PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: TOWARDS A NEW INTERNATIONAL DIFFUSION

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Abstract

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a practice built on the precepts of deepening democracy and spatial justice, which emerged in Brazil at the end of the 1980s. As such, PB spread throughout the country and the world, at first as a banner for the possibility of reinventing democracy beyond the limitations of the liberal model. However, some political processes caused this instrument to change, as it spread around the world, while at the same time losing strength and effectiveness in Brazil. This work is dedicated to promoting reflections on the processes of expansion and decay of the PB in Brazil and around the world, as well as the possibilities of rethinking this instrument from a popular and democratic conception anchored in the Global South.

Keywords

Participatory Budgeting; Participatory Democracy; International Diffusion; Global South; Inversion of Priorities.

O ORÇAMENTO PARTICIPATIVO NO SUL GLOBAL: POR UMA NOVA DIFUSÃO INTERNACIONAL

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Resumo

O Orçamento Participativo (OP), surgido no Brasil no final dos anos 1980, é uma prática construída com base em preceitos de aprofundamento democrático e justiça espacial. Diante disso, expandiu-se pelo país e pelo mundo, em um primeiro momento, como bandeira da possibilidade de uma reinvenção da democracia para além das limitações do modelo liberal. Contudo, alguns processos políticos fizeram com que esse instrumento se transformasse, à medida que se espalhava pelo mundo, ao mesmo tempo que perdia força e efetividade no Brasil. Este trabalho é dedicado a promover reflexões a respeito dos processos de expansão e decadência do OP na esfera nacional e internacional, bem como das possibilidades de repensar esse instrumento tendo em vista uma concepção popular e democrática ancorada no Sul Global.

Palavras-chave

Orçamento Participativo; Democracia Participativa; Difusão Internacional; Sul Global; Inversão de Prioridades.

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: TOWARDS A NEW INTERNATIONAL DIFFUSION[1]

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Introduction

Participatory Budgeting (PB) has been recognized as one of the most significant democratization practices of public administration ever conceived, sparking extensive debate across various academic fields – political science, urban and regional planning, economics, sociology, and more. Emerging in Brazil during the late 1980s, PB emerged from the nation's post-dictatorship process of reinventing democracy, conceived within the new forms of social and political organization that were taking shape at the time. Thus, PB combines a potent force for radical democratic transformation and for the advancement of spatial justice.

Three decades of PB saw its widespread adoption both within and beyond Brazil. Adopted in very distinct contexts, it then went on to incorporate different characteristics. In Brazil, after a period of being wide adopted, PB, when compared to the early years, now faces a process of sharp decline, evidenced by a decrease in the number of active experiences and the quality of those that have remained, both in terms of its effectiveness and its truly participatory character. Over time, in practice, its core principles of democratization and redistribution have indeed become secondary, coinciding with a decline in its national prominence, having either been supplanted by other forms of participation or even by the suppression of participation.

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However, despite the current widespread global adoption of PB, with experiences across all continents in a wide diversity of contexts and with countless variations, during its global diffusion, PB has also undergone many adaptations and intermediations (particularly by international institutions, such as the World Bank). This has led to a partial abandonment of the democratizing and redistributive virtues that characterized Brazilian PBs during the 1990s, giving way to a more "managerial" approach to the instrument. In both cases, PB seems to have concentrated a constant tension between its potential as a democratizing project and a neoliberal project, tending toward one side or the other, depending on the circumstances.

Thus, this article aims to reflect on the creation, expansion and decline of PB in Brazil, as well as its global diffusion. This analysis will be framed by a debate on democracy and spatial justice, taking into account the potential redistributive and democratizing virtues contained within the "original" project of PB and its implications in relation to contemporary geopolitical, geoeconomic and democratic dynamics. To achieve this, the first section presents a literature review on the emergence and expansion of PB in Brazil and on the hypotheses that have sought to reveal its decline. Next, we analyze the existing literature that addresses the international diffusion of PB and the implications for its political and democratic content. This will consider the role of hegemonic international institutions in the proliferation and adaptation of PB, in addition to the prevalence of the European continent in the current framework of the worldwide practice of this policy. A contrasting perspective on this process is then presented (in the form of a multiple case study approach [Yin, 2001]), of four contemporary experiences of PB that have emerged in developing nations: in Bogotá (Colombia), Mexico City (Mexico), Chengdu (China) and the Russian Federation (although in this case, it is a national policy practiced in different administrative regions, and not just in a single city). It should be noted that these experiences will only be touched upon, so that the focus of this work does not become excessively broadened. However, this article stems from a research project coordinated by the authors, which has encompassed a comprehensive review of the literature on PB and field research. Interviews were also held with technicians, academics and activists linked to PB, in addition to participation in thematic events, visits to sites and organizations connected to experiences of PB and an analysis of technical documentation and institutional materials. These rich sources will serve as the basis for the brief presentations contained in this article and will be further explored in work studies.[2]

2. This refers to the *Cartografia do Orçamento Participativo* [Cartography of Participatory Budgeting] project, based at the UFMG School of Architecture. More information regarding this project and publications may be accessed on the website: https://opbh.cartografia.org/. Accessed on: March 29, 2024.

Lastly, reflections on these processes are made through a geopolitical lens, taking into account the emergence of new international arrangements amidst intense hegemonic disputes and the potential for a renewed international diffusion of PB originating from the Global South.

It is argued that, although PB has "drifted" from its original conception during its international diffusion – attributable to the actions of international financial institutions and its adoption by European political forces –, the interaction of this policy with contexts in emerging countries could revive the redistributive, democratizing and counter-hegemonic characteristics of PB. In other words, it is believed that some of the new PB experiences in the Global South, born from addressing local social and territorial complexities through citizen participation in local budgets, offer shared innovations and characteristics. Thus, just as PB was spread, from Brazil, through the international circulation of ideas and the actions of global institutions, herein we propose the possibility of a new international diffusion, this time inserted into a more equitable and supportive international order, drawn from the Global South.

1. The birth of PB, and its expansion and decline in Brazil

Participatory budgeting (PB) emerged within a context of broad political and social transformations in the history of Brazil, marked by a process of redemocratization. The transition from the authoritarianism of the military regime through to the so-called "New Republic" from the 1980s onwards, with a gradual return to democratic elections, gave rise to a series of changes to the existing forms of political organization and the relationship between the State and civil society.

The public space witnessed the emergence of several new political actors, which reflected both the recomposition of popular organizations, suppressed during the 1960s military dictatorship, and the rise of the so-called "New Social Movements" (Gohn, 2019). Following an initial period, between the 1970s and 1980s, of establishing new political languages, a process began to adapt the demands of these groups to "democratic institutionality" (Dagnino, 1994), which initially translated into the movement for *Diretas Já!* [Direct Elections Now!] (1983-84), and in popular candidacies for the Legislative or the municipal and state Executive. Following the promulgation of the 1988 Constitution, which institutionalized some rights and validated a "new federative pact", granting municipal governments greater administrative and budgetary autonomy[3] (Fedozzi; Lima, 2016) – this process

3. It should be mentioned that, from the end of the 1990s, this relative budgetary autonomy was reversed by the fiscal adjustment policy of Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government, which brought significant consequences for the practice of PB, as will be demonstrated below.

became the formation of the so-called "Participatory Institutions", particularly on a municipal level. Amidst these transformations, PB became established as a powerful instrument for democratization and social change, due to its direct impact on public budgets – the core of the "distributive conflict" (Bezerra, 2017; Peres, 2020).

The emergence of PB, however, was neither a straightforward nor immediate process. While there is a consensus in the academic debate regarding its official launch in the southern city of Porto Alegre, during the administration of Olívio Dutra (1989-1992), some authors have referred to a "pre-history" of PB (Souza, 2010; Silberschneider, 2022; Avritzer, 2008), which may shed some light onto certain aspects addressed herein. Discussion and collective deliberation on municipal public budgets had taken place in some brief, specific experiences as of the late 1970s, still under the two-party system of the military dictatorship, in cities such as Lages (in the state of Santa Catarina), under the mayorship of Dirceu Carneiro, from the opposition party – MDB, and Boa Esperança (in the state of Espírito Santo), under Amaro Covre, from the government party – Arena (Souza, 2010; Silberschneider, 2022). In the early 1980s, as bipartisanship waned, Diadema (in the state of São Paulo) witnessed the first municipal administration led by the Workers' Party (PT). Headed by metalworker Gilson Menezes, this administration pioneered a new approach to budgetary discussions, which were open to the public, and marked by greater political and organizational content in relation to previous experiences.

Even in Porto Alegre, the state capital of Rio Grande do Sul, public discussion on municipal resources had already been on the agenda in the administration prior to that of Olívio Dutra. The PDT government of Alceu Collares, in collaboration with the city's residents' associations, established some mechanisms for popular budget oversight. However, it was with the PT victories across key municipalities during the 1988 elections that several experiments in this direction truly flourished. Among these, Porto Alegre stood out as a paradigmatic case precisely because it had previously debated the topic, fueled by a strong associative fabric and a progressive political tradition (Avritzer, 2003; 2008).

In this context, the victory of the so-called "Popular Front" – as the coalition around Olívio Dutra's candidacy became known – ignited debate between community movements and PT cadres on how to transpose popular demands and the tenets of the organized left into the workings of a municipal administration. Initially, mirroring trends in many other cities, the implementation of Marxist-Leninist-inspired "popular councils" took hold, although this was swiftly supplanted by a focus on the "democratization of the State". Structured through regionalized

plenary sessions for discussion and deliberation on municipal public investments, this new system become known as Participatory Budgeting (Fedozzi, 2009).

Adopted in ten (out of 38) PT-led city halls from 1989 to 1992, PB became a cornerstone of the so-called "PT way of governing", particularly outstanding for its emphasis on "active citizenship" and its capacity for "co-management", as noted by Fedozzi (2009, p. 44). Importantly, in Brazil's main PB cases,[4] it does not seem to have been a predetermined agenda by the municipal administration. Instead, the budget discussion emerged as a pedagogical interaction between public authorities and popular movement, or political society and civil society. Thus, introducing the budget discussion to the demands of the population ensured both the transparency of administrative processes for the knowledge of citizens – in a "politicization of the budget", as stated by Souza (2010) – and a distribution of resources to historically disadvantaged areas of cities. Hence, PB proved to be a powerful instrument for achieving "spatial justice" (Cabannes; Lipietz, 2018, p. 79) or "territorial justice" (Bogo; Silva, 2023, p. 2) and for "priority inversion" (Rena et al., 2022, p. 26), by breaking patterns of urban accumulation and spoliation based on delegating decision-making power to the population, especially the organized lower classes.

The expansion of PB throughout Brazil occurred relatively quickly, without, however, its "original" characteristics always being preserved. A topic of wide academic discussion, the adoption of PB in Brazilian municipalities and its expansion/retraction over time are controversial and difficult data to understand. One group of authors considers that adopting this instrument expanded throughout the 1990s and reached a peak of 137 cases during the municipal administrations of 2001-2004. It then fell into steady decline until 2016, with only sixty cities (Spada, 2014; Bezerra, 2017; Bezerra; Junqueira, 2022; Lüchmann; Romão; Borba, 2018). According to another approach, growth remained stable after 2004, leading to a peak of 433 cases in the 2013-2016 administrations (Fedozzi; Lima, 2016; Fedozzi; Furtado; Rangel, 2018). This divergence arises from the different criteria used to compose the databases, which, in the first case, relied on greater rigor in delimiting what constitutes an PB, in addition to only taking into account municipalities with more than 50 thousand inhabitants.[5]

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4. Here, the most "successful" PB projects are considered, in both quantitative (longevity, number of participants, amount of resources invested) and qualitative (effectively participatory and redistributive processes) terms, of which, perhaps, Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte and Recife are the main examples.

5. These are, respectively, data from the *Brazilian Participatory Budgeting Census* (Spada, 2014), an initiative by the researcher Paolo Spada, who, in turn, updated the methodology initiated by Ribeiro and De Grazia (2003) and Avritzer and Wampler (2008); and the *Rede Brasileira de Orçamentos Participativos* [Brazilian Network of Participatory Budgets] (RBOP) (Fedozzi, Furtado; Rangel, 2018). Both sites with the original data repository (http://participedia.net/en/content/brazilian-participatory-budgeting-census

Despite diverging interpretations, some common ground regarding the expansion and retraction of PB in Brazil still exists. Between the 1990s and 2010s, PB transitioned beyond being the "exclusive" domain of PT[6] and was embraced by other political parties, such as MDB, PSB, PSDB, and PDT, although the Workers' Party has remained the leading party in adopting this instrument in municipal administrations. Notably, if, during the 1990s, PB was viewed as a "flagship" policy in the PT way of governing – in that its initial expansion took place predominantly in PT-led city halls –, at the turn of the 2000s the instrument was driven by a certain "participationism". This attracted the participation of parties from across the ideological spectrums, including the centrists, forming part of PTs broad coalitions, and even the right-wingers, who adopted PB with a more "managerial", rather than redistributive, guise. The rise of PT to federal government and the consequent major transformations that took place coincided with PB losing its leading role within the party. Thereby, to a certain extent, the discourse and participatory practices were moved to the scope of national councils and conferences (Bezerra; Junqueira, 2022; Lüchmann; Romão, Borba, 2018).

In geographical terms, until 2016, PB was adopted in all regions of the country and in almost all units of the federation, although it tended to be concentrated in the states of the Southeast and South. Furthermore, its application presented a greater relative incidence in municipalities with a population of over above 250 thousand and with higher economic development conditions, GDP and per capita income (Fedozzi; Lima, 2016).

It would appear, starting from the 2017-2020 mandate, that the situation changed radically. Quantitative data regarding PB during this period, and later, from 2021 to 2024, are still restricted and imprecise. However, there already seems to be a relatively established understanding that Brazilian PB is in decline[7]

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and http://www.redeopbrasil.com.br/) are offline, at the time of preparing this work, which makes a more careful comparison difficult. AVRITZER, L.; WAMPLER, B. Públicos participativos: sociedade civil e novas instituições no Brasil democrático. In: COELHO, V. S. P.; NOBRE, M. (org.). *Participação e deliberação:* teoria democrática e experiências institucionais no Brasil contemporâneo. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2004. RIBEIRO, A. C. T.; GRAZIA, de. *Experiências de orçamento participativo no Brasil:* período de 1997 a 2000. Petrópolis: Vozes. 2003.

6. Fedozzi and Lima (2016) also point out that, throughout the 2000s, PB lost space in the PT's municipal administrations, going from 46.8% of the PT-led city halls in 2000, to 26.9% in 2012.

7. One of the few published studies on the adoption of PB in Brazilian municipalities for the period after 2016 was carried out by Lüchmann and Bogo (2022), based on a methodology that combines the two previously mentioned databases – from the *Brazilian Participatory Budgeting Census* (Spada, 2014) and RBOP (Fedozzi, Furtado; Rangel, 2018) – with an unprecedented survey, carried out on city hall websites and through telephone calls. The authors indicate that, in 2019, there were only 32 active PB cases in Brazil, representing a drop of more than 80% in relation to the 172 cases mapped in 2016. Furthermore, Luchmann and Bogo (2022) demonstrated that, of the 140 discontinued PB cases during this period, 78 were extinguished as a result of the PT's electoral defeat in the municipalities in question.

(Bezerra; Junqueira, 2022; Lüchmann; Romão; Borba, 2018; Fedozzi; Furtado; Rangel, 2018; Lüchmann; Bogo, 2022). Whether in relation to the number of PB cases in the country, or due to the mischaracterization of the remaining experiences, it seems clear that, currently, the instrument no longer enjoys the same prestige, effectiveness and notoriety as in its initial years. Several hypotheses have been structured in the academic debate with a view to explaining this phenomenon. One of them starts from observing that PB in Brazil was constituted in a way very closely related to PT and that, therefore, the main reason for the decline in its adoption would be a change in the party's operating strategy (Hunter, 2010; Spada, 2014). According to this view, PB would have served as an important electoral strategy for the party, which, after achieving its "objective" – i.e., the conquest of the federal executive – would have passed it over in favor of other tactics.

On the other hand, without contesting the strong link between PB and PT in Brazil and the possible influence of party dynamics on the instrument's decline, Bezerra (2017) and Bezerra and Junqueira (2022) sought to present other conditions that may have influenced this movement, beyond a simple electoral calculation. In line with Peres (2020), the authors argued that, at the end of the 1990s, the country underwent several reform programs that reversed the financial autonomy obtained by municipalities with the 1988 federative pact. These primarily included the Fiscal Responsibility Law or Complementary Law 101/2000 (Brazil, 2000) and a number of laws that established mandatory transfers and percentages of revenue for certain policies (mainly, health and education) which, from 1988 onwards, had become the responsibility of the municipalities.

It may also be noted that while measures, such as "streamlining" the public accounts and guaranteeing basic services yielded positive results, they significantly constrained the financial capacity of municipalities and, therefore, of PB. Discretionary spending on municipal public sector resources became severely restricted to a very small margin, and was further compounded by tight restrictions imposed on indebtedness and state and municipal government borrowing. Since PB notably depends on investment resources from city halls, Bezerra and Junqueira (2022) have argued that, from the beginning of the 2000s, these measures created major difficulties for the success of PB, which drastically reduced the effectiveness of the instrument, thereby leading both PT and other parties to abandon it.

In addition to a strictly fiscal viewpoint, Lüchmann, Romão and Borba (2018) delved deeper, outlining a range of potential causes for the decline of PB from various perspectives. They point to the tumultuous political climate in Brazil over recent decades, specifically the mid-2010s crisis marked by strong media and judicial attacks on PT, which culminated in the parliamentary coup that took place

to impeach President Dilma Rousseff and a significant 50% drop in PT-led city halls in the 2016 elections. These events, the authors argue, most likely had a substantial impact on adopting PB. Added to this was the emergence of significant distrust toward institutionalized participation and the simultaneous demand for new forms of political representation (particularly associated with digital platforms) alongside the predominance of conservatism in party politics and public debate. In addition, the authors analyzed political-institutional aspects. They focused on the previously mentioned expansion of PT coalitions – both on the national and municipal levels – which, when they did not dismantle PB in city halls due to pressure from right-wing political agents for adjustments to the political agenda, they relegated it to a secondary position. This resulted in a reduction of attention and dedication from the technical staff and a reduced budgetary allocation for PB. Lastly, Lüchmann, Romão and Borba (2018) point to a methodological concern regarding participatory processes, upholding that, over the last two decades, the predominance of PB has stagnated in terms of procedure and public engagement. This has thereby rendered PB a less dynamic instrument and has ultimately diminished its democratizing and redistributive potential.

> It seems to us that, as institutions which challenge what is already instituted, PBs carry with them a need for constant renewal as a condition for their own survival. And when such institutions become a routine, they in many cases lose their innovative and daring character, beginning a slow descent to extinction. They disappear not because their deaths are decreed by a ruler, but because they cease to be central in the configuration of the political processes. They die in a political sense well before being formally extinguished. (Lüchmann; Romão; Borba, 2018, p. 103).

Lastly, Fedozzi, Furtado, and Rangel (2018) examined the quality of Brazilian PB, putting forward some hypotheses for their decline. They argued that, over time, the initial model of PB inaugurated in Porto Alegre, where elected delegates and councilors from the territorial subdivisions amplified the voices of marginalized populations, never underwent improvements as it spread nationally. The authors also identified a lack of both participant renewal and participation quality, with regard to the availability of information and insufficient measures to ensure equal participation. Moreover, the authors also highlight the loss of effectiveness in participatory processes, i.e., the inability to deliver on the participants' chosen demands, which is presented by the authors as a central factor for the declining importance of PB in city halls and for the fiscal limitations placed on the instrument. Another key argument they present is the weak connection between Brazilian PB and urban planning mechanisms. They stated that this disconnect has influenced

the instrument's loss of effectiveness (as participation becomes detached from a comprehensive vision of urban space), in addition to its isolation in municipal administrations compared to other forms of urban intervention more strongly associated with the central themes of city planning.

Thus, a number of different factors have been outlined which led to a decline in Brazilian PB. Everything indicates that new political, economic, and social dynamics have rendered the most virtuous characteristics of this policy in Brazil obsolete or even impossible to implement. This decline is evidently related to the broader crisis of the very concepts of democracy and political (and territorial) representation that has unfolded in Brazil over recent decades – a phenomenon that has been addressed by various authors from different perspectives, such as Santos (2016), Abdalla (2017), Hardt and Negri (2018), Ricci (2017) and Telles (2017). However, despite being influenced by similar dynamics, the diffusion of PB in other countries has occurred (and is occurring) in a very different way.

2. Aspects of the international diffusion of PB

Parallel to the nationwide expansion of PB in Brazil, described herein, PB also became the object of international diffusion. Almost concurrently with the first PB experiences in Brazil, this practice spread across what is known as the Southern Cone, particularly in Argentina and Uruguay, which share similar political, historical, and cultural conditions to Porto Alegre, the birthplace of PB. However, as time passed, this expansion eventually transcended the regions linked with the initial experience by reaching out to other geographically distant realities, with the mediation of international actors and institutions.

Oliveira (2016) analyzed how PB, during the 1990s, particularly the Porto Alegre experience, sought international legitimacy, during which actors and institutions gradually propagated the instrument, sometimes adapting its characteristics to their own agendas and to the specific contexts of different countries. Thus, the author identified three key "tactics" adopted for this purpose: (i) institutional leverage: multilateral institutions either recommending or even requiring local governments to adopt PB; (ii) social construction, referring to the circulation of ideas and information promoting the implementation of the instrument; and (iii) the circulation of individuals, the specific role of the so-called "participation ambassadors", actors linked to local governments, NGOs and multilateral institutions, committed to disseminating participatory practice around the world. Events such as the Habitat II conference (1996), during which the Porto Alegre PB was recognized as one of the "good practices" in urban management by UN-Habitat,

and, particularly by the World Social Forum[8] (2001), which provided a platform for delegations from social movements, NGOs and political parties from around the world to experience the Porto Alegre PB at firsthand, representing a milestone in this diffusion process (Oliveira, 2016).

In this context, Oliveira (ibid.) identified three key institutions along with the specific actors within them, that played an essential role along this journey, whereby each institution incorporated specific aspects of their agendas into the PB model. First, the United Nations (UN), in the mid-1980s, established an office of the Urban Management Program for Latin America and the Caribbean (PGU-ALC) in Quito, Ecuador. Oliveira demonstrated how the work of the PGU-ALC was essential for the production and circulation of reports and manuals regarding PB in this region, directly influencing a wave of its expansion beyond the Southern Cone, especially toward the Andean countries (Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela). Dissolved in 2004, the PGU-ALC also fostered international networks focused on the PB debate, such as the International Observatory of Participatory Democracy (IOPD), which currently continues to actively share experiences on an international level.

Oliveira (2016) also highlighted the European Union (EU). In the mid-1990s, it launched the URB-AL program, heavily influenced by the earlier work of the PGU-ALC, and aimed at fostering exchanges between European and Latin American cities. Notably, one of its "networks" (or working groups) focused specifically on PB and was based in Porto Alegre. It was responsible for promoting and funding PB initiatives in Latin America, generating reports and, mainly, disseminating knowledge on PB back to Europe. However, it is important to note that the widespread adoption of PB in European cities only occurred in the early 2000s. This may be attributed to the initial "ideological" framing of PB in Latin America, which did not resonate well with many European political parties.

However, as Sintomer, Herzberg and Röcke (2008) pointed out, the expansion of PB across Europe accelerated rapidly after the turn of the millennium. While acknowledging the diversity of experiences and participation models across the continent,[9] they argued that, in general terms, the European PB differed greatly

8. It is crucial to recognize the World Social Forum's role in unifying the "anti-globalization" or "another globalization" movement and the fact that the Porto Alegre PB was seen as the leading popular, anti-neoliberal initiative for democratic radicalization at the time helped to solidify the city's selection as the forum's host and its designation as the "capital of democracy."

9. In fact, there has been an important cycle of PB in which much of the ideological content was preserved, mainly in Spain, Italy and France, promoted by left-wing parties in the early 2000s (Sintomer; Herzberg; Röcke, 2008).

from the primordial Latin American experiences. Unlike PB in Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte, which focused on material redistribution and socio-spatial justice, European PBs tended to prioritize either the modernization and efficiency of the State through participation, or to reinvigorate civic engagement and citizen proximity to government, without necessarily aiming for a priority inversion (Sintomer; Herzberg; Röcke, 2008; Sintomer et al., 2012; Dias et al., 2021). However, European PB has seen a remarkable expansion over recent decades, under very varied conditions (ideological spectrums, participation models, geographic contexts, etc.).[10] As a result, Europe now boasts most of the world's active PB programs, with Portugal standing out as a prime example, which has even implemented a national-level modality of the instrument (Dias et al., 2021).

Lastly, Oliveira (2016) identified the World Bank as the third key institution. While World Bank specialists participated in PB discussions from the mid-1990s, the effective role of the World Bank as an agent for disseminating the instrument only truly emerged in the mid-2000s. Notably, their approach was much more forceful than that assumed by the UN and the EU. Initially involved in organizing PB events and studies, the World Bank, according to Oliveira (2016), transitioned to directly disseminating PB, recommending PB policy, directly funding its implementation and, in some cases, determining the adoption of PB as a precondition for issuing loans to local governments.

Thus, the World Bank's interventions primarily focused on Sub-Saharan African countries (Senegal, Cameroon, Mozambique, Madagascar, etc.), and included a specific PB "model" tailored to the bank's agenda: combating corruption, reducing poverty, and promoting government efficiency. Oliveira (2016) argued that the World Bank's adoption of PB involved an "ideological distillation" of the concept. While participatory budgeting was aligned with the bank's goals – notably with regard to government decentralization –, the transformative power of the Porto Alegre model, particularly its organizational and redistribution aspects, were less appealing.[11]

Throughout this process, the international diffusion of PB, and its "seal of approval" by hegemonic international institutions, served to legitimize the

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10. One important characteristic that differentiates the European expansion of PB from that which occurred in Brazil is the fact that there was no immediate partisan or even ideological link to the instrument. Although the first experiences were carried out by left-wing parties, more directly linked to the success of the PB in Brazil and experiences such as the World Social Forum, the instrument quickly assumed a "de-ideologized" characteristic in Europe and, therefore, more replicable and adaptable.

11. Oliveira (2016) demonstrated how this is not a univocal process, as it is marked by disputes between different views within the World Bank; however, it is somewhat visible in the "adaptations" made to the predominant PB model, as the bank becomes a predominant actor of diffusion.

instrument both internationally and domestically in Brazil. However, references to the Brazilian PB, especially that in Porto Alegre, gradually faded. While it is often mentioned in the international debate, it holds little relevance to most current cases of PB. Naturally, this process reflects the objectives that have emerged over recent decades: as previously described, major Brazilian PB examples (such as those in Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte) have completely lost their original character and political protagonism in local contexts (if not vanished entirely). Additionally, the World Bank has perhaps established itself as the main promoting institution of PB globally. Furthermore, it may be stated that Brazil's role as the leading center for PB diffusion and reference has diminished, having often been replaced by Portugal, in terms of global influence, or by localized influences, such as Poland, in Eastern Europe (Dias et al., 2021).

There is, however, significant diversity and innovation in the PB models that have emerged worldwide over recent years. Currently, PB has been implemented across all continents adapting to diverse geographic, economic, political and cultural contexts. Estimates suggest over 10 thousand PB experiences globally.[12] Over time, these initiatives have moved beyond a purely territorial focus, so that today numerous thematic PB initiatives exist (e.g., focused on education, sports, climate change mitigation) or oriented toward specific social groups (women, immigrants, racialized populations, indigenous peoples, children and older people) (Cabannes; Lipietz, 2018). Furthermore, the city is no longer the only territorial area that delimits PB experiences. Recently, a series of experiences have emerged on other scales, such as national PB,[13] in Portugal and South Korea; regional or state PB, such as the state PB of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, and the regional PB in the Russian Federation; or, even, in unconventional territorial units, such as PB in Chengdu, China, which was initially structured in rural areas, but now covers the entire city, which, due to its dimensions, more closely resembles a metropolitan region or city-region (Dias et al., 2021; Cabannes; Lipietz, 2018; Cabannes; Ming, 2014; Dias, 2018; Shulga; Vagin, 2018).

12. As with data on Brazil, the quantification and "cataloging" of PB across the world proves to be a difficult and imprecise undertaking. The *Participatory Budgeting World Atlas* (Dias et al., 2021) has been an important reference in this regard and a continuous effort to register PB. The latest *Atlas* survey, however, brings some dubious data, as it concerns the period relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, when numerous PB were suspended, modified or discontinued.

13. In other cases, there is national legislation that requires the adoption of PB on a municipal scale, as is the case in Peru and Indonesia, countries that, for this reason, currently concentrate a very significant number of PB experiences – even though the amount of experiences are not necessarily accompanied by participatory quality (Dias et al., 2021).

Regarding the content and democratizing nature of these experiences, academic debate has seen various attempts to categorize them. Perhaps the most relevant to this discussion is the one proposed by Cabannes and Lipietz (2018). They have argued that three distinct logics currently structure PB experiences, often overlapping and even competing within the same initiative: (i) a "political" (or "power to the people") logic, related to the purpose of "radically democratizing democracy", originating from the original Brazilian experiences; (ii) another logic of "good governance", related to an effort to bring public authorities closer to citizens and improve the response to their demands; and, lastly, (iii) a "technocratic" logic, focused on government and budgetary efficiency (Cabannes; Lipietz, 2018, p. 70). In defending the importance of the political dimension of PB in promoting true urban and social transformations, the authors (ibid.) emphasis the fact that a significant part of the rapid dissemination of the instrument around the world and the role that international agencies (such as the UN, EU and World Bank) have played in this process are due to the perceived potential for government modernization. This perception inclines them to promote PB in a manner more linked to the latter two logics presented.

Hence, Cabannes and Lipietz (2018) have demonstrated, whether through the action of these international institutions or through internal PB processes, how the political dimension has become secondary. This has turned PB into an increasingly managerial instrument. To a large extent, this is due to the obstacles imposed on sustaining a political logic behind PB, such as: difficulties in maintaining progressive political leadership in PB-implementing governments; "ideologized" project adoption by international agencies; or the challenges in promoting projects with political and organizational content. Thus, while promoting PB aimed at "good governance" or of a "technocratic" nature may benefit citizens and urban transformations, this comes at a cost: sacrificing the core strengths of PB (as conceived in Porto Alegre) – namely, its redistribution, radical democracy and fostering political and civic engagement.

3. Transcalar reflections

To some extent, the entire formation and dissemination of PB was linked to a reinvention of the meanings of democracy within a context of crisis. In its genesis, PB was intrinsically linked to Brazil's democratic rebirth, at a time when the country was not only emerging from a long period of authoritarianism (which raised the need to create new democratic institutions), but also the arrival of new political actors, the coexistence of new and old forms of social organization and the emergence of new agendas. Furthermore, this was a time when new political and

democratic references were being sought around the world, given the collapse of the Soviet experience of real socialism, the hegemonization of the so-called "liberal democracy" and the gradual dismantling of social welfare programs in European countries (Santos, 2016).

This same context also triggered a second "cycle" of PB, when the instrument was disseminated locally and internationally as a counter-hegemonic democratic experiment, radically opposed to neoliberal dictates. It became a symbol of resistance for the anti-globalization movement at the World Social Forum. Later, the subject of disputes, PB would be recommended and propagated by the same institutions identified as the great "enemies" of that subaltern and popular movement against neoliberal globalization. Already "adapted" to the process of international diffusion, PB re-emerged as a response to another democratic crisis. This time, it was viewed as a mechanism to revive civic engagement, activated as an escape valve for the decadent European democracies, weakened by the 2008 crisis and the subsequent protest movements that emerged from then on.[14]

Meanwhile, in Brazil, PB fell victim to the weakening of a strong, grassroots popular political project, which initially directed its forces toward institutionality and securing broader political alliances. However, it later became the target of sustained attacks and a coup d'état (with obvious geopolitical reasons and implications).

All these different "paths" of PB, in over three decades since its emergence, converge on the fact that there is a latent incompatibility between democracy and neoliberalism (Abdalla, 2017; Santos, 2016; Harvey, 2008). In its genesis, PB was clearly conceived as an instrument for those fighting for a more robust democracy and alternative power structures, along with different economic and geopolitical relations. However, the current landscape reveals that most of the world's PB initiatives are in the Global North, particularly Europe, and that, of the three dimensions outlined by Cabannes and Lipietz (2018), perhaps the least prevalent is that of "politics", which leads us to state that the instrument has "changed sides".

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14. We refer to the "wave" of popular movements in the 2000s and 2010s, such as the 15M, in Spain, the Gillet Jaunes, in France, and the various occupations, inspired by Occupy Wall Street in the United States. Along with the emergence of new political forces (such as parties of the "new left", but also of the far right), they attest to the impact of the 2008 crisis on European democracies and the living standards of Europeans. A more extensive and qualified approach to these processes may be found in Nobre (2019), Hardt and Negri (2018), Harvey (2014) and Castells (2013). NOBRE, M. R. *Levantes urbanos:* O ciclo de lutas pós-crise do capitalismo de 2008 [Urban uprisings: The cycle of struggles after the 2008 capitalism crisis], 2019. Master's Dissertation – Postgraduate Program in Built Environment and Sustainable Heritage, School of Architecture at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, 2019. HARVEY, D. *Rebel cities*: From the right to the city to the urban revolution. London-New York: Verso, 2012. CASTELLS, M. *Networks of outrage and hope. Social movements in the internet age.* Polity Press, Cambridge 2012.

Nonetheless, despite the existing homogenizing efforts in the neoliberal project, the dissemination of PB throughout the world has produced a series of interesting originalities and possibilities. Contrary to the trend that has been established internationally, some alternative experiences have emerged in locations in the Global South – i.e., in countries with a history of colonization and/or imperialist domination by foreign powers and, therefore, historically excluded from prominent positions in global supply chains of value and the international division of labor, suffocated by debt with international financial institutions and deprived of economic, cultural and political sovereignty.[15]

These PB experiences display a range of innovations and characteristics that bring them closer to the original precepts of redistribution and democratization seen in the first Brazilian PB. This shift might be due to applying the instrument in urban (or even rural) contexts where territorial and social development remain pressing issues. This environment fosters initiatives from popular political forces that challenge Western and neoliberal hegemony. As a result, these forces are more likely to implement experimental practices, opening doors to new development possibilities. Some of these experiences are briefly presented below.

3.1 *Presupuesto Participativo in Bogotá* (Colômbia)

Bogotá is both the capital and the most populous city in Colombia, and has a population of nearly 8 million (extending to around 10 million when including the metropolitan region). The city is divided into twenty "localities", which are administrative regions with their own organizational structures and "local mayors" (*alcaldes locales*) selected by the municipal administration. Some have populations exceeding 2 million inhabitants. The Bogotá city hall (*alcaldía*) wields significant political influence nationwide, holding the second most important position after the presidency. The city fosters a more progressive political climate compared to the rest of the nation, and throughout the 2000s, it also championed various PB pilot experiences, though with limited success. From 2020 to 2023, Claudia López, of the Green Party (center-left), governed the city as Bogotá's first female and openly homosexual leader, known for her strong ties to popular movements.

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15. The concept of the Global South is a very controversial topic, currently enlivened by intense academic and political debates on the use and relevance, or not, of the term. Here we briefly adopt some criteria established by Prashad (2012). Generally speaking, it is easier to define the Global South as opposed to the so-called Global North, that is to say, all nations outside the axis established between the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Even so, we understand that the inclusion of Russia and China as components covered by the concept under analysis is a subject of debate in academia. For this study, we consider the two nations part of this "arrangement" of countries because we believe that both have historical, political and economic conditions relevant to the debate that we intend to develop herein. PRASHAD, V. *The Poorer Nations:* A Possible History of the Global South. New York: Verso Books, 2012.

In 2019, the city approved a regulation promoting PB within the "local development funds" of the twenty localities, which receive 10% of municipal funding, a measure implemented by the Cláudia Lopez administration, elected that same year. The city hall established a "system of participation and open governance" managed by an autarchy, the District Institute of Participation and Community Action (IDPAC), which dedicates more than five hundred officials specifically to promoting citizen participation. The "system" itself arose from a comprehensive survey of active social organizations in the city and also involved the construction of a digital platform – Bogotá Participa (*Participate Bogotá*) – developed by the National University of Bogotá. This platform proved essential for encouraging participation during the pandemic and serves as the "host" for PB (*Presupuestos Participativos*), alongside other participation initiatives. The PB, an annual event in the city, starts with a participatory planning process. Residents are called upon to define two "spending plans" (or thematic budgets) allocating 50% of the local development fund for each locality. Following this stage, hybrid roundtables (combining in-person meetings and online voting) are held to develop, present, and vote on proposals, always within the guidelines of the "spending plans." Once the proposals are voted on and selected, residents can track and endorse tenders and project execution through a dedicated platform. In some instances, social organizations involved in crafting the proposals may qualify (to assist the city hall) to bid on tenders and potentially execute the chosen projects themselves.

It should be emphasized that this PB occupies a central role in the administration of a large complex Latin American metropolis, permeated by social and territorial inequalities and complexities. The outstanding innovations of this process include the possibility of supporting and qualifying grassroots social organizations, amplifying previously silenced popular demands (such as care, culture and sports policies) in local planning mechanisms and developing a highly sophisticated digital platform, produced by a local university in partnership with the public authorities. Additionally, the Bogotá PB boasts an impressive organizational outreach, with a very high participation rate (230 thousand participants in 2023) and notably, the nature of the instrument prioritizes investments that align with community needs and its content promotes spatial justice.[16]

16. All the information provided herein regarding the Bogotá PB was obtained through the authors' participation in events promoted by Bogotá city hall, from an interview held with the then director of IDPAC, Alexander Reina (2023), and from the IDPAC and PB websites, available at https://participation.gobiernoabiertobogota.gov.co/. Accessed on: February 17, 2024. REINA, A. *Bogotá Presupuesto Participativo de Bogotá.* [Interview given to Henrique Porto and Anderson Quintella online] Belo Horizonte: Participatory Budget Cartography Project, May 2023.

3.2 *Presupuesto Participativo de Ciudade de Mexico* (Mexico)

The case of Mexico City mirrors that of Bogotá, but on a much grander scale, making it the largest active PB program in Latin America and one of the largest worldwide. Mexico City has functioned as an "autonomous city" since 2017, enjoying political, administrative, and debt autonomy and is both the capital and the most populous city in Mexico. A "head of government" (*jefatura de gobierno* – similar to a state governor) governs the city, which is divided into sixteen territorial demarcations (DTs – *demarcaciones territoriales*). Each DT boasts its own organization and the power to elect its own "councilors" and "mayors" (*consejales* and *alcaldes*). Mexico City's population surpasses 8 million, reaching nearly 20 million in the entire metropolitan area. Notably, some individual DTs exceed 1 million residents. Beneath the sixteen DTs lies another administrative layer with 1,837 territorial units (UTs – *Unidades Territoriales*), which are further categorized as either "colonies" (colonias, referring to modern settlements, dominant across most of the city) or "villages" (*pueblos*, settlements established by pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples).[17] Mexico City, and Mexico as a whole, has recently undergone significant electoral reforms, which established an "electoral power" as a fourth branch of government, with the autonomy to oversee any electoral process, including – in the case under study – the PB, under the responsibility of the Mexico City Electoral Institute (IECM).

Mexico City's PB was launched in 2009, starting in just one DT (Iztapalapa, one of the poorest and most lacking in infrastructure). The following year, the program swiftly expanded to encompass the entire city.[18] Recent years have seen significant changes, including increased budget allocation and a dedicated digital platform. This annual, hybrid process involves roundtables where residents deliberate on allocating 4% of each DT's budget. Each of the city's 1,837 UTs receives a minimum allocation of 45,000 USD (with the potential for more), bringing the total annual citywide budget to approximately 107 million USD. Half of these resources are equally distributed among all UTs, while the remaining 50% are allocated with

17. It is interesting to highlight the fact that Mexico City is a pre-Hispanic settlement, as being the site of the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán before the arrival of colonizers, which implies a series of territorial and social complexities.

18. Regarding the political forces and parties behind the initiative, both the pilot implementation of the PB in Iztapalapa and its expansion throughout Mexico City were promoted by the same progressive political group (linked to the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* [PRD] and, later, to the *Movimiento Regeneración Nacional* [Morena]), which has carried out successive administrations in the city. However, given the fact that PB is the responsibility of the electoral power, it is not possible to make a direct correlation with its functioning and party management, since it is even practiced in different DTs, administered by different parties of different ideological spectrums.

consideration for factors like poverty, rurality, and indigenous communities. Proposal presentations, voting, and monitoring can be done either in person or through the digital platform. The platform offers georeferenced visualization of projects, allowing for real-time information tracking. Each year, a work project is chosen and implemented within each UT, overseen by the DT city halls.

The sheer scale of the PB and the groundbreaking features are undeniable, solidifying its position as the largest PB in Latin America, both in terms of budget size and participant numbers, exceeding 400 thousand annually. Furthermore, its innovative approach tackles territorial complexity and inequality head-on. Resources are strategically allocated, with a focus on impoverished rural areas and indigenous communities. These communities also benefit from privileged participation through their traditional authorities, who hold autonomy in implementing resources within their territories. Finally, the program's independence from electoral cycles is particularly outstanding. While this detachment removes some of the traditional political and organizational aspects of PB, it fosters greater institutionalization and ensures policy continuity.[19]

3.3 Community Safeguard Fund in Chengdu (China)

Another very peculiar case – but one that, nevertheless, shares significant similarities with the previous two – is that in the Chinese city of Chengdu. The fourth largest city in China, it is, alongside Chongqing, the most important in the country's western region, with more than 20 million inhabitants, and rapidly growing.

The territorial division of the city (mirroring much of China) is indeed complex. Administratively, Chengdu functions as a municipality, encompassing a vast area comparable to a metropolitan region. This includes a large central core, several outlying urban centers, and a significant portion of rural territory. Below the administrative municipality tier, the city is divided into "districts" (for urban areas) and "counties" or "county-tier cities" (for rural areas). A third tier sees urban "subdistricts" and rural "towns/townships". Lastly, the closest tier to citizens is comprised of "communities" (urban) and "villages" (rural), functioning as autonomous entities. Recent decades have witnessed Chengdu's explosive growth in terms of economy, population, and urbanization. This rapid expansion has significantly impacted the territorial organization of its rural areas, sparking various discussions regarding land ownership and possession in the late 2000s.

19. All information provided herein regarding Mexico City PB was obtained through the authors' participation in a thematic event and access to the IECM and PB web pages, available at https://www.iecm.mx/www/sites/apasionate/convocatoria2023.html and https://plataformaciudadana.iecm.mx/#/inicio. Accessed on: February 17, 2024.

As a result of this process, in 2007, the municipal government instituted a "reform of integrated rural and urban development," comprised of multiple initiatives. One key element was a mechanism for public discussion on land ownership, drawing inspiration from traditional forms of community deliberation found in rural villages (village democracy). From 2008 onwards, this mechanism evolved into a "reform of social management and public services at the village tier," which closely resembles PB in practice, though not officially termed as such. This instrument allocates annual resources for deliberation by rural residents, aiming to improve infrastructure and development conditions in their territories. Operation begins with collecting proposals through door-to-door distributed forms in the villages. Residents then elect a "village council" to manage the process, followed by voting and deliberation on the proposals (Cabannes; Ming, 2014; Ming, 2014). In 2012, the mechanism expanded to Chengdu's urban areas (taking the name "community support fund") and eventually covered the entire municipality. A significant innovation came in 2021 with the incorporation of a digital platform. Developed by a local social organization, this platform integrates seamlessly with *WeChat*, China's ubiquitous "super app" used by nearly 60% of the population. Currently, the instrument facilitates annual investments of around 1.3 billion yuan (approximately 180 million USD), distributed among villages and communities based on population, infrastructure and service provision, and a priority focus on rurality. Notably, the Chengdu "PB" has become fully digitized with nearly 5 million users registered on its platform, boasting annual participation rates between 2 and 3 million.

In view of this, this instrument has probably become the largest active PB initiative in the world, both in terms of participant numbers and resources invested (in absolute terms, not per capita). Beyond its impressive scale, what truly stands out is the speed of evolution and innovation within this mechanism. This innovation is coupled with a clear inspiration and reference to traditional forms of local democracy found in rural Chinese villages. Additionally, it is important to highlight the emphasis on equalizing development between urban and rural areas. This is evident in the allocation of more resources to villages and the distinct project types chosen. Village projects prioritize infrastructure and income generation, while urban communities focus on supporting citizen initiatives, civic engagement, and small-scale improvements.[20]

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20. All information presented herein on the Chengdu PB was obtained from Cabannes and Ming (2014); Ming (2014); Frenkiel (2021) and Rena et al. (2023), as well as an interview held by the authors with professor and activist Ming Zhuang (2024), director of the HuiZhi Participation Center, a social organization that has been following the process since 2011 and was responsible for developing the

3.4 Local Initiative Support Programme – LISP (Russian Federation)

Lastly, an "intermediate" or transitional experience is presented between the two PB logics tensioned here. Evidently, Russia's geopolitical situation reflects on the experience of the PB in question – a country located "between" the Global North and South, between Europe and Asia and, at the same time, at the heart of major contemporary geopolitical transformations. The Russian Federation is the largest country in the world by territorial extension, made up of multiple ethnicities, religious confessions and cultures, which is reflected in its administrative subdivisions. The country has 83 regions: 46 provinces (oblasts), 5 autonomous provinces, 21 republics, 9 territories (Krais) and 2 "federal cities" (the capital Moscow and Saint Petersburg), so that the different administrative divisions are endowed with distinct degrees of autonomy.

The Local Initiatives Support Program, or LISP, was created based on an initiative by the World Bank, which, in accordance with the institution's operations in different parts of the world, presented a PB proposal for the Stavropol territory, in the North Caucasus. With the success of the project, the initiative spread to seven more regions, until, in 2016, it was adopted by the Federal Government's Ministry of Finance and disseminated to 26 different administrative regions[21] (Shulga; Vagin, 2018). LISP consists of a process of allocating budgetary resources from regional administrations to small rural municipalities (around 30 thousand USD per municipality), generally in very remote areas, for discussion and deliberation regarding small projects or infrastructure repairs.

As a World Bank initiative, the program presents some of the previously mentioned characteristics as part of the bank's "model": small scale projects and a focus on budgetary efficiency. However, it also introduces some innovations suited to the territorial conditions of Russia's regional context. Thus, the instrument includes the characteristic of addressing the urban-rural divide, a co-financing and co-management model established between regional governments

digital platform currently used. FRENKIEL, E. Participatory budgeting and political representation in China. *Journal of Chinese Governance*, 2021. RENA, N. et al. Democracia(s) e Orçamento(s) Participativo(s): experiências entre Belo Horizonte (Brasil) e Chengdu (China) [Democracy(ies) and Participatory Budget(s): experiences between Belo Horizonte (Brazil) and Chengdu (China). In: ENCONTRO NACIONAL DA ASSOCIAÇÃO NACIONAL DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO E PESQUISA EM PLANEJAMENTO URBANO E REGIONAL, 20., 2023, Belém. *Anais [...].* Belém: Anpur, 2023. Tema: Anpur 40 anos: novos tempos, novos desafios em um Brasil diverso [Theme: Anpur 40 years: new times, new challenges in a diverse Brazil]. MING, Z. *Participatory Budgeting in Chengdu.* [Interview given to Henrique Porto and Natacha Rena online] Belo Horizonte: Participatory Budget Cartography Project, Feb. 2024.

21. Until 2018, different forms of PB were practiced in fifty Russian regions, but only 26 of them specifically adopted the LISP model, according to Shulga and Vagin (2018).

and municipalities and the possibility of complementing resources as a result of fundraising alongside the private sector and local citizens. The significant outreach of participatory processes in rural municipalities is of particular note, with participation rates reaching 70% of the electorate. These municipalities are often remote and neglected by higher administrative bodies (Shulga; Vagin, 2018).

Lastly, attention should be drawn to the fact that, since 2022, the World Bank's closure of operation in Russia due to the armed conflict in Ukraine has led to the Ministry of Finance and the Federal Government assuming full control of the initiative. However, limited information exists in the international literature[22] concerning the current status of the instrument. Given its "trajectory" – transitioning from the practice of the World Bank (an institution that, since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, has maintained a supervisory role over Russia's finances (Chossudovsky, 1999) to control by the Federal Government, sanctioned and isolated by multilateral and Western institutions — the policy's consequences warrant further investigation.

4. Prospects for a new international diffusion

It is possible to identify that the four aforementioned initiatives share a series of key features, which align them with a PB model emphasizing material redistribution and priority inversion, reminiscent of Brazil's early experiences. Notably, all except the LISP involve significant annual investments exceeding 100 million USD, in absolute terms, translating to high per capita allocations. Furthermore, these instruments exhibit a high degree of administrative complexity and sophistication, based on processes of decentralization and administrative territorial division, the mobilization of large contingents of public servants and administrative structures to execute processes and the production and use of sophisticated digital platforms (excluding the Russian program once again). Importantly, all four initiatives prioritize material redistribution and spatial justice, aiming to bridge the gap between periphery and center, rural and urban, and even traditional and colonial populations (as seen in Mexico City).

The specificities within the political dimension of these initiatives may also be highlighted. Notably, both Bogotá and Mexico City's PB initiatives originated from projects by left or center-left parties, closely tied to popular movements (although in Mexico, the PB was eventually taken over by the electoral power). In

22. Some information may be found on the website of the Financial Research Institute, a think tank linked to the Ministry of Finance that produces information on participatory processes. However, the information is almost entirely in Russian, which makes it difficult to understand the current status of the process. Available at: https://www.nifi.ru/ru/, Accessed on: March 24, 2024.

Chengdu, PB emerged through the efforts of the local Communist Party, involving a dialectical interaction with grassroots organizations and traditions of community deliberation, particularly in rural villages. Lastly, LISP arose from the actions of the World Bank, later assumed by the Federal Government due to sanctions caused by the war against Ukraine. All these contexts, in their own ways, deviate from the Western liberal democratic norm, suggesting counter-hegemonic formations.

Evidently, several differences exist between the four initiatives (and other PB currently emerging in the Global South). Despite this, some common virtues emerge – focusing on supporting grassroots social organizations, evident in the Latin American experiences, and equalizing territorial development, a focus of both Chengdu and LISP. These shared strengths may serve as foundations for a "cycle" of PB in this region.

Today, at a time when the hegemony of the Western and neoliberal civilizational project has been challenged by "non-Western hegemony projects" (Tozi, 2018, p. 87) or even by a "shift of the dynamic center to the East" (Pochmann, 2022, p. 137), it may be feasible to point out new possibilities for the reinvention of PB and participatory democracy. It is argued that, with the emergence of new international arrangements – such as BRICS, Unasul, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Belt and Road Initiative, among others –, there is a possibility that participatory democracy and the international diffusion of PB are also supported in new arrangements.

Considering the tension between a neoliberal project and a democratizing project within PB, and the dominant role of neoliberal institutions in adapting the instrument away from its democratic ideals, the question arises: Could a "new international diffusion", driven by the institutions emerging from a new multipolar world order, support a new cycle of PB practices? This cycle would ideally be more closely linked to deepening democracy and promoting spatial justice, with stronger ties in both material terms and exchange of experiences and techniques.

Undoubtedly, Brazil, the birthplace of Participatory Budgeting, has much to gain from exchanging experiences with contexts in the Global South that have adapted PB to address contemporary challenges.

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