al. (2011); Avritzer (2009); Marquetti et al. (2008) and Cabannes (2004).

²⁵ These are Mato Grosso do Sul (Bittar 2003), Rio de Janeiro (Peci 2000), Minas Gerais (Corrêa 2008), Paraíba (Cezário 2013) and Rio Grande do Sul. The share of states that have practiced participatory budgeting has actually been higher than that of municipalities. 2.8 per cent of all municipal governments (or government periods) since the early 1990s has done participatory budgeting, whereas the share is 4.9 per cent at the state level. I made this estimate by adding up the total number of municipal government periods from 1989-2002 based on the cur-

menting it as Rio Grande do Sul. In 1999 the Workers' Party entered the government and initiated a process that aimed to create spaces where citizens could plan and decide on the budget, and to redistribute public funds to the poorest sectors of the population (Frente Popular 1998). All state investments were included in the participatory budget, but it was highly disputed and the government was forced to alter the organization of it due to pressures from the opposition (Goldfrank and Schneider 2006). It has continued to exist in the state since 1999, but in general right-wing governments have given the participatory budget a minor role in decisions over the state's investments. In 2011-2014 the Workers' Party regained power and tried to reinvigorate the process, but it only gave population the power to decide over about 10 per cent of the total investments.²⁶ The research on this process is less extensive than on Porto Alegre. However, Goldfrank and Schneider (2002) write that the existence and relative success of participatory budgeting at the state level challenges the assumption that participatory democracy is unworkable at large scales, although the regularity and the quality of participation seems to have been affected when moving from the city to the state level. Faria (2005) is concerned with how scale shifts power in the process from regular participants to representative forums, and that the bureaucracy is better organized and has a greater say in the process at the state level.

Comparing 'best cases' at the city and state level

I take this analysis a step further by adding data from the state participatory budget in Rio Grande do Sul 2011-2014. This data is from field-work I did in 2014, which consisted of interviews with government officials, organizers, participants and other central actors (49 interviews), observations of assemblies at the regional and local level (7 as-

rent number of municipalities in Brazil. For the number of government periods with participatory budgeting I used (Fedozzi and Lima 2014, 158) which give a total of number of 796 such periods. Some of these probably include participatory budgets that were started late or aborted, but that's also the case for the state level. The five states with participatory budgeting gives a total of 8 government periods from 1991-2014. I give Rio Grande do Sul four government periods with participatory budgeting. In addition to the state participatory budget from 1999-2002, I include all subsequent government periods since they involved a 'Consulta Popular' based on open municipal assemblies. This is a positive estimate since all of the state government periods would not fall into a strict definition of participatory budgeting. However, since there are good reasons to think that a large portion of the municipalities also would fall short of this definition, I believe this is a good comparison.

²⁶ Source: Transparência RS (www.transparencia.rs.gov.br).

semblies), and a survey of delegates in a strategic selection of six of the state's 28 macro-regions (chosen to represent the demographic, economic, social and political diversity in the state). My description of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre is based on secondary sources,²⁷ but I also analyze raw survey data on delegates from 2003 and 2009. The description of the first period of the state participatory budget is also based on secondary sources.²⁸ These secondary data highlight the development of the participatory budget over time, and give me an opportunity to compare the different levels. When using the secondary data, I have tried to be aware of possible bias, both positive and negative.

I compare what are considered the 'best cases' of participatory budgeting at the city and state level. The ideal here would be if these were also the most similar cases, in the sense that they were equal on all variables except for their scale (George and Bennett 2005, chapter 8; Levy 2008, 10-11). But they are not. The main similarities are that they were implemented and sustained by an alliance of a political party and social movements with commitments to participatory democracy and redistribution of public resources and that they are based on a similar organizational model. The main difference is that this alliance in Porto Alegre had more than 15 years to develop the process before the right-wing took over, whereas the state participatory budget had a shorter and more turbulent history of shifting governments and a contracting and expanding process. This study is based on both qualitative and quantitative data. I use this multi-method approach to be able to paint a more integrated picture of the participatory process, as opposed to only using one method. One weakness is that I have only surveyed delegates, and not regular participants in 2014. Since this comparison is about participatory democracy, I should ideally have data on the profile and opinions of both participants and delegates for all periods and at both levels. But despite these limitations, I think this study has more to gain than to lose from making a broad comparison.

²⁷ Especially the in-depth accounts and discussions in Baiocchi (2005); Abers (2000); Gret and Sintomer (2005); Avritzer (2009); Goldfrank (2011); Wampler (2007).

²⁸ These are Goldfrank and Schneider (2002); Goldfrank and Schneider (2006); Sobottka and Streck (2014); Goldfrank (2014); Streck et al. (2005); Faria (2005); (César 2004).

Institutional design, representation and space for deliberation

City democrats claim the space for participation is smaller at the state than the city level, and that engagement will be more indirect and representative. My comparison supports this contention. Whereas the budget cycle in Porto Alegre is based on two rounds of open assemblies in the city's districts, the state participatory budget includes only one assembly meeting in each municipality. In the first round of assemblies in Porto Alegre the city administration presents the results of the previous year's budget, shows the available resources of the current year and answers critical questions from the audience. This kicks off an important phase of discussion and organization that goes on in the local communities until the next round of assemblies. In the second round of assemblies the investment proposals are made, budget priorities are voted on and delegates elected.

In the state participatory budget both these rounds take place within a time-frame of two to three hours in one meeting. Consequently, the space for discussion and critical questions is diminished. Another feature that used to be central to the participatory budget in Porto Alegre was thematic assemblies. These were meetings that took place on a city-wide basis where spending within the different sectors of the municipality was discussed. Nothing of this sort has been attempted at the state level. All in all, the state participatory budget has been characterized by a stripped-down model where the spaces of direct participation and deliberation are fewer.

Is this related to differences in scale? Both yes and no. Partly it is a question of resources. If the state government had enough personnel to travel around and encourage people to come to the meetings, it would probably be able to hold the same number of assemblies in each municipality as in Porto Alegre. But the state of Rio Grande do Sul does not have these resources. The process, however, does not only depend on logistical assistance, but also on the political legitimacy of the municipalities to implement the process at the local level. This is a question of scale. Rio Grande do Sul has nearly five hundred municipalities, many of which are small and dominated by politicians who do not favor participatory democracy. It is not realistic, therefore, to ask the municipalities to hold several rounds of assemblies. As one of the state organizers emphasized, a lot of convincing and negotiation have to take place in order for many municipalities to even host a single meeting:

Even though [the state participatory budget] has been a tradition in Rio Grande do Sul for a long time, there are still places where local participation is small and timid [...]. Some mayors don't want to get involved in the process. If it was up to them it wouldn't take place. If they don't want to do it, we have to mobilize the community to force the municipality to get involved. But then the participatory process will be bad – if the municipal administration doesn't participate it will be very bad. So then the mayor says “ok, let's do it.” Before we have to use our authority to ask other public sectors to get involved in the process, [the mayor and the municipal administration] normally come around to do it in partnership with us. But if it depended on their initiative, it wouldn't happen.²⁹

This simplified model also means that the most important deliberation regarding the details of the budget is done by elected delegates. In the state-wide process from 1999-2002 this was especially the case as a state budget council was selected that wrote up, fairly autonomously, the final budget proposal. As Claudia Faria points out, the regular participants showing up at local assemblies in the state budgeting process are ‘weak publics’ compared to the ‘strong publics’ of the delegates where the elaboration of the budget takes place (Faria 2005, 204-206).

But this does not only happen at the state level. Also in Porto Alegre the delegates do most of the discussion, whereas the majority of participants only vote (Célérier and Botey 2015). However, at the local level there are opportunities for participants to control the delegates. First, the delegates live in the same neighborhood as the other participants. This makes it possible to bring up budget issues in everyday conversations. Second, meetings are held where delegates report back to the community on the workings of the budget process and the status of the local demands. Finally, neighborhood associations also rotate on who they elect as delegates, to prevent individuals from developing personal agendas and particular interests that are at odds with those who elected them (Baiocchi 2005, chapter 4; Wampler 2007, 77).

²⁹ Interview with “Rafael”, Coordinator in the Office for Citizen Participation in the Department of Planning, Administration and Citizen Participation (Seplag) in the state government, 28.01.2014

As Avritzer (2006) emphasizes, these practices are rooted in pre-existing participatory community traditions that are transmitted into the official public sphere. But is this only possible in the city? In general, there are three types of delegates in the state participatory budget. One is the mayor, local politician or municipal official. These delegates normally mobilize people from local communities and associations to come to the budget meetings, but do not respond to them. Next is the employee of a state institution like a school, hospital, fire brigade or police department. These delegates report back to the institutions and sometimes also to the users of the services they provide, such as pupils or patients. The last is the representative of a local community, a neighborhood association, social movement or NGO. These more frequently follow the same procedures as in Porto Alegre. One example is the Union of Resident Associations (UAMCA) in Canoas, which is involved in both the municipal and the state participatory budget. As explained by one of UAMCAs leaders, who is also the leader of a neighborhood association, the mobilization and contact with local residents is interchangeable in the municipal and state participatory budget:

We use online social networks, we call people on their phone, we are in touch with the president of the local associations and if it's needed we call a common meeting and then proceed to the communities. I have meetings with people in my community, for example, every first and third Saturday of the month, every month. So if we discuss something in the leadership we take it to the people in the community, because if not they would not be aware of it.³⁰

Participation levels, type of participants and patterns of mobilization

Considering these reduced opportunities to take part in formulating the policies at the state level, one would expect that the participation rate would be lower at the state than at the municipal level. But that is not the case. In 2001 the relative share of the population attending the assemblies was higher at the state level (3.71 per cent)³¹ than it has ever been in Porto Alegre (the highest was 1.27 per cent in 2002).³² The state participatory budget in 2011-2014, had lower assembly attendance than either of these two cases

³⁰ Interview with "Thais", delegate in the state participatory budget in Canoas, 10.04.2014

³¹ Source: Goldfrank and Schneider (2002)

³² Fedozzi et al. (2013)

(0.77 per cent). This is most likely caused by the fact the voting on the budget priorities was removed from the meetings and instead organized as a state-wide referendum. In 2014 approximately 1.3 million adults voted in this referendum, which makes up 11.7 per cent of the population.³³

But who are these participants? Gret and Sintomer (2005) argue that the local scale of the Porto Alegre's participatory budget has made it possible for hitherto excluded groups to become involved in local politics. Thus, they also predict that the profile of the participants will be different in participatory processes at higher levels of government, since the issues at stake there will be more complex and detached from the everyday realities of the population. But here they seem to be wrong. A survey made of the participants at the state level in 1999-2002, shows that the majority had the same characteristic profile as in Porto Alegre; they were mostly women with low education and low incomes (César 2004; Coradini 2009). In other words, the enlarged scale of the process did not lead to elite-domination.

Table 1: Share of delegates with low education (up to primary education).

	2000(c)/2001(a)	2009(d)/2014(b)
Delegates in the state participatory budget (from the Metropolitan Region of Porto Alegre)	46.4 %	19.8 %
Delegates in the municipal participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre	39 %	40.4 %

Note: Based on closest possible comparison of delegates in time. The Metropolitan region of Porto Alegre consists of Porto Alegre and surrounding municipalities. However, most of the delegates in the metropolitan region are from Porto Alegre.

Sources: a) Faria (2005, 193) b) survey of delegates at state level in 2014, conducted by the author c) Baiocchi (2005, 15) d) survey of delegates at the municipal level in Porto Alegre in 2009, conducted by Observatório da Cidade de Porto Alegre.

Unfortunately, we don't have data on the profile of regular participants in the state participatory budget from 2011-2014, but we do for the delegates. Delegates have always come from slightly more privileged sectors than the average participants (Fedozzi and Martins 2015; César 2004), so the interesting comparison here is not whether the delegates are different from assembly participants but whether they differ from each other at

³³ Sources for 2011-2014: <http://www1.seplag.rs.gov.br/upload/Mensagem.pdf> (last accessed 01.04.2016)

the different levels. As shown in table 1 nearly half of the delegates at the state level (46.4 per cent) came from lower-educated sectors of the population in the early 2000s, whereas this was the case of 39 per cent in Porto Alegre. Around the time of the second state participatory budget their profiles were very different. The share of delegates with low education was still high in Porto Alegre (40 per cent), but it was only 19.8 per cent among state delegates.

This table shows that the profile of delegates (and most probably therefore the sectors taking part in the process) is not dependent on the scale, but rather on other factors. The most probable explanation for the gap that has developed in recent years is that social movements, unions and neighborhood associations do not involve themselves in the state participatory process and therefore do not mobilize the low-income sectors to participate anymore. The community connected delegate has become the minority. As a study of state participatory budgeting in both the early 2000s and in recent years read: “[In] the original experiences participating citizens came mainly from what we might call civil society: people who came on their own, who became mobilized by neighborhood initiatives, or were participants in social movements, trade unions or other civil organisations. [...] [Now] more than half of the participants in public meetings of the participatory budgeting process are public servants” (Sobottka and Streck 2014, 169). My survey confirms this picture. Most delegates in 2014 were employed by the government. 67 per cent said that they represented a municipality, a state organ or a hospital, school or university, and only 18 per cent represented a civil society association, NGO, social movement, popular council or trade union. In comparison, the survey from 2001 shows 54 per cent of the state delegates in the metropolitan region at that time participated in a neighborhood association, 14.5 per cent in a trade union, 14.7 per cent in a popular council, and 9 per cent in an NGO (Faria 2005, 177).

Comprehensibility, bureaucratic administration and popular control

One of the reasons that participatory democracy is assumed to work better at the city level, is that the context is more comprehensible for ordinary citizens. Gret and Sintomer (2005) argue that higher scales will require more socio-economic resources of the participants, because it is more difficult to understand the complexity of the process when it encompasses more people. One indicator of such comprehension could be the

familiarity the participants have with the rules that guide the process. Again, what I have done is a comparison of the delegates' familiarity and not ordinary participants. But if their hypothesis is right we should probably see the same pattern among delegates as well, since this group would also struggle with more complexity at larger scales.

Table 2: Linear probability model: degree of familiarity with the rules and regulations of the participatory budget process (few or none vs. most or some) among delegates in Porto Alegre 2009 and Rio Grande do Sul 2014.

	Municipal delegates	State delegates	T-test comparison
Gender			
Women (reference group)			
Men	-0.17 (0.07)*	0.17 (0.04)**	-3.93
Age			
Less than 26 years (reference group)			
26-41 years	0.28 (0.21)	-0.06 (0.08)	1.51
42-60 years	0.33 (0.20)	0.10 (0.07)	1.05
More than 60 years	0.43 (0.03) †	0.11 (0.09)	1.29
Education			
No complete formal education (reference group)			
Primary education	0.11 (0.12)	0.09 (0.11)	0.09
Secondary education	0.39 (0.10)**	0.20 (0.10)*	1.31
Higher education	0.48 (0.13)**	0.34 (0.10)**	0.89
Employment situation			
Precarious employment or out of work (reference group)			
Stable employment	0.05 (0.08)†	0.12 (0.06)*	-0.68
Constant	0.11 (0.22)	0.12 (0.12)	
F-statistic	4.23**	7.16**	
Adjusted R ²	0.15	0.08	
N	146	557	

Note: The coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis. Significance levels: **p<0,01; *p<0,05; †p<0,10. The t-test of the regression coefficients in the two models shows that they are not significantly different from each other at the municipal and state level. Following Mood (2010) I have opted for a linear probability model even though the dependent variable is dichotomous. This is because logistic regression is vulnerable to unobserved heterogeneity and cannot be compared across samples. However, I have run a logistic regression as a robustness check, and both methods give similar results.

As the linear probability model in table 2 shows there is a correlation between educational resources and the economic resources that come from being in a stable employment situation at both levels. The correlation between the length of the education and familiarity of rules, however, is not *stronger* at the state level. This contradicts the prediction made by Gret and Sintomer. The probability that delegates with secondary education as compared to delegates with no complete formal education will understand the rules of the process is higher at the municipal (0.39) than at the state level (0.20). The probability that delegates with higher education will know them as opposed to those with no education is also higher at the municipal (0.48) than the state level (0.34). The difference between these coefficients, however, is not statistically significant. We cannot conclude that the process is more difficult to understand at the city level for people with lower education. This finding is somewhat surprising, but it's probably due to the fact that the participatory budget is a quite complex process in Porto Alegre. Nevertheless, this finding at least disturbs the notion that it is much easier to understand the workings of urban rather than state affairs.

Another assumption made is that as the complexity of issues increases at higher scales, experts and bureaucratic organizations will be more dominant in the decision-making processes. The participatory budget in Rio Grande do Sul exhibits an ongoing tension between the regular participants and staff in the state departments. Participants complain about the little degree of freedom they have in choosing the investments that they really want, whereas employees in the bureaucracy complain about the shortsightedness and ignorance of long-term planning, service delivery and infrastructure development among participants. There have been attempts to alleviate this tension. The organizers try, for example, to have officials from relevant state departments present at public assemblies to answer questions from the public as well as to provide information on the realism of different local demands. But the outcome of this has been ambiguous. On the one hand it has probably helped reduce the distance between the state administration and the population. On the other hand, it seems to have had the unintended consequence that these bureaucrats involve themselves in the process and try to convince participants to vote in favor of the demands of their sector.

Faria (2005) argues that state bureaucracies are larger and also more autonomous than at the local scale, and that this gives them more power vis-à-vis citizens in Rio Grande do Sul than in Porto Alegre. But this is also prevalent at the city level. As Rebecca Abers writes, the government in Porto Alegre “publicly declared that all budget decisions were ‘approved by the [elected council in the budget process].’ But in practice, it had significant influence over the results of many of the council's decisions. Not only did the administration have a monopoly on information about government practices, but also government staff included highly skilled professionals who were nearly always capable of formulating convincing arguments” (Abers 2000, 200).

It is difficult to measure whether this tension favors more the bureaucracy or the participants at the state and the municipal level, but if we are to judge based on the delegates’ own perception of their influence they are more positive in Porto Alegre than at the state level. When asked about their influence to establish the rules and guidelines that regulate the process, almost 50 per cent of the delegates in Porto Alegre said that they always have this authority whereas 30 per cent of the delegates in Rio Grande do Sul thought the same. When asked to evaluate their authority to monitor the implementation of projects selected through participatory budgeting, 71 per cent of the delegates in Porto Alegre said that they always had such authority compared to 53 per cent of the delegates in Rio Grande do Sul.³⁴

Is Barber’s hope warranted?

Barber writes that participatory budgeting offers hope for those who believe there may be a little less distance between mayors and citizens than between voters and state authorities. This study only partly warrants this hope. Participatory budgeting may remain closer to the ideals of participatory democracy when it occurs at the city level, but this does not imply that participatory democracy is impossible at larger scales. The state participatory budget has limitations: the space for deliberation among participants is narrow, the process is more representative than direct, and the state bureaucracy tries to

³⁴ Thanks to Brian Wampler for giving me access to the survey he did of a random selection of around half the delegates in Porto Alegre in 2003. Beware that the delegates’ perception of their own authority may not only vary with scale, but also time. It is not unproblematic to compare a survey done in 2003 and in 2014.

influence the outcome. This description is also valid for Porto Alegre, but to a lesser degree.

Does this mean that Low is right in that there is nothing special about the city? I think this conclusion would also be wrong. One of the key characteristics of democratic participation has been the existence community-based associations that have mobilized participants from low income sectors and introduced new relations between delegates and participants into the budget process. For a time this was recreated in the state participatory budget, and when these associations stopped mobilizing at the state level, the process became dominated by public officials and participants from more privileged backgrounds.

As Barber writes, participatory budgeting in Brazil is just one of many cases that cannot by themselves prove or disprove the proposition that the city is the most appropriate scale for participatory democracy. This picture would also be different if we broadened our scope to examine the space for participatory processes at the nation-state level – the realm of ‘big politics’; of monetary and foreign policy and of law-making. Nevertheless, the experiences of participatory budgeting in Brazil suggest that it is both wrong to overemphasize the uniqueness of the city and to undervalue the special role the city might play in larger, as well as local, participatory processes.

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Scaling Up Participation: Consequences for Voice, Vote, Oversight and Social Justice

Sveinung Legard and Benjamin Goldfrank

Abstract: Academics and practitioners tend to think that participatory institutions work best in small communities or cities, and have dismal expectations of what will happen to schemes like participatory budgeting (PB) if they are scaled up. One assumption is that politicians and bureaucrats at higher levels of government are unwilling to share power, and that the space for such schemes is thus small. Another is that representatives instead of ordinary participants will dominate them, and that participants will come from privileged sectors of the population. A final assumption is that large-scale participatory schemes will fail to redistribute resources to disadvantaged groups, and most likely favor strong and relatively affluent minorities. This study compares the state-level PB in Rio Grande do Sul under the Dutra (1999-2002) and Genro (2011-2014) governments to see whether these putatively general propositions hold true. We find that some do, but others do not. In both cases, elected representatives dominated the PB process, and participants and representatives alike had higher education and incomes than the average population. The authority granted to PB was quite low, and bureaucratic agencies used their resources to affect the PB agenda. On the other hand, the budget referendum held under the Genro government shrank the authority of the representatives and gave electors a final say over budget priorities. Under Dutra, participants and representatives had a more popular profile than under Genro, and Dutra also gave significant formal powers to the PB process despite intense resistance from the Right and its capitalist supporters. In both cases, bureaucratic resistance against PB was mild, and administrators expressed positive views of the PB. Moreover, the scaled-up scheme managed to redistribute resources to the poorest and least developed municipalities in each period. We conclude that scale matters, but so do institutional design, constituencies, and political ideology.

Keywords: participatory development, scaling-up, participatory budgeting, democratization

Introduction

Participatory budgeting (PB) was first introduced in Porto Alegre in Brazil in 1989, and has since become one of the most popular ‘participatory development’ initiatives in recent years – both in Brazil and worldwide (Fedozzi & Lima, 2014; Oliveira, 2017; Sintomer, Herzberg, & Allegretti, 2013). Evidence from Brazil suggest that municipalities with PBs better achieve development goals than others. Municipalities with PB increase social spending, improve the delivery of public services, and reduce infant mortality, *more* than municipalities without PB (Boulding & Wampler, 2010; Gonçalves, 2014; Touchton & Wampler, 2014; Zamboni, 2007). According to Wampler (2012) the key to the PB’s success lies in the combination of the following four principles: 1) *Voice*: active citizen participation in debating how to spend public funds, with an emphasis on participation from disadvantaged and disenfranchised communities. 2) *Vote*: participants are given real decision-making authority over public funds. 3) *Oversight*: a transformation of the public administration to make it receptive to citizen inputs. And 4) *Social justice*: redistribution of public resources to disadvantaged sectors of the population.

Even though PBs and similar participatory development initiatives (such as community-driven development, participatory planning, decentralization reforms etc.) have spread widely, they still only reach a minority of the population in the countries where they exist. This has led to a discussion of how it is possible to *scale* these initiatives to extend their impacts to larger populations (see for example Gillespie, 2004; Hartmann & Linn, 2008; Pachico & Fujisaka, 2004). As Binswanger and Aiyar (2003, p. 5) write: “We all are familiar with islands of success in community-driven development. These empower a few villages, urban neighborhoods, or producer organizations. How wonderful if they could be scaled up to cover all communities in a province or a nation!”

There are essentially two ways to cover a whole province or nation with a scheme like PB. One is to increase the number of localities with such schemes. This is for example the case with the PB experiments in Peru or Kerala, India (Heller, 1999; McNulty, 2011). This is often called ‘*scaling out*,’ and is well studied in the fields of PB and participatory development (Avritzer & Vaz, 2014; Baiocchi, 2015; Ganuza, Baiocchi, & Summers, 2016; Gillespie, 2004; Goldfrank, 2012; Hartmann & Linn, 2008; Jonasova & Cooke, 2012; Oliveira, 2017; Sintomer, Röcke, & Herzberg, 2016; Snapp & Heong, 2003; Wampler, 2007). Another is to lift a participatory

practice to a higher level of government so that all inhabitants of a province or a country are encompassed by it. This is called ‘*scaling up*,’ but is rarely studied or discussed. One reason is that there hardly are any instances of attempts to do so. Another is that academics and practitioners alike tend to think that participation works best in small communities or cities, and have dismal expectations of what scaling up will do to the participatory elements of such schemes.

This article is a study of two rare attempts to scale up PB. To our knowledge, it is also one of the first systematic discussions of the *scaling up* of participatory democracy. Our two cases are of PBs that were implemented at the state level in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil by the Workers’ Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores) governments led by Olívio Dutra (1999-2002) and Tarso Genro (2011-2014). Rio Grande do Sul’s PB has been called the world’s largest (Mellon, Peixoto, & Sjoberg, 2017). The state itself has 11.2 million inhabitants and an area of 496.827 km² (approximately the size of the Philippines). In 2014, 87,000 persons attended regional forums and municipal assemblies to formulate the state’s investment budget, and 1.3 million people voted on budget priorities.

Our study is structured around Wampler’s (2012) four PB principles, and our method is what Skocpol and Somers (1980) call a contrast-of-context approach. We begin with identifying some key social science predictions about how scale affects voice, vote, oversight and social justice, and then proceed to test these against our two cases. Our empirical data is based on a mix of qualitative (interviews, observations, archival research) and quantitative (surveys, budget-data) methods. Our aim is to find out whether these putatively general propositions hold true in both cases or are invalidated or moderated by particular features of one or both of them. In brief, we find that only some of the dismal expectations for large-scale participatory schemes hold true, particularly a strong role for representatives, some under-representation of disadvantaged social groups, and some resistance from high-level politicians to share power. However, our comparison also shows interesting commonalities and differences across the two cases that put into question traditional skeptical propositions about large-scale participatory democracy. In the end we propose some alterations and additions to the traditional skepticism. We argue that participatory institutions can be designed to achieve a better balance between participation and representation and to provide rules ensuring redistribution, that lower-class constituencies can be mobilized to participate in relatively large numbers, and that ideology is

crucial for parties and movements to withstand pressures from those who resist participatory mechanisms.

State-Level Participatory Budgeting Rio Grande do Sul

Our two cases are part of a longer continuum of events that has given Rio Grande do Sul the most participatory and democratic budgeting institutions in Brazil (Schneider, 2006). It began with the Alceu Collares government in the early 1990s, which gave civil society and political actors such as universities, mayors, city council presidents, and industrial and agricultural interests budget input through Regional Development Councils called COREDES. The Right-wing Antônio Britto government used the councils as the basis for a subsequent reform in 1998, when it introduced the Popular Consultation (*Consulta Popular*) – a referendum allowing citizens to vote on the COREDES’ budget proposals. The following year, however, the newly elected governor and previous mayor of Porto Alegre – Dutra from the leftist Workers’ Party – replaced the budget referendum with a PB process based on Porto Alegre’s model. The Dutra government argued that the consultation process only gave voice to local elites, and sought instead to create a form of participation that would represent the interests of workers, landless peasants, family farmers, and the urban poor.

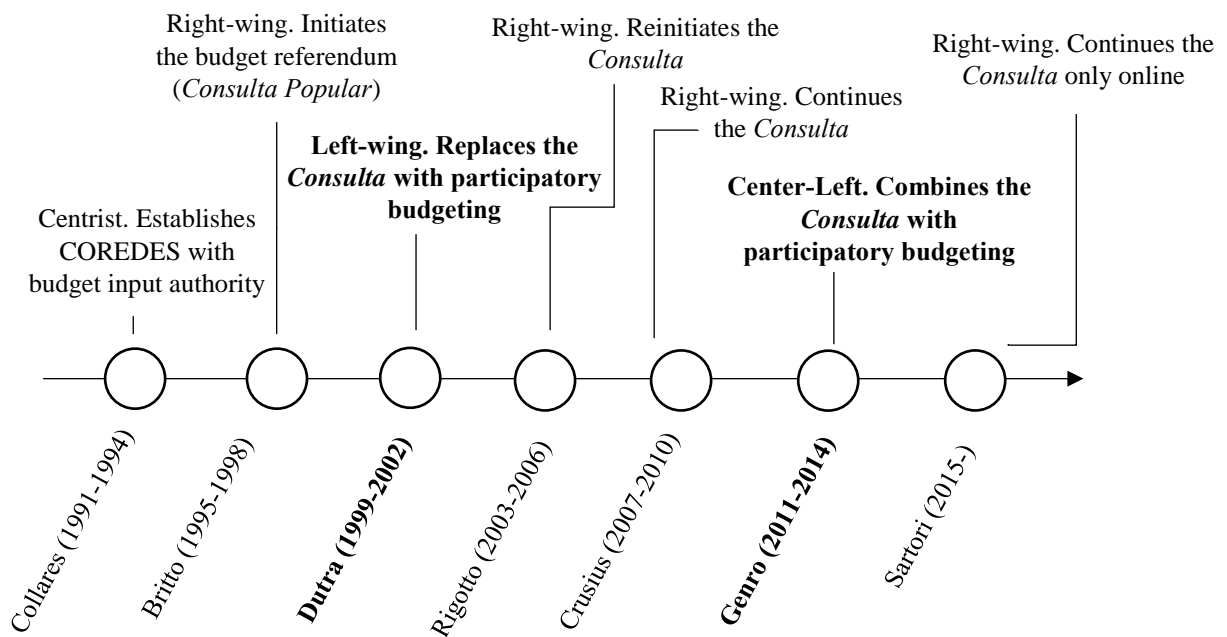


Figure 1: Timeline with governments (surname of Governor) and budget democratization process in Rio Grande do Sul from 1991 and up until today. We study the periods under Dutra (1999-2002) and Genro (2011-2014), emphasized with bold letters.

The budget model reverted back to the referendum under the subsequent governments, but continued to exist and grow in popularity. The Workers' Party-led Genro government (2011-2014), however, expanded the process even further. It added electronic voting to the PB, and established a separate digital participation platform. It also integrated the various forms of participation in a multi-channel “participatory system.” Moreover, it allowed the public to discuss its multi-annual budget plan, and invited them to propose and vote on additional large-scale projects considered non-binding.

Although our two cases share several characteristics – such as an ideological commitment to participatory democracy, a focus on redistribution of public funds, and a state-led economic growth model – their differences interest us more in this article. Dutra’s government had a strong social movement and trade union base, and it sought to give the projects of such organizations voice through PB. It had a strong leftist orientation and was based on an electoral as well as parliamentary alliance with other leftist parties. Its change strategy was highly confrontational, and it sought to replace existing budgeting institutions with a radical version of PB. Its aim was to make the PB the most important channel for extra-parliamentary political

engagement. The Genro administration, by contrast, had weaker social movement and union support, and its strength relied on delivering on its campaign promises. Genro was more moderate in his political outlook than Dutra, and had a support base of both Left-wing and Centrist parties in the state parliament. His change strategy was one of compromise. Instead of replacing existing budgeting institutions, Genro's government added new participatory elements to the model. Its aim was to create a multichannel participatory system, where PB was important but just one out of many channels of extra-parliamentary political engagement. These differences are crucial for the subsequent analyses, because we will use them to show how the very sweeping generalizations about scale and participation are moderated by differences in the contexts.

Scale and the core principles of PB

We operationalize 'scale' as a combination of *group size* (the number of people involved in the participatory process), *territorial extension* (the geographical distance between citizens) and *a power order* (the power dynamics at the governmental level at which the participatory process is implemented). In general, social scientists are skeptical about scaling up participatory schemes along these dimensions. A development theorist like (Brett, 2003, p. 11), for example, writes that "those who claim that [...] participatory methodologies can fundamentally alter the nature of the power structures that sustain complex societies are simply ignoring the well established insights of modern social science." In this section we sketch out some of the core counterarguments against the feasibility of scaling up voice, vote, oversight, and social justice before proceeding to test these against our cases in the subsequent analysis.

Voice

A core feature of PB is what Wampler (2012) calls *voice*. PB establishes new public venues where citizens can deliberate amongst themselves and with government officials over the allocation and content of public investments. Although only a small percentage of citizens attend meetings, and many just show up to vote without engaging in sustained discussions over time (Célérier & Botey, 2015; Junge, 2012, p. 421), it still has an important element of direct participation (Baiocchi, 2005). Two other features stand out as well. Disadvantaged and traditionally disenfranchised communities are especially encouraged to participate (Fedozzi et al., 2013) and communities and groups with similar interests are encouraged to establish

associations, formulate demands, and mobilize their constituencies around these common interests in public meetings (Baiocchi, Heller, & Silva, 2011).

As the number of people included in a polity increases, certain factors might affect the realization of voice. One is basic: there is not enough time to allow millions of people to voice their opinions on political matters like the budget before decisions are made (Dahl, 2000, pp. 106-107). Even if new information technologies can facilitate deliberations and decision-making at any distance, representation of opinions and interests become necessary components of voice in big groups. It is not possible for every individual to read and engage with everybody's opinion on an online platform within a reasonable time frame if the group becomes too big. For Dahl this means that citizens in large-scale polities must delegate authority in others. The longer the distances in time and space are between citizens and representatives, the greater the danger is that the political decisions are made by representatives without the interference of ordinary citizens (ibid pp. 109-114).

Another factor is that the scope of the issues involved in the decision-making processes becomes more complicated when the size of the polity increases (Cohen & Fung, 2004). Budgets at the state level, for example, can involve grand infrastructure projects, specialized medical services, funding for higher education, and services that cross municipal boundaries. Due to the demands this puts on the participants' knowledge of political matters, Gret and Sintomer (2005, pp. 81-82, 120, 124) predict that participants in large scale PBs will have significantly higher levels of education than the general population. When the territorial extension of the participatory process grows larger, class divisions may also affect voice through the economic costs of participation. These can be hours spent on attending meetings far from home instead of working, or money for bus fares or gasoline to travel to and from meetings. Consequently, Gret and Sintomer also predict that participants in large scale processes will have higher than average incomes.

The assumption here is that large-scale PBs will be dominated by representatives, and that ordinary participants will only play a symbolic role. Moreover, it is assumed that participants will have more of an elite profile than the popular profile of local PBs that Wampler describes.

Vote

What distinguishes PB from many other forms of participation is that citizens often have real decision-making authority over public policies. It places authority over part of the budget in the hands of PB participants rather than professional politicians. This is what Wampler (2012) calls *vote*. Fung (2006) writes that PB is one of few cases where participatory bodies exercise direct authority over public decisions or resources. In several Brazilian municipalities, the entire investment budget is dedicated to PB. Elsewhere, the share of the budget allocated to PB is often lower (Cabannes, 2004).

Because they transfer power to citizens, it is often assumed that participatory initiatives at higher levels of government are very difficult to realize. Montecinos (2009) claims that PB on larger scales tends to become politically controlled by traditional representative institutions. Experiences from India and Brazil show that participatory schemes tend to be sidelined or diluted as one moves up the governmental ladder (Baiocchi, Braathen, & Teixeira, 2013; Bruera, 2015; Törnquist, 2004, p. 212). Törnquist (2009, p. 14) argues that this is the case because higher government levels are more elite-dominated than local governments. Theoretically, this is supported by the view of a *scalar power order*, where groups and individuals have an interest in placing certain resources, rights and authorities at specific scales, and the struggle of social forces with different interests of what these should be shape scalar institutions (Herod, 2011, p. 14). Governmental scales, such as the state level in the Brazilian federation, are more or less stable equilibriums where the projects and demands of different social forces are represented through compromises (Jessop, 2016, p. 72; Schmitter, 1983, p. 892). Where state power is organized through a vertical hierarchy – with legislative, fiscal, and coercive powers concentrated at the peak of the government ladder – social struggles intensify as one moves upwards. The value of the state's resources increases in importance for the contenders, and the actors involved in the struggle may have a wider power base when the number of authorities and organizations increases.

Thus, Evans (2015, pp. 56-57) points to two obstacles that may constrain potential PB schemes at higher levels of government. These are the '*capital-*' and '*political system*' problems. The first refers to the problem of combining political democracy with the concentration of economic power. Political democracy is attractive to capitalists only insofar that it gives them clear and predictable rules that allow them to conduct their businesses, and also access to exclusive

venues where they can discuss policies with lawmakers and bureaucrats. If these venues are broadened or replaced by participatory institutions, and if this means that the rules they favor are at risk, capitalists may decide to mobilize against such reforms. They may for example support groups or use their access to media to exert public pressure against such initiatives.

The *political system problem* refers to the difficulties of combining participatory schemes with the logic of political contestation. The political system has its own self-interested actors with their own organizational vehicles and ideological projects. Careers depend on the exercise of authority, as well as the survival and growth of the party organization. To survive an upcoming election a party cannot delegate all decisions to participatory processes, but needs to implement the policies it promised to the voters in order to win new votes later. Moreover, it is impossible for any single party to rule without making compromises with potential allies as well as opponents (Jessop, 2016, p. 75). These concessions in turn reduce the space for the participatory process. In the case of PB, for example, public projects promised to other parties may be deducted from the PB portfolio.

The general assumption here is thus that the space for participatory programs on the state level is very limited. Attempts to implement them most likely will fail, either because the governing party is not willing to delegate sufficient authority to the participatory process, or because it will be pushed back by counter-forces if it tries to do so.

Oversight

Even when PB proposals end up as binding policies, there is a risk that they are not executed as decided by the participants. They can for example be altered or undermined by administrators. To remedy this, PB schemes often include bureaucratic reforms to ensure what Wampler (2012, p. 7) calls *citizen oversight*. These include measures to ensure more administrative transparency – such as citizen committees that oversee the implementation of investment decisions, and the publication of the status of previously decided projects – but also changes that enable bureaucrats to engage directly with citizens and receive their input when implementing new policies. In Porto Alegre an important strategy was to reduce the number of veto points or room for discretionary changes in the administration by establishing community facilitators inside the departments that worked with citizen delegates and an official intermediary between local-level participants and the bureaucracy. As Baiocchi and Ganuza

(2014) stress, *oversight* has to do with a shift of power from the bureaucrats and experts to laypeople.

Citizen oversight does not come naturally, but suffers from what Evans (2015, p. 55) calls a ‘marriage problem.’ The hierarchical command-and-control element of the state shapes the practices and consciousness of ordinary state officials. To ask them to embrace different modes of decision-making is to ask them to give up power, status, and privileges. As the scale of the state apparatus grows and bureaucracies get more entrenched and command more tasks and resources, the more they are likely to resist and limit the role of participatory schemes. This is supported by organizational theory that associates increased size with augmented formalization (Scott, 2003, pp. 265-267). In large bureaucracies officials are provided clear rules of behavior that limit their ability to exercise discretion, and thus also their proclivity to receive citizen input that goes against prescribed instructions. Large bureaucracies are also power tools that are of interest to political organizations besides merely executing their policies. Political organizations may extend their control over the bureaucracy by the use of political appointees instead of career administrators (Brown, 1982), and often hand out administrative posts to political allies to strengthen their governing alliance (Lewis, 2008). The degree of politicization of the Brazilian bureaucracy is very high (Garcia, 2015; Praça, Freitas, & Hoepers, 2011). A politicized bureaucracy may be used to exert influence on the PB process.

The assumption here is nevertheless that large-scale bureaucracies, whether formalized or politicized, do not marry easily with participatory reforms and, therefore, that such endeavors will be met with resistance or attempts by the bureaucracy to influence the outcome of participatory processes.

Social justice

A fourth core principle of PB is *social justice*. Governments utilizing PB often allocate public funds toward investments that improve the living conditions of people in impoverished neighborhoods. One explanation for this is that disadvantaged sectors of the population more frequently attend PB meetings than privileged sectors and formulate budget proposals that benefit themselves. Another is that PB schemes often entail rules that benefit neighborhoods that score low on human development indicators. This creates a virtuous circle of participation: The rules make it easy for poor citizens to comprehend that their participation will result in

public goods and resources for their communities, more individuals participate, and widespread participation increases the legitimacy of redistributive policies (Wampler, 2012, pp. 5-6).

Many theorists of collective action predict that such a virtuous circle of participation and redistribution is difficult to establish on a large scale. Olson (2002 [1965]), for example, argues that rational and self-interested individuals are unable to act collectively to achieve their common interests (due to the free-rider problem) unless groups are very small. In large-scale societies, it is more likely that smaller privileged groups will obtain collective goods before large and underprivileged segments of the population. Ostrom (2010) also argues that cooperation for common purposes is easier to achieve in small groups, since they allow face-to-face communication, a greater sense of social efficacy, easy access to information of past actions of other individuals, and personal ties – all of which prevent free-riding over time. Individuals get less feedback on their actions in large populations, and face difficulty in seeing how their well-being is dependent on the actions of others. Combined with a higher degree of anonymity, this reduces the likelihood that people develop mutual cooperative norms in large groups (Biel, 2000, pp. 32-36).

The assumption therefore is that social justice is difficult to achieve through large-scale PB, because free-rider problems and the lack of communication or personal ties will prevent underprivileged citizens from taking collective action. Instead, budget resources will most likely go to strong minorities who are able to coordinate demand-making without much organizational effort.

Data

The data we use to assess these assumptions are obtained through a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods. This mix is necessary because the different dimensions of PB only can be studied by using the strengths of qualitative and quantitative methods respectively (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007, p. 207). Our data-set therefore includes official statistics, field observations, interviews, surveys, archival research, and also secondary sources.

Qualitative data: Our qualitative data derives from fieldwork in each of our government periods. Fieldwork included direct observation (of events and meetings) and interviews with organizers, bureaucrats, politicians, participants, and other relevant actors (six interviews

during Dutra's term and 50 during Genro's term). It also entailed participant observation of seven assembly meetings at the local and regional level during the Genro period. For both periods, we have done archival research. Due to the more extensive qualitative fieldwork in Genr's period, we partly rely on qualitative findings from Faria (2005) for the Dutra period. The lack of qualitative data from the Dutra period presents reliability issues. However, our findings correspond with other independently published studies (Núñez, 2016; Sobottka & Streck, 2014; Streck, Eggert, & Sobottka, 2005), which strengthens our view that our data provide verifiable information on the issues we discuss here.

Quantitative data: Our quantitative data-sets derives from surveys of PB participants and delegates in selected regions and from official figures for all 497 municipalities that include socioeconomic conditions, state spending through PB, participation rates, and voting patterns. For the Dutra period we use a survey from 2001 of regular assembly participants (N=1479) from 51 municipalities spread across the state. We also have a survey of elected delegates and councilors from 2002 (N=1574) from 19 selected regions.¹ For the Genro period we have a survey of the delegates (N=645) in six regions. The regions were strategically selected to cover the variety of social and economic conditions in the state, including rich and poor, rural and urban, densely and sparsely populated regions. The strength of the earlier surveys is that they cover both participants and delegates, include more regions, and have a larger n. The weakness is that there are few participants per municipality and that participants with low education may be underrepresented due to the survey procedure. The strength of the later survey is that it polled all delegates attending the meetings in the selected regions. The weakness is that it has fewer regions and a smaller N. The reader should be aware of the different sampling procedures from the delegate surveys in 2002 and 2014. This is, however, only relevant for Table 2 below. The municipal-level data for the Genro period is analyzed for the first time in this article. We refer to Goldfrank and Schneider (2002, 2006) for findings on spending from the Dutra period.

¹ Benedito Tadeu César directed the surveys at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). The description of the data collection procedure is found in César (2004). We are grateful to César for giving us access to these data.

Common and contrasting findings in the two cases

Voice: Dominating representatives, but variations in degrees of influence and profile of participants

In line with the assumptions formulated above, we find that the PB process in both our cases was dominated by representatives, and that ordinary participants played a smaller role. One crucial difference between the cases, however, is that the budget referendum under the Genro government gave ordinary participants the authority to ratify the work of the representatives and have the final voice on the budget priorities. Under Dutra, on the other hand, participants could only indicate what they wanted the priorities to be. Participants and delegates also had higher education levels and incomes than average citizens in both periods – and this difference increased at higher scales of the process. The elite profile of the representatives, however, was more marked under Genro than Dutra, which must be explained by differences in the characteristics of the groups that mobilized people to participate.

In both cases, the governments opened spaces where citizens could propose projects and discuss how to invest state funds. There were, however, notable differences in *institutional design* between the two periods. The Dutra government's budget process began with one round of public assemblies in all the state's municipalities in which participants presented budget proposals, voted on investment priorities, and elected delegates to the regional level. Delegates at the regional level knit the local proposals together, negotiated with each other and the administrative branches of the government over priorities, and appointed a statewide budget council to draft the final investment plan with the government. The Genro government largely upheld this model, but did not have a statewide PB council to decide the final budget. Instead, it adopted the already existing budget-referendum (the *Consulta Popular*) of the previous governments. This was a referendum where citizens could both vote online as well as physically in various ballot stations at the municipal level. This referendum had the ultimate say over how much money was allocated to each budget area (such as education, sports, health, or security) as well as each municipality.

In both cases, our interviews and observations and the study conducted by Faria (2005) show that ordinary participants had quite limited opportunities to discuss and alter budget proposals. Under Dutra, the municipal assemblies were mostly used by groups and individuals to *present*

budget demands to other participants and state officials. Even though assembly participants voted on priorities, these were indicative for but not binding on further discussions among regional- and state-level representatives. Assembly participants also played a minor role in PB under Genro. Those who brought budget proposals to the municipal assemblies often did not have time to present them properly, and normally no discussions of benefits and disadvantages took place. Nonetheless, deliberation did occur, but typically outside of the formal structure of PB. Around half of the surveyed participants under the Dutra government, for example, said they had discussed the proposals that were launched in the municipal assemblies before coming to the meetings. In the Genro period, discussions took place between organized actors such as schools, hospital staff, patient groups, neighborhood associations, mayors, municipal administrations, fire brigades, police forces, NGOs, and local branches of social movements. The budget referendum incentivized such groups to forge alliances with each other because it increased the likelihood that their proposals would be included on the budget ballot and that they would get votes from others' supporters in the referendum.

In practice this meant that the PB representatives played the most important role in the PB process, to the point that one can say that they dominated the process in both our cases. The PB representatives in the Dutra period had time to discuss and negotiate the budget, and essentially held authority to alter or disregard the proposals that came from the local assemblies (Faria, 2005, pp. 204-206). This was especially the case with the statewide budget council that formulated the final investment plan. Under Genro, the PB representatives controlled the process informally, because negotiations parallel to the formal PB institutions decided what ended up on the budget ballot. In neither of the cases, were we able to identify attempts to install mechanisms that allowed regular participants to control the work of the PB representatives – such as rotation of delegates or regular local meetings where participants discuss outcomes of negotiations with their representatives -- mechanisms which can be found in municipal-level PBs (Baiocchi, 2005; Wampler, 2007). One significant difference between the two cases in this regard, however, was that the Genro-era budget referendum gave citizens the opportunity to *ratify* the work of the delegates. Even though the PB representatives decided what the population could vote on, they could not decide what they would vote for.

Despite the limited room for voice, a considerable part of the population came to the meetings or voted in the referendum. During the peak of the Dutra period, 378,340 people, or about six percent of the electorate, attended the municipal assemblies. Under Genro, 1.3 million people,

or 16.2 % of the electorate, voted in the referendum. Only 87,000 people, however, showed up at the assemblies. As predicted, the participants at the state level had higher education levels and incomes than the average population. Whereas average monthly family income in Rio Grande do Sul was 705 *reais* during the Dutra period, it was 918 *reais* among the assembly participants. Even more significant was the difference in education levels. As shown in Table 1, the share of participants with a completed primary, secondary, and higher education was consistently higher under the Dutra government than in the population at large. Whereas 61 percent of the general population had not completed primary education in 2000, this was only the case for 26 percent of assembly participants. As Table 1 also shows, educational levels increased with higher levels of representation, in line with traditional assumptions.

Table 1: Comparison of educational level of PB participants, delegates and councilors and the general population under the Dutra government. Percentage.

	PB participants*	PB delegates**	PB councilors**	General population***
Incomplete education	26 %	20 %	9 %	57 %
Primary education	32 %	27 %	20 %	19 %
Secondary education	29 %	30 %	39 %	18 %
Higher education	12 %	23 %	32 %	6 %

Sources: *Survey of PB participants from 2001 (n=1479). **Survey of PB delegates and councilors 2002 (n=1574). ***IBGE census from Rio Grande do Sul in 2000 (persons over 15 years).

This does not mean that most participants in the Dutra period – or even delegates and councilors – came from elite segments of the population. Rather, they were often salaried workers, small business owners, family farmers, and lower-rank public servants. They were leaders in their communities, with a relatively higher level of education and more stable employment. The variations in educational level among the participants and delegates demonstrate that the scale of the process does not explain everything. A considerable portion of the participants and delegates during the Dutra-years had not finished school or only completed primary education. In Tables 2 and 3 we summarize predictors of educational degree among participants in the Dutra government’s PB. They show that working class background, the level of development in the participant’s municipality and social movement affiliation are negatively associated with higher educational levels. This indicates that the relatively low educational levels among a significant portion of the assembly participants may have been the result of mobilization among working-class citizens in less developed municipalities. The low R^2 of this regression model

suggests, on the other hand, that these variables explain very little (9.3%) of the educational variation in our dataset.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of PB participants under the Dutra government.

Variable	Mean/ percentage	Standard deviation
Educational degree (score 1-8 from no schooling to post-graduate education)	4.25	1.1796
Gender (0=women, 1=men)	40.9%	
Age	34.3	12.885
Working class (0=Not worker or peasant, 1=Worker or peasant)	42.7%	
Human development index of municipality (score 0-1 from very low to high degree of human development)	0.49290	0.102851
Movement affiliation (0=not belonging to trade/professional union or social movement, 1=belonging to trade/professional union or social movement)	37.7%	

Source: Survey of PB participants from 2001, and municipal level HDI-data retrieved from The Economics and Statistics Foundation of Rio Grande do Sul (FEE) (Valid n=1105).

Table 3: Predictors of educational degree among PB participants under the Dutra government. Multiple linear regression. Unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis.

Variable	Coefficient
Constant	6.027*** (0.291)
Gender	-0.218* (0.107)
Age	-0.03** (0.004)
Working class	-0.989*** (0.105)
Human development index of municipality	-1.467** (0.511)
Movement affiliation	-0.272* (0.107)

***p<0.001; *p<0.01 **p<0.05, Adjusted R² = 0.093, Valid n= 1105

What is clearer, however, is the sharp difference in educational level between PB representatives in the two periods. As shown in Table 4, the share of representatives with incomplete or only primary education was 50 percent under Dutra, but only 18 percent under Genro. Conversely, the share of representatives with secondary or higher education was 82 percent under Genro as opposed to only 50 percent under Dutra. Additional analyses we have done indicate that this rise in educational levels is the result of the drastic influx of public servants in the PB process – who increased from 31% of the delegates during Dutra’s term to 64% during Genro’s term. Unfortunately, we do not have data on the educational level of the assembly participants from the Genro period, but it is likely that this also was relatively higher than under Dutra and followed the pattern of the differences between the representatives in both periods. What this variations shows is that even though participants and representatives in large-

scale PB had higher education levels than the average population, factors other than scale must explain the large differences in educational level between them.

Table 4: Comparison of education levels of PB delegates during the Dutra and Genro governments. Percentage.

	PB delegates Dutra government	PB delegates Genro government
Incomplete education	22 %	6 %
Primary education	28 %	12 %
Secondary education	28 %	41 %
Higher education	22 %	41 %

Sources: Survey of PB delegates and councilors 2002 (Valid n=383). Survey of PB delegates 2014 (Valid n=556). Comparison based on 5 selected regions.

Note: Power struggles and compromise

As assumed, the degree of authority that was attributed to the PB institutions ended up being low in both our cases. Dutra wanted to give PB participants the authority to decide over all state investments, but was forced to tone down its PB scheme after considerable resistance from business organizations and the political opposition. Genro voluntarily gave the PB process less funding, and sought to appease and include oppositional forces instead of confronting them. One crucial difference between our cases, however, is that the Dutra government managed to dedicate a significant portion of the budget to PB. The reason why the authority delegated in PB ended up being low was that the state apparatus was only able to execute a minority of PB decisions.

None of the cases we studied only gave symbolic authority to PB participants. Instead, both governments allocated a certain share of the budget to the PB. The share of the investment differed significantly, however, between the two periods. During the Dutra years, all state investments were delegated to the PB process. Genro, on the other hand, only allocated 10 percent of the investments for this purpose. Table 5 demonstrates the difference. On average, during Dutra’s term, 4.1% of the total state expenses was the outcome of decisions made in PB. By contrast, only 0.4% of the Genro government’s expenses came from the PB process.

Table 5: PB funds as share of total state expenses

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Average
Dutra government	3.63 %	4.24 %	4.36 %	--	4.1 %
Genro government	0.47 %	0.42 %	0.37 %	0.33 %	0.4 %

Sources: Portal da Transparência (<http://www.transparencia.rs.gov.br>), and Júnior, Júnior, and Florissi (2004, p. 337)

Dutra's government came under heavy attacks for its radical budget policy. During the election campaign, the industrial business federation FIERGS mobilized against its platform. Under previous governments, FIERGS had found a willing ear for its neoliberal agenda, but the Dutra administration stood for a different policy. It wanted to stall and reverse privatization schemes, invest in small business and family agriculture, and give the population a crucial voice in defining the budget priorities (Cadoná, 2015). After the introduction of PB, the government was boycotted by the development councils (COREDES), and disrupted by the opposition, which managed to use the judicial system to paralyze the government's involvement in the PB process for a whole year. The news media also sided with the government's opponents. Eventually it became impossible for Dutra to continue with PB without giving concessions to the opponents (Goldfrank & Schneider, 2006). The re-designed PB gave the COREDES and the legislature privileged positions in the PB process. Moreover, the political opposition held its own budget process and was allowed by the government to amend and even alter some of the proposals that had already passed through the PB process (Faria, 2006). Nonetheless, the Dutra government managed to keep its commitment to, at least formally, delegate hundred percent of the investments to the PB. One of the reasons it managed to do so was that it had strong supporters among trade unions and social movements outside of the state apparatus. These groups kept the PB process alive when the judicial system prohibited the government to organize it, and generally rallied around PB.

The COREDES, rival parties, and the business federation reacted less fiercely to Genro. This has to be understood in light of the very small share of the budget that Genro allocated to PB, as well as other actions Genro took to avoid confrontations. Genro upheld the privileged position of the COREDES within PB and made them co-organizers of the process. He also made PB part of a larger participatory system that encompassed multiple channels of engagement that included groups that typically opposed the Workers' Party agenda. The business federation FIERGS, for example, became part of a statewide Council for Economic and Social Development (CDES-RS) that discussed all major government policies.

Furthermore, Genro satisfied political allies in his electoral and legislative coalition. Out of the 24 secretary posts in his government, 13 went to members of parties other than the Workers' Party. These political favors further reduced the significance of PB. According to our government sources, these secretary posts under political allies became obstacles to the realization of PB. As one interviewee told us:

[...] Our difficulties [in implementing the process] have to do with the government ensemble not having the understanding [that decisions are made through popular participation]. This issue is not yet totally homogenized in our government, nor has it been in any other government up until today – not in previous ones, nor in the current one.²

Two other major obstacles to the delegation of authority had to do with factors other than those assumed. As illustrated in Figure 1, only a small portion of the investments decided through PB actually made it into public works or services. On average, the Dutra government executed only a third of its investments. The Genro government executed about half of the proposals that were decided through PB. One of the reasons for low execution rates in both cases was the poor fiscal capacity of the state government, which lived on borrowed money and had negative margins for investments (Santos, 2016, p. 9). Another obstacle they had in common was the lack of capacity in the municipalities to develop technically viable projects. Poor municipal administrations lacked engineers, architects, and other professionals with knowledge of the state's legal and technical requirements, which resulted in municipal and state authorities sending plans back and forth to each other without being able to realize them.

² Interview with "Leonardo," Secretary of Planning, Administration and Citizen Participation (Seplag), 22.04.2014

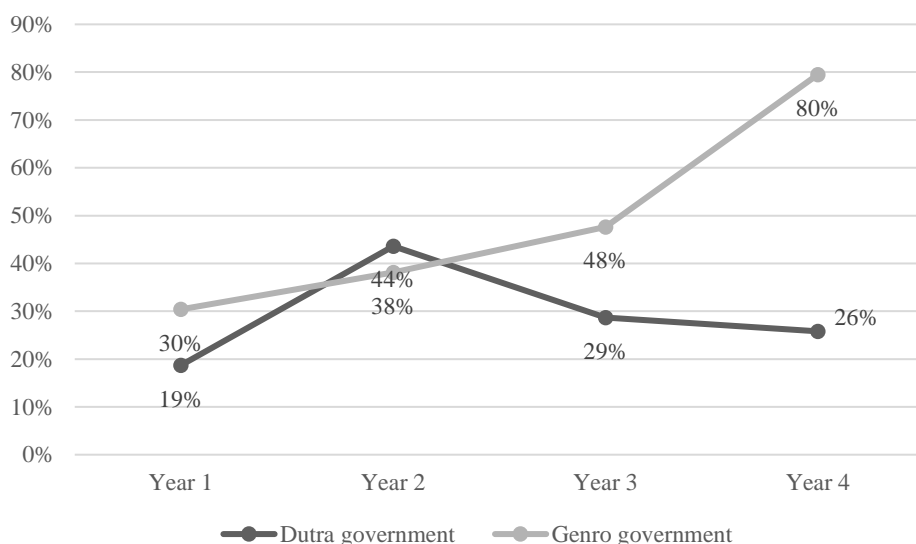


Figure 1: Execution rates under Dutra and Genro. PB investments paid as share of investments that were budgeted. Sources: Portal da Transparência (<http://www.transparencia.rs.gov.br>) and Calazans (2006, p. 16)

Oversight: Little bureaucratic resistance, but attempts to influence the agenda

Contrary to the assumptions formulated above, we do not find strong accounts of typical marriage problems between the bureaucratic administration and the state PB in our cases. Bureaucratic resistance was not prevalent, and state administrators expressed positive views of popular participation. On the other hand, these views were accompanied by more or less subtle attempts by bureaucrats to affect the PB agenda, which can also be considered an aspect of a marriage problem.

In both cases, government officials expressed an awareness of possible marriage problems. One central move shared by both governments was to establish a special office dedicated to popular participation to handle such problems. This PB office coordinated the participatory process and oversaw the execution of PB decisions inside and outside the state government. Its main task was to spearhead the decisions made in PB within the various ministries. In practice, this meant holding multiple meetings reminding the various secretaries of the importance of PB decisions, nagging units in which the execution of projects was delayed, trying to find solutions to technical or practical problems, and negotiating with reluctant administrators. According to one organizer from the Genro years, the bureaucracy resisted interference from the outside and protected itself against extra workloads due to pressures from the population:

“The other sectors of the administration don’t like us very much,[...] because we put more and more problems on top of them. [...] More problems. More meetings. [...] When we ask other sectors of the administration to come here, they say ‘Are you here again? What do you want from us now?’[...] So sometimes they don’t even come [to our meetings].”³

Another move was to employ regional coordinators to coordinate the process and act as an information hub between demand-makers, local authorities, and state agencies. They provided information to demand-makers about the status of PB projects and possible obstacles, as well as information back again to the government about problems experienced by local administrations and demand-makers on the ground. Despite the fact that the governments had taken these oversight initiatives, we found little explicit resistance among bureaucrats. Interviewees in the state administration frequently emphasized their commitment to PB, as well as the potential benefits for the bureaucracy. Among these were that participation could increase the speed of the administration, and that PB provided them with a better map of the population’s needs, demands, and priorities.

On the other hand, we found that local representatives of the state secretaries directly involved themselves in the PB process. Before the budget meetings took place they used their networks to affect the type of proposal that would eventually reach the agenda. In the assemblies and delegate meetings, they also showed up to advocate for their proposals. As described by a regional bureaucrat from the Secretary of Health under Genro:

“Those who bring forth the demands [in the health sector] are the local health agents [who visit families with health issues]. They will pass on [what they find out in their visits] to the municipal secretaries of health, they send the demand to us and then we try to take these demands into the discussions in the PB process [...]. At the regional plenary we presented a proposal [to establish a regional cancer treatment facility], and there was already support for this in the local community and the hospital embraced it. Some sewing had been done and a certain understanding had been establish between the different stakeholders. Now we are establishing this with the population as well, in order to finalize the proposal in the

³ Interview with “Rafael,” Coordinator in the Office for Citizen Participation in Seplag, 28.01.2014

municipal assemblies. If they sustain this proposal, we will move as fast as possible to attend to the demand.”⁴

This more or less explicit bureaucratic mobilization was a key feature of the PB process under both governments that we found in our fieldwork in the Genro period and descriptions by Faria (2005, pp. 213-214), but was even more prominent under Genro. Clusters of state administrators (such as representatives from the Secretary of Health and local administrations), public service workers (such as hospital staff), and users (such as patients) actively engaged themselves in the process to get funding for their sector. As many as one third of the representatives during the Genro period represented a state organ, hospital, or school.

This informal influence came in addition to the formalized control the government and the bureaucracy had over the PB agenda. Participants in PB assemblies were not free to propose whatever they wanted. Instead, they had to choose from what was called a “type list” or a “guideline book.” These were menus with predefined investment projects and associated money values from which participants could choose their proposals. To be sure, these menus were very broad. Genro’s government even organized a participatory process at the outset of its term to formulate this budget menu. Nonetheless, it meant that the various government agencies had already decided the citizens’ options.

Social justice: Redistribution in both cases

In contrast to the assumption that social justice is difficult to achieve in large-scale participatory schemes, in both of our cases, PB distributed resources to benefit the poorest and least developed municipalities. Under Dutra, however, a strong minority – the Workers’ Party organization – managed to attract a disproportionately large sum of the investments to cities where membership rates were high, but this effect disappeared under Genro.

⁴ Interview with “Henrique,” regional coordinator of the Secretary of Health (SES), 02.04.2014

Table 6: Descriptive statistics of Rio Grande do Sul's municipalities.

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation
PB spending per capita (log)	3.061	1.028
GDP per capita (1000 reais)	19.306	8.639
Human development index	0.695	0.061
Agriculture as share of GMP	0.378	1.618
Population (1000 inhabitants)	22.342	1.618
PB participants as share of population	0.205	0.150
Vote for Tarso Genro in 2010 as share of electorate	38.662	6.571
Workers' Party members as share of population	0.020	0.150

Sources: Spending data are from consulta.popular.gov.rs.br; participation data are from participa.gov.rs.br; political data are from <http://www.tre-rs.gov.br/>; and remaining municipal characteristics are from <http://feedados.fee.tche.br/feedados/> (Valid n=454).

Table 7: Predictors of PB spending per capita (log). Multiple linear regression. Unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis.

Variable	Coefficient
Constant	7.014*** (0.520)
GDP per capita (1000 reais)	0.017** (0.005)
Human development index	-5.423*** (0.722)
Agriculture as share of GMP	0.006 (0.024)
Population (1000 inhabitants)	-0.003*** (0.001)
PB participants as share of population	2.019*** (0.270)
Vote for Tarso Genro in 2010 as share of electorate	-0.023*** (0.006)
Workers' Party members as share of population	2.236 (1.732)

***p<0.001; **p<0.01; *p<0.05, Adjusted R² = 0.377 Valid n=454.

Goldfrank and Schneider (2002, 2006) have previously shown how PB investments in the Dutra period went to pro-poor projects and municipalities that scored low on the human development index. In addition, they demonstrated that PB favored municipalities with high participation rates and those with a high number of Workers' Party members. Our analysis of PB spending under Genro (see descriptive statistics in Table 6 and regression analysis in Table 7) shows a strong relation between low scores on the human development index and PB spending per capita. For every percentage point increase on the human development index, PB spending decreased by 5.4 per cent. The Genro government's PB also favored municipalities with high participation rates, but did not show any signs of benefitting those with a strong contingent of Workers' Party members. Partisan favoritism had disappeared under Genro. The relationship between the vote for Genro during the gubernatorial elections and PB spending was even slightly negative. In this model, we have controlled for GDP per capita, agriculture as a share

of GMP (since we know that the developmental model of the Workers' Party focused on improving family agriculture), and population size.

Both governments used rules that automatically awarded regions with high development needs a larger portion of the resources. This is crucial to understand why the PB in both cases had a social justice profile. On the other hand, local mobilization was vital in distributing resources to less developed municipalities within the regions, and previously published analyses of the Dutra period (Goldfrank & Schneider, 2006) as well as additional analyses of the Genro period show that participation rates were highest in the least developed municipalities. The support for these redistributive institutions increased over time. During the first years of the Dutra government, Workers' Party activists urged people to attend local assemblies. Once the institutions were up and running, others began mobilizing as well, and the statistical difference in participation rates between municipalities with a high number of Workers' Party members and those without vanished (ibid p. 19). A very active group of participants upheld the process under Genro. Of our surveyed delegates, 77 % had participated in PB before, with an average of nearly five times. These participants had a very positive outlook on popular participation and the PB institutions.

Discussion and conclusion

Several of the key social science assumptions about how scale affects voice, vote, oversight and social justice predict several findings in both our cases. The PB process was dominated by elected representatives, participants and representatives alike had higher education levels and incomes than the average population, the authority attributed to the PB institutions was quite low, and bureaucratic agencies used their resources to affect the PB agenda. But our contrast-of-context approach also shows that many of these putatively general propositions were undermined by particular features of the cases. For example, the budget referendum decreased the authority of the representatives and gave electors the final say over budget priorities. Participants and representatives had a more popular profile during the political mobilization phase under Dutra and more of an elite profile when civil servants engaged in the process under Genro. Dutra managed to give significant formal authority to PB – by allocating all state investments through the process – despite intense political opposition. In both cases, bureaucratic resistance against PB was mild, and administrators expressed positive views of

PB. Moreover, PB in both our cases redistributed resources to the poorest and least developed municipalities, and the signs of partisan favoritism under Dutra disappeared under Genro.

What alternative explanations may account for these differences from traditional social science assumptions? One is that *institutional design* matters. Social scientists with a more positive outlook on participation on a large scale argue that it is possible to design systems like nests, where discussions and decisions are made on a local level and transferred and compiled on higher scales (Pogrebinschi, 2013). Most advocates of participatory democracy seem to agree that some form of representation is required to make political institutions work on a large scale, but to do so a number of institutional mechanisms should be implemented to ensure the closest possible relation between final outcomes and local preferences, such as rotation of representatives, recall mechanisms, mandates, and referendums (Arendt, 2006 [1965], chapter 6; Barber, 1984, pp. 270, 291-293; Bookchin, 1995, appendix 1; Shalom, 2008). In the case of Rio Grande do Sul's PB, this mechanism was the budget referendum. Another aspect of institutional design is its role in helping to overcome large-scale collective action problems, while at the same time opening up for decentralized participation. The PB rules that were instituted in Rio Grande do Sul dictated that the state's monetary resources should go to the least developed regions, but within these parameters it was still possible for participants to decide on both concrete projects and priorities at the local and regional levels. These institutions were not established by an external enforcer, but were the result of a previous voluntary collective action (Elster, 2007, p. 396) – the election that gave the Workers' Party the position to establish these rules.

Another crucial alternative explanation is that *constituencies* matter. The groups that mobilized people to participate in the PB process came from different segments of the population in the periods. Under Dutra trade unions and social movements mobilized strongly because the PB was seen as an alternative to the Right's neoliberal agenda. The representatives from this period had much lower educational levels than those in the Genro period. This points to weaknesses in the resource model of participation that underlie the view that large-scale participatory processes place a particularly high demand on the knowledge-level of participants. The involvement of organizations in PB can reduce the individual costs of acquiring information about policy issues (Leighley, 1996, p. 447) and may counteract the tendency to exclude poorer citizens with lower education levels. People may also participate for less 'rational' reasons; they react to events, are mobilized through personal relations, or need to feel that they belong to a

community or express who and what they are (Rogers, Fox, & Gerber, 2013). Movements and popular mobilization play important roles in activating such reasons by providing a social network, a sense of community, and an ability to act together on the basis of identity and in reaction to outside events (McCarthy & Zald, 1977).

A third alternative explanation is that *political ideology* matters. When people are able to turn common concerns into public matters, they may also turn their economic, social, cultural or coercive capital into political power (Törnquist & Stokke, 2013, pp. 9-10). With a shared political framework, neighborhood associations, social movements, labor unions, and other groups that mobilize disadvantaged groups may enhance the capacity of disadvantaged and disenfranchised citizens to participate in politics. Ideology is central in creating and upholding a collective identity when challenging or resisting political opponents (Fligstein & McAdam, 2011, p. 7). The reason why the Dutra government tried and was able to allocate all investments to the PB despite massive resistance was that the party and the movement that supported it were motivated by a critique of the established political institutions and a strong belief in participatory democracy. Furthermore, as critics of rational choice theory point out, social norms – like those that are nourished by ideological struggles – can facilitate collective action even in very large groups. Social norms are justified in terms of a general good – such as freedom, democracy, or social justice – and not personal relationships. They tell us to act in certain ways irrespective of whether we can observe the outcomes, or if we can know whether or not they will be reciprocated by others (Udehn, 1993, pp. 252-253). In large populations we will find what Elster (2007, pp. 397-399) calls ‘mixed motivations.’ Not all individuals act as rational, self-interested individuals looking for a shortcut to a public good. Ideology may move people to cooperate even if they do not experience or even foresee benefits for themselves, and such ‘unconditional cooperators’ can move utilitarians and self-interested individuals to get involved in collective actions schemes. The minority of recurring participants in Rio Grande do Sul’s PB fits well with this description of social norm-driven unconditional cooperators.

A final alternative explanation is that there are wider *openings* for participatory schemes than traditional assumptions account for. Compromises made on the state level may not only restrict participatory schemes, but also facilitate their realization. The Genro-government managed to establish a participatory system and maintain the PB because it was willing to implement a more stripped down version than did Dutra. Furthermore, bureaucracies can become increasingly open to citizen inputs as their size increases. Large bureaucracies tend to devolve

tasks to lower levels in order to prevent problems from emerging at levels where they cannot effectively be handled (Brans & Rossbach, 1997). Such a devolution of tasks is often accompanied by governance-strategies that include a multiplicity of actors that are affected by and responsible for planning and implementing policies (Callon, Lascoumes, & Barthe, 2009). Adding citizen inputs in this mix can benefit bureaucratic organizations because it increases downward accountability and shortens the chain of agency from planning to implementation (Fung & Wright, 2003, p. 16). Even though we found a bureaucracy that involved itself in PB to gain influence over the agenda, we also found a bureaucracy that valued PB because it provided information to improve the allocation of resources and contacts to make the implementation process easier.

If we only had looked at one of our cases, Rio Grande do Sul's PB could have been interpreted as a failure. But our contrast-of-context approach shows variations that point to possibilities for voice, vote, oversight and social justice on a large scale. Admittedly, representatives dominated the process, participants came from relatively more privileged sectors than the average population, and only a fraction of the state expenses ended up being decided through the PB. This should not deflect attention from the fact that a very large number of individuals was involved in deciding over the available budget funds, at times participants and delegates came from underprivileged sectors, and the two governments we studied at least attempted to open up the investment budget to the population. This represents a remarkable breach with the autocratic and clientelistic practices of normal Brazilian state-level politics (Abrucio, 1994; Borges, 2007). Very few, if any, local cases of PB are able to fulfill all of Wampler's core principles. The shortcomings we found in Rio Grande do Sul would be recognizable in most local cases as well (Hernandes, 2008; Junge, 2012; Montambeault & Goirand, 2016; Romão, 2011). Against the dimmest of expectations, then, the state PB in Rio Grande do Sul suggests that scale is not an unsurmountable hurdle to participatory schemes. The biggest obstacle to realize the PB in the two periods we studied was in fact the state's dire financial situation. Under improved economic conditions the world's largest experiment in PB could perhaps have met a better fate.

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The Systemic Turn and Participatory Budgeting: The Case of Rio Grande do Sul

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Abstract: The scale and complexity of modern polities limits the extent to which participatory practices can be both deliberative and participatory at the same time. This article examines large-scale participatory budgeting (PB) in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, where the government of Tarso Genro (2011-2014) approached the complexity stemming from increased scale through diversification, making PB one channel among many offline and online policy-making channels. Drawing from theories of deliberative systems, multichannel engagement, and countervailing power, we find that diversification allowed for in-depth deliberation in some channels while simultaneously retaining an element of direct democracy. The addition of online voting also managed to mobilize certain sectors of the population that otherwise would not have participated in the process. The main disadvantage was that the different channels of the participatory system undermined each other. Since power was distributed across the system, citizens had to prioritize specific areas in order to influence state policies. Social movements, always vital for a well-functioning PB, migrated to other spaces and left the budgeting process open to control by well-established powerful groups. High-ranking politicians and allied public sector workers essentially displaced lower-class social movements.

Keywords: participatory democracy, deliberative democracy, participatory budgeting, Brazil

Introduction

No argument has been used so strongly against participatory democracy as that of scale. Social science classics claim that the size of modern societies make them impossible to be governed by ordinary citizens; we need representatives, experts, and overarching institutions in order to deal with the complexities of issues on a large scale (Michels 1962 [1915]; Schumpeter 2010 [1943], 220-222; Weber 1978 [1922], 952). Most scholars continue to argue that participatory democracy is unfeasible above the community level because of the impracticality of involving millions of people in making policies for whole states or nations (Bobbio 1987, chapter 2; Przeworski 2010). Nonetheless, since the turn of the millennium, two separate but connected trends have reinforced opposing views that question at least the strongest versions of these claims about the impossibility of scaling up.

In the realm of practice, innovations in citizen participation have gained widespread notoriety as governments around the world adopt them and attempt to scale them up. Latin America, in particular, became a center for experimentation with new forms of participation (Fung 2011; Cameron et al. 2012; Pogrebinschi 2017), with participatory budgeting (PB) as the key example of participatory democracy's relevance in the modern world (Barber 2013, 307-308; Fung & Wright, 2003c). PB is a process of citizen participation in decisions regarding public budgets, and is one of the most fashionable local government reforms globally in recent years (Peck & Theodore 2015; Porto 2017). Since the early 2000s, several Latin American governments began trying to scale PB or other participatory institutions up to the state or national level. Brazil was clearly at the forefront of this wave (Fung 2011, 868; Cameron & Sharpe 2012, 244; Pogrebinschi & Samuels 2014, 321) before the removal of the Workers' Party from the presidency in 2016.

In the realm of theory, scholars working in the vein of deliberative democracy have taken a "systemic turn" that involves understanding deliberative and participatory practices within the broader political system as a whole, allowing theorists to scale up their studies from small-scale initiatives like citizen juries or local-level PB to large-scale polities (Elstub et al. 2016, 143; Parkinson & Mansbridge 2012; Fishkin & Mansbridge 2017; Warren 2017). The systemic approach recognizes that any modern democratic form of government contains a division of labor among many types of institutions playing different roles and serving different functions, and that these institutions will be more or less deliberative and may involve fewer or greater

numbers of participants. Yet, if adequately coupled with and correctly sequenced among themselves and other governing institutions, deliberative institutions could increase democratic legitimacy by enhancing the inclusion and empowerment of citizens, the quality of policy, and the responsiveness of policy-makers. According to Fishkin and Mansbridge (2017), rising nativist populism and declining trust in representative institutions in the North Atlantic and renewed authoritarianism elsewhere only strengthen the need for more deliberative systems of government (Fishkin & Mansbridge 2017).

This article focuses on the confluence of these trends. We examine a particularly interesting and important case – an attempt to scale up PB by to the state level by including it within a system of deliberative and participatory institutions created by the government in Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil called the Sistema Estadual de Participação Popular e Cidadã (State System of Popular Citizen Participation; *Sistema* hereafter). This case is interesting theoretically because it offers one of very few opportunities to examine a deliberate attempt to create a large-scale deliberative *and* participatory system, allowing us to assess the ongoing debate between deliberative democrats and participatory democrats. The practical importance of this case stems in part from its location. Rio Grande do Sul's capital city, Porto Alegre, is considered the official birthplace of PB, which has spread to over two thousand cities world-wide. Recreation of PB's success at the state level could have turned the *Sistema* into a similarly transferable model. At the same time, as a crucial state government for the Workers' Party, this case can help shed light on its recent decline and on the fate of participatory democracy in Brazil more generally.

Our broad question concerns what happens to a successful local-level participatory initiative when it is scaled up as part of a wider deliberative system. Initially, from 1999 to 2002, the state government essentially copied the local version of PB from the state capital of Porto Alegre. Through municipal assemblies and the election of delegates, participants discussed and decided how to spend the state's investment money. A dozen years later, in 2011, the state government introduced the *Sistema*, which not only used PB for the state's investment budget, but also added multiple other channels of public engagement on a range of policy issues. The two instances of PB related to the complexity stemming from increased scale in different ways. In the first case, the approach was one of *unification*, where major policy issues were assigned to one institution, and where it was up to the participants to make priorities and connect the dots between the various investment areas in a holistic manner. The second case was one of *diversification*, where the policy issues were spread across multiple offline and online

institutions, granting participants the opportunity to debate the details of multiple policies using different venues.

Each approach had advantages and disadvantages. The unification approach has been documented and analyzed in previous works, and we have a fairly clear idea of the problems and benefits associated with it (César 2004; Faria 2005; Goldfrank & Schneider 2002; 2006; Streck et al. 2005). Mainly, it gave citizens the opportunity to deliberate on a vast range of issues by attending only one process. It also represented social movements and disadvantaged groups fairly well. However, it became more representative than participatory. There was not enough time to deal with the whole range of issues in the local assembly, and they did not have technologies that could facilitate communication and coordinate the participants' decisions across hundreds of municipalities.

The diversification or systems approach is less understood. Using theories of deliberative systems, multichannel engagement, and countervailing power, this article considers the advantages and disadvantages of the diversification approach. In general, diversification allowed for in-depth deliberations in some channels while simultaneously retaining an element of direct democracy. The addition of online voting also managed to mobilize certain sectors of the population that would not have participated in the process otherwise. The disadvantage was that the different channels of the participatory system undermined each other. Since power was distributed across the system, no channel had more authority than others, which forced citizens to prioritize specific areas in order to influence state policies. Social movements, always vital for a well-functioning PB, migrated to other spaces and left the budgeting process open to ordinarily powerful groups. High-ranking politicians and allied public sector workers essentially displaced lower-class social movements. In sum, we argue that one eventual outcome of the *Sistema* was a kind of elite capture of participatory budgeting.

To be clear from the outset, we do not claim that scaling up participatory democracy is unfeasible. In a state of 11 million inhabitants, over a million *riograndenses* participated annually in the *Sistema*'s PB from 2011 to 2014, helping to decide the allocation of hundreds of millions of *reais* in investment spending. Our argument is rather that participatory or deliberative democrats wishing to scale up local initiatives face distinct challenges and trade-offs. Different forms of scaling up have different advantages and disadvantages that reformers

should take into account as they design new institutions, even when they adopt a systemic approach.

We organize the article as follows. The next section reviews relevant portions of the academic literature on deliberative, participatory, and multichannel democracy, paying particular attention to the notions of displacement and countervailing power. Subsequent sections draw on extensive field research in Rio Grande do Sul in 2014, consisting of in-depth interviews, observation of public meetings, and archival research, to describe the functioning of the *Sistema* and PB's place within it, the reasons behind its origins, and its general results. Following this, we examine the role of online voting and particularly whether it displaced offline participation, the migration of social movements away from PB as they were displaced by elites, and the related dissolution of countervailing power. These sections draw on our qualitative research and on two original quantitative data sets, one consisting of municipal and regional data on offline and online voting and socio-demographic and political characteristics, and the other of individual-level data from surveys of PB delegates in two periods, allowing us to compare the profile of delegates in the period with the unification approach (1999-2002) with the profile of delegates in the period with the diversification approach (2011-2014).¹ The conclusion addresses possible implications for democratic theory, for understanding the dramatic weakening of the Workers' Party in Brazil, and for those seeking to make democracy more deliberative and participatory in Brazil and elsewhere.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Deliberative and Participatory Systems

According to Cohen and Fung (2004), the scale and complexity of modern polities limits the extent to which participatory practices can be both deliberative and participatory at the same time. Careful discussions of policy issues require participants with sufficient knowledge and interest, but on any issue in a large-scale polity the number of individuals with such knowledge and interest is small. One could imagine that all citizens were capable of deliberating over for example economic issues, but that would mean that other important areas such as education, environment, or foreign policy would suffer. Thus, the paradox is that it is impossible to imagine one single arrangement that would allow (i) every citizen to participate in any particular area of public governance, or (ii) any citizen to participate in every area of public governance.

¹ The surveys are described below in the section titled Displacement 1: Social Movement Migration.

Though their concerns and claims overlap in many ways (Curato et al. 2017, 32), theorists of participatory democracy and of deliberative democracy offer different approaches to this conundrum.

The former focus on creating a participatory society by offering “opportunities for individuals to participate in decision-making in their everyday lives as well as in the wider political system” and reforming “undemocratic authority structures” (Pateman 2012, 10). They reject the notion that participatory democracy requires all citizens to participate in all areas of public decision-making, but rather suggest that it means that all are “aware that they can participate at any time in a transparent and deliberative process as part of an empowered community of equals over issues of common concern” (Baiocchi & Ganuza 2017, 160). When analyzing specific institutions, participatory democratic theorists tend to emphasize who is participating and how much power participants have over policy outcomes and over the participatory institutions themselves. They therefore find participatory budgeting particularly compelling as a step towards creating a participatory society, especially as originally practiced in Porto Alegre, where participants disproportionately hailed from disempowered groups, held considerable influence over budget priorities and public investment projects, and decided on the general rules that guided the process on an annual basis.²

By looking at the range of participatory practices that often exist in contemporary societies, deliberative systems theory suggests other ways out of Cohen and Fung’s paradox. As developed by Mansbridge et al. (2012), it expands the analysis of deliberation and participation from one single process — be it PB or the ‘mini-publics’ often referred to in deliberative democracy theory — to multiple channels, whether deliberative, participatory, or representative. This is especially relevant for the diversification approach in Rio Grande do Sul, where the government explicitly attempted to create an integrated system with multiple channels for engagement by citizens and their associations. The systemic approach emphasizes that not all democratic venues need have the same tasks or be of equal importance, stressing that there is often a division of labor among parts of the system. A common critique used against participatory democracy is that it would take too much time to involve every member of a large political entity in deliberations on every decision that is made (Dahl 1990). A systemic

² By the same token, they criticize deliberative democrats’ favored venues – mini-publics – for reflecting existing inequalities and for being disconnected from and powerless over important policy decisions (Pateman 2012, 9; see also Baiocchi & Ganuza 2017, 44-45).

approach, on the other hand, stresses that in-depth discussions can occur in one place, negotiations in another, and decision-making in a third. The different parts of a deliberative system can complement or undermine each other. The strength of one part might compensate for the weakness of another, as when one institution is better at facilitating high quality discussion among smaller groups of people and others cater to mass participation in making decisions over the same issues. But the parts of the system might undermine each other instead. This is what Mansbridge et al. (2012, 3) describe as *displacement*. An institution that looks like an exemplary form of deliberation on its own — like a mini-public or a representative forum that discusses public policy — might displace broad-based channels of participation if decision-makers give it more weight.

This systemic perspective recently has become more prevalent in studies of democratic innovations more generally (Spada et al. 2016). One reason for this interest is that participatory and deliberative initiatives are increasingly becoming multichannel. Rio Grande do Sul's *Sistema* is one example, but during the same period similar systems were implanted in several cities and even attempted at the federal level in Brazil. Furthermore, the growth in channels of engagement based on new information and communications technology platforms has led to a range of studies of online and hybrid participation (Borge et al. 2009; No et al. 2016; Monnoyer-Smith & Wojcik 2012). Spada et al. (2016, 5) define multichannel democratic innovations as “institutions that integrate messages and participatory spaces targeted to different segments of the population in a system specifically designed to increase and deepen citizen participation in the political decision-making process.”

Some of the benefits of multichannel innovations may be that they can attract more participants than single venues like face-to-face PB. They are also potentially more resilient (if one channel fails, others may prevail), and can enhance the political inclusion of groups that are specifically disadvantaged or have difficulties in making their voice heard in general processes. Such systems can gain efficiency by sharing knowledge and resources across channels, and participants themselves have more freedom to choose which issues and fields they wish to address (Spada et al. 2016, 8-10). Despite these potential benefits, the introduction of new channels can also backfire. As in the case of deliberative systems theory, Spada et al. (2016, 10-14) are concerned with how one or more channels in the system might displace others, though they do not use the term displacement.

The most central and relevant dangers for our case concern competition between channels and competition within them. Different channels of engagement may compete for active participants, leading some channels to wither, and may compete for funding, leading to a cannibalization of resources that could weaken the functioning of the system as a whole. Competition among channels increases the likelihood that participants choose those channels that offer the best return for the least effort, a “form of soft free-riding” that can undermine the system’s legitimacy (Spada et al. 2016, 11). Adding and combining different participation channels, some of which entail more effort but also offer greater privileges, also “increases the probability that a selected group of people that has the time and interest will monopolize such channels” (Spada et al. 2016, 12). Spada and his co-authors call this select group “an oligarchy of super-participants” (2016, 12), which could dominate an individual channel and the less powerful participants within it.

In our terms, the key displacement risks to PB when integrated into a larger system are two-fold: that PB gets displaced by other channels of citizen engagement and that, within PB, elite groups displace citizens and civic associations. Both forms of displacement are potentially interesting and may intertwine in practice. We call this displacement and not replacement because PB’s primary normative attraction is that, in many cases, its distinguishing feature has been giving equal or even greater voice to disadvantaged and previously disenfranchised groups (Fedozzi et al. 2013; Wampler 2012). This has been the case in cities where active community associations have mobilized residents in poor neighborhoods to participate in local assemblies (Avritzer 2006). Displacement of poorer participants could be particularly pronounced when PB is combined in a multichannel system that includes online options, which typically show higher rates of participation by wealthier and more highly educated sectors of society (see Sampaio 2011). The digital divide suggests that online political participation amplifies pre-existing societal exclusion. Research in Brazil has shown that “people with university-level education participate in online initiatives roughly five times more than those with primary education” (Sampaio 2011, 498). In itself, this does not have to mean anything else than different segments of the population choosing to use different channels, but it becomes a problem if online participation outweighs the participatory venues based on physical presence. Spada et al. (2016, 11) provide examples of PB in which the priorities chosen by lower-class in-person participants were overturned by middle-class “e-participants” in Brazil and of younger online participants reversing the results of in-person votes by senior citizens in Italy, leading to protests and suspension of PB, respectively.

Displacement by elites within PB can occur without online channels as well. Indeed, PB is especially vulnerable to the erosion of what is often referred to as “countervailing power” (Fung & Wright 2003a; Galbraith 1993 [1952]). A range of studies shows how cases of successful PB are dependent on active participation by civil society organizations like neighborhood associations, social movements, and even trade unions. Such organizations mobilize participants locally, contribute to enlightened deliberations on budget issues at the community level, coordinate the actions of the multiple associations that take part in the process, negotiate between various interests, communicate local demands and needs to higher level in the process, and last – but very importantly – pressure government institutions to share their power if they are reluctant to do so (Abers 2000; Baiocchi et al. 2011; Wampler 2007). One of the keys to success of the original PB in Porto Alegre was that it, in the words of Baiocchi and Ganuza (2014, 38), “was the only connector between citizenry and local state, and everybody — rich or poor, organized or unorganized — had to debate their proposals within the new structured public sphere.” When participatory forums operate in a complex web of institutional arrangements, this opens the possibility for what Fung and Wright (2003b, 35) call ‘forum-shopping’ — if participants cannot get what they want in one setting, they may press their interests in more favorable places. If neighborhood associations, social movements, and trade unions migrate to new channels, this opens up PB for elite capture.

Ordinarily powerful actors can then hijack the channel and weaken the overall democracy-enhancing elements of the system. In cities with weak associations, the municipal administration often exerts great control over the participatory process to the detriment of the ordinary citizens (Avritzer 2006). Montecinos (2012, 12-13) argues that PB outside of Brazil typically has failed to become a complement to representative institutions precisely because of the lack of this form of countervailing power. This is a frequent trajectory for many externally initiated participation initiatives. When communities lack the capacity to utilize the processes in their own favor, they often end up overtaken by local elites (Mansuri & Rao 2013, chapters 3 and 4). In the case of Rio Grande do Sul’s *Sistema*, PB was not externally initiated and in fact had a history of strong social movement involvement, and thus theoretically stood a chance of preventing displacement and the erosion of countervailing power even if combined with new channels. The next sections examine the creation of the *Sistema* and what happened to PB in practice.

The *Sistema* and PB in Rio Grande do Sul

When the left-oriented Tarso Genro from the Workers' Party was elected governor of Rio Grande do Sul in 2011, his government immediately formalized a State System of Popular Citizen Participation that included not only PB but multiple participation mechanisms and forums, both online and offline, and explicitly combined representative and participatory democracy. Each year, more than a million citizens voted in the final phase of the *Sistema*'s budget process. In 2013, the *Sistema* won first place in Latin America in the United Nations Public Service Awards in the category "Fostering participation in public policy decision making through innovative mechanisms" (UNPAN 2013). One of the *Sistema*'s new elements, the Gabinete Digital (Digital Cabinet), won four national prizes and one World Bank prize for innovation and e-governance and was featured alongside participatory budgeting in *The Economist* (*The Economist* 2013; Wu 2013). And Brazil's national government, under the same political banner as Genro, used Rio Grande do Sul's *Sistema* experiment as a guide to develop its own national-level participation system (CEBRAP 2013).

The *Sistema* consisted of four different axes providing channels of engagement: budget decisions, social monitoring, social dialogues, and digital participation. The first axis refers to PB, the second to various rights-based and sectoral councils representing voluntary organizations at all levels of government, the third to a wide range of forums and seminars where multiple actors discuss policy issues together with state officials, and the fourth to new forms of digital participation that the government devised.

Insert Figure 1 about here

In terms of the budget process, the *Sistema* adhered to the cycles and mechanisms used under previous governments, but with its own particular combination. One novelty was the state's formulation of a four-year budget plan through a series of open meetings where government officials, public institutions, and civil society associations deliberated over guidelines for new investments. This process set the boundaries for the rest of the budget discussions. These discussions started early in the year in 28 regional forums that reviewed the results of previous budget years, assessed regional needs, and initiated debate over regional priorities. Each regional forum also elected a commission that facilitated the process within its borders, and sometimes the forum also set rules for how to distribute funds in the region. In the subsequent

local assemblies in the state's 497 municipalities, residents could submit and discuss investment proposals, select the prioritized budget areas of the municipality, and elect delegates. These delegates later met in regional plenaries to finalize budget proposals and the ballot for the popular vote. This occurred over several days both in physical ballot stations in the municipalities and online via personal computers and mobile devices. The number of votes determined the prioritized investments within each region and municipality, and redistributive rules based on a regional development index determined the allocation of resources to the regions.

Insert Figure 2 about here

Several differences between the state's original PB from 1999-2002 and the *Sistema* budget process from 2011 to 2014 stand out. One is that, in the *Sistema* version, the participants in the public assemblies who diagnosed the regional and municipal problems and developed and discussed proposals were not the only citizens who voted on those proposals; instead the voting took place at a later date, and voting via internet was added. Second, the state-wide PB council and regional committees that previously gave continuity to the process and oversaw budget implementation played a minimal oversight role in the *Sistema*. Moreover, PB voters and participants in the *Sistema* decided over a significantly smaller amount of budgetary resources than in the original PB. Whereas the original PB encompassed all state investments, or 4.1 percent of overall state revenues, the funds available in the *Sistema* only made up a tenth of the investments, or 0.4 percent of revenues.³ Despite this, the number of voters in the *Sistema*'s budget process was far higher than in earlier periods. In 2014, 1.3 million individuals or 15.2 percent of the electorate cast a vote, compared to 378,340 participants (nearly 7 percent of the electorate) in 2001.⁴ These numbers, however, cannot be directly compared as a sign of the *Sistema*'s popularity. Participating in the earlier PB was more costly than under the *Sistema*. Citizens previously had to set aside time and sometimes also money to travel to and from a meeting that lasted 3 to 4 hours. In the *Sistema*, voters could simply go to the nearest ballot station (offline vote) or conveniently vote online from home or work, or wherever they happened to be with a laptop computer (online vote).⁵

³ Our calculations from Júnior, Júnior, and Florissi (2004, 337) and the state government's "Transparency Portal" (<http://www.transparencia.rs.gov.br>).

⁴ For 2014, see Mellon et al. (2017, Table 1, 15); for 2001, see Goldfrank & Schneider (2006, 16).

⁵ In a small number of municipalities, there were computer stations for voting as well, and these counted as online votes.

Reasons for Establishing the *Sistema*

We find three main reasons for the Workers' Party government's change from the unification approach under Governor Dutra (1999-2002) to the diversification approach of Governor Genro (2011-2014) and his creation of the *Sistema*. First, government officials perceived diversification to be a better response to the challenges of complexity and scale. Second, they viewed it as a way to accommodate already existing forms of participation. And third, the governor wanted to appeal to the political center and avoid conflicts with the opposition and preexisting institutions.

According to government officials, the pure PB model pursued by Dutra's unification approach is better suited for the local scale.⁶ They also view it as outdated in relation to the new social complexities that developed after the democratization of Brazilian society. Group interests became more diversified than before and, as a consequence, political views and values varied as well. Furthermore, new technologies had been introduced that altered the relationship between the state and the population. As expressed in one of our interviews:

*The government cannot compress the intense calls of the population for more transparency and participation in only one instrument, in only one calendar, as in the case of participatory budgeting. In a municipality it is possible to do so, but at a regional scale this is too timid and very slow. The population has a much more intense rhythm of demanding things from the state, from the ruler, at this scale. You cannot subordinate this search for rights, this charge, in one rigid calendar, in only one ritual, in one instrument that goes on for a whole year.*⁷

For Schmidt and Kopp (2015, 145), officials in Genro's Planning Department, the aim of the *Sistema* was not to focus on only one type of participation, but rather to integrate PB and digital

⁶ To be fair, under Dutra PB was not the sole channel of citizen engagement with the state. Other channels existed, but the Dutra administration prioritized PB as the main venue for presenting and debating major public policies requiring state funding.

⁷ Interview with "Leonardo," State Secretary of Planning, Administration and Citizen Participation (Seplag), Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, 22.04.2014. We conducted 51 interviews with *Sistema* participants, government officials, and union and opposition actors. The interviews were conducted face-to-face with a semi-structured interview guide and most lasted 1-2 hours, with some running shorter. Most interviewees are anonymized in this article, but some can indirectly be identified. This was clarified to and accepted by all interviewees, who gave their informed consent with this procedure.

participation with the many councils and forums that already existed. The number of statewide public policy councils representing social movements as well as business and labor interests, had grown substantially since the Dutra period. They nearly doubled from 16 under Dutra to 29 under Genro, and the number of representatives in these institutions increased even more, from 154 to 455 (Núñez 2016, 143, 151). Genro's gubernatorial campaign had already announced in its electoral platform that he would introduce a system to include a corporatist state council of labor unions, employers' associations, public institutions, and civil society organizations, rights-based or sectoral councils at the various levels of the state government, discussion and voting on digital platforms, and several other participatory forums (Unidade Popular pelo Rio Grande 2010, 8-10). The government wanted these channels to complement and strengthen each other in order to improve the use of deliberative processes and generate better budgetary decisions:

The idea of a system contributes to the quality of the budget discussion. Why? When all of the deliberations in the social monitoring and dialogue axes arrive in the budget axis, the budget decisions we make become better. [...] In the social monitoring and social dialogue axes the discussion can go on 365 days a year. These deliberations enter a budget process that [...] has a limited time period [...]. This may improve the quality of the discussions in the budget assemblies.⁸

Finally, the governor's own writing and his coalition's campaign platform made the appeal to the political center clear. Whereas Governor Genro used to compare Porto Alegre's PB to the Paris Commune of 1871, he later warned against "the anarchy of assemblies" (*anarquia assembleísta*) and argued that saving democracy required creating "strategic programmatic points of agreement with a new center, without which it is impossible to govern within democracy" (Genro 1997 cf. Genro 2011, 311). A decade earlier, the more radical Dutra government had focused on the participation of disenfranchised sections of the population, the importance of social movements, and the transfer of power to the base of society. By contrast, Genro's program emphasized that "all segments of society" were to "dialogue and construct" Rio Grande do Sul together, that state power should be shared among multiple agents, and that the protagonist was "society" at large (Unidade Popular pelo Rio Grande 2010, 8). This move toward the center partly stems from an understanding of Rio Grande do Sul's past experiences

⁸ Interview with "Felipe," Director of Office for Citizen Participation in Seplag, Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, 16.01.2014

with participatory institutions, which share a similar history with those in other parts of Latin America of facing resistance from conservative sectors. Most importantly, when Dutra introduced state-level PB in 1999, opposition parties and politicians condemned and combated the process vigorously, especially from the state legislature (Faria 2006; Goldfrank & Schneider 2006). The Genro administration's explicit appeal to combine participatory and representative institutions in the *Sistema* and its publicized use of computerized communications technologies aimed at providing legitimacy and warding off condemnation from opposition parties and their elite supporters. How did Genro's approach fare?

Mixed Outcomes of the *Sistema*

While our focus is on what happens to PB once it is incorporated in a larger system, in general terms, the establishment of the *Sistema* did succeed in appeasing potential conflicts with the opposition in the legislative assembly and with preexisting deliberative institutions. The relationship between the government and the political opposition in the legislative assembly was more pacific in the Genro period than under Dutra. The opposition criticized the Genro administration for its handling of PB, but never tried to sabotage PB as in previous years. The opposition's main objections to Genro's PB were that it promised more than it could deliver, that the government used it to pay for equipment and services that should be obligatory for the state to provide, and that it employed partisan coordinators who did political work instead of facilitating citizen participation. The same can be said of the government's relationship to the already existing regional development councils or COREDES, which traditionally played a role in the state's budget process. At the central level, the government and the COREDES cooperated in carrying out PB, and negotiated and came to agreements if they had differences on any changes introduced. Each side described this accord as one in which they recognized and acknowledged each other's different positions, but eventually reached consensus on difficult issues. However, several regional councils complained that the government coordinators overran the COREDES and engaged mainly in partisan politics.⁹

The *Sistema* offered a more diverse set of deliberative channels than did the Dutra government, and allowed for more in-depth participation by interested citizens and relevant organizations.

⁹ Interview with "Lucas," President of the statewide Forum of the COREDES, Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, 08.04.2014; and participant observation of Forum of the COREDES, Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul 13.03.2014.

At the state level, the social monitoring axis contained 33 councils, of which 29 had representation from civil society associations. This came in addition to the vast flora of municipal councils. By law all Brazilian municipalities have to establish health, education, and social assistance councils, but many — especially large cities — have multiple other councils. A mid-size municipality like São Leopoldo (214,210 inhabitants) has 20 official councils alone, but it is not uncommon for even small rural towns to have more councils than those that are mandatory. In the social dialogue axis there were 36 thematic conferences that relied significantly on social movement participation, many of which were based on local participatory forums taking place in advance of each state conference (Seplag 2014).

At the same time, PB provided a form of direct participation that none of the more deliberative channels offered. The integration of the PB with the rest of the *Sistema*, however, remained opaque throughout its lifespan. Even though state officials tried to establish procedures that would create a spillover effect from deliberations in other channels to the budget process, this rarely happened. Although members of councils frequently participated in local assemblies, we never encountered examples where either council members or other participants spoke of this integration as a theme. In practice, PB was isolated from the other channels. Interaction with the other axes' was informal and accidental. Near the end of Genro's term, those in charge of organizing the *Sistema* admitted that they never quite managed to integrate its various elements in a coherent structure.¹⁰ As a former government official, who had served in several Workers' Party administrations at the municipal and state levels, told us:

*The governor's digital processes – Governor Asks, Listens, Responds – were not articulated with the PB/Consulta or with the Development Council. All the participatory channels were going simultaneously and under different leaders, different secretaries, so there was no real system. These leaders came from different political currents and had different political projects, so they didn't work together.*¹¹

In sum, the *Sistema* largely met the Genro administration's goals of helping to reduce conflict with the opposition and of maintaining multiple channels of citizen engagement, though it did not effectively synchronize these channels. Instead, competition between channels emerged,

¹⁰ Interview with "Felipe," 16.01.2014.

¹¹ Interview with Tarson Núñez, Advisor for International Relations and Cooperation, Cabinet of the Governor, Ufa, Bashkortostan, 23.09.2017

and PB was isolated. What about the outcome for PB itself? Did the addition of the online option and the presence of other channels diminish PB's ability to give voice to the disenfranchised and to serve as a countervailing power?

Adding Channels: Online Participation

With respect to whether adding an online option weakened the voice of regular, "offline" participants, we can fairly categorically state that online voting did not displace traditional PB participation. Instead, the online option largely attracted a separate group of participants, many of whom might not have participated otherwise, thereby boosting participation in general. As shown in Table 1, for the state as a whole, both offline and online voting increased by the end of the period. The number of online voters nearly doubled during the *Sistema* period (with an 88 percent increase from 2011 to 2014), while the number of in-person voters increased by 7 percent. Most PB voters continued to vote in person; by 2014, slightly less than 20 percent of PB voters chose the online option.

Insert Table 1 about here

Examining variation in participation rates at the municipal level provides additional evidence that online voters did not displace offline participation. In 55 of the 497 municipalities, over 50 percent of PB voters chose the online option, and this rate ranged from less than one percent in nine municipalities to 100 percent in three municipalities. To test the effects of online participation on offline participation, we conducted regression analyses of the absolute numbers of offline participants in the 497 municipalities in 2014. As shown in Table 2, the number of online voters that year is positively correlated and statistically significant even when controlling for several other significant predictors such as population, distance from Porto Alegre, vote share for Genro in 2010, and an indexed score on sanitation, which includes measures for the percentage of domiciles connected to the water and sewage systems and the average number of inhabitants per domicile.¹² These results suggest that, in general, interest in online PB participation does not detract from offline PB participation; instead, both types of participation

¹² We also conducted regression analyses with change in the number of offline participants between 2011 and 2014 as the dependent variable and found similar results. The main independent variable of interest was the change in the number of online participants, and we found that in both bivariate and multivariate regression analyses, it was positively correlated with the change in the number of offline participants and statistically significant, though we found fewer significant predictors and a lower R-square in that model.

mostly fell and rose together. In particular, 2014 saw an increase of over 98,000 online participants and over 92,000 offline participants.

Insert Table 2 about here

Our quantitative findings are consistent with reports from our interviewees as well as with individual-level survey research. Government officials told us that in 2014 they led a particularly intensive get-out-the-vote effort targeting both potential online and offline voters. The government's strategy included use of social networks, principally Facebook and Twitter, sending vans with computers and an internet connection to several municipalities, and mobilization via a network of government agents in each region.¹³ An interesting study by the World Bank's Digital Engagement Evaluation Team (Mellon et al. 2017) also indicates a lack of displacement through online voting. The team examined all the PB votes, online and offline, in Rio Grande do Sul in 2014 and conducted surveys of online and offline voters in Porto Alegre, and report three major results. First, "respondents who are male, university educated, less than 30 years old, or who use the Internet daily are more likely to vote online" (Mellon et al. 2017, 17). Second, most of the online voters surveyed (69%) reported that they would not have voted in PB if there were no online option. Together, these findings strengthen the impression that the online channel reaches a specific segment of the population that would not otherwise have participated. Third, using a regression analysis of project proposals in the 28 regions, they find that online vote choices are highly correlated with offline vote choices (the bivariate $R^2 = 0.84$; Mellon et al 2017, 18). This last result is surprising, given the different demographic profile of the online voters, but similarly points to the online option's innocuous role. Voting, whether online or in person, is a low-effort, low-salience act of participation. To better understand how the *Sistema* affected PB, we need to study the key actors engaged in the crucial deliberative stages, and here we do find signs of displacement.

Displacement 1: Social Movement Migration

To examine the issue of who participates most actively in PB and to what extent the profile of participants changed when PB became part of the *Sistema*, we take advantage of PB regional

¹³ Interview with Tarson Núñez, 23.09.2017.

delegate surveys from 2002 and 2014.¹⁴ These delegates are the most committed participants, those who deliberate over PB priorities and projects and create the ballot. Our survey data are taken from a strategic sample of five of the state's 28 regions: Litoral Norte, Médio Alto Uruguai, Serra, Sul, and Vale do Rio dos Sinos. These regions are comparable for the two periods and are selected to represent the diversity of rich and poor, agricultural and urban, densely and sparsely populated regions. Although the five regions constitute a small sample, they appear fairly representative of the delegates as a whole.¹⁵

The survey data reveals one of the most remarkable differences between the earlier state-level PB and the *Sistema's* PB: the widely diverging degree of social movement participation. In the Dutra era's unification approach, PB had a very strong social movement presence, in part as a reaction to opposition intransigence. When the state judiciary prohibited the government from using state resources to organize PB assemblies in 1999 – following a conflict with the opposition in the legislative assembly – social movements stepped up. The major trade union (CUT), the landless workers' movement (MST), and the rural workers' unions Contag and Fetag decided to run the assemblies themselves. Social movements remained active in PB throughout this term. Of the delegates in the selected regions in the 2002 survey, 34 percent reported that they were affiliated with a trade-union or civil society association and 22 percent that they were affiliated with a social movement. In the state capital Porto Alegre, a city with a strong history of active civic associations, 54 percent of delegates in 2001 participated in a neighborhood association, 14.5 percent in a trade union, 14.7 percent in a popular council, and 9 percent in an NGO (Faria 2005, 177).

Under Genro's diversification approach, the relationship between social movements and PB changed. Organizations traditionally allied with the Workers' Party, such as CUT, MST, Contag, and Fetag, were not opposed to the Genro government's PB. At the same time,

¹⁴ Benedito Tadeu César directed the 2002 survey at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), described in César (2004). We are grateful to him for providing access to these data. Legard directed a group of students from UFRGS to conduct the 2014 survey.

¹⁵ The profile of the delegates in the five regions in the 2002 survey (n=389) is largely similar to the profile of the delegates in the total 19 regions in the same survey (n=1409). The most notable differences are that the five-region sample has fewer public servants (4.2% difference). We assume that the difference between the delegates in our selected regions and the rest of the delegates are also largely similar in 2014, but we have not been able to test for this. We do not know the skewness for the 2002 survey as a whole, but most probably delegates with weak organizational affiliation are underrepresented in the survey. In 2014 we faced the challenge that more people than elected showed up at some of the delegate meetings and responded to our survey. This was especially the problem in one region (Serra). However, a sensitivity analysis shows that the results do not change if we exclude this region and we have therefore kept it in our results.

however, they did not put much effort into mobilizing their members to participate. Of the delegates in our 2014 survey, only 16 percent reported that they represented a trade union, social movement, or other civil society association. In Porto Alegre, the number of delegates from such associations was nearly half of that in 2001. A government official described this absence as a distortion:

The trade unions participate little, and the rural movements – who are very strong in Rio Grande do Sul – could participate more. There are distortions. The rural movements are very organized, and at times they prefer to talk directly to the governor instead of participating here. And since the governor is preoccupied with rural issues, he sometimes establishes an advisor who acts as a middleman in between the governor and the rural movements. And then they say: “We won’t participate [in PB] because we already manage to resolve these issues by other means.” These are distortions.¹⁶

One major reason for social movement migration has to do with the *Sistema* — or rather, the *Sistema* plus the many other contact points between organized actors and the state that had developed with the democratization of Brazil after military rule ended in 1985 and that expanded further after the Workers’ Party won the presidency in 2002. The many councils and conferences encompassed by the *Sistema* came in addition to all the different forms of social movement engagement built into diverse programs of the various federal, state, and municipal secretaries and agencies that utilized participatory methodologies.

The rural workers union Fetag exemplifies the kinds of opportunities and pressures this put on the social movements. Under the *Sistema*, Fetag participated both in councils at the state and local level, in thematic conferences, and a host of other spaces. These included frequent meetings and negotiations with the governor’s staff and the various secretaries. Fetag also formed part of the government’s “Harvesting Plan” (*Plano Safra*) that encompassed the programs that supported small-scale producers and agribusiness – the implementation of which also relied on participation of rural communities. Fetag’s regional and local branches, for example, helped the state in distributing goods and performing services directed at their members, and accompanied technical consultants visiting farms and cooperatives, as well as

¹⁶ Interview with “Felipe,” 16.01.2014.

taking part in various committees discussing the execution of government policies. In addition, local Fetag representatives participated in regional forums for mayors and local council members, formalized municipal partnerships, and financial institutions.

At the local, regional, and state levels, our interviewees also emphasized the importance of protests and other forms of action to put pressure on the government and politicians in the legislative assembly. This range of opportunities meant that social movements had to prioritize where to participate, and they therefore emphasized those channels that best rewarded their members:

Most of the unions [in Fetag] are small and only have a president and some staff that does the bureaucratic part. When there are three meetings in three different places on the same day, they cannot participate in all of them and have to choose one.[...] We have to prioritize those that will attend most to the needs of the farmers. [...] Our number one priority is always what reaches out to the highest number of families, in as many regions as possible [...].¹⁷

The social movement emigration out of PB cannot be explained by the opening of multiple participatory opportunities alone; the relatively scarce resources available in the *Sistema's* PB proved important as well. As previously shown, PB under Genro only encompassed a fraction of the state's budget. The resulting discouragement emerged as a recurring theme in our interviews with social movement representatives at both the state and local levels. As explained by one Fetag leader:

Inside the trade union movement there are leaders who don't believe in the state PB anymore, who don't vote, don't support it and don't come to the meetings. There are those kind of pessimists who don't want to participate and collaborate any longer, because they already participated some times and didn't manage to achieve what they expected to obtain.¹⁸

¹⁷ Interview with "Bruno," statewide leader of the Rural Workers' Federation Fetag, Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, 23.04.2014.

¹⁸ Interview with "Paulo," regional leader of Fetag, Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, 23.04.2014.

Both availability of new channels within the *Sistema* as well as PB's diminished centrality and clout help explain declining social movement participation; in turn, as described below, this had negative consequences for giving voice to the disenfranchised.

Displacement 2: Dissolution of Countervailing Power

Under the Dutra government's unification approach, PB had served as the *primary* connector between the citizenry and the state and encompassed all state investments. This made it an attractive venue for popular sector social movements, who stayed loyal to PB and became a counter-weight to the ordinarily powerful actors that decided over the budget resources. Under the diversification approach of the *Sistema*, however, the movements migrated to other channels that had greater force of attraction, and engaged in forum-shopping. This opened up the budgeting axis for conventionally powerful actors – such as local political elites and relatively privileged public servants – who ended up dominating it. In fact, 67 percent of the delegates in the *Sistema* represented a public institution – a municipality, an administrative office, a hospital, school, or university. As emphasized by Sobottka and Streck (2014, 169-170), these public servants came “to defend investments in their offices [sic] everyday needs. Nurses want funds for the needs of day-to-day health posts; public school teachers want to ensure that in their schools there are [sic] chalk, cleaning supplies and school meals; police officers in their uniforms claim cars to patrol the streets, and life jackets to protect them.” This profoundly altered the socio-economic profile of those who represented the participants in the process. As shown in Table 3, in contrast to the more popular and partisan profile of elected PB delegates under Dutra, the typical *Sistema*-era delegate was a middle-aged, highly educated, non-partisan man from the public sector.¹⁹ In sum, PB went from being a popular movement during the Dutra period to a local, regional, and intra-governmental elite phenomenon under Genro's *Sistema*.

Insert Table 3 about here.

The incentive structure of the budget process favored organized groups who could muster thousands of votes. When the organized social movements reduced their activities, it meant that

¹⁹ Additional regression analyses demonstrate that being a public servant is positively associated with having higher education levels, even when controlling for gender and age, in both periods, while being affiliated to or representing a social movement is not a statistically significant predictor of higher education levels in the Dutra period and is negatively correlated with education levels in the Genro period, again controlling for gender and age.

the countervailing power dimension of PB dissolved and organized public sector workers and professional politicians took over. For regular participants, deliberation became less important. The municipalities that could muster the highest share of voters would get the highest amount of investment money – even if this was tempered by rules that guaranteed more funds to the poorest municipalities regardless of voter turnout. What mattered most was getting projects on the ballot and then mobilizing voters during the 2-3 referendum days at the end of the process. In order to encourage potentially eight million electors to participate, the government relied on the support of municipalities and groups involved in the process.

A large majority of the ballots were handed in physically (not online), and the task of collecting them was partly done by the municipalities and the local organizations of the COREDES, but also by participating groups who got ballot boxes and collected votes themselves. These interest groups used the opportunity to argue that voters should support their demands. This gave an advantage to large, organized groups in the referendums. Institutions like schools and hospitals could convince students or patients to vote for their demands and use employees to collect votes on the referendum day. Organizations like police and fire departments could use their trucks to move around to a large number of localities, and possibly also to use their authority to encourage and influence voters.²⁰ As one fire brigade officer explained:

So, on the day of the referendum you all go out on the street to get votes?

Yes, we go out with our trucks, go to the ballot places, talk to people. We make good pressure in the whole region.

So, you go to the ballot places to talk to the people to prioritize...?

We say yes to the vote. We want to win the vote. The people who see the ballot don't understand much, but if they see a fire fighter that talks to them, they vote. Here we say that "those who aren't seen, aren't remembered." We have to sell our fish. We participate effectively.²¹

An additional strategy for gaining votes was to make alliances with groups representing demands from other areas or municipalities. Groups representing a certain demand also encouraged voters to select the demands of their allies on the ballot (voters can select up to four

²⁰ Haikin et al. (2017, 235, 282-283, 292-295) describe multiple instances of public sector workers attempting to persuade passers-by to vote and to do so for particular projects.

²¹ Interview with "Igor," Fire brigade officer and PB delegate, Torres, Rio Grande do Sul, 09.04.2014.

projects, which makes it possible to promote up to three other demands). Large organized interest groups also had the advantage here, in that they could engage in wide outreach on the voting days, which made them attractive as allies of other interest groups. These alliances often took place alongside the official process, which further cemented the advantages of already powerful actors. As described by a mayor who was deeply engaged in the PB process:

After the municipal assembly we hold here, there is a new regional meeting of delegates. There, we have to negotiate. There, it's only negotiations. There, we coordinate a lot to make sure that our demands pass. Did you see how five municipalities [at the regional audience] voted for only one thing? They had already closed a deal. When we called to our neighbor-municipality to say that we wanted to negotiate with them, they told us that they had already closed a deal with three other municipalities. Unluckily, they said, you did not call us soon enough and we had to defend our alliance. We were left behind. [...] Even if we came with the largest delegation to that meeting, we lost this opportunity to coordinate with the others. Now, we have to negotiate with the other delegates in the region, and to vote both for things that are of interest for us and what is of interest for others.²²

In the end, former official in the Dutra and Genro administrations, Tarson Núñez, described the state PB as “various sectors of the government fighting over the budget... Government secretaries from the different areas mobilized their people, their constituencies – firefighters, farmers” (interview 23.09.2017). Rather than serving as a popular counter-weight to the powerful, PB transformed into an internal contest within the state government and between local governments.

Conclusion: Displacements in Deliberative Participatory Systems

The diversification approach to scale had some advantages in Rio Grande do Sul. It provided one solution to the perceived trade-off between deliberation and mass participation, by allowing in-depth policy discussion to take place in some channels and large-scale participation to occur in others. The introduction of online voting was not only a tool to facilitate voting, but also became a channel tailored to younger middle-class segments of the population without

²² Interview with “Camila,” Mayor and PB delegate, Torres, Rio Grande do Sul 09.04.2014.

displacing other participants. We have not focused on the deliberative and participatory system as a whole in this article, however, but concerned ourselves with the trajectory of PB as one channel within a multichannel system. It fared less well, ending up isolated and diminished. As stressed by other researchers, PB is susceptible to forum-shopping, and we argue that this is especially true in multi-channel systems. Indeed, with the *Sistema's* multiple deliberative venues, this is what happened to state-level PB in Rio Grande do Sul from 2011 to 2014 under Genro. Social movements, which had played crucial roles supporting PB under Dutra, migrated to other spaces and reduced their engagement within PB. This left PB vulnerable to already powerful groups, in this case local political elites and organizations of public servants. The outcome was the dissolution of countervailing power as popular sector social movements were displaced.

What can the case of Rio Grande do Sul tell us about the debate between theorists of deliberative and participatory democracy, about the Workers' Party's fate in Brazil, and about the chances of scaling up local democratic experiments in Brazil and elsewhere? First, neither deliberative nor participatory democrats offer an effective strategy for overcoming opposition to new democratic channels from the already powerful. The diversification approach to scaling up, which we link to deliberative systems theorists, weakens mass participation too much. It ensures inclusion of both incumbent and rival elites but ultimately disperses social movement energies. On the other hand, the unification approach associated with participatory democrats risks domination by ruling party partisans and fierce resistance from rival political elites. Second, Workers' Party administrations under Genro, and under Lula and Dilma Rousseff nationally, created multiple channels of deliberation but very few channels of mass participation, and the one channel of mass participation under Genro, PB, was diminished. As others have argued (Dagnino & Teixeira 2014), the mass protests starting in 2013 – which sprung up in Rio Grande do Sul as strongly as elsewhere in Brazil – indicate the insufficiency of the Workers' Party's efforts to create participatory institutions to channel popular sector demands. Third, future designers of large-scale multichannel democracies will need to pay more attention to avoiding displacement among and within channels and find better ways to balance deliberation and mass participation. Easy answers for how to do either of these tasks do not exist. In different, more propitious contexts – where government revenues are greater (or indebtedness smaller) and where political polarization is less extreme – it may be easier to synchronize and sequence deliberative and participatory channels. Moreover, the institutionalization of channels that truly allow for deliberation among ordinary citizens as well as empowered mass participation

probably requires a large-scale mobilization that is more akin to the movement that originated participatory budgeting in the first place in Brazil in the 1990s.

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Figures and tables for “The Systemic Turn and Participatory Budgeting: The Case of Rio Grande do Sul”

Figure 1. Institutional Design of the Sistema

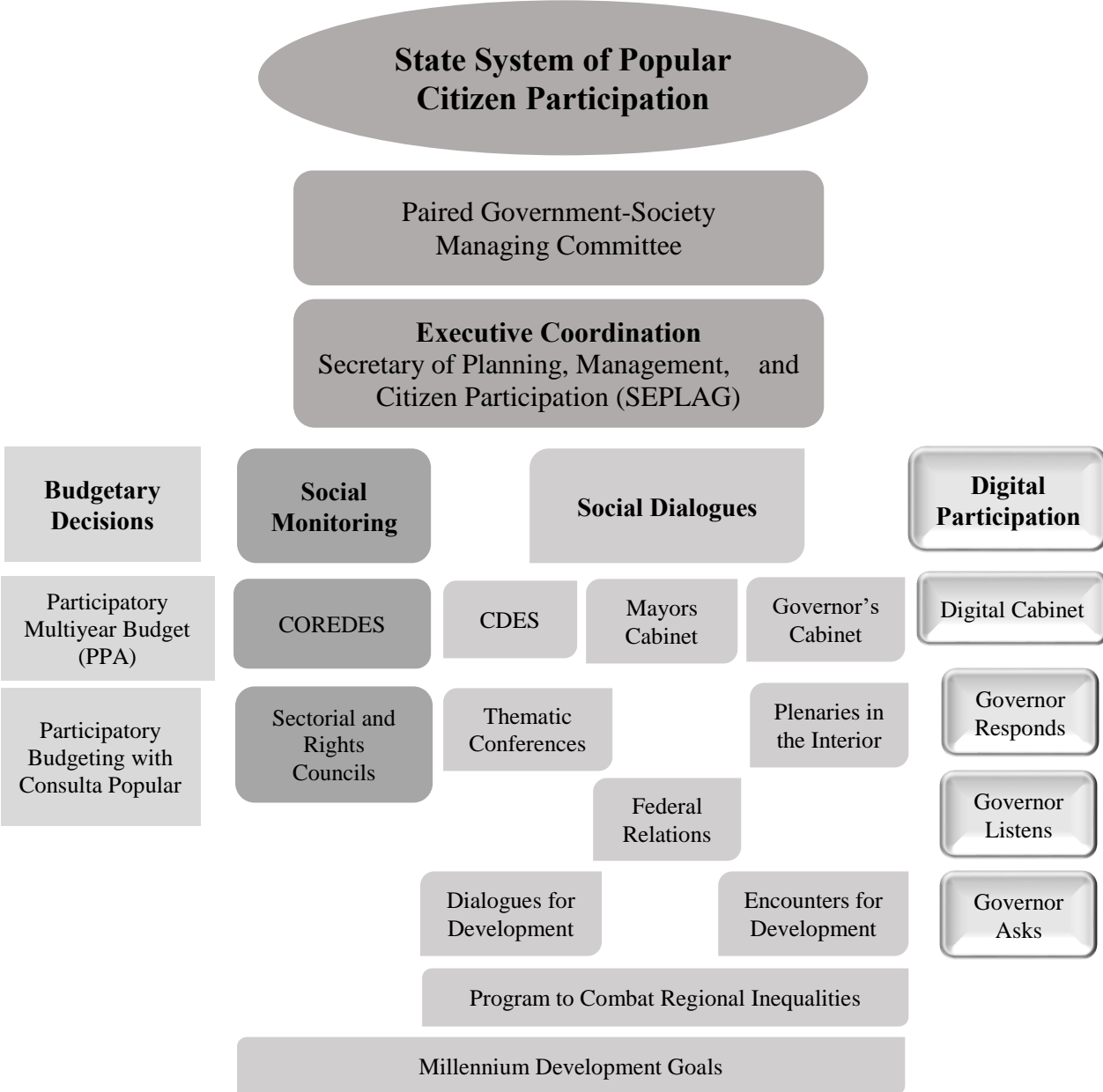


Figure 2: Participatory budget process 2013

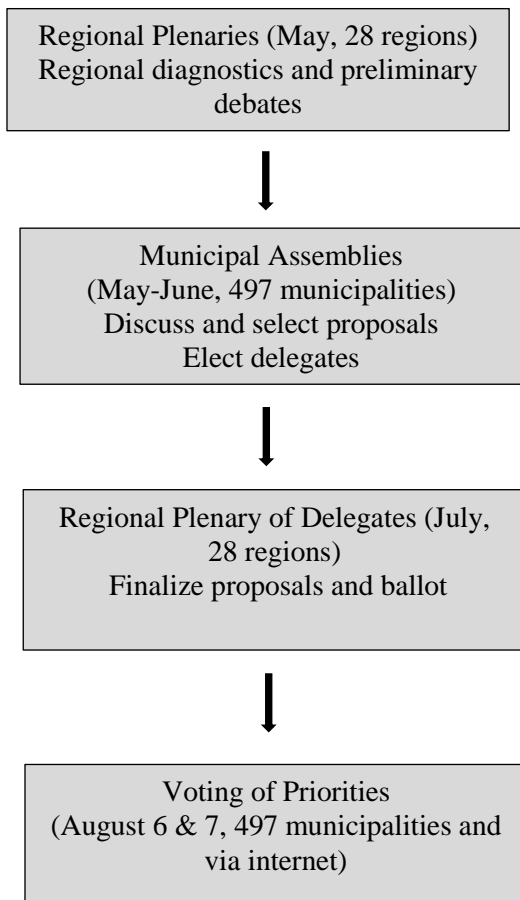


Table 1: Offline and online votes 2011-2014. Total numbers.

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014
Offline votes	988,145	907,146	967,610	1,059,842
Online votes	135,996	119,603	157,549	255,751
Percent of votes online	12.1%	11.6%	14.0%	19.4%

Source: Seplag (2014, 41); our calculations.

Table 2: Predictors of Offline Voting 2014, total number of voters. Multiple linear regression. Unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis.

Variable	Coefficient
Constant	-2997.9*** (886.1)
Online voters 2014 (number)	0.7718*** (0.169)
Vote for Tarso Genro in 2010 as share of electorate	8754.7*** (2109)
Population (1000 inhabitants)	192.03*** (21.68)
Distance from Porto Alegre (km)	-2.9627** (0.951)
Sanitation index	5304.1*** (880.2)
Workers' Party members as share of population	-8142.3 (8325)
PB spending per capita in 2012	3.3547 (8.067)

***p<0.001; **p<0.01; Adjusted R² = 0.452; Valid n=496.

Table 3: Comparison of characteristics of delegates under pure state PB (2002) and the Sistema (2014)

	2002	2014
Women	40.8 %	33.4 %
Median age	38	44
Primary or no education	49.6 %	18.0 %
Secondary or higher education	50.4 %	82.0 %
Public sector workers	31.4 %	64.8 %
Partisan affiliation with the government	56.3 %	25.5 %
N	389	564

Translation and Institutional Change: What Happened when Participatory Budgeting Came to the Nordic Countries?

Sveinung Legard

‘Participatory budgeting’ (PB) is a term used for the proposal that ordinary citizens and not elected politicians should decide on how to spend public funds. The idea and practice of PB emerged in Brazil in the early 1990s but has since travelled to thousands of municipalities across the globe, among them cities such as Paris and New York. As it has spread, however, its content and form have altered. Whereas PB originally denoted reforms that challenged representative political institutions, it now stands for schemes and projects that seek to strengthen them. This is because PB has been *translated* and given new meanings in the places it has travelled to. Today, PB is normally presented as a form of ‘good governance’ or citizen consultation and not as a comprehensive reform to alter local political institutions. The practice has also changed. In the original PB all municipal investments were distributed through a participatory process, but in cities like New York and Paris only a fraction of the funds are set aside for local residents to decide.

In the Nordic countries PB has been introduced as a project that encourages particular segments of the population to engage in conventional politics. This translation has not led to fundamental institutional change but has rather only added layers to pre-existing arrangements. There are at least two explanations for this. One is that conditions that nourished PB in the first place are absent in the Nordic countries. PB was born at a time when the Brazilian public had very little confidence in state institutions, and there existed a massive popular movement that advocated participatory democracy as an alternative to the status quo. In the Nordic countries, to the contrary, confidence in public institutions is relatively high, and most movements work within the established institutional order. The other explanation is that settled institutions exert a strong pressure on how imported ideas and practices are translated. The rules that regulate representative democracy are very strict in the Nordic countries, and those who defend them are well situated to block challenges to existing institutional arrangements. In this chapter I will illustrate these two explanations for the trajectory of PB in the Nordic countries by looking at Fredrikstad – a mid-sized city in southeast Norway that introduced PB in 2009.

1. Translation, Institutions and Change

First some words on the analytical perspective that informs this study and the method used to conduct it. The travel of ideas or policies – like PB – is often studied within ‘policy diffusion’ or ‘policy transfer’ frameworks (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Simmons, Dobbin, & Garrett, 2006). These are concerned with the mechanisms with which policies travel or with the structural forces underlying their diffusion but also with how they are implemented in new places. Such research rarely argues that foreign institutions and practices are adopted *in toto*. Cut and paste transitions are seen as exceptions, and hybridized combinations of outside and local knowledge are more common. Local differences may alter the speed, scope and extent to which outside practices are incorporated. Some actors are always more interested in pushing transfer processes, and certain actors are more receptive to them than others (Marsh & Sharman, 2009, p. 279). But what these perspectives lack is often a view of how ideas themselves change as they travel from one place to another (Mukhtarov, 2014). As Bruno Latour writes, ‘the spread in space of time of anything – claims, orders, artefacts, goods’ is in ‘the hands of people’ who ‘may act in many different ways, letting the token drop, or modifying it, or betraying it, or adding to it, or appropriating it’ (Latour, 1986, p. 267). That is why ideas are not simply received, rejected, resisted or accepted – they are *translated* (Latour, 1991, p. 116). To understand the changes that occurred with PB as it came to the Nordic countries, I therefore turn to what is called *translation theory* in ‘Scandinavian institutionalism’ (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996; Røvik, 2016; Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008; Scheuer, 2008a; Wæraas & Agger Nielsen, 2015).

When ideas and practices travel they are first decontextualized from their original location and then recontextualized into a new one. This opens up for a great deal of interpretation and alteration. Translation theory emphasizes that these interpretations and alterations are not arbitrary but rather bound by certain rules. Røvik speaks of three modes of translation with associated rules. The *reproducing* mode of translation refers to deliberate attempts to replicate practices in the source context. *Copying* is the rule within this mode. These are actions ‘that aim to replicate in a recipient context certain practices and/or results found in a source context. Thus, copying denotes attempts to achieve a success similar to that observed in the source context by using the exact same means in a new location’ (Røvik, 2016, p. 8). The *modifying* mode of translation is more pragmatic and happens where translators both try to include central elements of the desired source practice in the translated version as well as to adjust them to

work within the recipient context. There are two rules in this mode: addition and omission. *Addition* involves adding elements to the source version when it is being translated to a new context. *Omission* refers to toning down or omitting certain aspects of the source version in the recipient context. Both rules can be applied in the same settings since source and recipient contexts might be similar in certain aspects but different in others. The *radical* mode of translation takes place when translators consider themselves relatively unbound by the prototype when they implement a new practice in their own context. The editing rule within this mode is *alteration* – the ‘comprehensive transformation and mixing of one or more source versions of a practice, leading to the creation of a unique version in the recipient organization’ (ibid., p. 9). The use of these rules is decided by certain conditions, such as how embedded the practice is in the source context or how transformable the transferred knowledge is. The most important condition in this discussion, however, is the degree of similarity between the source and recipient contexts. If they are very similar, copying is the most appropriate rule. If they are moderately similar, adding or omitting is common. If the contexts are very different on variables crucial for the functioning of the practice, it is more likely that the transferred idea is domesticated and presented as an innovation rather than an imitation or modification (ibid., p. 14). As I will show, the content of PB slowly changed as time progressed and PB moved to new contexts that lacked the factors that were crucial for its implementation. PB as practised in the Nordic countries and Fredrikstad is a product of this journey.

Another important concept in translation theory is that of an *editing infrastructure*. People who wish to introduce a new practice in their organization or community can seldom do so by replication. They have to relate to the conditions in the field (Scheuer, 2008b, p. 161). These conditions are partly bound to the way people are thinking and the norms for behaviour. As Sahlin and Wedlin write, when ‘reforms and experiences are accounted for and narrated, they tend to be framed and presented in familiar and commonly accepted terms so that they will make sense to a reader or listener. [...] These concepts, references and frameworks form the infrastructure of editing and they restrict and direct how the accounts are given’ (Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008, p. 225). Translators have to align their projects with certain ‘master rules’, position them within existing categories and thought-schemes and draw upon available discourses to make them meaningful to others (Hardy & Maguire, 2008, p. 208). The editing infrastructure refers to what Scott has called the cognitive and normative pillars of institutions. The cognitive pillar emphasizes how institutional rules make up frames through which meaning is made, and the normative pillar describes how these rules define values, roles and appropriate

forms of behaviour (Scott, 1995, pp. 37–38, 40). As I will show, the cognitive and normative pillars of representative democracy exerted a strong influence on the translation of PB to Fredrikstad.

What the concept ‘editing infrastructure’ should also include is what Scott calls the regulative pillar of institutions. This has to do with processes that ‘involve the capacity to establish rules, inspect or review others’ conformity to them, and as necessary, manipulate sanctions, rewards or punishments’ (ibid., p. 35). This is the hard power of institutions – something that translators are expected to adapt to if they are to succeed in introducing a new practice. The opportunity for success depends, for example, on the strength of the veto power of those who defend the established institutions and the possibility for bending its rules (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010, p. 18). If budgeting rules are malleable or the political establishment is weakened, it could be possible to introduce a radical version of PB. If not, the translation most likely to succeed would be a more moderate one. This does not necessarily mean that change is impossible within such a setting. Revolution and the displacement of existing institutions with brand new ones is not the only form of change that can occur. Small-scale, gradual and unnoticeable change can occur when new institutions or rules are added alongside existing ones. Mahoney and Thelen call this *layering* and argue that even though powerful veto players can protect old institutions, they cannot necessarily prevent the addition of new elements to them (ibid., p. 20). The introduction of PB in the Nordic countries must also be understood to occur within such a setting, which effectively narrowed down its range of possible translations.

A weakness with this perspective is that it can easily send the impression that a translation is preordained, depending on the field in which it is implemented. Institutional fields are not totalizing phenomena. They are riven with inconsistencies and conflicts, something that provides opportunities for institutional change (Hardy & Maguire, 2008, p. 203). The form and content of translations cannot therefore be decided a priori but instead are ‘primarily an empirical question to be resolved by studying the introduction of a practice into a particular context’ (Wæraas & Sataøen, 2014, p. 245). The task of the researcher is therefore to describe the translation, identify what rules are used and seek explanation for them. This is what I do with PB in Fredrikstad in this chapter. The method I have used is text analysis. I have identified documents where the translation of PB appears and analyzed these using the tools discussed above. The documents studied are both internal and external and encompass a PB-brochure, flyers that encourage citizens to participate, website definitions, contributions to newspapers

from municipal staff and PowerPoint presentations given to other municipalities or official institutions. Translations in larger organizations are normally objectified in written documents (Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008), and people who want to change institutions mainly communicate with audiences through the production, distribution and consumption of texts (Hardy & Maguire, 2008, p. 208). The strength of the text analysis is that it captures this official translation work. The weakness of it is that it may miss out on the unofficial and oral translations that go on in such settings as well as the political and organizational play of the field actors that lies underneath the translation process.

One final note on my approach is that I do not look to judge how true or untrue the translation of PB in Fredrikstad is to the original version that emerged in Brazil in the early 1990s. According to some definitions (see for example Wampler, 2012) most examples from the Nordic countries would probably not count as PB. I have been myself walking the streets of Oslo collecting signatures to introduce PB in my city, and I can understand the pain that many feel when they see what they perceived as an emancipatory project be translated into something radically different. In this analysis, however, I follow Spinoza's dictum of *non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intelligere* (not to laugh, not to lament, not to curse – but to understand) and leave the politics aside for another occasion. What is crucial here is to understand why PB has been translated as it has.

2. From Porto Alegre to Fredrikstad

Before it came to the Nordic countries and Fredrikstad, PB had already undergone a long journey. It was first initiated in Porto Alegre in southern Brazil when a socialist alliance led by the Workers' Party (PT) won the municipal elections in 1989. Together with community organizations and local social movements, the new municipal administration pursued a participatory democracy model inspired by socialist ideas of workers' councils and Christian Base communities from the progressive branch of the Catholic Church. In its original format participatory budgeting meant that all adult citizens could participate directly in allocating *all* of the municipality's investments. Typical projects would range from connecting neighbourhoods to the running water network, paving roads, upgrading sanitation systems, renovating schools or establishing a health clinic, computer lab or kindergarten. The new budget institutions combined direct participation and representation. The direct participation took place in open assemblies where residents would come forth with investment proposals and vote on

how to prioritize the money. The participants would then elect delegates and councillors to represent them in negotiations with the municipal administration and the make-up of the final investment proposition. The new budgeting rules never formally supplanted the representative political institutions in Porto Alegre, but they undermined the authority of the local legislative assembly. PB was commonly perceived as more transparent and just than the patron-client relations that up until then had dominated local politics. The opposition was also weakly organized and not able to veto the outcomes of the budget process (Abers, 2000; Baiocchi, 2005; Goldfrank, 2011; Gret & Sintomer, 2005).

The PB institutions transformed Porto Alegre. They improved government transparency and reduced corruption (Goldfrank, 2011, pp. 231–237) and redirected public resources to working-class neighbourhoods and marginalized sectors of the population (Marquetti, 2008). Segments that previously were disengaged from politics – like women with low income and little formal education living in the outskirts of the city – became mobilized to participate actively on budget issues (Fedozzi et al., 2013). These changes received worldwide attention. Development agencies such the UN and the World Bank adopted PB as a best practice of urban good governance. The global social movement gathering ‘World Social Forum’ hosted by Porto Alegre gave participatory budgeting an iconic status on the international Left. It was also widely studied and disseminated in academic circles where it was described in very positive terms as a ‘redistributive democracy’ (de Sousa Santos, 1998), a case of ‘empowered participatory governance’ (Fung & Wright, 2003), an ‘empowered participatory regime’ (Baiocchi, 2005) and even a ‘real utopia’ (Wright, 2010).

One of the reasons why Porto Alegre became an emblem of participatory democracy was that it not only consulted citizens but also gave them real power in deciding over municipal funds. According to Baiocchi and Ganuza (2014) it had both a communicative and an empowering dimension. The communicative dimension rested on public forums that were established to discuss the budget, whereas the empowering dimension was based on institutions that secured that the outcomes of these deliberations were realized by the municipality. The empowerment dimension, however, is rarely found in any of the thousands of cases of PB found on a world-wide basis today (Dias, 2014; Gilman, 2016; Sintomer, Herzberg, & Röcke, 2008). In Paris, for example, the municipality has allocated €500 million from 2014 to 2020 to projects that have been proposed and elected by citizens. In New York, city districts are allowed to initiate PB if they set aside \$1 million for the process. These funds are extremely small compared to the

overall investment levels in these cities, and they have not been accompanied by wider reforms to transform the administrative structure of the government to ensure that the outcomes of citizen deliberations become policies. In general, the version of PB that has travelled the world has been one with a focus on ‘good government’ rather than institutional change and is often found in ‘piecemeal fashion or as an overly simplified template for citizen consultation, devoid of any broader radical agenda to transform state-society relations from below, or even to fundamentally alter resource distributions’ (Peck & Theodore, 2015, p. 214).

The type of PB that was introduced in the Nordic countries came at a time when the concept had already undergone substantial alterations. Sweden was first among the Nordic countries to initiate what they called ‘citizens’ budgets’ in several municipalities at the local level starting around 2006 (Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting, 2011, Ch. 4). This was followed by several local initiatives in Denmark (Bregenv-Larsen, 2016), one undertaking in Finland (Oikkonen, 2012) and also in Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland (Grímsson & Bjarnason, 2016). PB came to Norway when an alliance of left-wing groups and community associations in Oslo petitioned the city government to do a PB-trial (Bystyret i Oslo, 2005). Even though it was unsuccessful, it was soon followed up by other advocates. In 2009, a Cabinet Minister from the Socialist Left Party (*Sosialistisk Venstreparti*) co-authored a book claiming that participatory budgeting would make Norwegian politicians more accountable and improve budget priorities (Lysbakken & Skjerve, 2009, p. 204). The centre-left government of which he was part also encouraged municipalities to experiment with participatory budgeting as a way of facilitating increased participation from citizens in local issues (Regjeringen Stoltenberg II, 2009, p. 30). The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) has stated that participatory budgeting is a policy tool they recommend as long as a portion of the budget is specifically set aside for this purpose (Kommunesektorens organisasjon, 2013, p. 31). Participatory budgeting has even been adopted by conservatives. The current right-wing government refers to it as a good practice to engage citizens in small towns who merge with others to form larger municipalities (Regjeringen.no, 2015). Fredrikstad, however, is the only municipality in Norway that has explicitly introduced PB. Although PB did not come by accident to the Nordic countries – as the relatively broad outreach of PB in political debate in Norway and the many cases in Sweden and Denmark illustrate – it did arrive in Fredrikstad partly by coincidence. In 2008 the municipality was invited to join an EU-funded project with Uddevalla – a Swedish town that took interest in Fredrikstad’s community funding scheme. The aim of the project was to experiment with new methods to engage citizens in municipal

politics. Through this cooperation, Fredrikstad was included in a network of Swedish municipalities which received training from European experts on how to implement and organize PB.

This led to the implementation of three different PB projects in Fredrikstad over a six-year period. The first took place quite soon after Fredrikstad joined the PB network. In 2009, youths aged 13 to 19 were invited by the municipal administration to propose ideas on how to spend 200,000 NOK (around 22,500 euro) on projects for youngsters in the city. The ideas were transformed into workable projects by the youths themselves and then put to a vote among all pupils at the city's lower and upper secondary schools. The winner was a so-called 'LAN party' – a gathering where kids can bring their own computer equipment and play multiplayer games. A total of 61 per cent of the city's pupils voted (Fredrikstad kommune, 2010, p. 6; Oliveira & Allegretti, 2013, pp. 17–19). In 2013 a similar process was initiated for active skaters. The municipality gave the local skater association 200,000 NOK to construct new ramps in their skate hall. The municipality facilitated a participatory process where the skaters elaborated the design proposals and voted on them online (Syversen, 2013; Ystgaard, 2013). The most recent PB event took place in 2015 when residents in a local community surrounding a city square – including children from the kindergartens and the primary school – were invited to propose how the square should look after it was renovated. The municipality gave 800,000 NOK (around 91,000 euros) to the renovation. In total 260 people from the local community participated in designing the proposals, and 235 people voted. More than two-thirds of the voters were less than ten years old (Eidsvold, 2014, 2016; Holøien, 2015).

These projects did not lead to fundamental institutional changes in Fredrikstad. As Scheuer (2008a, p. 112) argues, travelling ideas can have institutional impacts in a recipient context if they are translated into objects, then to actions and finally to institutions if the actions are repeated regularly. However, PB in Fredrikstad did not happen on a regular and predictable basis but instead remained on an ad-hoc action level. At no point did these actions challenge the established political institutions. The youth and skater projects hardly used money from the municipal budget. In the city square renovation project, which was the most ambitious of the three, the elected politicians had already decided that the 800,000 NOK should go to the renovation. What the participating community members could decide was how the park should look. The rule that municipal budgeting is the responsibility of elected officials in the city council was never replaced. On the other hand, the PB projects can be said to have opened up

the opportunity to also handle public funds in a participatory fashion – opportunities that had not been formulated and only partly utilized in Fredrikstad before they got to know the concept of PB. As such, the PB in Fredrikstad can be understood as a form of layering, where new informal rules of how to handle public money were added to pre-existing formal ones. This feature is shared by the other Nordic countries, where PB is now and then used to give certain communities extra influence in regard to how money is spent within certain public works or services. The only exception from this is Reykjavik, where the inhabitants have been able to distribute around €1.9 million annually since 2012.

3. A Toolkit Version of PB

Fredrikstad's PB looked very different from the original experiences in Porto Alegre because it was translated to mean something else as it came to the city. One thing shared by all translations is that ideas and practices are objectified and turned into accounts or materializations when they travel (Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008, p. 225; Scheuer, 2008b, p. 161). Part of this objectification consists of turning the idea or practice into a linguistic artefact such as, for example, a label (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996, p. 32). To make objects transferable, time- and space-bound features are excluded. If the source and recipient contexts are very different, local prerequisites are omitted. The practice is distanced and decoupled from time and space (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996, pp. 85–86). The story of how and why the idea or practice came about in the first place is reconstructed. What might have been very chaotic, incidental and diffuse is presented as rational. Previous experiences are scientized or theorized. Actors are described as purposeful and procedures and effects as logical outcomes of their intentions (Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008, p. 226).

In Fredrikstad, PB was labelled 'Deltakende budsjettering' – the labelling underscored by the use of the capital 'D' (which equals 'Participatory budgeting' with a capital 'P' in English) (Fredrikstad kommune, 2010, 2013). Instead of being understood as a particular model or set of reforms – as was the case in Porto Alegre – it is rather understood as an umbrella term for a range of methods that include citizens in decisions regarding tax money. A central document describing Fredrikstad's PB emphasizes that it is not necessary to include the whole investment budget in the process to qualify as PB. It is sufficient to use only a certain portion, regardless of how big it is. Nor do decisions regarding this portion need to be binding. They may only be advisory. Thus, the document does not single out only one method as PB but states that it

involves a range of solutions and possibilities. The analogy which is used is a tool kit with a variety of tools (Fredrikstad kommune, 2010, pp. 1, 3; 2013). This definition opens up for a very wide range of practical expressions of PB, and it also frees those who want to adopt it from any bonds to previous experiences.

Translations are often dramatized as they are introduced into new settings: concepts, categories, examples, references and ideological frameworks are used to structure, narrate and make sense of the ideas or practices that are translated (Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008, pp. 226–227). In Fredrikstad, the concept of ‘Deltakende budsjettering’ was repeated in internal as well as external communications – in brochures, on the city’s website, in presentations to other authorities and in contributions to newspapers as well. The dramatization of PB is that of a policy invention with global success. The story that is told is that PB used to be tied to a certain context, but because of its great achievements it spread out to ever more regions and was transformed in such a way that it became suitable to any place that wishes to develop democracy further. Several examples are used to underscore this point. One is the Bertelsmann Foundation’s prize to the ‘world’s best municipality’, which was awarded to a town in New Zealand that involved its inhabitants in making the budget priorities. Another is the fact that PB is now utilized in ‘a majority of the European countries’ and that even the British parliament issued a report ‘inviting all public enterprises’ to introduce PB (Fredrikstad kommune, 2010, p. 3).

The success story not only has its heroes but also villains in the form of dangers that can be realized if PB is not adopted in the right manner. Lobby groups, for example, can attain too much influence, public expenses can increase, decision-making processes may be drawn out and irrelevant themes and priorities can be put on the agenda. However, these are classified as only possible pitfalls or ‘challenges that have to be handled’, and research comes to the rescue with certain guidelines (or success factors) for what to do (ibid., pp. 4–5). There is also a story of local success told in the document, which is the one of the implementations of PB in Fredrikstad. After going through different PB projects in other parts of the world, the document turns its attention to the first PB experience with the students in the city. It claims that ‘nowhere in the world has there been a youth project where Participatory Budgeting has been used as a method where the voter turnout has been so high’ (ibid., p. 6). Moreover, it is noted that even though PB is an idea imported from abroad, it already has a predecessor in Fredrikstad in the community-funding scheme. This adds an element of familiarity to PB, which might disarm

criticism that it is something foreign that does not fit into Norway – it is not so different from what we are already doing after all. As a whole, the translators used what Sahlin and Wedlin (2008) call rules of logic and formulation to decontextualize PB and to tell a success story of an innovation that could easily be adopted in a Norwegian city.

4. Modifying a Pre-Existing Translation

One of the reasons why this toolkit version of PB had to be presented as a near universal was that the conditions that nourished the original PB were absent in Fredrikstad. The research literature on Porto Alegre (as well as other Brazilian cities) points to a number of factors that were necessary for its successful implementation and persistence. These included the extensive decentralization of fiscal powers to the municipal government, an ideological commitment among the leading political party to establish a new form of government, a strong mayoral government that gave the municipal administration power over elected politicians, civil society organizations who shared the vision of a new society and were able to educate and mobilize citizens to become empowered participants in the new institutions and very low levels of public confidence in established institutions (Abers, 2000; Baiocchi, Heller, & Silva, 2011; Goldfrank, 2011; Wampler, 2007). All of these factors combined constituted a very peculiar combination that existed only in some cities in the south of Brazil in the early 1990s (Avritzer, 2006). Virtually all of these factors were absent in Fredrikstad when PB came to Norway. The spending of the municipality was heavily directed by national policies and regulations, no major political party was committed to transforming the local government, the mayor and the municipal administration were subordinated to the elected politicians and civil society organizations did not mobilize large number of citizens nor demand anything like PB. The only faint similarity was that confidence in the local government was fairly low. Among other things, a majority of the population felt that the politicians disrespected the view of the citizens and that special interests were prioritized over common interests (Kommunesektorens organisasjon, 2010).

Since the contexts were very different on variables that were crucial for PB, the translation was radically different compared to Porto Alegre. Thus, alteration might seem to be the rule applied in Fredrikstad. The translators were unbound by the prototype in Porto Alegre and did not describe it as a model for Fredrikstad. Instead Porto Alegre and other examples from Latin-America were framed as part of the prehistory of PB in a different and developing part of the world (Fredrikstad kommune, 2010, p. 7). The municipality in Fredrikstad did not target all

citizens as in Porto Alegre but rather specific groups such as the youth and skaters. They also used external funds or only a small fraction of the budget for participatory projects as opposed to all municipal investments in the original format. But to say that alteration was the rule in Fredrikstad only makes sense if the translation was done directly from Brazil to Norway. It was not. The Fredrikstad experience is better understood as a product of a long chain of translations that started in Brazil, moved on to other countries in Latin-America and finally came to Europe and the Nordic countries. The content and meaning of PB had already been altered on this journey because these contexts were already very different from that of Brazil. PB-advocates in Fredrikstad did not do the translation work by themselves but instead together with other municipalities inside the Swedish PB network. The main PB document in Fredrikstad is largely a copy of a PB fact sheet from this network, where the focus was on places other than Brazil. The examples used in the publication were from Portugal, where a municipality involved young people improving their school environment, as well as Sweden, where a suburb to Stockholm allowed citizens to vote on how to spend money to upgrade their physical environment (Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting, 2010). The network also organized tours to other municipalities with PB, and representatives from Fredrikstad went to Seville in Spain to see the practice for themselves (Oliveira & Allegretti, 2013, p. 19).

The disembedding of PB from Porto Alegre and Brazil had, in other words, already been done by others before Fredrikstad. Moreover, the diverse set of practices that used the PB term already provided a very different basis to translate from than had the focus been on Brazil. It is therefore more appropriate to say that Fredrikstad moved within the modifying mode of translation, where the translators tried to both include central elements of the source practice in the translated version and to adjust it to fit within the recipient context. The most important source practices for Fredrikstad were not those found in Brazil but rather the examples found in Europe. In addition, they could also look to the many other Swedish municipalities who implemented PB simultaneously (Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting, 2011, pp. 21–54). These examples, however, had not been described in detail, which meant that there were many *non-explicit aspects* in these practices that the translators in Fredrikstad related to. This opened up the possibility to add elements to the model – such as specific target groups that politicians and administrative staff found it important to reach – or pre-existing concepts like ‘Youth Entrepreneurship’, which was used to develop investment ideas into feasible projects. Due to the many models and examples to choose from there was no need to tone down or omit aspects of specific source versions. Instead, this was indirectly done through selecting those that were

most convenient for Fredrikstad. The toolkit definition of PB that Fredrikstad inherited lent it easily to additions and omissions: as long as some part of the population was involved in discussions about the use of public funds, it was not so important *how* they did it. Lastly, the differences between the contexts of other European PBs and that of Fredrikstad were not especially significant. This made it easy for the translators in Fredrikstad to identify with the motivation for introducing participatory budgeting – such as the emphasis on developing democracy further and creating more effective administrations – but also to add elements that were specific to their own context. One of the most important aspects that was added was the inclusion of the pre-existing community funding scheme in the description of what could be called PB.

5. Supporting Representative Democracy

The success of translations depends on the number of people acting on their behalf (Scheuer, 2008a, p. 127). Translators need to mobilize other groups and individuals to support their proposal, and one way to do so is to present ways of thinking that can get people to act together. This is often referred to as ‘collective action frames’ (Tarrow, 1998). Such ways of thinking typically consist of the following elements: *punctuation* identifies a problem and defines it as important, *diagnosis* elaborates the problem and describes who or what is responsible for it, *prognosis* describes what is required to correct the problem and finally *motivation* encourages actors to participate in the change (Hardy & Maguire, 2008, p. 208). Here, the concept of editing infrastructure comes in. On one hand translators wish to introduce something new, but they also need to do so in a way familiar enough for people to gain their support – they have to relate to underlying concepts, categories, values etc. One way to do so is to frame the proposals within the cognitive and normative pillars of established institutions. The main translation document in Fredrikstad should be understood as an attempt at this. The document defines decreasing participation, sinking party membership and increasing distrust in public institutions as the main problems that have to be solved (punctuation), and it indirectly puts the blame on the lack of dynamism in the political system (diagnosis). At the same time it emphasizes that there are innovations such as PB that create win-win situations for everyone involved – not least the municipal administration and local politicians (prognosis). Finally, the document tries to evoke fear in those who read it that the state of democracy can evolve into a much graver situation if nothing is done and uses the global success of PB as a hope for a more optimistic future (motivation). This way of framing PB does not challenge the established institutions but rather

speaks about upgrading and neutralizing the threats to them (Fredrikstad kommune, 2010). It is directed to an internal audience in the municipality – elected politicians and the municipal administration – and tries to convince them that PB is a good idea.

But the editing infrastructure cannot be understood as one unitary system of facts and values dictated by established institutions. Institutional fields are not totalizing phenomena but are rather riven with inconsistencies and conflicts. Translators must bear on these tensions when they try to mobilize support (Hardy & Maguire, 2008, pp. 203–204). Only providing one version of the translation might be risky if support from various groups is needed in order to be realized. One such inconsistency is the difference in values and ways of thinking about democracy. Democracy can mean different things for different groups in society and be associated with a diversity of discourses and values. It is likely that politicians and administrative staff primarily associate democracy with representative institutions, whereas citizens at large associate democracy with the right of everyone to be heard and affect outcomes. Politicians are likely to attach values such as reliability and responsibility to representative institutions, whereas as the general population are prone to attach other values such as responsiveness and effectiveness to them. These differences might be a source of tensions of opinions. One example is a survey conducted in Fredrikstad where 88.7 per cent of the politicians agreed that elected officials considered the views of the inhabitants, and only 36.8 per cent of the general population thought the same (Kommunesektorens organisasjon, 2010, p. 20). The external communication was framed differently than the internal documents. Instead of focusing on the perceived benefit for the municipality or its political system, it focused on the right of individuals and communities to be heard in the political process. In the youth project, for example, the participants were encouraged to suggest something that could make Fredrikstad ‘more fun,’ ‘nicer,’ ‘more environmentally friendly’ or ‘safer’ for themselves. As a group, they were asked to come up with new ideas to enhance the life quality of the youth in the city (Fredrikstad kommune, 2009). In the square renovation project the municipal administration emphasized that the park belonged to the residents. They acknowledged that nearby residents had wanted to improve it and that they would be affected by noise and logistical problems while the renovation was going on. Thus, as the municipal organizer told the residents in a communication to a local newspaper, ‘that makes it even more important to have a place that is your own. Because you decide over the square’ (Eidsvold, 2014). Nevertheless, even though the external communication spoke to a different set of values and ways of thinking about democracy, at no point did it dispute the legitimacy of the representative

institutions. It rather underscored that representative institutions could be supplemented by other modes of engagement without antagonism. As such, the concept of PB and the way it was framed moved well within the cognitive and normative pillars of representative democracy.

6. Layering as the Best Available Option

Translators also need to adapt to the regulative pillar of institutions if they are to succeed in introducing a new practice. Two important aspects here are how flexible the rules of the established political institutions are and how strong the position of institutional defenders is (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010). In Fredrikstad the translators found themselves in a situation where there was little room to interpret the rules of how budget decisions should be made and where it was not possible to allow any slack in enforcing them. These rules are regulated by law in the national Local Government Act, which does not leave any room for discretion. The act states that it is only the municipal council that consists of elected politician who can make decisions on how to allocate the city budget. How strict these rules are can for example be observed in the reactions from government institutions when they perceive threats to the budget authority of the municipal council or sub-municipal councils which may also decide over a portion of the budget according to the law. In 2008 a city-district in Oslo, Norway's capital, told the city government that they wanted to introduce PB. They asked for a statement from the juridical department of the city government but got as a reply that it is illegal to give decision-making powers over public funds to popular assemblies and that it would not allow it. Furthermore, the city district was told that even if it wanted to try out the method with merely a small sum of money, they nevertheless had to apply to the national government for a temporary exemption from the Local Government Act. All continuation of this work had to be stopped until such permission was given (Kallmyr & Andersson, 2008). Although Fredrikstad is not a city district that has to wait for statements from the city government, it is still overseen by higher state authorities and could be sanctioned if it deviates from the rule that only the municipal council can make decisions regarding the local budget. Instead, the advocates of PB in Fredrikstad are better understood as a small group of institutional entrepreneurs trying to bring about change in the municipal administration from within.

This is related to the veto power of institutional defenders. In the case of Fredrikstad these had access to the juridical system that can prevent municipalities from breaking national regulations. Closer by, however, was the sanction power of the municipal council in Fredrikstad

itself. When the youth PB project was executed, the only political party that actively supported PB in its programme – the Socialist Left party (SV) – had just two representatives on the municipal council. The institutional defenders were therefore in a majority in Fredrikstad, and any proposal to change the rules of how the budget was made would have easily been vetoed locally. In such a situation institutional change is a hard feat to achieve. One way to do it could be for the challengers to go head-on with their opponents and attempt to displace the existing budgeting institutions and replace them with PB. Such a confrontation would require a huge support base, similar to what led to the introduction of PB in Porto Alegre in the first place. But this was absent in Fredrikstad. There was no movement or organization demanding PB from outside the municipal administration nor anyone mobilizing people behind PB once initiated. Given the strictness of the budgeting rules, the strong position of the institutional defenders and the small number of people acting on behalf of the idea, *layering* became the best available option. PB in Fredrikstad became an addition to representative democracy.

7. A Common Pattern – With One Exception

Fredrikstad inherited a translation of PB that was radically different from the version that originated in Porto Alegre. The meaning of PB had changed because it moved to places where the conditions that nurtured it in the first place were absent. This was the case in Europe and in particular in the Nordic countries. In Sweden, Denmark and Finland – and in Fredrikstad – the predominant version of PB was as a makeshift addition to conventional politics, where small sums of money were allocated by special target groups through participatory methods. Although the translators in Fredrikstad slightly modified the version they inherited, they by and large kept it intact. Just as in the other Nordic countries this version fit well with the circumstances under which PB was introduced: there was no movement challenging representative democracy with new values or alternative ways of thinking, the budgeting rules of the established political institutions were strict, the institutional defenders were strong and the change agents were in the minority.

The exception from this pattern tells a great deal. In Reykjavik, Iceland, the only place among the Nordic countries with PB as a regular feature, a scheme called ‘Better neighbourhoods’ was established in 2011 and has been going on ever since. The scheme basically consists of citizens making proposals to a central website of public works that they wish to see implemented in their neighbourhood and subsequent periodical voting to single out the most popular proposals.

The municipality has committed itself to implementing a certain portion of the top demands, and since its inception around 200 public works have been initiated this way. The demands encompass community improvements such as benches, footpaths, lighting, playgrounds etc. (Grímsson & Bjarnason, 2016; Participedia, 2016). Even though Reykjavik's PB concerns only a small share of the budget, the scope of the practice still exceeds that of any other Nordic country. The reason why this was possible was that the institutional defenders in the established political parties had lost support, and thus also their veto power in the municipal council, in the wake of Iceland's financial crash in 2008. In addition, new organizations and movements arose that demanded that citizens should have a direct say in political decisions on Iceland's debt negotiations, general policies at the city level in Reykjavik and even the drafting of a new constitution. Those two conditions were absent in Fredrikstad and in the other Nordic countries at the time of the introduction of PB.

When thinking about institutional change, it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking only of social upheavals that turn the existing social order upside down or the complete replacement of old institutions with new ones. This might close our eyes to other forms of more subtle, almost indistinguishable change, like the addition of PB to the existing representative political order. In itself, PB has not changed the way conventional politics is conducted in the Nordic countries. On the other hand, it has been consonant with a series of institutional developments in local democracy. Layering by adding new institutions and practices to the existing political institutions has been the normal way of dealing with claims for increased participation in decisions on and the delivery of services and threats from oppositional movements as well as falling support for representative democracy in the Nordic countries. Councils for immigrants, the disabled and the elderly are found at all levels of governments today as well as representative organs for patients, parents and other user groups in welfare state institutions (Kjølsrød, 2003). Legislation that gives communities the right to participate in planning has been added as a response to claims by oppositional movements on the left (Amdam & Amdam, 1990) and consumer-oriented management reforms as a response to oppositional movements on the right (Sahlin-Andersson, 2001). In addition, multiple new forms of citizen involvement, participation and deliberation have been initiated by state and local authorities in attempts to counter lower voter-turnouts, falling confidence in government and declining recruitment to political parties (Skivenes & Eriksen, 2000). This has resulted in what Aars (2012) calls a 'cloudy bundle' of public engagement schemes – especially at the municipal level. Although PB has not changed anything by itself, the added effect of all of these layers has resulted in

significant transformations of political institutions in the Nordic countries. Whether this has or has not led to more democracy must be the topic of another chapter.

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