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The emergence of Participatory Budgeting on the international stage. A short analysis of its history, its international diffusion and its local implementation in two European countries: France and Italy

**Supervisor**

Ch. Prof. Stéphanie Novak

**Assistant supervisor**

Ch. Prof. Luis Fernando Beneduzi

**Graduand**

Emile Longuemare  
Matricolation number  
870334

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## **Abstract**

Negli ultimi trent'anni si è assistito a grandi cambiamenti che hanno sostanzialmente modificato quello che era l'ordine mondiale post-Guerra Fredda. Ad essere scosso, però, non è stato solo il sistema, ma anche tutti gli attori che lo componevano. L'affacciarsi di nuovi attori e scenari, in seguito alla frammentazione causata dalla caduta del muro di Berlino, ha fatto sì che il mondo delle relazioni internazionali abbia subito un grande cambiamento, sia a livello teorico che pratico. Il precedente predominio di realismo e liberalismo ha piano piano ceduto il passo a nuove teorie, come quella che viene denominata Costruttivismo. Questa teoria ha preso piede inizialmente un po' in sordina e soprattutto grazie all'influenza di importanti intellettuali provenienti da altri ambiti, come l'educazione o la psicologia. Il tratto più importante, o che risulta esserlo ai fini di questo elaborato, è l'aspetto sociale che il Costruttivismo comporta. Questa particolare caratteristica ha permesso agli intellettuali che si definivano per l'appunto costruttivisti di poter meglio definire il mondo che si era venuto a creare dopo il 1980, sottolineando l'importanza di considerare all'interno delle teorie aspetti quali l'identità e il contesto sociale.

Questa attenzione ai processi sociali risulta molto importante soprattutto negli ultimi anni, dove a causa di crisi economiche, politiche e sociali, si è assistito ad una progressiva perdita di terreno di quella che è una delle forme più antiche di governo: la Democrazia. Al giorno d'oggi, molte sono le analisi che constatano che la democrazia rappresentativa tradizionale è in difficoltà a causa di pressioni interne, dovute a movimenti sovranisti, o esterne, per tensioni politiche internazionali. La "crisi della democrazia" è ormai un aspetto che trova d'accordo molti studiosi e a cui nel tempo si è cercato di trovare una soluzione.

L'evoluzione della democrazia rappresentativa, in particolare quella discendente dalle rivoluzioni degli Stati Uniti e francese, ha preso strade molto diverse da quelle che erano state intraprese nell'antica città greca di Atene,

immaginata solitamente come la culla della democrazia. Ed oggi, grazie all'opera di molti intellettuali attivi in questo campo, quali per esempio Habermas, Manin o Fishkin, si è arrivati a discutere di forme molto diverse di democrazia sia nella teoria che nei metodi. Una delle più valide, nonché una delle più efficaci, è quella della democrazia partecipativa che vede un maggior grado di partecipazione dei cittadini e della società civile all'interno dei processi democratici tradizionali attraverso forme nuove o canali già consolidati.

Nonostante nel corso della storia la democrazia partecipativa abbia avuto molti sostenitori e molti detrattori, negli ultimi trent'anni ha visto una grande ondata di sperimentazioni sia pratiche sia teoriche che l'hanno resa una delle forme di democrazia più accettate, sia a livello locale che nazionale ed internazionale. Nell'ambito della democrazia partecipativa si colloca una particolare pratica, già menzionata nel paragrafo precedente, che ha riscosso molto successo: il Budget Partecipativo. Questa specifica declinazione ha avuto una grande diffusione e ha incontrato così tanto successo da essere ancora oggi implementata, in diversi gradi e forme, in molte realtà locali e nazionali. Ma nonostante il grande successo ottenuto, e riconosciuto, molte sono state le critiche che sono state mosse contro queste esperienze.

Questo elaborato cerca di ricostruire quello che è stato il percorso, dalle origini ai giorni nostri, di questa particolare forma di democrazia partecipativa. Per rendere questa analisi il più completa possibile, sono stati presi in considerazione gli eventi e gli attori più importanti e, data la grande quantità di informazioni e di esempi pratici, sono stati riportati solo alcuni dei casi più importanti per la diffusione del Budget Partecipativo. Per fare ciò, oltre a basarsi su fonti indirette, all'interno di questo lavoro sono presenti due interviste che vedono coinvolte due figure che hanno avuto una personale e diretta esperienza con gli eventi trattati.

Lo scopo che questo elaborato si pone è quello di ripercorrere le tappe che hanno portato il Budget Partecipativo ad essere considerato come una norma

internazionale, grazie alla sua diffusione nel mondo e alla sua forza intrinseca. Per realizzare tutto questo si è scelto di usare una ricostruzione degli eventi che combina una componente cronologica con una componente dimensionale.

Nel primo capitolo viene presentato un quadro teorico che spiega il perché della scelta del costruttivismo come teoria di riferimento e presenta alcune delle caratteristiche di questa teoria che risulteranno fondamentali nel corso dell'analisi generale. È importante sottolineare la natura sintetica di questa prima parte dell'elaborato vista la grande varietà e diversità del materiale disponibile all'interno della grande famiglia del Costruttivismo. Il Costruttivismo viene usato in collegamento con quella che è generalmente conosciuta come la crisi della democrazia rappresentativa. Il punto di vista sociale, particolarmente centrale nel pensiero Costruttivista, assume una grande importanza all'interno di quelle che sono le evoluzioni della democrazia rappresentativa. Che ci sia una crisi della democrazia e delle sue forme è ormai un'idea che riscuote consensi trasversali, ma come risolvere questa crisi è tutt'ora una questione aperta.

Nel secondo capitolo si approfondisce l'analisi, entrando nel merito delle origini del Budget Partecipativo e di qual è stato il suo percorso di diffusione dal livello locale a quello nazionale fino a quello internazionale. Pertanto, il capitolo si apre con un'analisi della più grande e famosa esperienza di Budget Partecipativo, quella della città di Porto Alegre in Brasile. Questa particolare esperienza ha avuto un impatto che ha spesso trascorso il suo stesso modello ma che ha permesso di diffondere un nuovo modo di fare democrazia. Dopo aver presentato l'esperienza della municipalità di Porto Alegre, il capitolo prosegue illustrandone la diffusione a livello dello stato federale del Rio Grande do Sul, di cui questa città è capitale. L'approccio al livello internazionale è preceduto da un'analisi di quelli che sono stati gli attori principali, istituzionali e non, che lo hanno permesso. In questa parte si cerca di sottolineare come le interazioni tra i vari attori locali, nazionali ed internazionali abbia giocato un ruolo fondamentale

sia per la diffusione che per il successo che il Budget Partecipativo ha avuto nel corso della sua storia.

Subito dopo la presentazione di questi promotori locali e internazionali, il capitolo prosegue con una rapida analisi della diffusione del Budget Partecipativo nei vari continenti e nelle varie nazioni del mondo cercando di fornire un quadro dello sviluppo internazionale del Budget Partecipativo. A causa della natura variegata del processo di diffusione, alcuni esempi più importanti sono stati analizzati per cercare di dare un quadro generale della diffusione di questa particolare forma di democrazia partecipativa. È importante sottolineare come alcuni dei più recenti progressi e innovazioni stiano accadendo in paesi che non hanno una grande tradizione democratica, come alcuni paesi africani e asiatici.

Il terzo capitolo riprende la struttura del secondo e affronta l'analisi della diffusione del Budget Partecipativo in Europa. Il motivo per cui si è scelto di accordare maggiore spazio al caso europeo rispetto al resto del mondo è da ricercare nella sua importanza e nella sua ulteriore complessità e nelle sue pratiche diverse che hanno anche differito dal modello di riferimento presentato in questo lavoro, quello di Porto Alegre. Alcune esperienze di Budget Partecipativo, che vengono evidenziate all'interno di questo capitolo, hanno avuto un ruolo fondamentale per il progresso e lo sviluppo di questa particolare forma di democrazia partecipativa. Al fine di illustrare meglio la diffusione in Europa, il quarto capitolo presenta l'analisi cronologica di due casi studio, la Francia e l'Italia, che oltre ad aver avuto un ruolo di rilievo sia nella diffusione locale che internazionale del Budget Partecipativo sono state anche due nazioni che hanno avuto un ruolo pionieristico poiché sono state le prime due nazioni ad accogliere ed implementare esperienze di Budget Partecipativo che hanno avuto un successo duraturo. Bisogna sottolineare che al giorno d'oggi del grande numero di pratiche che erano state attivate nel primo decennio degli anni 2000, sono poche quelle che resistono ancora. C'è stata una flessione sia nel numero che nella qualità di quelle che sono state le esperienze italiane, francesi ed europee.

Questo lavoro si conclude cercando di capire se il Budget Partecipativo abbia raggiunto uno status di “norma” internazionale e se effettivamente sia stata una pratica che ha avuto successo e che ha portato dei cambiamenti all’assetto globale, nazionale e locale. Aver raggiunto il livello di “norma” internazionale rappresenterebbe un grande traguardo per questa pratica di democrazia partecipativa perché vorrebbe dire che il Budget Partecipativo ha effettivamente raggiunto uno status internazionalmente riconosciuto e solido e che quindi, almeno per il periodo in cui è stato applicato estensivamente ha rappresentato una valida alternativa, o un valido complemento, a quello che è il sistema democratico occidentale.

Oltre al valutare se la pratica di democrazia partecipativa presa in analisi abbia effettivamente raggiunto lo status di “norma” internazionale, viene anche presentato quella che è la critica più comune al Budget Partecipativo e che tende a minarne l’efficacia agli occhi di alcuni: la questione della legittimità di questo processo. Anche in questo caso il dibattito è molto acceso e molto variegato e nelle conclusioni viene presentata una sintesi e una personale opinione del problema.

# Introduction

The last thirty years have seen major changes that have greatly altered what was the post-Cold War world order. What was shaken up, however, was not only the system, but also all the actors that made up the system. The emergence of new actors and scenarios, following the fragmentation caused by the fall of the Berlin Wall, has meant that the world of international relations has undergone a great change, both theoretically and practically. The ancient predominance of realism and liberalism in international relations has gradually given way to new theories, such as what is called Constructivism.

This theory has entered into international relations a bit quietly and thanks to the influence of important intellectuals from other fields, such as education or psychology. The most important trait, or that turns out to be so for this elaboration, is the social aspect that Constructivism brings with it. This particular characteristic has allowed intellectuals to better define the world that was created after 1980. Intellectuals, who defined themselves as Constructivists, have often stressed the importance of considering aspects such as identity and context within theories.

Much like Constructivism, the literature on Democracy, and on its particular representative version, has resembled constructivists beliefs that the *«environments in which [actors] are embedded are in important part cultural and institutional, rather than just material»*<sup>1</sup>. This common point of view has allowed some intellectual to look at the traditional western democratic process, both in its ascending and in its descending moment, through the eyes of Constructivism<sup>2</sup>. This has been very important, at least in modern times, because of the current situation of Democracy. In fact, in recent years, due to economic, political and

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<sup>1</sup> Peceny, M. (1999) "The Social Construction of Democracy", Reviewed Work(s): Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies by Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, Yun-han Chu and Hung-mao Tien; Democracy's Victory and Crisis by Axel Hadenius, International Studies Review, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 95-102, Published by: Wiley on behalf of The International Studies Association, pg. 96

<sup>2</sup> Ivi, pg 97

social crises, there has been a progressive loss of ground of modern Democracy. Nowadays, in fact, there are many analyses that see representative democracy in difficulty due to internal pressures, see sovranist movements, or external movements, as international political tensions. The "crisis of democracy" is now an aspect that many critics agree on and to which solutions have been sought many times.

The evolution of democracy, in particular the one descending from the United States Revolution and the French Revolution, has taken very different paths from those that had been taken in the ancient Greek city of Athens, usually imagined as the cradle of democracy. And today, thanks to the work of many intellectuals active in this field, such as Habermas, Manin or Fishkin<sup>3</sup>, we have come to discuss very different forms of democracy. One of the most valid, as well as one of the most effective, has been that of participatory democracy.

Although participatory democracy has had many supporters and many detractors, over the last thirty years it has generated a great wave of experimentation, both practical and theoretical, which has made it one of the most accepted forms of democracy, both locally, nationally and internationally. Within participatory democracy there has been a particular practice that has been very successful: the Participatory Budget. This specific declination has had a great diffusion and has met so much success that it is still implemented today, in different degrees and forms, in many national and local realities.

This work tries to reconstruct what has been the path, from the origins to the present day, of this particular form of democracy. In order to make this analysis as complete as possible, the most important events and actors have been taken into consideration and, given the large amount of information and practical examples, only some of the most important cases for the dissemination of the Participative

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<sup>3</sup> Merkel, W. (2014) "Is there a crisis of democracy?", *Democratic Theory*, 1(2), pp. 11-25, doi: 10.3167/dt.2014.010202, pg. 12

Budget have been reported. Furthermore, the final aim of this paper is to see whether Participatory Budgeting has reached the standard of International norm.

The first chapter presents briefly examines the state of the art of the brief digression the current situation of democracy in the western world that is essential to understand why there has been the need for alternative ways of doing democracy. This chapter also present the theory of Constructivism that is very helpful, given its attention to social interaction, for the overall analysis of the diffusion of Participatory Budgeting. Given the complexity of these two subjects, the analysis will be limited to highlighting the necessary background useful for the successful outcome of this work.

In the second chapter I will proceed with the analysis, entering into the merits of the origins of Participatory Budget and what has been its path of diffusion from the local to the national and to the international level. Therefore, the chapter opens with an analysis of maybe the greatest and most famous experience of Participatory Budget, the one of Porto Alegre in Brazil. After briefly presenting the experience of the municipality of Porto Alegre, the chapter continues by illustrating its diffusion at the level of the federal state of Rio Grande do Sul, of which this city is the capital.

As it can be understood from the previous paragraph, the second chapter focuses on the development of Participatory Budgeting in Porto Alegre, where it emerged and became internationally known. The third chapter instead initiates the analysis of the worldwide expansion of this particular participatory practice. In order to do so the chapter starts with the presentation of the local and international promoters that have played pivotal roles in the international diffusion and its subsequent local implementations. Due to the varied nature and great number local implementation, only a few more important examples have been analysed to try to give an overview of the dissemination of this particular form of participatory democracy.

The fourth chapter further analyses of the diffusion of Participatory Budgeting by highlighting the expansion of Participatory Budgeting in Europe. I chose to dedicate a specific part to Europe because of the importance that the European countries had in the diffusion of Participatory Budgeting in the world and because Europe is the continent with the greater number of Participatory Budgeting experience, both present and past. In order to better illustrate the diffusion in Europe, in chapter five two case studies presented, France and Italy. Both these countries have played an important role as the first countries to welcome and implement participatory budget experiences and as European promoter of this practice.

Throughout the course of my research and analysis I have been able to record two interviews with experts: with Vittorio Agnoletto and Massimo Allulli. The first experts has, and still is, a member of the International Committee of the World Social Forum. Thanks to Mr. Agnoletto I have gained background information from a figure that had been directly involved in the processes of the World Social Forum. The second interview that I recorded with Mr. Allulli has allowed me to further grasp the situation of Italy in which the Participatory Budgeting was being implemented. Mr. Allulli had also first-hand experience with the *Associazione Rete Nuovo Municipio* (ARNM) that had been an active promoter of Participatory Budgeting practice throughout the Italian territory.

I conclude this work by briefly presenting one that has been the biggest critical point of Participatory Budgeting, and also Participatory Democracy that is legitimacy. This aspect of legitimacy has been one of the most controversial point in the debate over Participatory Budgeting and has paramount importance for the status of International Norm. In fact, how could an International Norm be defined as such if it has legitimation problems? How could this particular norm be diffused and implemented in many different contexts if it is not received as legitimate, or if the advocates of this specific norm are seen as not fully legitimate?

# 1. Representative democracy and its alternatives

There is one element that has strongly characterised western countries in the last seventy years: Democracy. This particular and very specific kind of political system has had a long and complex history. There is general agreement that the term democracy and the first appearance of this political system are to be found in ancient Greek, in Athens. This form gradually faded throughout the centuries, only to remerge at full strength in the Constitutional Debate after the US Independence and in the aftermath of the French Revolution.

It was in those years that the system that is termed democracy today actually originated. The ideas that the *Federalists*<sup>4</sup> (in the US) and intellectuals such as Robespierre (in France) elaborated a specific form of governing that was loosely inspired by ancient Athenian practices. These modern theorists of democracy envisioned the creation of a system that was aimed at representing the people<sup>5</sup>. The representative nature of the system was seen as the only way to filter and correctly guide the people<sup>6</sup>. As it was conceived in those times the *representative system* was greatly undemocratic for today's standards: only a very small minority made of only white men had voting rights and human rights had not yet been expressed and enforced. But still the nature of the changes from the previous regimes set the *representative system* on a much more democratic path.

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<sup>4</sup> Dunn, J. (2005) "Setting the people free: The Story of Democracy", Atlantic Books, edizione in lingua italiana (2008) EGEA, Università Bocconi Editore, pg. 78

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem

Despite the efforts of many intellectuals, such as Rousseau, Montesquieu or Madison, the *representative system* had to dark times, at least in Europe. In 1815, after the end of the Napoleonic wars, the Restoration period brought back most of the old monarchical systems throughout Europe, leaving only the United Kingdom as the only state with “democratic” features<sup>7</sup>.

A new push for more democratic systems came throughout the 1840s, with the emergence of the Paris Commune<sup>8</sup>. And even though this uprising will be suffocated in blood, the push for more democratic systems remained latent. It was only gradually after the Second World War that the democratic system spread all over Europe and gradually consolidated itself in today’s forms.

Since its conception, in the late XVIII century, the principles of the *representative system* had undergone great transformations: what have been created as oligarchic practices, such as the voting distribution, have become some of the core elements of the most recent democracies<sup>9</sup>. These characteristics have been the defining features of democracy and are still today the core of the western democracy<sup>10</sup>. The universal suffrage has only widened the number of people that can access to voting, but it has not flattened the aristocratic background of the elections because it does not give to every individual the same chance at being elected into the *representative system*<sup>11</sup>. In the end, democracies today are a great mixture of elements that have developed over time and have responded to social changes throughout history. The nature of today’s representative democracies has become so familiar that almost nobody questions its existence or its validity.

Despite this general acknowledgement of the representative features of democracy, in recent times there are some figures that have started to question this

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<sup>7</sup> Such as the Parliament that as firstly instituted in the XII century, but acquired more power in the XVII century after the English civil war.

<sup>8</sup> Meier, C. in Dunn, J. (1995) “Democracy: the unfinished Journey, 508 BG to AD 1993”, Marsilio Editori S.P.A in Venezia, pg. 161.

<sup>9</sup> Manin, B. (2010) “Principi del governo rappresentativo”, Il mulino, pg. 264-265.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem

system. The idea that western democracies are going through crisis has reached the same degree of acceptance as democracy itself. And yet, some intellectuals have argued that this crisis is not happening or it is only affecting some features of the democratic system. Not too long ago there was hardly any consensus over the crisis of democracy, nowadays instead it would be hard to find anyone denying democracy is in crisis<sup>12</sup>.

The debate over the crisis of democracy has seen three camps, each with its group of intellectual in support of its argument<sup>13</sup>. The first one is the *public discourse*, in which the main concern seems to be the crisis of trust in political elites, political parties, parliaments, and governments aggregate into a general “crisis of democracy”<sup>14</sup>. The second argument sees crisis as a congenital element of democracy and claims its roots in the writings of ancient Greek philosophers, such as Plato, Aristotle and Polybius and more modern intellectual such as Thomas Hobbes and Alexis de Tocqueville<sup>15</sup>. Last but not least, the third argument is much more recent and has started to appear with intellectual such as Offe, Habermas, Huntington and Mouffe<sup>16</sup>. Each of these authors has its own point of view on which kind of crisis is affecting democracy. The only element on which all these three arguments agree on is the fact that there actually is a crisis of democracy<sup>17</sup>.

In order to understand whether there is a crisis within democracy, the main core elements of this governing form need to be further analysed. The most defining element that has been present since the conception of modern democracy, and still today is very much relevant, are the elections. Without this element there would be no democracy<sup>18</sup>. The electoral process was the only way envisaged by the

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<sup>12</sup> Torney, S. (2014) “The contemporary crisis of representative democracy”, *Democratic Theory*, 1(2), pp. 104-112, pg. 104.

<sup>13</sup> Merkel, W. (2014) “Is there a crisis of democracy?”, *Democratic Theory*, 1(2), pp. 11-25, doi: 10.3167/dt.2014.010202, pg. 11.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>15</sup> *Ivi*, pg. 12.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>18</sup> *Ivi*, pg. 14.

founders of the representative democracy through which the people could express power<sup>19</sup>. Today elections are still the strongest element in the hands of the people to express their will. But what half a century ago was the golden age of voter turnout had seen a fairly steady decline more or less across the board as far as the advanced democracies are concerned<sup>20</sup>.

Another important element for democracy is the presence of political rights. These specific rights, such as the freedom of speech and the right to association, are the prerequisite of any kind of democratic system<sup>21</sup>. It is through these rights that there can be electoral competitions and the voters can formulate a political opinion<sup>22</sup>. What has been maybe the greatest embodiments of these rights has been the party system that has and still is a pillar of any democratic system. In fact, the party system has been the playground for democracy actors for a long time and its decline at the hand of populist systems and voting abstention seriously impedes the developing of true democratic procedures<sup>23</sup>. The need for political rights stressed the need for civil rights. These rights are fundamental in order to prevent what Tocqueville has defined the “tyranny of the majority”<sup>24</sup>.

The third element that characterised representative democracy is strictly connected to the party system and has been the bonding agent of democracy is the trust that citizens have in the political class<sup>25</sup>. This trust has faded in recent times because of the rise of powerful companies, banks, or financial funds that in

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<sup>19</sup> Meier, C. in Dunn, J. (1995), “Democracy: the unfinished Journey, 508 BG to AD 1993”, Marsilio Editori S.P.A in Venezia, pg. 166.

<sup>20</sup> Tormey, S. (2014) “The contemporary crisis of representative democracy”, *Democratic Theory*, 1(2), pp. 104-112, pg. 105.

<sup>21</sup> Merkel, W. (2014) “Is there a crisis of democracy?”, *Democratic Theory*, 1(2), pp. 11-25, doi: 10.3167/dt.2014.010202, pg. 14-15.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>24</sup> Ivi, pg. 15.

<sup>25</sup> Tormey, S. (2014) “The contemporary crisis of representative democracy”, *Democratic Theory*, 1(2), pp. 104-112, pg. 106.

advanced democracy should not be allowed to decide on security and financial or economic policy, but that nowadays are even more powerful than states<sup>26</sup>.

Last but not least, the final element that define sane representative democracies is the check and balance between the legislative, executive and judiciary branches of powers<sup>27</sup>. This equal distribution has been the element that has differentiate modern democracies from the XVIII and XIX centuries.

Each of these elements that characterise Western representative democracies has had some crisis elements in recent times and by piecing all the elements together it might be possible to conclude that western representative democracy is facing an internal crisis. What has emerged from the analysis of this crisis is that, as theorised by the ancient Greek philosophers, democracy is constantly dealing with internal crisis that has acquired the title of *latent*<sup>28</sup>. Despite this *latent* crisis that has seemingly affected democracy, many of the professional indices that have been formulated over the years to monitor the situation, have scarcely registered any kind of fluctuation in the quality and participation of western democracies<sup>29</sup>. On the other hand, even though mass surveys of people have showed no significant change in the level of democratic satisfaction for all the countries in the European community in the last forty years (since 1973)<sup>30</sup>, the level of trust and of democratic participation in overall Europe has seen a moderate decline in the last two decades (since the 1990), especially in Eastern Europe<sup>31</sup>.

By piecing all the above mentioned elements, it is clear that democracies, at least in the last thirty years, are going through some kind of trouble, being those low electoral turnouts, rising in movements against civil and political rights or the

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<sup>26</sup> Merkel, W. (2014) "Is there a crisis of democracy?", *Democratic Theory*, 1(2), pp. 11-25, doi: 10.3167/dt.2014.010202, pg. 16.

<sup>27</sup> Merkel, W. (2014) "Is there a crisis of democracy?", *Democratic Theory*, 1(2), pp. 11-25, doi: 10.3167/dt.2014.010202, pg. 16

<sup>28</sup> Ivi, pg. 17

<sup>29</sup> Ivi, pg. 19

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem

<sup>31</sup> Ivi, pg. 20

assurgency to power of non-state actors, such as International Organisations or Multinational Corporations. Many of these challenges have been identified by many intellectuals, such as Habermas<sup>32</sup>, and many new alternatives have come out in recent years.

## 1.1 The alternatives

In the last thirty years many events have shaped the world: the fall of the Berlin Wall, the emergence of new democracies throughout the world (such as Brazil, Argentina, Portugal and Spain) and the numerous financial crisis that have affected single nations. The steady rise in the number of democracies<sup>33</sup> in recent history has been accompanied by other elements that have further reinforced the idea of crisis within democracies. The sharp acceleration of globalisation has seriously affected the resilience of the world order as it was conceived throughout the Cold War.

As globalisation progressed through the economic and political world, the internal stability of democracy have become more and more challenged. Increasing regional and global problems, such as the global spread of AIDS or the “war on drugs”, have started to wear away some of the international credibility of the standard democratic system<sup>34</sup>. Despite this aspect of a challenge by globalisation to democracy, it is important to underline that globalisation has brought positives changes such as the creation of new international actors, such as social movements, that have fought in favour of different versions of Democracy<sup>35</sup>.

What has been the standard until then, being the representative democracy, was facing serious critics from intellectuals from many different directions. New

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<sup>32</sup> Mouffe, C. (1999) “Deliberative democracy or agonistic pluralism?”, *Social research*, pp. 745-758

<sup>33</sup> [pewresearch.org](http://pewresearch.org), *Pew Research Center*, last visited on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2020, website: [www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/05/14/more-than-half-of-countries-are-democratic/](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/05/14/more-than-half-of-countries-are-democratic/)

<sup>34</sup> Held, D. (1997) “Democracy and globalization. Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations”, 3(3), pp. 251-267, pg. 251

<sup>35</sup> Ivi, pg. 261

alternatives were sought after by critics of representative democracy. Intellectuals such as Habermas, Fishkin, Manin and Matsusaka have tried to present new ways of doing democracy. It is important to notice that the critics of democracy have not emerged only from the intellectual field. In the 1960s and 1970s, a great push for alternatives have come from the emergence of social movements, being those students, workers unions, feminist movements.

These movements contributed to change and reshape society in an attempt to widen the strict nature of the system in place. For example, in the 1960s the student movement, with its Port Huron Declaration, combined with feminists and peace movements took the social and political scene by storm<sup>36</sup>. Initially these new movements were seen as antipolitical and radical, but in the 1970s prejudice against social movements started to fall. They were seen as a political alternative to the narrow instrumentalism and penchant for bureaucratic manipulation that characterized mainstream politics<sup>37</sup>.

New social movements demanded a new model of doing democracy, with a higher degree of participation. But problems began to emerge very quickly, the new social movements proud themselves in consensus-based decisions that are easy to reach in small groups, but as soon as the movement enlarges itself, reaching a compromise is not an easy task. Moreover, the social movement in the 60s and 70s built their internal structure on decentralisation and non-hierarchical structure<sup>38</sup> and this coupled with the consensus-based decision prohibited the social movements of making quick decision necessary in social and political contexts.

The social movements of the 60s and 70s were important because they started to develop and test new forms of democracy, such as participatory and

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<sup>36</sup> Polletta, F., (2013) "Participatory Democracy's Movement", in *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*, edited by David A. Snow, Donatella della Porta, Bert Klandermans, and Doug McAdam, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, pg. 81

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem

<sup>38</sup> Ibidem

direct democracy, that were clearly an effort to secure more equality in the frozen representative democracy paradigm. Social movements are important to understand the evolution of democracy in recent times because they are the expression of today's *Démos* and they provide a creative solution to current issues that the democratic system in place is not capable to properly address.

### 1.1.1 Deliberative democracy

Along the lines of these new advocates for alternatives ways of doing democracy, came the discourse over deliberative, direct and participatory democracy. As mentioned above, one of the greatest contributors to this discourse have been Habermas and Rawls<sup>39</sup>. The German philosopher and the North American political introduced the importance of deliberation within democratic practices. From the analysis of Rawls and Habermas the deliberative turn of democracies originated. This deliberative turn<sup>40</sup> of democracy is not a new element in the history of democracy, but instead is a revival of an old theme<sup>41</sup>. The main aim of this new theory was that in a democratic polity political decision should be reached through a process of deliberation among free and equal citizens, has accompanied democracy since its birth in fifth century Athens<sup>42</sup>.

As Chantal Mouffe has noted «*Deliberative democracy*», in both Habermas and Rawls and their disciples, «*does concede to the aggregative model that under modern conditions a plurality of values and interests must be acknowledged and that consensus on what Rawls calls “comprehensive” views of a religious, moral*

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<sup>39</sup> Habermas, J. (1994) “Three normative models of democracy”, *Constellations*, 1(1), pp. 1-10 / Dryzek, J. S. (2001) “Legitimacy and economy in deliberative democracy”, *Political theory*, 29(5), pp. 651-669.

<sup>40</sup> Elster, J. (1997) “The market and the forum: three varieties of political theory”, *Deliberative democracy: Essays on reason and politics*, 3-34.

<sup>41</sup> Mouffe, C. (1999) “Deliberative democracy or agonistic pluralism?”, *Social research*, pp. 745-758, pg. 745

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*

*or philosophical nature has to be relinquished. But its advocates do not accept that this entails the impossibility of a rational consensus on political decisions, understanding by that not a simple modus vivendi but a moral type of agreement resulting from free reasoning among equals. Provided that the procedures of the deliberation secure impartiality, equality, openness and lack of coercion, they will guide the deliberation towards generalizable interests, which can be agreed upon by all participants thereby producing legitimate outcomes»<sup>43</sup>.*

What this means is that, the most important elements in the deliberative theory are rationality and equality. In fact, in this particular version of democracy citizens are all equal, they come together and through public reasoning they reach a shared decision<sup>44</sup>. The idea of equality is so important for deliberative democracy that, at least in theory, each participant has an equal voice in the process<sup>45</sup>, even if in reality this does not always happen. As a consequence, deliberative democracy is not a neutral instrument and has some minimum requirements, for example, the information on which the participant build their reasoning has to be carefully weighted for both sides of the arguments discussed. Furthermore, there needs to be a substantive balance, in the sense that the debate must focus on the actual case and not on other irrelevant matters. Last but not least, there has to be a diversity of opinion on the subject matters<sup>46</sup>.

To reach an optimal outcome, as mentioned before, there is the need to rely on rationality and this is not always possible, thus causing one of the most common flaws of the deliberative democracy. Furthermore, during deliberations, the question of individual preferences arises: each participant has his/her own preference already in mind and they might not change it throughout the process,

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<sup>43</sup> Mouffe, C. (1999) "Deliberative democracy or agonistic pluralism?", *Social research*, pp. 745-758, pg. 757

<sup>44</sup> Cohen, J., (1997) "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy in Deliberative Democracy", in *Essays on Reasons and Politics*, The MIT Press Cambridge, Massachusetts London, England, pg. 103

<sup>45</sup> Manin, B. (1987). "On legitimacy and political deliberation. *Political theory*", 15(3), pp.338-368

<sup>46</sup> Fishkin, J., (2009) "When the people speak: deliberative democracy and public consultation", Oxford University Press, pg. 36

thus blocking the whole process. On this matter, Joshua Cohen, one of the most influential disciples of Habermas<sup>47</sup> has identified two types of preferences: the *adaptive* and the *accommodationist*<sup>48</sup>.

Adaptive preferences are defined as «*preferences that shift with changes in the circumstances of the agent without any deliberate contribution by the agent to that shift*»<sup>49</sup>, while accommodationist preferences are «*psychological adjustments to conditions of subordination in which individuals are not recognized as having the capacity for self-government*»<sup>50</sup>. The presence of one of these two preferences in the participants of a deliberation can shape the outcome of the whole process; for example, with the accommodationist preference there will be a significant band wagon effect that seriously alters the final rational outcome of the deliberative process. Even though many examples of successful deliberation can be found today<sup>51</sup>, it is hard to see the current political situation accepting the deliberative process as a democratic alternative, because deliberative democracy requires stability in necessary institutions<sup>52</sup>. And given the complexity of democratic processes, stability is not something that it is easily achievable.

In the last decade the deliberative alternative of democracy has found one notable practical implementation: the Deliberative Polls. This particular form have been created by the Stanford Professor James S. Fishkin and have been carried out in more than 100 countries all over the world. The Centre for Deliberative Democracy, set up and headed by professor Fishkin, have defined the Deliberative Polls as «*an attempt to use public opinion research in a new and constructive way. A random, representative sample is first polled on the targeted issues. After this*

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<sup>47</sup> Mouffe, C. (1999) “Deliberative democracy or agonistic pluralism?”, *Social research*, pp. 745-758, pg. 746

<sup>48</sup> Cohen, J., (1997) “Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy in Deliberative Democracy”, in *Essays on Reasons and Politics*, The MIT Press Cambridge, Massachusetts London, England, pg. 108-109

<sup>49</sup> Cohen, J., (1997) “Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy in Deliberative Democracy”, in *Essays on Reasons and Politics*, The MIT Press Cambridge, Massachusetts London, England, pg. 110

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>51</sup> See the Deliberative Polls carried out by professor Fishkin in different context throughout the world

<sup>52</sup> Cohen, J., (1997) “Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy in Deliberative Democracy”, in *Essays on Reasons and Politics*, The MIT Press Cambridge, Massachusetts London, England, pg. 111

*baseline poll, members of the sample are invited to gather at a single place for a weekend in order to discuss the issues. Carefully balanced briefing materials are sent to the participants and are also made publicly available»<sup>53</sup>.*

### 1.1.2 Direct democracy

Another alternative that had attracted considerable attention in recent times is the Direct Democracy.

This other alternative way of doing democracy, like the deliberative one, has its root in ancient Greece. In fact, the main objective of Direct Democracy is to give back the “power” to the citizens by transforming the representative mechanism into a direct one. This particular form is exactly what Madison and the founding fathers of modern representative democracy wanted to avert: popular participation was not appreciated<sup>54</sup>. In fact, Madison in the Federalist n. 10, sees *pure democracy*<sup>55</sup> as a form of government that cannot *guarantee the proper balance between the heterogeneous interests present in a society*<sup>56</sup>. Despite this aversion from the founding fathers, with the raising lack of confidence in the political system, groups of citizens and associations have asked for a more direct involvement in the decision-making process.

To give a definition of Direct Democracy is not an easy task. Barber sees this particular form of democracy as a system of *«self-government by citizens rather than representative government in the name of citizens»<sup>57</sup>*. Examples of direct democracies, such as Switzerland, can be found today, but they were mostly

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<sup>53</sup> [Cdd.stanford.edu](https://cdd.stanford.edu), *Centre for Deliberative Democracy*, visited last on the 19th of January 2020, website: <https://cdd.stanford.edu/what-is-deliberative-polling/>

<sup>54</sup> Buček, J., Smith, B. (1999) “New approaches to local democracy: direct democracy, participation and the `third sector””, in *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy 2000, volume 18*, pg. 5

<sup>55</sup> This is the definition that Madison gives to the democracy in which the people are directly involved into political decision-making. Something that today would have been close to be a direct democracy ideal

<sup>56</sup> Dunn, J. (2005), “Setting the people free: The Story of Democracy”, Atlantic Books, edizione in lingua italiana (2008) EGEA, Università Bocconi Editore, pg 77

<sup>57</sup> Maduz, L. (2010) “Direct Democracy”, University of Zurich Center for International and Comparative Studies, pg. 1

present in the USA in throughout the 19th century<sup>58</sup>. What makes Switzerland's case unique is that citizens are directly asked to express their opinion on legislative proposals quite often, whereas in other countries direct democracy's forms are used very seldom.

The most important characteristic of direct democracy, and also the one that distinguishes it from Deliberative and Participatory, is the fact that Direct Democracy leads to formal/final decisions<sup>59</sup>. This particular form has had great appeal in modern times thanks to the rise to power of populist movements, such as the *Movimento 5 Stelle* (Five Star Movement) in Italy or the *Front National* (National Front) in France that have appealed to the dissatisfied social classes<sup>60</sup>. The term populism has been widely used in the XX and XXI centuries to describe anti-elitist appeals against established interests or mainstream parties, referring to both the political left and right in Europe, North America, Latin America and other regions in the world<sup>61</sup>. The populist vision includes the existence of two homogeneous groups, their antagonistic relationship, the affirmation of the right of the majority against the minority, the Manichean opposition between "we" (the pure, virtuous people) and "them" (the corrupt and negligent elite, rulers or establishment)<sup>62</sup>. What is important to notice is that Direct Democracy has found great support from the citizens, both in North America and Europe, but has been opposed by traditional representative parts of the political and intellectual establishment<sup>63</sup>.

What makes Direct Democracy so strong is the fact that nowadays social movements, in different countries and of various nature, are advocating for it and

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<sup>58</sup> Massachusetts held a referendum in 1780 to approve its new constitution.

<sup>59</sup> Buček, J., Smith, B. (1999) "New approaches to local democracy: direct democracy, participation and the 'third sector'", in *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy 2000, volume 18*, pg. 6

<sup>60</sup> Lupia, A., Matsusaka, J. G., (2004) "Direct Democracy: New Approaches to Old Questions", *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.*, pp. 463-482, pg 470

<sup>61</sup> Martinelli, A. (2017) "Beyond Trump: Populism on the rise", Edizioni Epoké, pg. 15

<sup>62</sup> Ibidem

<sup>63</sup> Lupia, A., Matsusaka, J. G., (2004) "Direct Democracy: New Approaches to Old Questions", *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.*, pp. 463-482, pg 470

they are looking for a more horizontal politics based on this alternative and self-organisation<sup>64</sup>. Moreover, one particular aspect that further reinforces the influence of Direct Democracy is the weight that public opinion can have on shaping policies even if direct practices are never used. Intuitively, the threat of an initiative by an interest group may be enough to induce a change in behaviour of the legislature<sup>65</sup>.

The direct democracy element that is used the most is the referendum. It is used to check the public opinion on a subject matter or to confirm/repel a particular political decision. Usually referenda are seen just as a one-time event, but to be successful they need to be seen as a process<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> Oikonomakis, L., Roos, E. J., (2016) "A Global movement for Real Democracy", in *Street Politics in the Age of Austerity: From the Indignados to Occupy*, Amsterdam University Press, pg. 227

<sup>65</sup> Lupia, A., Matsusaka, J. G., (2004) "Direct democracy: New approaches to old questions", *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.*, pp. 463-482, pg. 475

<sup>66</sup> Frey, B. S. (May 1994) "Direct Democracy: Politico-Economic Lessons from Swiss Experience", *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 84, No. 2, Papers and Proceedings of the Hundred and Sixth Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association, Published by: American Economic Association, pp.338-342, pg. 339

### 1.1.3 Participatory democracy

The idea of participation has been a constant in both democratic thinking and practices. In many different form and degrees, participation has been envisaged by all democratic experiences: from Athens to the French Revolution to the new emergence of democratic practices in recent years, participation has played a role within democracy. For example, in ancient Greece, participation was limited to specific social group of citizens; in Rome instead, participation was allowed to any Roman citizen. On the contrary, in more modern times, participation was explicitly hindered by the representative system or the *Restauration*, but nonetheless it remains present in the form of the elections.

In the late 90s and early 2000, after the experiences of students and feminists movements, it became possible to conceive new ways of doing democracy. The advent of new technologies, such as internet, has also provided the means for a greater part of the population to express itself and to significantly improve its knowledge. What happened also is the further fragmentation brought by globalisation that created new problems that required new solutions. The idea that decisions need to be made by the people that are directly affected by the consequences has had a huge impact on new democratic practices. new conceptions of the democratic practices have started to emerge.

Equality and participation became some of the most important elements that, at least on paper, defined democracy. The idea that just a few representatives could embody the necessity of the whole citizenry<sup>67</sup>, as it was conceived by the standard representative system started to falter, and new practices of participation emerged throughout the world.

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<sup>67</sup> Meier, C. in Dunn, J. (1995) "Democracy: the unfinished Journey, 508 BG to AD 1993", Marsilio Editori S.P.A in Venezia, pg. 166

As new theories on alternative ways of doing democracy have started to emerge<sup>68</sup>, in recent years another solid alternative has found its way to centre stage: Participatory Democracy. To give a clear and comprehensive definition of participatory democracy is not easy, Giovanni Allegretti has presented participatory democracy as «*Non un unico istituto, dunque, ma una famiglia di procedure*»<sup>69</sup>. A generic definition of participatory democracy can be a variation of democracy in which citizens take a more active role in the decision-making processes that concerns themselves directly.

As Allegretti has said, there are many practices of participatory democracy that are implemented world-wide, such as participatory budgeting, citizens jury or participation of proximity. Academic literature on participatory democracy has blossomed in the past thirty years<sup>70</sup> is extensive, it has thoroughly examined its characteristics and has established some requirements in participatory democracy<sup>71</sup>:

1. There needs to be inclusion throughout the process, meaning that anybody can be involved in the participatory proceedings;
2. Any kind of group or association can take part to the meetings;
3. The institutions involved in the process need to make credible promises and have to guarantee the transparency of the process;
4. There needs to be continuity;
5. Participation has to be enabled with the suitable tools and methods;
6. The discussions held during the participatory meetings has to have an impact on the results;
7. The people can monitor and control the whole process.

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<sup>68</sup> See for example Deliberative and Direct Democracy

<sup>69</sup> Allegretti, G. (2011) “La democrazia partecipativa in Italia e in Europa”, Published in Associazione Italiana dei Costituzionalisti n. 01/2011, pg 6. Trad. «Not a single institution, but a family of practices»

<sup>70</sup> Bherer, L., Dufour, P. & Montambeault, F. (2016) *The participatory democracy turn: an introduction*, Journal of Civil Society, 12:3, 225-230, DOI: 10.1080/17448689.2016.1216383

<sup>71</sup> Allegretti, G. (2011) “La democrazia partecipativa in Italia e in Europa”, Published in Associazione Italiana dei Costituzionalisti n. 01/2011, pg. 8-9

What emerges clearly from these requirements is that participatory democracy is not independent from the actual political system, on the contrary it is an upgrade for the existing representative democracy, because politics cannot be replaced by participation<sup>72</sup> but it could be complemented by it. As mentioned before, participatory democracy does not lead to formal decisions in the majority of the cases but including non-elected citizens into the decision-making process empowers the people to gain a more extensive knowledge of the situation. This element of empowerment is acknowledged by Carole Pateman that claims that «*citizen can be more democratic through participation*»<sup>73</sup>.

Participatory democracy, like direct and deliberative, is no stranger to criticism; in fact, the biggest critic that has been moved to participatory democracy is that real inclusive participation cannot be realised because of the differences present inside society<sup>74</sup>. Given the nature of the existing variety of experiences and types of participatory experimentation, it is very hard to convene to single point of view on whether this alternative to the existing representative democracy effectively works.

What could be done is to look at a specific aspect of participatory democracy and see if it has been effective. Maybe the best example of participatory proceedings is the participatory budgeting. This specific institution of participatory democracy has a long and vast history.

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<sup>72</sup> Bobbio, L. (2006) “Dilemmi della democrazia partecipativa”, *Democrazia e diritto*, pp. 11-26, pg. 13

<sup>73</sup> Knappe, H. (2017) “Participatory and Deliberative Democracy: From Equality Norms to Argumentative Rationalities in Doing Democracy Differently”, *Political Practices and Transnational Civil Society*, Published by: Verlag Barbara Budrich, Budrich UniPress, pg. 48

<sup>74</sup> Ivi, pg. 50

#### 1.1.4 Participatory Budgeting

Participatory Budgeting, as mentioned before, is particular variation of Participatory Democracy and as such it has gathered much support and success in the last twenty to thirty years. The nature of its success has depended on a wide variety of factors, both endogenous and exogenous. One of the most successful experience of Participatory Budgeting that has emerged in the last thirty years is the one of Porto Alegre, in Brazil. The true origin of this concept is still debated today, but what is known is the fact that this particular practice emerged in Latin America at the end of the 1980s.

The 1980s in Latin America were years of change, the military dictatorships that had ruled the counties for decades were yielding, willingly or unwillingly, the government due to internal and external pressure. In this turmoil, the state of Rio Grande and its capital Porto Alegre emerged as the perfect set up for an alternative way of doing democracy. This city had all the characteristics needed: the literacy rate of the state and city was one of the highest within all Brazil, the social and economic differences between social classes were less pronounced and the overall population lived in better conditions in compared to other State. In addition to this, the city of Porto Alegre had a strong movement of citizen participation, the Union of Neighbourhood Associations of Porto Alegre (UAMPA), that was advocating for participatory structures within the municipality<sup>75</sup>. Therefore, it is no coincidence that a successful participatory practice had emerged in this city.

What made this experience important is its domestic success and its subsequent international diffusion. The Participatory Budget of Porto Alegre has assumed global importance with the 1996 prize awarded by the UN-Habitat Conference held in Istanbul. This price propelled the Latin American experience

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<sup>75</sup> Baiocchi, G. (2003) "Participation, Activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre Experiment in Deepening Democracy Institutional Innovations" in *Empowered Participatory Governance the Real Utopias Project IV* by ARCHON FUNG and ERIK OLIN WRIGHT, published by Verso, London, pg. 47

towards international fame and recognition. Starting in the late 1990s, local municipalities worldwide began to implement practices, more or less similar, to the one ran in Porto Alegre.

The diffusion and the impact that this Participatory Budgeting had on the rest of the world is very much important still today<sup>76</sup>. The idea that PB has reached such an international dimension that it could be seen as an International Norms has floated in the intellectual world<sup>77</sup>. And even though this idea might come as a surprise to some, with the help of the mechanism of international diffusion of norms, as theorised by Social Constructivism, this work will try to explain whether PB has actually become an international norm.

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<sup>76</sup> All it takes is to see the number of PB practices implemented throughout the world as showed in the World Atlas of Participatory Budgeting

<sup>77</sup> See De Oliveira, O. P. (2017) "International policy diffusion and participatory budgeting: ambassadors of participation, international institutions and transnational networks", Springer

## 1.2 International norms diffusion

Choosing Social Constructivism as the main theory has allowed to factor into the mechanism of PB diffusion the social aspects that have been crucial to the successful outcome of this process.

As a prerequisite for the analysis of Social Constructivism, there needs to be a brief explanation of Globalisation. This particular phenomenon has been defined as «*intensification of economic, political, social, and cultural relations across borders*»<sup>78</sup>. It is clear and obvious that globalisation has yielded positive results for the world, but it is also clear that the way through which globalisation has played out had caused some resentment throughout the world. One example of this resentment toward globalisation is the protest organised in 1999 in Seattle against the World Trade Organisation (WTO), that was seen as one of the heads of the neoliberal globalisation. Another example of the resentment can be seen in the spontaneous movement *Occupy Wall Street*. These anti-neoliberal protests aimed at fighting the “capitalist” expansion of globalisation are all movements that affect states both on the domestic and international level.

In this context, the mainstream IR theories, being realism and liberalism, fail to grasp the complexity of these non-state actors and to limit themselves to a traditional model of world’s representation<sup>79</sup>. Realism in particular has been the most used theory of international relations to explain the world, due to its appeal to statism, survival and self-help to statesmen<sup>80</sup>. Realists and realism theory put at the centre of their analysis power; it is not by accident that one of the benchmarks for realist is Niccolò Machiavelli. Liberalism, on the other hand, had run parallel to realism but instead of focusing on power it focused on ideas, on the sense of

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<sup>78</sup> Viotti, Paul R. (2012) “International relations theory” in Paul R. Viotti, Mark V. Kauppi, 5th edition, published by Pearson Education Inc., pg.277

<sup>79</sup> Ibidem

<sup>80</sup> Baylis, J. & Smith, S, (2001) “The Globalization of World Politics. An introduction to international relations 2<sup>nd</sup> edition”, Published by Oxford University Press, pg. 162

community and on the power of the market<sup>81</sup>. Liberal theory recognised States as actors but does not attributes them the same role of control that realists do.

A turning point happened with the emergence of a new theory. In 1999 a special issue of the Journal of European Public Policy was published thus propelling the new theory towards new horizons<sup>82</sup>. This new direction began, in particular in the US, as a spill over from other disciplines, such as education or psychology<sup>83</sup>. This new theory has been generally addressed as Constructivism, but in IR it would be mainly known as Social Constructivism. It mainly stemmed from the critique of realism and liberalism, but it slowly developed its own way<sup>84</sup>. What had favoured the development of this new IR theory have been the post–Cold War decline of communist ideology that had left intact the current globalized market system and its associated liberal financial institutions, norms, and rules by which state and non-state actors operate. The duality of the world that had been constituted during the Cold War era came to an end and opened the stage of international relations to new and numerous variables. In this optic, the static and state-centric vision of realism, with its most recent alternative being neorealism, fell flat in explaining these results, leaving questions unanswered.

Social Constructivism is not a univocal theory, many different authors identifies themselves as “social constructivists”. The diversity and wide variety of actors has made this new theory a very multifaceted theory. As mentioned above, Constructivism began its course as a critique to realism and liberalism, but gradually oriented itself towards a wider horizon; to be more specific constructivists *«analyse how institutions, comprised of rules and norms, establish*

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<sup>81</sup> Baylis, J. & Smith, S, (2001) “The Globalization of World Politics. An introduction to international relations 2<sup>nd</sup> edition”, Published by Oxford University Press, pg. 163

<sup>82</sup> Risse, T. (2004) “Social Constructivism and European Integration”, in Antje WIENER and Thomas DIEZ (eds), *European Integration Theory*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, pp. 159-176, pg. 159

<sup>83</sup> Ibidem

<sup>84</sup> Viotti, Paul R. (2012) “International relations theory” in Paul R. Viotti, Mark V. Kauppi, 5th edition, published by Pearson Education Inc., pg, 277

*habitual practices and procedures*»<sup>85</sup>. Going through the multitude of Constructivists academic papers and books it appears that there is not one single version of Constructivism, but many different ones that share some basic elements. As Paul Viotti and Mark Kauppi have said: «*At its core, social constructivism, as the term implies, relates to the irreducibly intersubjective dimension of human action to include what we consider to be knowledge and reality, with the assumption that the objects of our knowledge are not independent of our interpretations*»<sup>86</sup>. This definition captures one of the most important aspects of constructivist thought: constructivism does not try to establish a univocal paradigm, as do realism and liberalism, instead it sees the world as constantly shifting because of changes in the social relations that in turn are determined and determine domestic and international society<sup>87</sup>.

The steady shifting of social relations has been crucial in the last thirty years and seeing the world as a constantly changing because of this gave the field of IR a fluid outlook. New actors, such as NGOs and other Institutional IOs, have changed the power relation of IR and greatly affected the state-centric system that had been in place after the treaty of Westphalia in 1648. The novelty that Social Constructivism has brought into IR is «*a sociological perspective on world politics, emphasizing the importance of normative as well as material structures, and the role of identity in the constitution of interests and action*»<sup>88</sup>. Constructivists turn shifted the focus on human behaviour: whereas rationalism looked at human behaviour with the *homo economicus* and thus the *logic of consequences*, constructivism thought sees humans acting as *homo sociologicus*, which use a

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<sup>85</sup> Klotz, A., Lynch, C., Checkel, J. T. & Dunn, K. C. (2006) "Moving beyond the Agent-Structure Debate", *International Studies Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 355-381, Published by: Wiley on behalf of The International Studies Association, pg. 358

<sup>86</sup> Viotti, Paul R. (2012) "International relations theory" / Paul R. Viotti, Mark V. Kauppi, 5th edition, published by Pearson Education Inc., pg. 278

<sup>87</sup> Klotz, A., Lynch, C., Checkel, J. T. & Dunn, K. C. (2006) "Moving beyond the Agent-Structure Debate", *International Studies Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 355-381, Published by: Wiley on behalf of The International Studies Association, pg. 358

<sup>88</sup> Rice, R., & Reus-Smit, C. (1998) "Dangerous Liaisons?: Critical International Theory and Constructivism", *European Journal of International Relations*, 4(3), pp. 259-294. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066198004003001>, p. 259

*logic of appropriateness*<sup>89</sup>. This *logic of appropriateness* is something that completely changed the way in which people act; This new framework implies that there is a set of values that validates the decision as *appropriate*<sup>90</sup>. This shift in the focus of IR changed the way in which the world was explained: it meant that IR intellectuals started to look more on aspect such as identities and interests, and new “players” that could impact on those aspects, such as norms, acquired a greater importance in the IR field.

Before going into further analysis of the role of norms in Social Constructivism, the role of identity needs to be underlined. As mentioned above, identity has been seen as closely linked to the social context and even though this feature has been fairly ignored by realism and liberalism; on the other hand, constructivism sought to analyse and understand how this context has developed, both on the local level and on the international one because it recognised the importance of identity in the process of interests creation. Identity also in the eyes of Social Constructivists had strong influence over the interests of a specific individual: as asserted by Jung quoting Wendt: «*identities are the basis of interests and actors do not have a portfolio of interests that they carry around independent of social context; instead, they define their interests in the process of defining situation*»<sup>91</sup>.

One of the elements that has mostly played a relevant role in Social Constructivism theory are *Norms*. Even though norms were already present in realism, they acquired greater importance in Social Constructivism thanks to their power over the social context in which they were applied and from which they came from. During the time of hegemony of Realism and Liberalism, norms stayed on the side-line and only re-emerged during the *constructivists turn* with a stronger

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<sup>89</sup> Jung, H. (2019) “The Evolution of Social Constructivism in Political Science: Past to Present”, SAGE Open

January-March 2019, pp. 1–10 © The Author(s) 2019 DOI: 10.1177/2158244019832703, pg. 2

<sup>90</sup> Ibidem

<sup>91</sup> Ivi, pg. 7

methodological component. In fact, throughout the 1970s and 1980s there was a behavioural revolution and an economic turn within the mainstream international relation theory, these changes made important contributions by forcing scholars to think much more rigorously about issues of research design, theoretical clarity, disciplinary cumulation and parsimony<sup>92</sup>. This has led to a more attentive study of the impact that norms have on the IR theories and higher degree of awareness on norms themselves.

The origin of norms for social constructivists, at least in the greater sense, is to be found in social interaction. They have a dual nature: norms influence and are influenced by social interaction and common agreements<sup>93</sup>. Furthermore, as Thomas Risse has noted «*many social norms not only regulate behaviour, they also constitute the identity of actors in the sense of defining who “we” are as a member of social communities*»<sup>94</sup>. This demonstrate perfectly how the concept of identity is important in the study of norms. How to explain this interaction between identities and norms is distinctive aspect of constructivism: human interaction is shaped primarily by ideational factors, not simply material ones. Among these ideational factors the most important ones are widely shared or ‘intersubjective’ beliefs, which are not reducible to individuals and these shared beliefs construct the interests and identities of purposive actors that will shape and in turn will be shaped by norms<sup>95</sup>.

Norms are intersubjective and associated with action. In addition to this, norms serve as models for expected behaviour or practice, they «*simplify choices of actors with nonidentical preferences facing each other in a world characterized*

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<sup>92</sup> Finnemore, M., Sikkink, K. (1998), “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change”, *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 4, International Organization at Fifty: Exploration and Contestation in the Study of World Politics, Published by: The MIT Press, pp. 887-917, pg. 890

<sup>93</sup> Risse, T. (2004), “Social Constructivism and European Integration”, in Antje WIENER and Thomas DIEZ (eds), *European Integration Theory*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, pp. 159-176, pg. 163

<sup>94</sup> Ibidem

<sup>95</sup> Shawki, N. (2 September 2011) “Global Norms, Local Implementation — How Are Global Norms Translated into Local Practice?”, *GSIJ Article Issue 26, Illinois State University Department of Politics and Government Copyright © GSIJ & Author(s)*. ISSN 1557-0266 GSIJ, published at Stony Brook University by the Stony Brook Institute for Global Studies (SBIGS), pg. 2

*by scarcity*» and serve as justifications and models for ways in which specific tasks should be accomplished<sup>96</sup>. Furthermore, norms are used as bridge between what is appropriate and what is not, thus introducing the *logic of appropriateness* to explain normative influences on actors, arguing that norms function to identify appropriate and inappropriate behaviours and courses of political action<sup>97</sup>.

The study of the effects of norms on IR has not had a one-dimensional linear development. Instead there have been, at least until today, two different ways of norms study. The first one studies the normative influences on international relations, that both neoliberal and interpretivist approaches, and tended to argue that norms engendered international cooperation by shaping state interests and preferences in ways that gave state actors more shared interests. In addition to this, norms helped to realize common interests and common gains and established common notions of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour<sup>98</sup>. The second-wave research, on the contrary, seeks to better understand various domestic influences of international norms on state actors, the public, various societal elites, and domestic discourses<sup>99</sup>. The second-wave looks for changes in domestic discourses, national institutions, and state policies, it seeks empirical evidence of the domestic salience of particular transnational norms, focusing on processes of state socialization and the acceptance of previously rejected norms<sup>100</sup>.

The emergence of Social Constructivism in IR has brought a new perspective that allowed intellectuals to better see and analyse the world. This aspect has been important in the last thirty years, because the changes in the world order and in the IR on all levels, presented old challenges under new disguises.

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<sup>96</sup> O'Neill, K., Balsiger, J. & VanDeveer, S.D. (2004) "Actors, Norms, And Impact: Recent International Cooperation Theory and the Influence of the Agent-Structure Debate", *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 7, pp. 149–75 doi: 10.1146/annurev.polisci.7.090803.161821, pg. 160

<sup>97</sup> Ibidem

<sup>98</sup> Ivi, pg. 161

<sup>99</sup> Ibidem

<sup>100</sup> Ibidem

### 1.2.1 International norms diffusion

As mentioned above, norms play an important role in constructivists theory, they sometimes are seen as elements that can shape the international, national and local social order and in this sense PB achieved important results in changing world balance. But why and how do some transnational ideas and norms find greater acceptance in specific places rather than in others? This is an important question for international relations scholars, who are challenged by recent intellectual to put greater attention to the «*causal mechanisms and processes by which ... ideas spread*»<sup>101</sup>.

Understanding how diffusion of norms happens is not an easy task. There are different schools of thought on how norms spread and to choose one side of the debate is no neutral act, because in most of these theories the role that norm has is strictly connected to the way in which they spread. For example, Amitav Acharya has outlined four different mechanisms of diffusion of norms. The first one is called moral cosmopolitanism, it has three main features: «*First, the norms that are being propagated are "cosmopolitan," or "universal" norms, such as the campaign against land mines, ban on chemical weapons, protection of whales, struggle against racism, intervention against genocide, and promotion of human rights, and so on.*» *Second, the key actors who spread these norms are transnational agents, whether they are individual "moral entrepreneurs" or social movements. Third, despite recognizing the role of persuasion in norm diffusion, this literature focuses heavily on what Nadelmann has called "moral proselytism," concerned with conversion rather than contestation (although the latter is*

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<sup>101</sup> Acharya, A. (2004) "How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism", *International Organization*, Vol. 58, No. 2, pp. 239-275 Published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of the International Organization Foundation, pg. 240

*acknowledged), and regarding resistance to cosmopolitan norms as illegitimate or immoral»<sup>102</sup>*

The moral cosmopolitanism sees the diffusion of norms as teaching mechanism, in which the international norms are superior to the local ones and thus are better; in this teaching mechanism, great importance is given to international actors that have the duty to preach and teach to local stakeholders<sup>103</sup>. The superiority of international norms and actors in this theory greatly downplays the role of local agents and pre-existing norms that are predominant in the second mechanism of norms diffusion outlined by Acharya.

In this second mechanism, local and regional players, together with cultural variables, assume an important role in conditioning the reception of new global norms<sup>104</sup>. This approach differentiates itself from the moral cosmopolitanists, because it sees norms as integrating each other's and not competing: For example, Checkel's notion of *cultural match*, which describes a «*situation where the prescriptions embodied in an international norm are convergent with domestic norms*»<sup>105</sup>. In this sense, the second approach to diffusion of norms is «*more rapid when ... a systemic norm ... resonates with historically constructed domestic norms*»<sup>106</sup>.

From this last approach, two more dynamic subversions appear: framing and grafting. Framing is particularly important because it stresses the importance of those actors that are involved throughout the process of norms diffusion. In fact, norms advocates, being international or domestic, have an important role in the process because there might be a link between the new norm and a pre-existing

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<sup>102</sup> Ivi, pg. 242

<sup>103</sup> Acharya, A. (2004) "How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism", *International Organization*, Vol. 58, No. 2, pp. 239-275 Published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of the International Organization Foundation, pg. 242

<sup>104</sup> Ivi, pg. 243

<sup>105</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>106</sup> Jeffrey, C. (1999) "Norms, Institutions and National Identity in Contemporary Europe", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (Mar. 1999), pp. 83-114, Published by: Wiley on behalf of The International Studies Association, pg. 87

one that is not evident and need to be highlighted, or the norm, in order to be accepted both on domestic and international level, has to be presented and explained by a specific figure<sup>107</sup>. Grafting, on the other hand, «*is a tactic norm entrepreneur employs to institutionalize a new norm by associating it with a pre-existing norm in the same issue area, which makes a similar prohibition or injunction*»<sup>108</sup>.

Both framing and grafting are effective mechanisms of norms diffusion that offer a more dynamic approach, given also the great importance that norm advocates have, but they present also a disadvantage: the norms that go through these processes will be largely interpreted and thus each interpretation will be different from each other, resulting in a wide variety of norms having similar characteristics<sup>109</sup>.

Another process of norm diffusion that has been presented by Amitav Acharya is localization. Given the fact that within constructivists theory the social aspect has a relevant role, the *Localization* approach cannot be ignored. For Amitav Acharya the idea of localising something is to «*invest [it] with the characteristics of a particular place*»<sup>110</sup>, hence the process of localization is an active practice of construction, using methods such as framing, grafting or cultural selection, in a way that the foreign norm is framed by local actors and develops a significant congruence with previous local beliefs and practices, thus increasing the probability of its acceptance<sup>111</sup>. Some scholars have regarded localization as being equal to adaptation, but adaptation is a generic term that can subsume all kinds of behaviours and outcomes. On the contrary, localization has more specific features such as the initiative to seek change normally belongs to the local agent

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<sup>107</sup> Acharya, A. (2004) "How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism", *International Organization*, Vol. 58, No. 2, pp. 239-275 Published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of the International Organization Foundation, pg. 243

<sup>108</sup> Ivi, pg. 244

<sup>109</sup> Ibidem

<sup>110</sup> Ivi, pg. 245

<sup>111</sup> Ibidem

and that throughout this process «*local beliefs ... were always responsible for the initial form of the new wholes took*»<sup>112</sup>.

A key aspect that has to be considered, also for other approaches to norm diffusion, is the legitimacy and credibility that the norm entrepreneur have. Most of the time they represent the new norm; in addition to the legitimacy of the norm entrepreneur, the strength of local previous norms and tradition are factors that can greatly impact the diffusion of a norm at the local level<sup>113</sup>. However, Constructivism does not make any particular claims about the content of social structures or the nature of agents at work in social life<sup>114</sup>.

Despite this, the importance of local and transnational agents in norm diffusion is still very much crucial. These key figures have been given many different names, some authors have called them translators, other norms entrepreneur or norm advocates. Yet despite the variety of names, the importance of these actors has been widely shared. In fact, local norm entrepreneur have been seen as having «*one foot in the transnational community and one at home*»<sup>115</sup>, thus possessing a kind of duality that is paramount for a successful norm diffusion process: they have great knowledge of the international and the local situation, plus they can coordinate other local and transnational actors and mobilize them to boost the chances of a successful norm diffusion, both at local or at transnational level.

In order to qualify as agents, actors must not only reflect on choices and learn from mistakes but also exert transformative power<sup>116</sup>. Historically, the only

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<sup>112</sup> Acharya, A. (2004) “How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism”, *International Organization*, Vol. 58, No. 2, pp. 239-275 Published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of the International Organization Foundation, pg. 250

<sup>113</sup> Ibidem

<sup>114</sup> Finnemore, M. & Sikkink, K. (2001) “Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics”, *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 4, pp. 391–416, pg. 393

<sup>115</sup> Shawki, N. (2 September 2011) Global Norms, Local Implementation — How Are Global Norms Translated into Local Practice?, GSJ Article Issue 26, Illinois State University Department of Politics and Government Copyright © GSJ & Author(s). ISSN 1557-0266 GSJ, published at Stony Brook University by the Stony Brook Institute for Global Studies (SBIGS), pg. 3

<sup>116</sup> O’Neill, K., Balsiger, J. & VanDeveer, S.D. (2004) “Actors, Norms, And Impact: Recent International Cooperation Theory and the Influence of the Agent-Structure Debate”, *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 7, pp. 149–75

actors that had any kind of transformative power on IR were Nation States, at least after the Westphalian Pact. The only other international player that had acquired legitimacy on the international stage are International Governative Organisations (IOs). These players have received through Nation-State mandate the power to make decisions that impact the whole world. In this regard, constructivist see IOs as having «*significant influence over the capabilities, understanding, and interests of states*» and they «*promote certain norms and practices among states, often in unanticipated ways*»<sup>117</sup>. IOs have been identified by constructivists as agents of norms diffusion within the international world, because they teach states other point of views<sup>118</sup>.

Many scholars have assessed the importance of IOs on the international norms diffusion process: for example, Adler assessed that the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) construction of security community based on alternate security norms, or Checkel that explored the spread of human rights norms through various states in Europe by the Council of Europe (CoE)<sup>119</sup>. But nowadays the growing attention to Non-State Actors (NSAs) has emerged from criticisms of the state-centric paradigm that dominated IR until the 1970s: innovations in communications and information technology, increasing overseas travel, and the growing number of international conferences—which allowed individuals and organizations to share resources in order to collectively influence ideas, values, norms, and political orientations—provided scholars with a greater appreciation for the importance of NSAs in international politics<sup>120</sup>. An important

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doi: 10.1146/annurev.polisci.7.090803.161821, published online as a Review in Advance on Dec. 12, 2003, pg. 159

<sup>117</sup> Parks, S. (2005) “Norms diffusion within international organisation: a case study of the World Bank”, *Journal of International Relations and Development* n.8, pp. 111-141, pg. 112

<sup>118</sup> Ibidem

<sup>119</sup> Ivi, p. 114

<sup>120</sup> O'Neill, K., Balsiger, J. & VanDeveer, S.D. (2004) “Actors, Norms, And Impact: Recent International Cooperation Theory and the Influence of the Agent-Structure Debate”, *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 7, pp. 149–75 doi: 10.1146/annurev.polisci.7.090803.161821, published online as a Review in Advance on Dec. 12, 2003, pg. 157

aspect that has emerged from these practices is the fact that new NSAs have gained as much legitimacy as other IOs, such as the UN, had<sup>121</sup>.

The emergence of new actors on the field of IR is not something that should be underestimated, because if constructivists see IOs as important places of socialisation<sup>122</sup>, thus are very important to construct the world (given the social nature of things in constructivism), could it be possible that also other NSAs, that have gained as much influence as IOs, have become relevant on IR?<sup>123</sup>

Some of these new NSAs have been identified by Keck and Sikkink as transnational advocacy networks, *«which embrace those actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services. They refer to transnational “networks” rather than civil society or coalition to stress the “structured and structuring dimension in the actions of these complex agents”»*<sup>124</sup>. In addition to single NSAs, in recent years transnational advocacy networks have started to blossom, according to Keck and Sikkink. These transnational advocacy networks are a new and transformative phenomenon in many aspects: they have been able to *«mobilize non-state international actors and information strategically to help create new issues and categories, and to persuade, pressurize, and gain leverage over much more powerful organizations and governments»*<sup>125</sup>. What is remarkable of these transnational advocacy networks is the fact that they have not been always successful in their effort, but nonetheless they have gradually increased their weight in policy debates at domestic, regional and international

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<sup>121</sup> O'Neill, K., Balsiger, J. & VanDeveer, S.D. (2004) “Actors, Norms, And Impact: Recent International Cooperation Theory and the Influence of the Agent-Structure Debate”, *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 7, pp. 149–75 doi: 10.1146/annurev.polisci.7.090803.161821, published online as a Review in Advance on Dec. 12, 2003, pg. 158

<sup>122</sup> For examples, Checkel sees International Organisations as having an important role in the “normative suasion” process “primarily through “talking” between agents within institutions or organizations”

<sup>123</sup> Jung, H. (2019) “The Evolution of Social Constructivism in Political Science: Past to Present”, *SAGE Open*

*January-March 2019*, pp. 1–10, © The Author(s) 2019 DOI: 10.1177/2158244019832703, pg. 7

<sup>124</sup> Ivi, pg. 5

<sup>125</sup> Ibidem

level. Activists in networks try not only to influence policy outcomes, but to transform the terms and nature of the debate<sup>126</sup>.

The study of these new domestic and international actors, such as transnational advocacy networks or NSAs, has shown that these agents have started to focus more and more over ideational issues and not material ones: for example, the Climate Change activism that has started to be reframed by these agents as a more global and cosmopolitan problem, rather than a simple State problem<sup>127</sup>. Or in the case of PB, it is thanks to NGOs or transnational networks that the issue is still carried on.

And yet why use Constructivism in a Participatory Budgeting analysis?

Constructivism does not, by itself, produce specific predictions about political outcomes that one could test in social science research<sup>128</sup>. It is a theory that helps to establish a framework for thinking about the nature of social life and social interaction but makes no claims about their specific content<sup>129</sup>. In a constructivist analysis, agents and structures are mutually constituted in ways that explain why the political world is so and not otherwise, but the substantive specification of agents and structures must come from some other sources. Constructivism does not provide substantive explanations or predictions of political behaviour until coupled with a more specific understanding of who the relevant actors are, what they want, and what the content of social structures might be<sup>130</sup>.

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<sup>126</sup> Jung, H. (2019) “The Evolution of Social Constructivism in Political Science: Past to Present”, *SAGE Open*

*January-March 2019*, pp. 1–10, © The Author(s) 2019 DOI: 10.1177/2158244019832703, pg. 5

<sup>127</sup> O’Neill, K., Balsiger, J. & VanDeveer, S.D. (2004) “Actors, Norms, And Impact: Recent International Cooperation Theory and the Influence of the Agent-Structure Debate”, *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 7, pp. 149–75 doi: 10.1146/annurev.polisci.7.090803.161821, published online as a Review in Advance on Dec. 12, 2003, pg.158

<sup>128</sup> Finnemore, M. & Sikkink, K. (2001) “Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics”, *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 4, pp. 391–416, pg. 393

<sup>129</sup> Ibidem

<sup>130</sup> Ibidem

Despite this, Constructivism still retains an important role, thanks to its interdisciplinary nature. Furthermore, in recent years, the study of constructivism has found itself as having an unexpected companion: current democratic studies have seen to give as much importance to the fact that «*environments in which [actors] are embedded are in important part cultural and institutional, rather than just material*»<sup>131</sup>.

Why talk about democracy and what could it be the link with Constructivism theory?

To start from a general standpoint, democracy has been recently referred to as an International Norm. In fact, democracy as an international norm is stronger today than ever, and democracy itself is widely regarded as an ideal system of government<sup>132</sup>. Despite the fact that in the last thirty years the number of democracies in the world has doubled, with more than 60 % of the world's states now possessing democratic regimes, most scholars seem profoundly concerned about the state democracy today: they are more fixated on democracy's *Crisis* than on *Victory*<sup>133</sup>.

Even considering all the doubts surrounding democracy, the promotion of this form of governing, even when embraced and, according to many, tainted by the most powerful country in the international system, has also become an international norm<sup>134</sup>. This international norm still needs to be diffused by someone. As previously mentioned, there is a specific actor that has emerged from

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<sup>131</sup> Peceny, M. (1999) "The Social Construction of Democracy", *Reviewed Work(s): Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies by Larry Diamond, Marc F.Plattner, Yun-han Chu and Hung-mao Tien; Democracy's Victory and Crisis by Axel Hadenius, International Studies Review, Vol. 1, No. 1*, pp. 95-102, Published by: Wiley on behalf of The International Studies Association, pg. 96

<sup>132</sup> McFaul, M. (2004) "Democracy promotion as a world value", *The Washington Quarterly*, 28:1, pp. 147-163, DOI: 10.1162/0163660042518189, pg. 148

<sup>133</sup> Peceny, M. (1999) "The Social Construction of Democracy", *Reviewed Work(s): Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies by Larry Diamond, Marc F.Plattner, Yun-han Chu and Hung-mao Tien; Democracy's Victory and Crisis by Axel Hadenius, International Studies Review, Vol. 1, No. 1*, pp. 95-102, Published by: Wiley on behalf of The International Studies Association, pg. 95

<sup>134</sup> McFaul, M. (2004) *Democracy promotion as a world value, The Washington Quarterly*, 28:1, pp. 147-163, DOI: 10.1162/0163660042518189, pg. 148

Constructivists that plays an important role in the diffusion of a norm on local and international level: Norms Entrepreneur. These figures, in the field of promotion of democracy can be found in IOs, such as the UN, in NGOs, such as Freedom House or in other social movements.

Despite being democracy a worldwide accepted international norm, with a strong network of figures supporting and protecting it, there are still a lot of problems with democracy and its diffusion: for example, many democratic states have only assumed a *façade* of democracy or have slightly leaned on democratic norms: for example, most tyrants and pseudo-democrats would claim that they either practice democracy or are trying to chart an evolutionary transition to democracy, not that they are advocating an alternative to democracy<sup>135</sup>. Equally worrisome is the growing gap between liberal democracies and electoral democracies<sup>136</sup>.

External actors have intervened more often and aggressively to enforce human rights norms in other states than they have intervened to promote democratic regime change. Although Western democracies historically have a mixed record of exporting various forms of democracy, the legitimacy and practice of external actors promoting democracy—be they states, NGOs, or international institutions—has grown in the last two decades as the idea that people have a right to democracy has gained support<sup>137</sup>.

Democracy and good governance have also emerged as a new priority of aid organizations traditionally focused solely on economic development. Both the World Bank and the UN Development Fund have made good governance a larger

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<sup>135</sup> McFaul, M. (2004) “Democracy promotion as a world value”, *The Washington Quarterly*, 28:1, pp. 147-163, DOI: 10.1162/0163660042518189, pg. 148

<sup>136</sup> Ivi, pg. 151

<sup>137</sup> Ivi, pg. 155

component of their work and have also started to recognise best practice of democratic governing<sup>138</sup>.

After having acknowledged that democracy has become an International norm it needs to be established which kind of democracy have been diffuse at international level. Traditionally democratic practices that have spread are the one originated in the West, because of the influences these nations had over world politics in the last century and have been coupled with economic systems that resembled or propagated from the developed world, especially after the end of the Cold War and the triumph of the West.

As it will emerge in the next chapter, the importance of non-state actors has been paramount for the diffusion of the idea of Participatory Budgeting. The role of international and regional forums such as the World Social Forum or the European Social Forum cannot be underestimated. Furthermore, the diffusion of PB, especially in its early stage, has been connected to wider movements that sought to find a new and alternative way to the traditional western neoliberal perspective.

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<sup>138</sup> McFaul, M. (2004) "Democracy promotion as a world value", *The Washington Quarterly*, 28:1, pp. 147-163, DOI: 10.1162/0163660042518189, pg. 156

## 2. From Porto Alegre to the World

In this chapter the challenging history of Participatory Budgeting will be explained. Starting from its origin, to the development and its international exploit. Many actors, both domestic or international and institutional or informal, have contributed to this process of expansion.

This chapter starts with a brief analysis of the first and most famous PB experience, Porto Alegre. It then continues with the evolution of the participatory practices at the state level of Rio Grande do Sul, the first attempt of upgrading and increasing the impact of PB on the traditional representative democracy.

While the PB was emerging at the state level, the diffusion of this particular practice reached beyond Brazil and Latin America and was implemented, with mixed results, throughout the world. In order to further fully understand the expansion of PB in the world, this chapter will present the key moments and the most important actors that have been relevant in promoting and supporting the diffusion of this practice in the different continents of the world. Only one continent will be left out of this analysis: Europe.

The European expansion of PB, given its complicated nature and its very diversified outcomes, will be further analysed in the next chapter.

## 2.1 Origin of the Participatory Budget

There is no univocal definition of PB, instead many different practices have been labelled “participatory budgeting”. One attempt to define PB has been tried by Brian Wampler and Michael Touchton. They have defined it as «*a democratic, incremental policy-making institution in which citizens are directly involved in deciding how local governments spend their resources*»<sup>139</sup>. Even though there is a wide range of “participatory budgeting”, there is one element that is shared by all these practices: all the experiences worldwide see the participation of common citizens to specific meetings aimed at discussing a specific part of the institutional budget and all have in common the fact that PB are connected with the political forces that first started them. Furthermore, PB is used, at least on paper in most cases, as an instrument to rebalance the equilibrium in favour of the citizens and the reason why it has had all this success is that PB does not have strict limits and it can be adapted to various contexts and different socio-political environments<sup>140</sup>.

The idea of Participatory Budgeting, (henceforth PB), has had its first successful appearance in the city of Porto Alegre in Brazil in the late 1980s. It would first spread through Latin America, where more than 1,000 among the 16,000 municipalities had introduced it by 2006, and then over the entire globe<sup>141</sup>. The end of the 1980s were crucial years for Brazil: the military dictatorship that had governed the country since the 1964, the year of the military coup, was slowly

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<sup>139</sup>Wampler, B. and Touchton, M. (2018) “Designing institutions to improve well-being: Participation, deliberation and institutionalisation”, *European Journal of Political Research*, doi: 10.1111/1475-6765.12313, pg. 2

<sup>141</sup> Sintomer, Y., Herzberg, C. and Röcke, A. (March 2008) “Participatory Budgeting in Europe: Potentials and Challenges”, *Volume 32.1 International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, DOI:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2008.00777.x, pg. 164

releasing its grip over the government of the country and a *slow, gradual and secure* process of transition to democracy was initiated<sup>142</sup>.

The fact that this successful experience of participatory democracy became so successful in Porto Alegre is related to many factors: in 1988 together with the municipal elections, the new constitution of Brazil was approved and greatly reshaped the outlook of the country<sup>143</sup>. The municipal elections of 1988 were won by a coalition of parties led by the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (henceforth *PT*)<sup>144</sup>. This party had been created by unions of workers and other civil society organisations that had been very active in their opposition to the military dictatorship<sup>145</sup>. One of the elements that characterised this party was its proximity with the people, and in particular with the working class, thanks to its roots in the trade unions and other social movements, such as the Catholic associations. The victory of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* came as a surprise to many, in fact the mayoral candidate of the PT was seen as a dark horse<sup>146</sup>.

In addition to the change in the mayoral administration in favour of a leftist coalition, the issuing of the national Constitution in 1998<sup>147</sup> posed the legal grounds for participation<sup>148</sup>. Furthermore, the idea of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores*, was to work with the system, within the system and for the

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<sup>142</sup> Fausto, B. (2014) "A concise history of Brazil", with contribution of Sergio Fausto, published by Cambridge University press, New York, pg. 309

<sup>143</sup> Ibidem. It is important to underline the entry into force of the new Brazilian Constitution because during the draft of this Constitution many social movements, such as the Catholic associations and the workers union, were very active and civil society had a great influence in the drafting process.

<sup>144</sup> Baiocchi, G. (2003) "Participation, Activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre Experiment in Deepening Democracy Institutional Innovations" in *Empowered Participatory Governance the Real Utopias Project IV* by ARCHON FUNG and ERIK OLIN WRIGHT, published by Verso, London, pg. 47

<sup>145</sup> Abers, R. (1996) "From Ideas to Practice: The Partido dos Trabalhadores and Participatory Governance in Brazil", *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 23, No. 4, *The "Urban Question" in Latin America*, pp. 35-53, Published by: Sage Publications, Inc, pg. 36

<sup>146</sup> Abers, R. (1998) "From clientelism to cooperation: Local government, participatory policy, and civic organizing in Porto Alegre", *Brazil. Politics & Society*, 26(4), pp. 511-537, pg. 515

<sup>147</sup> Wampler, B., Avritzer, L. (2004) "Participatory Publics Civil Society and New Institutions in Democratic Brazil" in *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 3, pp. 291-312 Published by: Comparative Politics, Ph.D. Programs in Political Science, City University of New York, pg. 291

<sup>148</sup> Wampler, B., & Avritzer, L. (2004). *Participatory Publics: Civil Society and New Institutions in Democratic Brazil*. *Comparative Politics*, 36(3), pp. 291-312. doi:10.2307/4150132, pg. 299

system<sup>149</sup>. In fact, the assemblies and all of the discussion concerned with PB were open to the public<sup>150</sup>. After the electoral win, the PT implemented Participatory Budgeting throughout the city. PB started to gather more and more attention from the citizens of Porto Alegre, turnout to the assemblies steadily rose<sup>151</sup> and the project that had been selected through the process were implemented almost right away by the municipal administration showed that through this participatory practice the citizens are listened to<sup>152</sup>

Another element that contributed to the success of PB in Porto Alegre, was the nature of the coalition of city. This coalition was led by the PT, a grassroots party that had its origins in the anti-dictatorship movements and in the working class<sup>153</sup>.. To the success of PB in Porto Alegre had also contributed the strong network of neighbourhood associations: in 1985 The Union of Neighbourhood Associations of Porto Alegre (UAMPA), started advocating for participatory structures involving the municipal budget<sup>154</sup> because of lack of transparency and clear disparities in the investments between the neighbourhoods. Participatory public grew out of the intermingling of democratic and social demands and in turn became a fertile breeding ground for new strategies that confronted the social and political exclusion of the majority of Brazil<sup>155</sup>.

The implementation of this participatory practice had also been influenced by the broad agreement of all parts of the municipal coalition on an overall programme of democratization and decentralization of the administration,

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<sup>149</sup> Ibidem

<sup>150</sup> Ivi, pg. 300

<sup>151</sup> Wampler, B., & Avritzer, L. (2004). Participatory Publics: Civil Society and New Institutions in Democratic Brazil. *Comparative Politics*, 36(3), pp. 291-312. doi:10.2307/4150132, pg. 302

<sup>152</sup> Ivi, pg. 307

<sup>153</sup> Abers, R. (1996) "From Ideas to Practice: The Partido dos Trabalhadores and Participatory Governance in Brazil", *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 23, No. 4, *The "Urban Question" in Latin America*, pp. 35-53, Published by: Sage Publications, Inc, pg. 36 (I don't know if I have to repeat the quote here because I already said this above)

<sup>154</sup> Ibidem

<sup>155</sup> Wampler, B., Avritzer, L. (2004) "Participatory Publics Civil Society and New Institutions in Democratic Brazil" in *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 3, pp. 291-312 Published by: Comparative Politics, Ph.D. Programs in Political Science, City University of New York, pg. 295

reversing municipal priorities toward the poor and increasing popular participation in decision-making<sup>156</sup>. These socio-economic factors were strengthened by the situation of the bureaucracy present at the time in Brazil, that was systematically undermined by a clientelist system. Moreover, in Brazil participation was considered as a solution to most of the problems that society and the government had<sup>157</sup> because the population could be included in all the steps of bureaucracy: from the planning part to the implementation and the supervision of the results<sup>158</sup>. Furthermore, the PB supported the local civil society dynamism by creating a network, training and facilitating the accession of citizens in local associations<sup>159</sup>, thus helping overcome some of the difficulties present in Porto Alegre. Another positive aspect of the PB is that it seems to have drastically reduced abovementioned practices of corruption and clientelism that were and are still widespread in Brazil, thus overall improving the life conditions of thousands of people<sup>160</sup>.

## 2.2 The municipal level

Before starting the analysis of the participatory experiment of Porto Alegre, one element needs to be highlighted: the participatory practice that took place in Porto Alegre was not the only one started throughout Brazil or Latin America, but it was the most successful and widely recognised both at the international and at

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<sup>156</sup> Baiocchi, G. (2003) "Participation, Activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre Experiment in Deepening Democracy Institutional Innovations" in *Empowered Participatory Governance the Real Utopias Project IV* by ARCHON FUNG and ERIK OLIN WRIGHT, published by Verso, London, pg. 47

<sup>157</sup> Nassuno, M. (2006), "Burocracia e Participação: A experiência do orçamento participativo em Porto Alegre", *Department of Social Sciences of the university of Brasilia*, pg. 11

<sup>158</sup> Ivi, pg. 12

<sup>159</sup> Nassuno, M. (2006), "Burocracia e Participação: A experiência do orçamento participativo em Porto Alegre", *Department of Social Sciences of the university of Brasilia*, pg. 32

<sup>160</sup> Utzig, J. E., (2002) "Participatory budgeting of Porto Alegre: a discussion in the light of the principle of democratic legitimacy and of the criterion of governance performance", pg. 2

the regional level. In fact, participatory budgeting was initially implemented in 1990, in twelve Brazilian cities and by 2005 it had been expanded to more than three hundred municipalities worldwide<sup>161</sup>. Other examples, such as Belo Horizonte or Belem, started at the same time or just shortly after, but what made the experience of Porto Alegre so important is its longevity and its success, both domestic and international.

As mentioned before, the PB did not spring from nothing but it came from a demand that was already present in Porto Alegre. Civil society had been demanding for long time to be included and to have access to the black box of the municipal budget<sup>162</sup>. It is through the budget that nearly all of the municipalities worldwide are administered. In addition to this, the municipal budget is most of the times something that is very obscure and hard to understand for the citizens. It is to be noted that the part of the budget that was opened and unlocked for the participatory practice constituted only a portion of the entirety of the municipal budget and mainly constituted the part dedicated to the investments, leaving out the fixed costs such as the salaries and administrative costs.

Mobilising civil society took a considerable effort from society itself and from PT militants, because the parts that were relatively well-off were easy to contact and to mobilise, while instead the wealthy and the poorer areas required different approaches: the poor were either fighting for survival and had no time to dedicate to taking part in meetings or assemblies, or simply had no interests in these meetings; the wealthy instead, lived in neighbourhood that had already all the services needed and thus did not require further State investment in their neighbourhood<sup>163</sup>.

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<sup>161</sup> Wampler, B. (2007) "A guide to participatory budgeting" in *Participatory Budgeting. Public Sector and Accountability Series* edited by Anwar Shah, published by The World Bank, Washington D.C., pg. 22

<sup>162</sup> Utzig, J. E., (2002) "Participatory budgeting of Porto Alegre: a discussion in the light of the principle of democratic legitimacy and of the criterion of governance performance", pg. 9

<sup>163</sup> Baiocchi, G. (2003) "Participation, Activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre Experiment in Deepening Democracy Institutional Innovations" in *Empowered Participatory Governance the Real Utopias Project IV* by ARCHON FUNG and ERIK OLIN WRIGHT, published by Verso, London, pg. 48

Looking at the fragmented reality, it is easier to understand the PT's difficulties to implement a system that could effectively impact the situation. The ingenious solution that the PT found was to insert a pro-poor rule that would see that a part of the municipal resource would be assigned to poorer areas<sup>164</sup>, thus creating the idea that the PB had an actual effect and further fostering participation from other neighbourhood that previously were not involved in the PB meetings.

As it emerges from above, the municipal development of PB, happened in a well-structured mechanism over a long period of time. It helped improve the overall situation of the municipality: the percentage of the public budget available for investments has increased to nearly 20% in 1994 from 2% in 1989<sup>165</sup>. Thus, giving the citizens an increased share of the public decision-making and thereby increasing the legitimacy of some of the municipality's decisions and altogether improving the prospect of the municipal expenses<sup>166</sup>.

The validity of this process has been further demonstrated by the increased participation throughout the years of its implementation: «*The number of participants in the participatory budgeting process in Porto Alegre reached 40,000 per year in less than a decade*»<sup>167</sup>. Furthermore, this steady increase of participants has been countered by a consistent engagement by the municipal officers and personnel. It is also important that the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT) had chosen this participatory practice as its preferential asset and was strongly committed to it.

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<sup>164</sup> Baiocchi, G. (2003) "Participation, Activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre Experiment in Deepening Democracy Institutional Innovations" in *Empowered Participatory Governance the Real Utopias Project IV* by ARCHON FUNG and ERIK OLIN WRIGHT, published by Verso, London, pg. 48, pg. 51

<sup>165</sup> Ivi, pg. 50

<sup>166</sup> Ibidem

<sup>167</sup> Bhatnagar, D, Rathore, A, Moreno Torres, M, Kanungo, P (2003) "Participatory budgeting in Brazil (English)", *Empowerment case studies*, Washington, DC: World Bank, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/600841468017069677/Participatory-budgeting-in-Brazil>, pg.

The key element that the PT was looking for was a different way of doing democracy that could bring closer the citizens and the municipality. This need for an alternative was strongly influenced by the origin of the PT: the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* was in fact not a conventional leftist party, although it had an array of Marxist groups among its founders, the PT was created as an alternative to the traditional leftist view of the communist parties in Brazil<sup>168</sup>. Moreover, the main sources of members and leaders of the PT were the new movements (new unionism, urban and rural social movements, and grass roots groups linked to the Catholic Church - known in Brazil by the name of *comunidades eclesiais de base*) that became strong in the fight for freedom, better wages, and better quality of life by the end of the seventies and the beginning of the eighties<sup>169</sup>. The forces that constituted the PT were strongly suspicious of the traditional representative democracy that had been historically manipulated by the upper-middle classes in Brazil<sup>170</sup>. Their distrust led to the experiment of the Participatory budgeting throughout the city of Porto Alegre and later on within the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

The process of creation of the participatory practice in Porto Alegre came while the PT was running for power. There was in fact no pre-established blueprint on which the PT was relying to implement their idea of citizen participation<sup>171</sup>. Despite this lack of a plan, the governing PT municipality followed up on its promises and started to seek the council of citizens organisations and single individuals, in order to try and find the most fitting procedures.

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<sup>168</sup> Utzig, J. E., (2002) "Participatory budgeting of Porto Alegre: a discussion in the light of the principle of democratic legitimacy and of the criterion of governance performance", pg. 6

<sup>169</sup> Ibidem

<sup>170</sup> Ibidem

<sup>171</sup> Utzig, J. E., (2002) "Participatory budgeting of Porto Alegre: a discussion in the light of the principle of democratic legitimacy and of the criterion of governance performance", pg. 7

### 2.2.1 The structure of Porto Alegre's PB

The structure of the PB was created to reflect the differentiated nature of the neighbourhood of Porto Alegre. Two types of assemblies were created: one using neighbourhood criteria and, after 1994, another one with thematic criteria<sup>172</sup>. Each of the neighbourhood in Porto Alegre had its own assembly and in this meeting the priorities of the neighbourhood would be presented and debated. These neighbourhood assemblies saw a high percentage of women participation<sup>173</sup>. On the other side, the thematic assemblies reflected the needs of the municipality to overcome the naturally fragmented reality of Porto Alegre. They were conceived as a mean to reach a more just redistribution of the investment, that would not be hindered by the weight of the different neighbourhood<sup>174</sup>.

As the number show, Participatory budgeting grew each year thanks to a mechanism of inclusion and transparency that had been instilled since the beginning of the process. Every year a new cycle of participatory meetings started with the analysis of the proceedings of the previous year in order to keep the whole participatory process updated and transparent<sup>175</sup>. The structure of the process was organised in such a way that it allowed a wide range of interaction between the citizens and their representatives on key issues. In fact, the PB of Porto Alegre has been conceived as a two-tiered structure of fora where citizens participate as individuals and as representatives of various civil society groups (neighbourhood

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<sup>172</sup> Abers R., Knaebel G. (1998) La participation populaire à Porto Alegre, au Brésil. In: *Les Annales de la recherche urbaine*, N°80-81, Gouvernances, pg. 45-46

<sup>173</sup> Abers R., Knaebel G. (1998) La participation populaire à Porto Alegre, au Brésil. In: *Les Annales de la recherche urbaine*, N°80-81, Gouvernances, pg. 51

<sup>174</sup> Utzig, J. E., (2002) "Participatory budgeting of Porto Alegre: a discussion in the light of the principle of democratic legitimacy and of the criterion of governance performance", *Participatory Publics: Civil Society and New Institutions in Democratic Brazil*, pg. 32-33

<sup>175</sup> Abers R., Knaebel G. (1998) "La participation populaire à Porto Alegre, au Brésil", in *Les Annales de la recherche urbaine*, N°80-81, Gouvernances, [https://www.persee.fr/doc/aru\\_0180-930x\\_1998\\_num\\_80\\_1\\_2196](https://www.persee.fr/doc/aru_0180-930x_1998_num_80_1_2196), pg. 45

associations, cultural groups, special interest groups) throughout a yearly cycle<sup>176</sup>. Within these two for a, the various Districts of the city were divided in sixteen areas and eight thematic assemblies that covered the most important management domain of the municipality, such as Public Housing, Sanitation, Transportation<sup>177</sup>. This is particularly relevant given the socio-economic situation of the city; even though the city of Porto Alegre had a higher rate of literacy and a lower grade of inequalities compared to other states throughout Brazil, the city still had one third of its population living in underserved neighbourhood.

The yearly cycle of the PB starts in March, when in the 16 districts of Porto Alegre the regional assembly meet and elect their representative for the Council of the Participatory Budget<sup>178</sup>. The role of this council is to be the final deliberator for the budget allocated to the participatory budget procedure. Once the Council of the PB has voted and approved the budget proposed, it is sent to the legislative part of the administration to obtain the official green light<sup>179</sup>. This process has been set up because the municipality wanted the PB to be a reinforcement to the actual administrative structure, thus legitimacy is obtained by making the Camara Municipal vote on the propositions coming from the PB procedures. The proposals that the Council of the PB approves come from the 16 regional district assemblies and the 8 thematic meeting, in which individuals and associations, jointly with municipal officers, discuss and debate over the merits of every project presented by the constituency.

The kick-off of the PB in March by the regional district assemblies is followed by intermediate meeting that take place within neighbourhood and small

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<sup>176</sup> Baiocchi, G. (2003) "Participation, Activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre Experiment in Deepening Democracy Institutional Innovations" in *Empowered Participatory Governance the Real Utopias Project IV* by ARCHON FUNG and ERIK OLIN WRIGHT, published by Verso, London, pg. 48

<sup>177</sup> Ibidem

<sup>178</sup> Baiocchi, G. (2003) "Participation, Activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre Experiment in Deepening Democracy Institutional Innovations" in *Empowered Participatory Governance the Real Utopias Project IV* by ARCHON FUNG and ERIK OLIN WRIGHT, published by Verso, London, pg. 48

<sup>179</sup> Ibidem

regions that allow a more comprehensive gathering of local priorities<sup>180</sup>. In these meetings, the participants decide the list of priorities of every district and which project to actually send to the bigger assemblies. Later in the process, delegates meet in each of the districts on a weekly or bimonthly basis to learn about the technical issues involved in demanding projects as well as to deliberate the district's needs<sup>181</sup>.

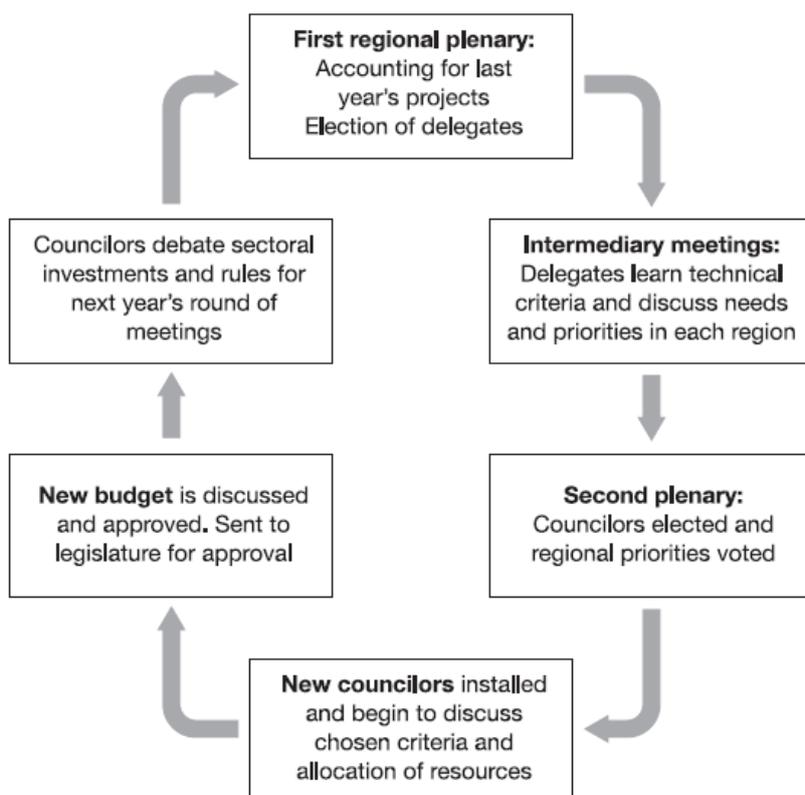


Figure 1.1 The yearly cycle of the PB process.  
Source: Baiocchi, G. (2003) "Participation, Activism and Politics: the Porto Alegre experiment" in Fung, A., & Wright, E. O. (2003). *Deepening democracy: Institutional innovations in empowered participatory governance* (Vol. 4). Verso.

What is important to take into consideration is the fact that the PB structure is flexible and it adapts every year in order to better serve its community; this is shown particularly when the rules of the game are discussed and debated every year on an ad hoc basis and not established once and for all. Through this yearly

<sup>180</sup> Abers R., Knaebel G. (1998) La participation populaire à Porto Alegre, au Brésil. In: Les Annales de la recherche urbaine, N°80-81, Gouvernances, pg. 45

<sup>181</sup> Baiocchi, G. (2003) "Participation, Activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre Experiment in Deepening Democracy Institutional Innovations" in Empowered Participatory Governance the Real Utopias Project IV by ARCHON FUNG and ERIK OLIN WRIGHT, published by Verso, London, pg. 48

discussion of rules there is the intention of the municipality to educate the participants to the PB so that they can better understand the overall situation of the municipality and improve the PB outcome thanks to the increased awareness<sup>182</sup>.

The proposals that are sent to the Council of the PB have been elaborated by the participants of the 16 district level and 8 thematic assemblies. These proposals have been further checked by the technical part of the municipality that helps throughout the process of elaborations and selections of the project that would be sent to the Council. Once they reach the Council, they are given the final approval or denial through a grading system that, together with the rules is rewritten at every new beginning of the cycle. Adding to these criteria argued by the PB's participants, the mayor and the municipal part of the PB process have added three conditions for the distribution of the investments: 1) the total population of the region; 2) the deficiency of a given kind of infrastructure in the region; 3) the priority given by each region to a given infrastructure category<sup>183</sup>.

The role of the Council is not just of approving the projects and pass them to the Camara Municipal: they deliberate on the rules of the process as a whole as well as on broad investment priorities; they also act as intermediaries between municipal government and regional activists, bringing the demands from districts to central government, and justifying government actions to regional activists<sup>184</sup>. The process of the PB is long and takes a lot of commitment from all the parties involved. In Porto Alegre, after the first years in which only 8% of the general population has taken part<sup>185</sup>, participation had a steep rise once the citizenry saw that through this new way, they could actually obtain something, without going

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<sup>182</sup> Wampler, B., Avritzer, L. (2004) "Participatory Publics Civil Society and New Institutions in Democratic Brazil" in *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 3, pp. 291-312 Published by: Comparative Politics, Ph.D. Programs in Political Science, City University of New York, pg. 304

<sup>183</sup> Utzig, J. E., (2002) "Participatory budgeting of Porto Alegre: a discussion in the light of the principle of democratic legitimacy and of the criterion of governance performance", 31

<sup>184</sup> Baiocchi, G. (2003) "Participation, Activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre Experiment in Deepening Democracy Institutional Innovations" in *Empowered Participatory Governance the Real Utopias Project IV* by ARCHON FUNG and ERIK OLIN WRIGHT, published by Verso, London, pg. 50

<sup>185</sup> Abers R., Knaebel G. (1998) "La participation populaire à Porto Alegre, au Brésil. In: Les Annales de la recherche urbaine", N°80-81, Gouvernances, pg. 46

through the clientelist method that had become a practice throughout Brazilian history. This clientelist system was so pervasive and well established that a specific percentage, destined to the public officer that sponsored or approved the transaction, of any kind of public contract, for constructions or public license, was already included within the price paid by the contractor<sup>186</sup>.

On the contrary, the PB system is set up in a way that all the parties are connected and in constant communication, plus citizens are involved in the decision-making process, that usually is a specific prerogative of the municipality<sup>187</sup>. Furthermore, the local units, even though they have substantial decision-making power, they do not work completely autonomously from other units or from central monitoring units<sup>188</sup>. This combination allows the system to be stable and actually reflect the needs of the citizens. And the numbers confirm the success of the PB process in Porto Alegre: The percentage of the public budget available for investment has increased to nearly 20 percent in 1994 from 2 percent in 1989<sup>189</sup>. Furthermore, the fact that the citizens have a say in the public decision-making has made those decision more legitim and as a side effect it helped improve the prospect of the municipal expenses<sup>190</sup>.

Figure 1.3 shows the trend of participants to the Participatory Budgeting of Porto Alegre:

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<sup>186</sup> This amerges very clearly in the documentary “*The Edge of Democracy*” by Petra Costa and has been further investigated by the criminal enquiry *Lava Jato*.

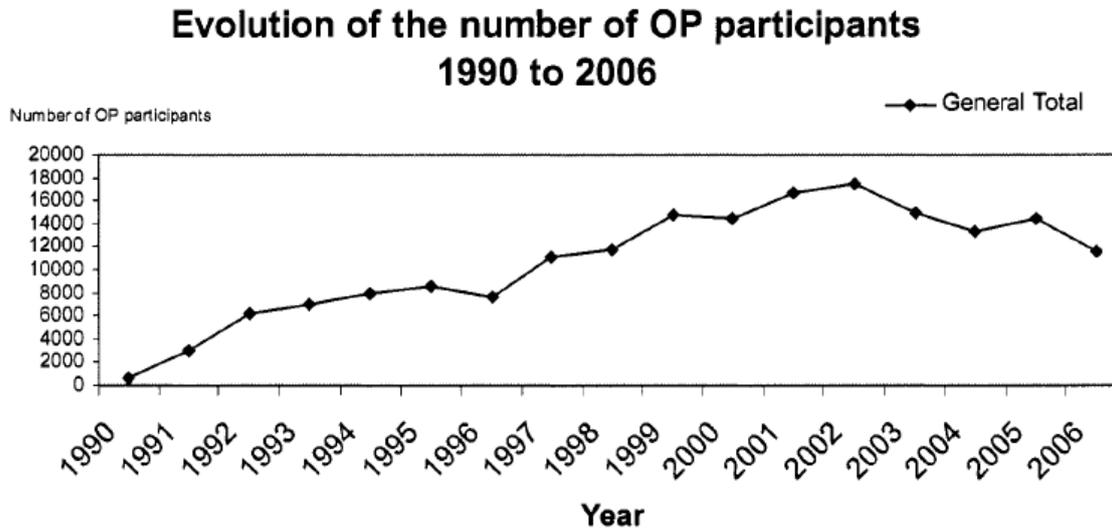
<sup>187</sup> Baiocchi, G. (2003) “Participation, Activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre Experiment in Deepening Democracy Institutional Innovations” in *Empowered Participatory Governance the Real Utopias Project IV* by ARCHON FUNG and ERIK OLIN WRIGHT, published by Verso, London, pg. 50

<sup>188</sup> Baiocchi, G. (2003) “Participation, Activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre Experiment in Deepening Democracy Institutional Innovations” in *Empowered Participatory Governance the Real Utopias Project IV* by ARCHON FUNG and ERIK OLIN WRIGHT, published by Verso, London, pg. 50

<sup>189</sup> Ibidem

<sup>190</sup> Ibidem

Figure



*Source: World Bank. Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office. Sustainable Development Unit. Brazil-Country Management Unit. (2008) "Brazil: Toward a more inclusive and effective participatory budget in Porto Alegre", World Bank.*

Even with all these positive data about the participatory budgeting not everything is positive: for example, between the legislative body and PB there are both conflicts of power and legitimacy, expressed by the struggle for competencies and for controlling resources<sup>191</sup>. This struggle over resources takes place in a situation where in Porto Alegre between 1979 and 1987, the number of municipal employees rose by 65% and 98% respectively and thus forcing the majority of municipal resource to be employed for civil servants salaries<sup>192</sup>. Despite the presence of struggle within civil and political society in Porto Alegre, this experiment of radical democracy was a success of because of the successful linking

<sup>191</sup> Baiocchi, G. (2003) "Participation, Activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre Experiment in Deepening Democracy Institutional Innovations" in Empowered Participatory Governance the Real Utopias Project IV by ARCHON FUNG and ERIK OLIN WRIGHT, published by Verso, London, pg. 15

<sup>192</sup> Louault, F. (2004) "Coups et coûts d'un échec électoral. La défaite du Parti des Travailleurs à Porto Alegre", published in Lusotopie n. XIII (2) | 2006 Le politique par le bas, pg. 76

of the social and political society that joined the same project of bottom-up empowerment<sup>193</sup>.

Over the course of its existence the participatory experience of Porto Alegre had stayed liquid. It has always maintained a close eye on local participation, with at the same time shifting its internal structure<sup>194</sup>. The porto-alegrensis experience has been so successful because its assemblies have always been centred around pertinent subject that had been brought up at the beginning of the yearly cycle<sup>195</sup>. Furthermore, the active involvement of both institutional and civil society actors has maintained high the level of attention and the strength of the structure<sup>196</sup>. Moreover, the inclusive and the self-consciousness aspects of the PB assemblies have further contributed to develop a sense of community around this participatory experience and at the same time, in conjunction with all the other abovementioned elements, they have provided long lasting success of the porto-alegrensis Participatory Budgeting<sup>197</sup>.

Nonetheless, opening the budget to external actors presented both great opportunities and significant challenges. One of the most positive impacts that sharing the budget with citizens had was the increased effectiveness of the allocation of resources: using a specific grading system combined with a list of priorities elaborated by the assemblies of citizens, the resources were pointed to those areas that had the more needs and had participated the most<sup>198</sup>.

On the other side, reaching a sufficient number of participants and presenting something as complicated as the municipal budget presented a challenge to the whole process. After the first years of implementation, less than

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<sup>193</sup> Wampler, B., Avritzer, L. (2004) "Participatory Publics Civil Society and New Institutions in Democratic Brazil" in *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 3, pp. 291-312 Published by: Comparative Politics, Ph.D. Programs in Political Science, City University of New York, pg. 308

<sup>194</sup> Salvatore, A. (2003) "La città che partecipa", Ediesse, Roma, pg. 29

<sup>195</sup> Ibidem

<sup>196</sup> Ibidem

<sup>197</sup> Salvatore, A. (2003) "La città che partecipa", Ediesse, Roma, pg. 30-31

<sup>198</sup> Amura, S. (2003) "La città che partecipa", Ediesse Editore, Roma

8% of the municipal population had taken part to the process<sup>199</sup>. This is also because it was not at all easy to reach the people, in particular those that had been living in tough and poor neighbourhood. Despite these challenges, the municipal staff steadily witnessed increase in participation to the participatory process, thanks to the transparency and the evident results that were reached in a relatively short period of time by the PB<sup>200</sup>.

The successful outcome of the participatory practice of Porto Alegre was of great importance because it showed that a positive *democratic deepening* was possible and that within this deepening the associative and deliberative dimension have a crucial role in the successful outcome of the experience<sup>201</sup>. In addition to this, the novelty of the Porto Alegre's PB is the fact that a certain degree of institutionalisation was included throughout the process. The mayor office had opted to create a specific office (GAPLAN) within the administration, in order to "legitimise" the decision of the assemblies that were taken throughout the participatory process<sup>202</sup>. Despite the creation of this office by the administration, the mayor's office also decided to not include the PB proceedings inside the official administrative mechanism, thus granting it legitimacy without compromising its independence<sup>203</sup>.

Last but not least, a key aspect that set up a precedent for all the future participatory experiences, was the redistributive nature of the Porto Alegre's PB<sup>204</sup>.

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<sup>199</sup> Abers R., Knaebel G. (1998) "La participation populaire à Porto Alegre, au Brésil", in *Les Annales de la recherche urbaine*, N°80-81, Gouvernances, [https://www.persee.fr/doc/aru\\_0180-930x\\_1998\\_num\\_80\\_1\\_2196](https://www.persee.fr/doc/aru_0180-930x_1998_num_80_1_2196), pg. 46

<sup>200</sup> Baiocchi, G. (2003) "Participation, Activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre Experiment in Deepening Democracy Institutional Innovations" in *Empowered Participatory Governance the Real Utopias Project IV* by ARCHON FUNG and ERIK OLIN WRIGHT, published by Verso, London, pg. 50-51

<sup>201</sup> Porto de Oliveira, O. (2010) "Le transfert d'un modèle de démocratie participative Paradiplomatie entre Porto Alegre et Saint-Denis", *Collection «Chrysalides», n° 7, éditions de l'IHEAL*, Paris, pg. 70

<sup>202</sup> Abers R., Knaebel G. (1998) "La participation populaire à Porto Alegre, au Brésil", in *Les Annales de la recherche urbaine*, N°80-81, Gouvernances, [https://www.persee.fr/doc/aru\\_0180-930x\\_1998\\_num\\_80\\_1\\_2196](https://www.persee.fr/doc/aru_0180-930x_1998_num_80_1_2196), pg. 45

<sup>203</sup> Ibidem

<sup>204</sup> Porto de Oliveira, O. (2010) "Le transfert d'un modèle de démocratie participative Paradiplomatie entre Porto Alegre et Saint-Denis", *Collection «Chrysalides», n° 7, éditions de l'IHEAL*, Paris, pg. 70

The percentage of the budget that was allocated to participatory budget was around 17% at the beginning of the process and then grew until 21% after 10 years<sup>205</sup>. The rise in the percentage mirrors the rise in participation that had characterised the first decade of the participatory practice of Porto Alegre. The participatory experience of Porto Alegre had thus steadily grown and had tackled some of the most compelling issues of the city, all while improving the conditions of democracy that were present throughout the municipality.

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<sup>205</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) "I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente", Ediesse editore

### 2.3 The state level

After years of success at the local level, the high leadership of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* decided to implement PB at the state level, thanks to the electoral victory of Olivio Dutra in 1998, that had been previously also the mayor of Porto Alegre. Going from municipal to state level presented many different challenges and obstacles. The first and most important was the number of people affected by the proceeding: at the time Porto Alegre had 1.3 million inhabitants, while the state of Rio Grande do Sul had more than 9 million. The Party thus tried to implement the PB at State level with mixed results<sup>206</sup>.

Apart from this there was a political challenge. In fact, after the democratization period that followed the military dictatorship, «*the rules for parties were thrown open, including low vote thresholds; open-list, proportional representation ballots; and few limits on party switching or alliances. The result was an extremely fragmented and volatile party system*»<sup>207</sup>. All of this contributed to political insecurity at national and state level.

This new institution was part of the PT's electoral strategy and progressive policy agenda in Rio Grande do Sul, but in the meantime, it was used also as a political move. The design of PB in fact, weakened the institutional strongholds of opponents, mobilized old and new supporters, and advanced progressive spending priorities, but the other parties recognized the threat and attempted to pre-empt the PT with new budget institutions of their own<sup>208</sup>. They further attempted to delegitimize participatory budgeting institutions installed in 1999. The experience

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<sup>206</sup> Baiocchi, G. (2003) "Participation, Activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre Experiment in Deepening Democracy Institutional Innovations" in *Empowered Participatory Governance the Real Utopias Project IV* by ARCHON FUNG and ERIK OLIN WRIGHT, published by Verso, London, pg. 47

<sup>207</sup> Goldfrank, B., & Schneider, A. (2006) "Competitive Institution Building: the PT and Participatory Budgeting in Rio Grande do Sul", *Latin American politics and society vol. 48 n.3*, pp. 1-31, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, pg. 7

<sup>208</sup> Ibidem

of participatory budgeting in Rio Grande do Sul can shed light on how parties design institutions to favour their policy agendas and electoral prospects, and it provides an excellent window for observing the particular challenges facing the left<sup>209</sup>.

As mentioned above the party system in Brazil was highly volatile and self-centred. The actions of the PT following the victory in the state elections do not differ from this mentality, in fact Dutra attempted to design state-level PB to the party's advantage, thus strongly shaping the PT as a political move<sup>210</sup>. What is more is the fact that a specific participatory system already existed in Rio Grande do Sul before the PB: *coredes* and *consultas popular* were mechanism of participation that were introduced at state level by previous governors<sup>211</sup>. As it was the case of the PB for the PT, these previous mechanisms of popular consultation were the distinctive element of the other parties, that found themselves at the opposition after 1998.

What Dutra's team did is that they essentially tried to transfer Porto Alegre's PB model to the state level, thus ignoring the *coredes*, in a clear political move. The override of the *coredes* by the PT had a double effect: the PT's supporters, such as the Rural Landless Workers' Movement (MST), the Central Workers' Confederation (CUT), and the Small Farmers' Movement (MPA), found new space to express their concerns in this new participatory setting, but on the other hand, the change brought by Dutra's administration broke off relation with the opposition parties and their organised supporters, thus leaving the PT isolated throughout the state political scenario<sup>212</sup>.

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<sup>209</sup> Goldfrank, B., & Schneider, A. (2006) "Competitive Institution Building: the PT and Participatory Budgeting in Rio Grande do Sul", *Latin American politics and society* vol. 48 n.3, pp 1-31, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, pg. 7-8

<sup>210</sup> Ivi, pg. 13

<sup>211</sup> Ivi, pg. 11

<sup>212</sup> Ivi, pg. 13

The implant of the Porto Alegre model was strongly promoted by PT's administration because it «*bypassed both the legislative branch, where the PT [...] was a minority*»<sup>213</sup>. The will of the PT of implementing a participatory system that would favour them triggered a severe response by the opposition parties: they created a new “forum” that served better their interests and set itself in opposition to the state level PB<sup>214</sup>. An important aspect of the opposition's “forum” was the fact that it was strictly kept under control by local or state deputies of the parties. This seriously differed from the participatory mechanism that the PT had implemented, in which representatives of the party were rarely present, and if they were present, they possessed little power over the meetings. This political move took away the power from the other parties, such as the PMDB, and placed it in the hands of people, those that participated in the assemblies within the PB, that were much closer to the PT. As mentioned before, the PT tried to shift from the *coredes* system to the Participatory Budgeting system in order to increase their power in the legislative branch of the state of Rio Grande do Sul and thus increase their operating space.

The counter- attack delivered by the opposition triggered a counter-response from the supporters of the PB and the PT. These groups that were the backbone of the whole process took the field and strongly manifested their support for this participatory mechanism that as actually allowing them to engage in the state's decision making processes<sup>215</sup>. After the supporters publicly spoke out in favour of the PB, the opposition started to frame their attack by comparing the PT to «*the*

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<sup>213</sup> Goldfrank, B., & Schneider, A. (2006) “Competitive Institution Building: the PT and Participatory Budgeting in Rio Grande do Sul”, *Latin American politics and society vol. 48 n.3*, pp 1-31, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, pg. 12

<sup>214</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>215</sup> Goldfrank, B., & Schneider, A. (2006) “Competitive Institution Building: the PT and Participatory Budgeting in Rio Grande do Sul”, *Latin American politics and society vol. 48 n.3*, pp 1-31, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, pg. 13

*German Nazis and the Soviet Communists and describing participatory budgeting as a totalitarian practice»<sup>216</sup>.*

The strength of these attacks and the strong opposition ultimately forced Dutra and his administration to modify the PB model and making it more agreeable for the *coredes*: each *corede* received two seats on the state budget council (whereas PB participants elected the other 160 members); the annual calendar was revised so that regional assemblies to create guidelines preceded the municipal assemblies; and *coredes* members were invited to help coordinate all PB meetings<sup>217</sup>. Despite being so heavily attacked by the opposition within and without the state, the Rio Grande do Sul and Porto Alegre gradually appeared on the national and international radars as models of participation and as a “vitrine” for the PT’s ability to govern. This good image that had invested the PT’s administrations, not only the one of Porto Alegre but throughout the state as well, has had a crucial impact on the national elections of 2002 where a PT candidate was indeed elected. But the fame of Porto Alegre crossed the national borders thanks to a series of organised events that promoted the participatory model of Porto Alegre and of the PB, for example, the World Social Forum (WSF).

Despite the international fame, the success in electing a *petista* President and the administrative success the PT had over the years, the run of the PB at state level did not survive the 2002 gubernatorial elections. The PT lost the elections and the PMDB, opposition winning party, suppressed the PB model in favour of the previous *coredes* system<sup>218</sup>. The reason for the dismissal of the PB after the 2002 gubernatorial elections can be found in the political situation of Brazil and on the performance that the PT’s participatory mechanism had. The *coredes* system favoured the interests of those that were in power at the moment, because

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<sup>216</sup> Ivi, pg. 14

<sup>217</sup> Goldfrank, B., & Schneider, A. (2006) “Competitive Institution Building: the PT and Participatory Budgeting in Rio Grande do Sul”, *Latin American politics and society vol. 48 n.3*, pp 1-31, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, pg. 14

<sup>218</sup> Ivi, pg. 21

it allowed a lot less independency to the assemblies and fairly limited the individual participation to the meetings, thus leaving aggregate interests as the main actors<sup>219</sup>. Furthermore, the PB had mixed economic results: «An average annual surplus of R\$403 million in 1997 and 1998 was reversed to an average deficit of R\$627 million from 1999 to 2001. Only in 2002 was a small surplus of R\$145 million possible»<sup>220</sup>.

This means that, especially in the case of PB, it is possible to have a situation of flux in which this participatory governance policy is taken up or developed in certain places contemporaneously<sup>221</sup>. The opposite is also possible, in the sense that we can have movements of reflux which would coincide with the abandonment of PB. Moreover, even though the PB fared really well at the municipal level, evidence have shown that at the state level, where interests and forces are more pressing, the positive outcomes of this particular participatory practice can differ greatly.

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<sup>219</sup> Ivi, pg. 14

<sup>220</sup> Ivi, pg. 22

<sup>221</sup> Porto de Oliveira, O. (2010) “Le transfert d'un modèle de démocratie participative Paradiplomatie entre Porto Alegre et Saint-Denis”, *Collection «Chrysalides», n° 7, éditions de l'IHEAL*, Paris, pg. 42

## 2.4 Prelude to the worldwide expansion

As presented above, PB had originated as a practice at the municipal level, being the greatest example the city of Porto Alegre. It then started to expand at state level in 1998 when the PT won the gubernatorial elections and tried to implement its own distinctive participatory mechanism. Despite the failure of the state level experiment, the PB still expanded itself beyond Latin American borders into other foreign municipalities. But the brief appearance of PB on a higher level was an indication that this practice was catching on. In fact, the step from municipal to state level is the first example of the gradual path of development that the PB has followed: it has started to spread to the Southern Cone, especially at the beginning of the millennium. Here, between forty and sixty cities have already implemented it, with different methodologies and results. PB first inspired Brazil's neighbours, Uruguay and Argentina, where important experiments soon began in some major cities, such as Montevideo (Uruguay's capital, which has more than 1.325 million inhabitants and has been governed by the left-wing Frente Amplio since 1990), Rosario and La Plata (two cities in Argentina, with populations of 1.2 and 600,000 million, respectively), and Paysandú (population 85,000), which is probably the most famous experiment in Uruguay<sup>222</sup>.

Despite the setback it had of the Rio Grande do Sul, the PB further developed and expanded itself outside of Latin America. In fact, the real tipping point happened in 1996 when the city of Porto Alegre was awarded a prize as one of the top 40 "best urban management" by the UN-Habitat conference of Istanbul<sup>223</sup>. The city of Porto Alegre even received praise from the World Bank

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<sup>222</sup> Sintomer, Y, Herzberg, C, Allegretti, G – with the collaboration of Anja Röcke and Mariana Alves (2013) "Participatory Budgeting Worldwide – Updated Version Study", *Published by: ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL gGmbH – Service für Entwicklungsinitiativen (GLOBAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – Service for Development Initiatives)*, pg. 30

<sup>223</sup> Ganuza, E., Baiocchi, G., (2012) "The Power of Ambiguity: How Participatory Budgeting Travels the Globe", *Journal of Public Deliberation Volume 8 | Issue 2 Article 8*, pg. 7

and from the Inter-American Bank for its innovative urban management, thus pushing the PB model of the city towards international level.

The international fame of this local and successful alternative came at the perfect timing: the last decades of the 1990s had been characterised by a great insurgence against neoliberal practices and a search for alternatives ways of doing democracy. One of the actors that propelled Porto Alegre and its participatory practice to new heights and towards a greater diffusion, was a transnational forum that rapidly became an advocacy network for participatory democracy and other anti-neoliberal practices: the World Social Forum (WSF). This forum has been defined as an «*anti-neoliberal gathering of tens of thousands of social movement activists in response to the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland*»<sup>224</sup> and the city of Porto Alegre had been chosen to host the first World Social Forum (WSF) in 2001.

It might seem that the WSF was only focused on fighting neoliberalism, but it is important to understand that the WSF is much more than a simple gathering of anti-neoliberal movements: it was the starting point for a much bigger and wider network of associations, groups and individuals who share common views and are looking to find new processes and ways<sup>225</sup>. In the words of Vittorio Agnoletto, the speaker of the Italian delegation to the 2001 WSF in Porto Alegre, the «*WSF has been a University for all of those movements that had one goal in common: to seek a valid alternative to the current situation*»<sup>226</sup>.

It could be argued that transnational alliances of social movements are not new, but during the 1990s and early 2000s, two striking characteristics about contemporary transnational efforts appeared: transnational alliances of social

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<sup>224</sup> Goldfrank, B., Schneider, A. (2006) “Competitive Institution Building: the PT and Participatory Budgeting in Rio Grande do Sul”, *Latin American politics and society vol. 48 n.3*, pp 1-31, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, pg. 15

<sup>225</sup> Conway, J. (2004) “Citizenship in a time of empire: the World Social Forum as a new public space”, *Citizenship Studies 8:4*, pp. 367-381, DOI: 10.1080/1362102052000316972, pg. 370

<sup>226</sup> Longuemare, E. (2019, December 13), Semi-structured interview with Mr. Vittorio Agnoletto

movements emerged with increasing speed and with less regard for geographical distance, thanks also to the improvement of the ICT technologies. Furthermore, these transnational efforts move along networks that are neither fixed nor symmetrical – things do not move in all directions, flows are unequal, and networks are subject to change<sup>227</sup>. Nevertheless, the social practice of transnational advocacy networks creates a space within which new forms of community are possible. The pre-eminent example of this is the World Social Forum<sup>228</sup>.

The WSF has played the role of both a place of encounters and a place of discussion for those groups and individuals<sup>229</sup> and it has been defined as a great contributor to the formation of a *world parliament in exile*<sup>230</sup>. Moreover, the organisational structure of the WSF has shown the difference that there is between this type of organisation and the others, such as with its primary adversary the World Economic Forum. In fact, contrary to mainstream forums, the final day of the WSF did not produce any kind of final statement from its participants and there was no single leadership at the helm of the WSF.

In addition to this, the fact that throughout the first years of its existence the WSF was mainly organised by local Brazilian organisations was a sign of the focus on local and more inclusive participatory practices. The nature of the organisations that constituted the Organisational Committee further reinforced the care for local realities and of the bottom-up approach: they were the Central Trade Union Confederation (Central Única dos Trabalhadores) (CUT), the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra) (MST) and six smaller Brazilian civil society organisations<sup>231</sup>. Indeed, out of the eight

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<sup>227</sup> Ponniah, T., & Fisher, W. F. (2003) "Introduction: the World Social Forum and the reinvention of democracy", in *Another World is Possible: Popular Alternatives to Globalization at the World Social Forum*, ed (s). WF Fisher & T. Ponniah, Zed Books, London, pg. 2

<sup>228</sup> Ivi, pg. 3

<sup>229</sup> Teivainen, T. (2002) "The World Social Forum and global democratisation: Learning from Porto Alegre", *Third World Quarterly*, 23:4, pp. 621-632, DOI:10.1080/0143659022000005300, pg. 624

<sup>230</sup> Ibidem

<sup>231</sup> Ivi, pg. 625

organisations formed the initial Organizing Committee (OC), only one was linked to international campaign<sup>232</sup>. As such, while the Forum had a global reach intended to facilitate the progressive objectives inherent within global society, its origins remain distinctly rooted within Brazil.

Despite being organised by Brazilian organisations, at least until 2004, the international social nature of the WSF could not be denied and it has been one of the defining elements of the WSF: interactions between participants, both positive or negative, have had a huge impact on those organisations involved throughout the process and the meetings that have happened within the WSF panels have had relevant consequences, both on national and local level<sup>233</sup>.

Since its conception in 2001, the WSF has increased in both its size and its 'inclusivity'. A direct sub effect of the WSF is the creation of local regional forums, such as the European Social Forum, the Asian Social Forum, the Boston Social Forum that relied upon the same objectives of the WSF<sup>234</sup>.

Notwithstanding this role of creator of a new path and new actors, the WSF is not considered an agent, instead the Forum has been seen as a «*pedagogical and political space that enables learning, networking and political organizing*»<sup>235</sup>. This has happened because of a precise desire of Organising Committee (OC) that has explicitly refused to any characterisation of the WSF as deliberative body, preferring instead to focus the aim of this event on the idea of creating a safe space for local actors to meet, create strong connections and sharing best practices<sup>236</sup>.

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<sup>232</sup> Worth, O., & Buckley, K. (2009) "The World Social Forum: Postmodern Prince or Court Jester?", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 649-661, Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd, pg. 650

<sup>233</sup> Boavenutra de Sousa Santos,(2005) "The future of the world social forum: the work of translation", *Development* 48(2), pp. 15-22, pg. 16

<sup>234</sup> Owen Worth and Karen Buckley, (2009) "The World Social Forum: Postmodern Prince or Court Jester?", *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 30, No. 4, Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd., pp. 649-661, pg. 649

<sup>235</sup> Ivi, pg. 6

<sup>236</sup> Ibidem

This pedagogic and network-oriented aspect has been the key for the promotion of the PB model of Porto Alegre. The fact that the OC of the WSF was made of mainly porto-alegrensis organisations is already one of the indicators of the status of the city and its different way of doing democracy. Furthermore, one of the main objectives of the first WSF was to organise a convergence of practices and movements in order to reinvent democracy<sup>237</sup>. Moreover, the need to integrate participatory democracy has been seen as having such importance throughout the WSF that it became «*the essential step for overcoming elite domination, technocracy, classism, racism, sexism and the apathy generated by bureaucratization and current forms of representative democracy*»<sup>238</sup>.

The importance of the WSF has never been stressed enough, but it was not the only way through which PB had reached the international public. A series of transnational and institutional networks played a major role in the diffusion of PB in Latin America (and beyond) in the period 1997-2010. One is the Urban Management Programme of the United Nations in Latin America and in the Caribbean (PGU-ALC), based in Quito, that has been the most important UN programme on urban issues<sup>239</sup>. The key year was 1996 when the Istanbul HABITAT Summit took place and the door for direct cooperation with municipal local governments was opened.

This PGU has fostered great change and improvements both at the Latin America and at the European level, thanks to the international credibility inherited by its UN origin. In fact, PGU helped to create networks that facilitated the exchange of good practices, the production of practical tool-kits, the

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<sup>237</sup> Ponniah, T., & Fisher, W. F. (2003) "Introduction: the World Social Forum and the reinvention of democracy", in *Another World is Possible: Popular Alternatives to Globalization at the World Social Forum*, ed (s). WF Fisher & T. Ponniah, Zed Books, London, pg. 13

<sup>238</sup> Ibidem

<sup>239</sup> Sintomer, Y, Herzberg, C, Allegretti, G – with the collaboration of Anja Röcke and Mariana Alves (2013) "Participatory Budgeting Worldwide – Updated Version Study", Published by: ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL gGmbH – Service für Entwicklungsinitiativen (*GLOBAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – Service for Development Initiatives*), pg. 35

implementation of training programmes and the diffusion of experiments around the subcontinent<sup>240</sup>. Furthermore, this network did not limit itself in the promotion of best practices, it also carried forward an educational aim: PGU produced a wide variety of studies and manuals that strongly increased the diffusion and the implementation of participatory practice, i.e. PB, throughout the world<sup>241</sup>.

Last but not least, the PGU had mobilised serious international Governative agencies that decisively contributed to the success of PB's diffusion.

To show the importance of the PGU: nearly all major Latin American PBs participated in networks organized or supported by the PGU, most notably Porto Alegre; plus, PGU has had a strong influence even in shaping some European PBs through the networking and the technical supporting tools that it promoted<sup>242</sup>. In 2004, PGU had to close as the UN decided to continue another programme to the exclusion of all others and the burden of promoting participatory practices fell upon other networks, such as the *Cities Alliance* that was mainly directed and funded by the World Bank<sup>243</sup>.

But the UN did not abandon the promotion of participatory democracy, and within this PB. In fact, a large number of the PGU actors were also involved in URBAL, the EU cooperation programme with Latin American local governments, and especially in its thematic network number 9, specifically devoted to "Participatory Budgeting and Local Finance"<sup>244</sup>. The URBAL 9 umbrella-network, not by accident coordinated by Porto Alegre, included two waves of sub-programmes and lasted from 2003 to 2010, managing 450 local governments and other institutions (such as NGOs and universities). The programme not only

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<sup>240</sup> Sintomer, Y, Herzberg, C, Allegretti, G – with the collaboration of Anja Röcke and Mariana Alves (2013) "Participatory Budgeting Worldwide – Updated Version Study", *Published by: ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL gGmbH – Service für Entwicklungsinitiativen (GLOBAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – Service for Development Initiatives)*, pg. 35

<sup>241</sup> Ibidem

<sup>242</sup> Ibidem

<sup>243</sup> Ibidem

<sup>244</sup> Ibidem

contributed to the development of the idea of PB, but also fostered a minimum standard for Latin American experiments and provided some detailed information concerning what was actually going on<sup>245</sup>. The last project coordinated by URBAL 9 was intended to bring together the cities that had formerly been coordinators of projects on PB, in order to create a permanent space and tools for training on PB<sup>246</sup>.

An important side effect of the URBAL 9 has been the creation of think tank and other networks, on all level, such as the OIDP (International Observatory of Participatory Democracy) of Barcelona and the local observatory of Porto Alegre (Observapoa), that have since gained autonomy and are still operating today, actively promoting participatory practices and local and international networking<sup>247</sup>.

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<sup>245</sup> Cabannes, Y. (2006). “Les budgets participatifs en Amérique Latine”, *Mouvements*, (5), pp. 128-138, p. 135

<sup>246</sup> Sintomer, Y, Herzberg, C, Allegretti, G – with the collaboration of Anja Röcke and Mariana Alves (2013) “Participatory Budgeting Worldwide – Updated Version Study”, *Published by: ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL gGmbH – Service für Entwicklungsinitiativen (GLOBAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – Service for Development Initiatives)*, pg. 35

<sup>247</sup> Ibidem

### **3. Worldwide expansion**

As is mentioned in the previous part, the idea of PB has found its success and its most renowned origin in Latin America, thanks to the strength and the innovativeness in time where change was needed and searched for. In fact, thanks to forums, such as the WSF, or institutional or informal networks, such as the OIPD and the URBAL-9, the idea of PB rapidly diffused itself all over the world.

Countries that first approached this new participatory method range from France to New Zealand, from Canada to Nigeria, from Argentina to China. Some of the countries imported and adapted the PB that had been made famous by the Porto Alegre experience. Others took the experience and morphed it with some previous participatory practices they already had in place.

What is important to say is the fact that PB emerged and diffused at an extraordinary rate, both in Latin America and in the rest of the world. Each of these national experiences had its own characteristic and peculiarity, but all had in common, at least on paper, the ideal to search for a new way of doing democracy.

To show how quick participatory budgeting arose worldwide: Figure 1 shows the diffusion of participatory budgeting in the year 2010, while Figure 2 shows diffusion in year 2012

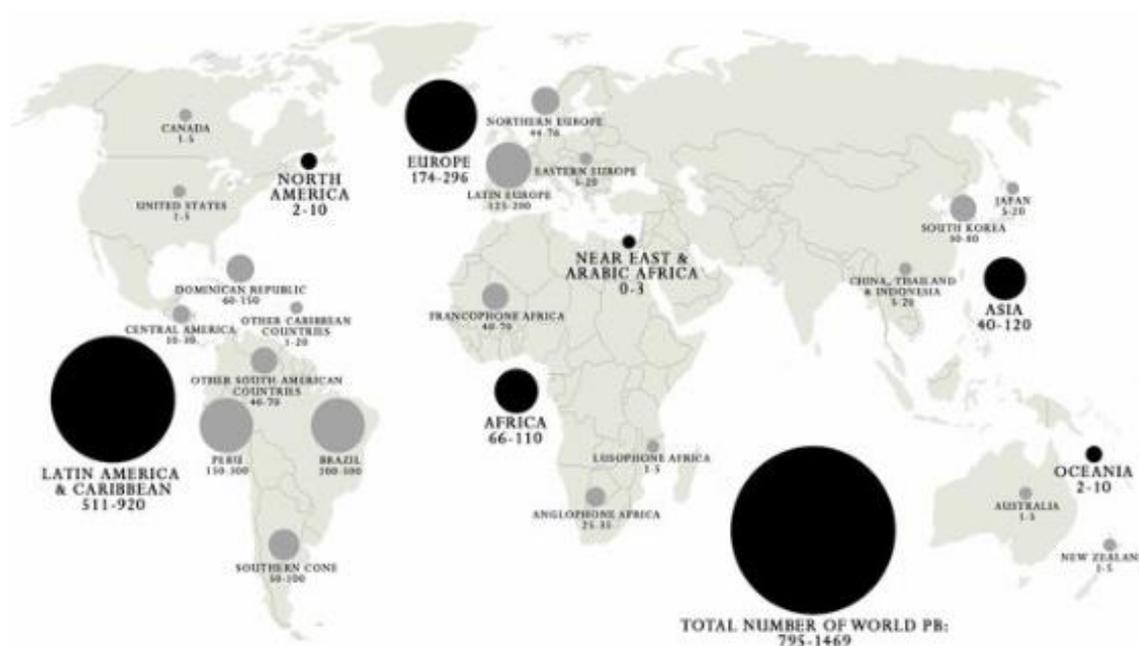


Figure 1. Sintomer, Y, Herzberg, C, Röcke, A, and Allegretti, Giovanni (2012) Transnational Models of Citizen Participation: The Case of Participatory Budgeting, *Journal of Public Deliberation*: Vol. 8: Iss. 2, Article 9

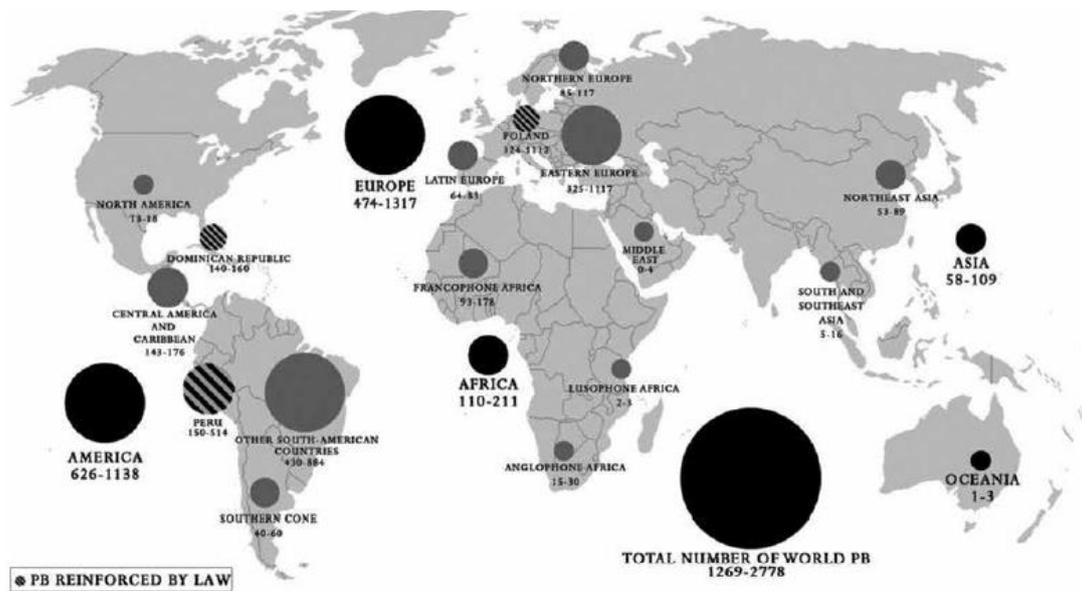


Figure 2. Sintomer, Y, Herzberg, C, Allegretti, G – with the collaboration of Anja Röcke and Mariana Alves (2013) Participatory Budgeting Worldwide – Updated Version Study, Published by: ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL gGmbH – Service für Entwicklungsinitiativen

### 3.1 North America

The idea of citizens participation is not new in north America, especially in the United States. The most visible example being the town-hall meetings held shortly after the independence war<sup>248</sup>. Nonetheless, the North American experiences caught on, especially the ones in the US, late in regard to the rest of the world.

Canada was the first country in North America to start PB experiments in 2001 and the US started almost a decade later than the rest of the world<sup>249</sup>. This is indicative of the problems faced by activists and the intellectual community that supported this practice. In fact, Canada and United States both faced similar

<sup>248</sup> Baiocchi, G., & Lerner, J. (2007) “Could Participatory Budgeting Work in the United States?”, *The Good Society*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 8-13, Published by: Penn State University Press, pg. 8

<sup>249</sup> Lerner, J., & Secondo, D. (2012) “By the People, For the People: Participatory Budgeting from the Bottom Up” in *North America Journal of Public Deliberation* Volume 8 | Issue 2 Article 2, pg. 1

challenges that were different from those that could be found in Latin America, given also the difference in the development of these countries<sup>250</sup>. Within this, the main difference is the aim that the participatory practices in north America try to reach. In Latin America PB was mainly focused on basic needs, such as shelter, water and transportation. In fact, as mentioned above, the projects that were approved and implemented through PB were basic but necessary ones, such as connecting homes to the sewers or regulating the temporary housing of the slums. Another substantial difference between Latin America and the US/Canada was the fact that given the democratic history of the latter, more formal participatory mechanism were put in place by municipal administrations<sup>251</sup>. Last but not least, the degree of autonomy that North American municipalities have is far lower than their Latin American counterparts, this seriously limits the choices that city council can take and the radical nature of those same choices<sup>252</sup>.

The element that has transferred from Latin American practices to North American ones is the care for underprivileged: the Canadian experiences have focused on people who were the neediest throughout their community, most of the times even formally excluding wealthier categories. This attention to the socio-economic aspect has been seen as important because of the diverse composition of society in Canada. In fact, contrary to the Latin American cities where the citizen's background was more or less uniform, in Canada, and US as well, the strong immigration experiences throughout their history has further fragmented society into different ethnical groups<sup>253</sup>.

The key element that has favoured the development of participatory practices in Canada is the international diffusion of the PB worldwide. Given the fact that participatory budgeting was not diffused throughout North America and

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<sup>250</sup> Ivi, pg. 10

<sup>251</sup> Ivi, pg. 10

<sup>252</sup> Lerner, J., & Secondo, D. (2012) "By the People, For the People: Participatory Budgeting from the Bottom Up" in *North America Journal of Public Deliberation* Volume 8 | Issue 2 Article 2, pg. 10

<sup>253</sup> Ibidem

there was a very limited amount of formal politician openly supporting these practices, the Canadian experiences had to seek legitimacy elsewhere; the elsewhere being abroad and on non-state subjects<sup>254</sup>. What is more is the fact that having foreign models helped build a stronger connection with the wide variety of network that were implementing PB practice throughout the world and thus mutually reinforcing each other, until the apex in 2016 when Montreal hosted the WSF<sup>255</sup>.

As for the US experiences, as well as for Canadian experiences, the importance of activists, both from the intellectual community and not, resulted crucial for the implementation and the success of PB. In 2005 at the WSF, a specific session was organised for the participatory budgeting practices in the Global North. Throughout this workshop PB was presented to local administrators and activists that immediately after started the *Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP)*, a «non-profit organization that empowers people to decide together how to spend public money, primarily in the US and Canada. We create and support participatory budgeting processes that deepen democracy, build stronger communities, and make public budgets more equitable and effective»<sup>256</sup>.

The role of the PBP cannot be underestimated and is crucial for the diffusion and implementation of participatory budgeting practices throughout the United States and Canada. This network has acted as the main technical leading partner and the main educational one for municipalities such as Chicago, Toronto and New York.

A peculiarity of the North American experiences is the amount of money with which PB practices start for example, the PB of first District of Chicago

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<sup>254</sup> Baiocchi, G. & Lerner, J. (2007) "Could Participatory Budgeting Work in the United States?", *The Good Society*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 8-13, Published by: Penn State University Press, pg. 11

<sup>255</sup> Fsm2016.org/en/, *World Social Forum 2016*, visited last on the 13th of December 2019, website: <https://fsm2016.org/en/>

<sup>256</sup> Participatorybudgeting.org, *Participatory Budgeting Project*, visited last on the 15th of December 2019, website: <https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/mission/>

initiate the process with 1.3\$ million, a substantial sum for a first time experience<sup>257</sup>. This might depend on the presence of high qualified consultant, such as the aforementioned PBP, and it could depend on the fact that US and Canadian municipalities have a greater fiscal independence<sup>258</sup>.

Even though the starting pot of public money devoted to PB was significant, it did not mean that PB would have the same changing effect that they had in Latin America. The fact that the challenges that PB tried to tackle in North America were much more complex and needed long-term strategies strongly influenced some of the outcomes of the North American PBs, such as the 49th district of Chicago<sup>259</sup>. To respond to these problems, activists and entrepreneurs of PB decided to adapt PB to their need. They in fact decided to select, as area of interests of their participatory experiments, areas that would attract portion of society that would otherwise ignore such participatory practice<sup>260</sup>. Furthermore, *Grassroot Leaders* were selected within the population, in order to foster citizen participation and make PB more inclusive<sup>261</sup>.

All of these measures obtained mixed results. In the North America, especially in the US, political participation is not a neutral act and tend to be seriously subjected to racial and ethnic division. On the plus side, PB offered a wide margin for adaptation to local need and necessity and the competence of the activists and entrepreneurs that supported the development of this idea resulted in more overall positive than negative outcomes.

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<sup>257</sup> Lerner, J., & Secondo, D. (2012) “By the People, For the People: Participatory Budgeting from the Bottom Up” in *North America Journal of Public Deliberation* Volume 8 | Issue 2 Article 2, pg. 2

<sup>258</sup> Baiocchi, G. & Lerner, J. (2007) “Could Participatory Budgeting Work in the United States?”, *The Good Society*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 8-13, Published by: Penn State University Press, pg. X

<sup>259</sup> Lerner, J., & Secondo, D. (2012) “By the People, For the People: Participatory Budgeting from the Bottom Up” in *North America Journal of Public Deliberation* Volume 8 | Issue 2 Article 2, pg. 4

<sup>260</sup> Lerner, J., & Secondo, D. (2012) “By the People, For the People: Participatory Budgeting from the Bottom Up” in *North America Journal of Public Deliberation* Volume 8 | Issue 2 Article 2, pg. 4

<sup>261</sup> Ibidem

## 3.2 Asia

The diffusion and expansion of PB in Asia presents many different challenges, the main one being the fact that this continent hosts almost one third of the world's population. In addition to this, the government forms that are present throughout Asia are a lot more heterogeneous compared to the European or North/South American ones<sup>262</sup>. The form of government is not something to be underestimated because it can seriously impact the level of participation that is granted to citizens.

Asia also presents socio-economic disparities that are similar to the Latin American ones, thus one could think that the challenges that this continent would face in implementing participatory budgeting could be similar to the ones that could be found in Latin America. On the contrary the situation could not be any more different: The development of participatory practices in Asia followed a more or less linear development: it started in India and expanded first through Indonesia and South Korea and later into China<sup>263</sup>. The differences within these experiments do not facilitate a clear overall framework but leave researchers to necessity of studying each national case.

The first and most important participatory experience took place in India, in the state of Kerala. This experience started in 1996, even before the international diffusion of the Porto Alegre experience. The Kerala participatory experiment is particularly important because it is, to this day, the biggest mobilisation of participants<sup>264</sup>.

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<sup>262</sup> Sintomer, Y, Herzberg, C, Allegretti, G – with the collaboration of Anja Röcke and Mariana Alves (2013) “!Participatory Budgeting Worldwide – Updated Version Study”, *Published by: ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL gGmbH – Service für Entwicklungsinitiativen (GLOBAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – Service for Development Initiatives)*, pg. 63

<sup>263</sup> Ibidem

<sup>264</sup> Sintomer, Y, Herzberg, C, Allegretti, G – with the collaboration of Anja Röcke and Mariana Alves (2013) *Participatory Budgeting Worldwide – Updated Version Study*, Published by: ENGAGEMENT

The structure of this participatory experience is similar to the Porto Alegre one: it spread from the lowest level of the administration until the highest and had as available fund around forty of the total state revenues<sup>265</sup>. The procedures was articulated in steps that allowed control and transparency throughout the whole process. It also gave this experiment a way to manage the numbers of people that participated through it.

The most importance feature of this experience could be its *plasticity*; it allowed the Kerala participatory experiment to survive the political changes that inevitably happened through its 16 years of existence<sup>266</sup>. This experience did eventually die in 2012, at least in the Kerala state. Other Indian municipalities did pursue some forms of participatory practices, but they were less ambitious and were the result of processes of exchange with European and Brazilian cities that had already implemented PB practices<sup>267</sup>. Despite the great impact that the Kerala experience had on the Indian landscape, the other participatory practices remained subordinated to previous methods, such as the *Citizens' Report Card*, that sought to improve administrative behaviour<sup>268</sup>.

The diffusion of PB in Asia reached Japan and South Korea few years after the start of the Kerala experiment. Unlike India and China, Japan and South Korea were, and still are, two rich members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and their social, economic and political contexts has little in common with the first two. The challenges that Japan and South Korean PB experiences had to face were similar to the ones that North American encountered. These practices have emerged as a *«tool for tackling problems linked to the shrinking of resources, incomplete decentralization and the*

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GLOBAL gGmbH – Service für Entwicklungsinitiativen (GLOBAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – Service for Development Initiatives), pg. 63

<sup>265</sup> Ibidem

<sup>266</sup> Ivi, pg. 64

<sup>267</sup> Ibidem

<sup>268</sup> Ibidem

*lack of accountability and responsiveness of elected institutions to the needs of their citizens (particularly the poor)»<sup>269</sup>.*

The South Korean experiences are arguably the most mixed and complicated of the Asian continent, also given the number of experiences that took place throughout the country<sup>270</sup>. This country, much like Brazil, had a strong tradition of citizen participation, especially throughout the process of democratisation of the country in the 1980s<sup>271</sup>. Furthermore, citizen participation has been strengthened through a series of legislative reforms, such as the 2005 Local Referendum Act, the 2006 Act on the Local Ombudsman Regime and local petitions against the abuse of local finance and the 2007 Local Recall system, by which elected mayors and councillors may be removed from office<sup>272</sup>.

As PB started its diffusion in South Korea, it was initially conceived as a bottom-up process, thanks to the involvements of local NGOs, such as the Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice. Instead, as most cases worldwide demonstrate, its diffusion has been stimulated on a top-down basis by the national government<sup>273</sup>. As in a perfect case of adaptation of an outside norm, the core principles were imported from Brazil and re-elaborated locally<sup>274</sup>. South Korea has even taken a step forward by starting an experiment in 2011, that would train citizens and civil servants with materials translated from European and Latin American PB. Today, the Hope Institute in An-guk Dong has the role of promoter

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<sup>269</sup> Sintomer, Y, Herzberg, C, Allegretti, G – with the collaboration of Anja Röcke and Mariana Alves (2013) “Participatory Budgeting Worldwide – Updated Version Study”, *Published by: ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL gGmbH – Service für Entwicklungsinitiativen (GLOBAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – Service for Development Initiatives)*, pg. 67

<sup>270</sup> Ibidem

<sup>271</sup> Ibidem

<sup>272</sup> Ibidem

<sup>273</sup> Ibidem

<sup>274</sup> Ibidem

of PB practices throughout the country: it organises local training courses to qualify social and institutional actors on PB<sup>275</sup>.

The case of Japan is even more articulated than the one in South Korea. Japanese society is fragmented in groups that are very close-knit together and often are in sharp competition with other groups that are seen as rivals<sup>276</sup>. Despite this, the idea of citizen participation is very much present in the Japanese society, for example the municipal budget of the city is compiled by the designated office and then published on the city's website, and not just that: the summary of the budget is present in every ward and in the central office of the City. This wide sharing of the city budget is made in order to facilitate feedbacks of citizens that can be sent by email, fax or letters<sup>277</sup>.

The PB practices that were organised throughout Japan did not match the formal example of those that could be found in other areas of Asia or the world. This is mainly due to the nature of the socio-political situation in Japan. Society in Japan had a precise and fixed order and everyone and everything contributed to maintain it<sup>278</sup>. Citizen engagement followed precise rules and was limited to specific areas and even in this formal setting citizen participations was still limited and statistically irrelevant<sup>279</sup>.

PB's diffusion did not spare the People Republic of China. The first introduction of participatory budgeting in China go back to the late 1990s, but the

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<sup>275</sup> Sintomer, Y, Herzberg, C, Allegretti, G – with the collaboration of Anja Röcke and Mariana Alves (2013) "Participatory Budgeting Worldwide – Updated Version Study", *Published by: ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL gGmbH – Service für Entwicklungsinitiativen (GLOBAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – Service for Development Initiatives)*, pg. 67

<sup>276</sup> Uddin, S., Mori, Y., & Adhikari, P. (2019) "Participatory budgeting in a local government in a vertical society: A Japanese story", *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 85(3), pp. 490-505., pg. 493

<sup>277</sup> Ivi, pg. 497

<sup>278</sup> Ivi, pg. 491

<sup>279</sup> Uddin, S., Mori, Y., & Adhikari, P. (2019) "Participatory budgeting in a local government in a vertical society: A Japanese story", *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 85(3), pp. 490-505, pg. 498

actual implementation of some forms of PB could be found after the year 2000<sup>280</sup>. Given the nature of the Chinese central government, in many cases the participatory budgeting experiments that were set up, had to coexist with a severe form of government control<sup>281</sup>.

As in the case of North America, here in China the work of NGOs and local activists has played an important role in the diffusion of PB throughout the state<sup>282</sup>. And even though PB was actually introduced in China, the Chinese government shaped its core values in order to implement specific programmes that fought corruption, improved administrative efficiency and enhanced state capacity<sup>283</sup>.

International funding plays a significant role. The World Bank has led, developed and encouraged the spread of PB all over the world, has facilitated south–north dialogue, and has organised projects to enhance capacity building. The funding from the World Bank to developing countries explains the fact that most PB experiments and projects occur in developing countries. In China, the World Bank provided funding for the PB experiment in Jiaozuo city and the Ford Foundation has also provided funding for research, conferences and even the cost of PB experiments<sup>284</sup>.

In recent years, the Asian continent has seen a great development in the cases of Participatory Budgeting. For example, in the year 2018 the *Program for Developing Initiative Budgeting in the Russian Federation*, approved by the Government Commission on Open Government, has been launched<sup>285</sup>.

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<sup>280</sup> He, B. (2011) “Civic engagement through participatory budgeting in China: Three different logics at work”, *Public Administration and Development*, 31(2), pp. 122-133., pg. 123

<sup>281</sup> Ivi, pg. 122

<sup>282</sup> Ivi, pg. 123

<sup>283</sup> Ivi, pg. 122

<sup>284</sup> Ivi, pg. 125

<sup>285</sup> Belenchuk A., Vagin V., Shapovalova N., Gavrilova N. Galkina N., Antsyferova I., (2019) “Best practices in the development of initiative budgeting in the regions and municipalities of the Russian Federation”, report prepared by the Center for Initiative Budgeting at the Financial Research Institute of the Russian Ministry of Finance (Head V. Vagin) with the support of the Department of Budget Methodology and Public Sector Financial Reporting, Moscow, pg. 4

The Russian experiments are important in the panorama of modern Participatory Budgeting experiences, given the great support that the Federal Government has provided. In fact, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) has been directly involved in sponsoring and support local implementation of participatory initiatives<sup>286</sup>. In fact, as part of the *Program for Developing Initiative Budgeting in the Russian Federation*, over 20 participatory experiences promotion and educational events were held during the year, including webinars with representatives of regional financial authorities to improve the effectiveness of the current participatory projects and involve new regions in the development of participatory experiments<sup>287</sup>.

To showcase the importance of these practices in the Russian Federation: «*Initiative Budgeting*» (as it is called in Russia) «*was also included in the key strategic planning document the Principal Directions of Activities of the Russian Government to 2024 as an action “to introduce and promote participatory mechanisms enabling Russian citizens to take part in the socio-economic development of their respective territories, using participatory (initiative) budgeting”*»<sup>288</sup>.

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<sup>286</sup> Belenchuk A., Vagin V., Shapovalova N., Gavrilova N. Galkina N., Antsyferova I., (2019) “Best practices in the development of initiative budgeting in the regions and municipalities of the Russian Federation”, report prepared by the Center for Initiative Budgeting at the Financial Research Institute of the Russian Ministry of Finance (Head V. Vagin) with the support of the Department of Budget Methodology and Public Sector Financial Reporting, Moscow, pg. 4

<sup>287</sup> Ibidem

<sup>288</sup> Ivi, pg. 6-7

### 3.3 Oceania

The arrival and emergence of PB practices in Oceania has followed two very distinct tracks: one in Australia and the other one in New Zealand. Despite this, both states did not experience a great number of participatory experiences.

Two significant cases could be taken as the symbols of the PB in Australia and New Zealand.

In order of time, the case of Christchurch in New Zealand is the oldest and more important of the two. This city in southern New Zealand has experienced a practice of citizen participation since 1993 and has won the prize *Carl Bertelsmann for democracy and efficacy of the municipal administration* in the same year<sup>289</sup>. This experience is particularly important because it started well before the international fame of Porto Alegre and thus presented different characteristics from the Brazilian experiment.

As is the case of some Asian countries, the New Zealand participatory mechanism had been preceded by a legislative reform that had shrunk the number of municipalities from eight hundred to eighty-six on the whole national territory<sup>290</sup>. In addition to this, the most important aspect that characterised New Zealand's municipalities was the fact that they hold on to two thirds of the fiscal revenues: this allowed the municipalities to have a huge margin of manoeuvre in deciding how to structure their local budgets<sup>291</sup>.

In Christchurch, citizen participation was encouraged through a series of formal channels, such as email or letter sent to the municipal council. Similarly, to

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<sup>289</sup> Sintomer, Y, Herzberg, C, Allegretti, G – with the collaboration of Anja Röcke and Mariana Alves (2013) “Participatory Budgeting Worldwide – Updated Version Study”, *Published by: ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL gGmbH – Service für Entwicklungsinitiativen (GLOBAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – Service for Development Initiatives)*, pg. 76

<sup>290</sup> Ibidem

<sup>291</sup> Ibidem.

the Japanese experience, the municipal council of Christchurch promoted its budget on the official media channels of the city, drafting reports that could be accessible to any citizen<sup>292</sup>. Unlike the Porto Alegre experience, in New Zealand the citizens possessed nearly no decision-making power over budget proposals and this participatory device was used more as a consultative measure to feel the pulse of the citizenry<sup>293</sup>.

On a totally different notice can be found the experiment of the Canada Bay area in the municipality of Sidney. This experiment started in 2011, thus very late for the average, and it was strongly promoted by the *newDemocracy Foundation*<sup>294</sup>. This foundation played a pivotal role in the developing of the Canada Bay Citizens' Panel (CP). The CP was mainly conceived as a mix of deliberative democracy and participatory budgeting. It involved the municipal budget but was structured as a panel of discussion for selected citizens, much like the experiments conducted by professor James Fishkin<sup>295</sup>. Canada Bay decided to use a mini-public type of process, in which «*representativeness and deliberation were privileged over widespread participation for two reasons: (1) the newDemocracy Foundation suggested that this CP could provide the Council with a more extensive and considered response from its citizens than other approaches had achieved;8 and (2) there was a history of disappointing participation in Council's previous attempts to involve citizens*»<sup>296</sup>.

This choice has been influenced by the fact that surveys of citizens, before the CP implementation, showed that the citizens of Canada Bay do not generally participate in consultation processes initiated by Council. This situation changed

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<sup>292</sup> Sintomer, Y, Herzberg, C, Allegretti, G – with the collaboration of Anja Röcke and Mariana Alves (2013) “Participatory Budgeting Worldwide – Updated Version Study”, *Published by: ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL gGmbH – Service für Entwicklungsinitiativen (GLOBAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – Service for Development Initiatives)*, pg. 76

<sup>293</sup> Ibidem

<sup>294</sup> Thompson, N. K. (2012) “Participatory budgeting-the Australian way”, *Journal of Public Deliberation*, 8(2), 5., pg. 1

<sup>295</sup> Ivi, pg. 2

<sup>296</sup> Ibidem

after the CP execution: surveys of panel's participants showed that a great number of partakers would directly challenge the municipal council if they encountered a problem.

In the end, the experience of Canada Bay differs a lot from the traditional PB experiments in the sense that they followed a more top-down approach on all levels, from the selection of participants to the decision-making process<sup>297</sup>. Despite these specific characteristics, the influence of the PB can be very much seen in the structure of the dialogue between the institutional actors and the citizens and on the actual power that the citizens Panel had over budget proposals<sup>298</sup>.

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<sup>297</sup> Thompson, N. K. (2012) "Participatory budgeting-the Australian way", *Journal of Public Deliberation*, 8(2), 5, pg. 5-6

<sup>298</sup> Ivi, pg. 8

### 3.4 Africa

At the end of years 2000s, the diffusion of Participatory Budgeting had already spread over Europe, Asia, North and South America and Oceania. The diffusion of PB practices also reached the African continent and proved that this particular form of democracy can be implemented in socio-political context far different from the “western standard”.

The diffusion of Participatory Budgeting in Africa has followed a patchy and uneven development and it has been made possible only with the help of foreign agencies, such as the World Bank or the UN, other state institutions, such as the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and thanks to local and international NGOs. The scarcity of resources that the African municipalities had to face was partially filled by these foreign donors that provided both the monetary and the educational part<sup>299</sup>. The contact with European and Latin American countries that had PB experiments in place was also another key for the development of participatory practices in Africa<sup>300</sup>. These meetings have happened both at international forums, such as the WSF of Dakar in 2011, and at local forums, such as the *Africities* meetings<sup>301</sup>.

This mosaic of participatory experiences is so diversified that is very hard to give a uniform representation. What is important to the diffusion of PB is the fact that many of these experiments that have emerged in Africa have been led and heavily depended on the push of local NGOs, coupled with the support of international partners. But the presence of these international donors has led some to question the presence of a neo-colonial spirit, throughout the participatory

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<sup>299</sup> Sintomer, Y, Herzberg, C, Allegretti, G – with the collaboration of Anja Röcke and Mariana Alves (2013) “Participatory Budgeting Worldwide – Updated Version Study”, *Published by: ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL gGmbH – Service für Entwicklungsinitiativen (GLOBAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – Service for Development Initiatives)*, pg. 57

<sup>300</sup> Ivi, pg. 58

<sup>301</sup> Ivi, pg. 56

experiences in Africa<sup>302</sup>. Moreover, the necessary presence of these international donors is one of the main limitations of these practices: this “donor-based” perspective has put in the background the decision-making power of the citizens by elevating above them the donors wishes<sup>303</sup>.

Similarly, in other international experiences, the African PB’s experiments have opted to use these practices in order to reach a higher degree of transparency and accountability of the government. In cases such as Nigeria, where the mismanagement of the state’s finances has happened since its democratic transition in 1999 the implementation of PB has had some positive results<sup>304</sup>.

Nigeria is not an isolated case. The South African experience of PB has been worthy of notice. The country has experienced one of the most violent and lasting political of segregation and at the 1994 elections a strong demand of participation burst out<sup>305</sup>.

The developing of PB experiments in South Africa has been closely related to the reform of the budgetary system envisaged by the new Constitution<sup>306</sup>. Upon this new reform, new institutions were created with the aim of promoting participatory budgeting. One of these new advocates for PB was the *Budget Information System* (BIS) that provided training and support for participatory projects such as the *Women’s and Children’s Budget*<sup>307</sup>. Despite the presence of foreign and local NGOs and of domestic institutions, the state of PB practices in

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<sup>302</sup> Sintomer, Y, Herzberg, C, Allegratti, G – with the collaboration of Anja Röcke and Mariana Alves (2013) “Participatory Budgeting Worldwide – Updated Version Study”, *Published by: ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL gGmbH – Service für Entwicklungsinitiativen (GLOBAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – Service for Development Initiatives)*, pg. 55

<sup>303</sup> Ibidem

<sup>304</sup> Adesopo, A. A. (2011) “Inventing Participatory Planning and Budgeting for Participatory Local Governance in Nigeria”, *International Journal of Business and Social Science Vol. 2 No. 7*; [Special Issue –April 2011], Department of Public Administration Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife Nigeria, pg. 111

<sup>305</sup> Langa B., & Jerome, A. (2004) “Participatory Budgetin in South Africa”, *Les Cahiers du SISERA vol.1*, Dakar, pg. 6

<sup>306</sup> Ibidem

<sup>307</sup> Ivi, pg. 12

South Africa is still far from ideal. The main problem that South Africa has is the need to change the mindset of its national government: *«for PB to thrive in South Africa, there is need to confront many of the non-formal constraints to engagement which still persist, in particular, poor communication, limited education and a multitude of languages which inhibit the ability of many people to engage»*<sup>308</sup>

To this date, setting aside the fragility of the formal democratic institutions, the difficulties of implementing PB in Africa have been linked to two major issues: the first is the lack of resources and the second is to overcome the traditional communication channel of patron-client that has been inherited by the colonial domination<sup>309</sup>. The first issued has been partially resolved, as mentioned before, by including foreign donors and by empowering local communities; as for the second one the work is still in progress<sup>310</sup>.

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<sup>308</sup> Sintomer, Y, Herzberg, C, Allegretti, G – with the collaboration of Anja Röcke and Mariana Alves (2013) “Participatory Budgeting Worldwide – Updated Version Study”, *Published by: ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL gGmbH – Service für Entwicklungsinitiativen (GLOBAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – Service for Development Initiatives)*, pg. 16

<sup>309</sup> Ivi, pg. 59

<sup>310</sup> Ibidem

### 3.5 Europe

Last but not least in this analysis there is Europe. The diffusion of PB in the Old Continent has followed many different paths and has a plethora of exceptions. PB shored up to the coast of Europe in a very important moment: the mid-90s saw a sharp increase in the ideas of civic engagement as a tool for administrative modernization<sup>311</sup>. There were in fact nation states that were trying to close the gap between represented and representatives. States like France with its law on *démocratie de proximité* in 2002, or United Kingdom with its *Local Government Act* of 2000, have tried to give legislative solution to the problem of citizens involvement<sup>312</sup>.

Critics of participatory budgeting in Europe have opposed it by saying that it worked in Latin America because the socio-economic disparities that were present in those countries were structural while in Europe the same disparities were not as much evident, thus PB would not work as good. The fact that each nation state had already its mechanism for citizen engagement in one way facilitating the implementation of PB, but on the other hand resulted in a wide spectrum of experiences that were identified under the definition of PB.

The differences between experiences are not only structural, but also formal. For example, French experiences have taken place at the sub-municipal level and have limited the actual decision-making power of the citizens assemblies<sup>313</sup>. On the other hand, the Italian experiences have a structure more similar to the Porto Alegre one, thus leaving more power to the assemblies.

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<sup>311</sup> Ganuza, E., Baiocchi, G., (2012) “The Power of Ambiguity: How Participatory Budgeting Travels the Globe” *Journal of Public Deliberation* Volume 8 | Issue 2 Article 8, pg. 7

<sup>312</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>313</sup> *Ivi*, pg. 8

Furthermore, one clear consequence of the transformation of PB into a best practice has been the marginalization of social justice principles that inspired the initiative in the first place<sup>314</sup>. PB has become a *reassembled and rendered compatible*<sup>315</sup> theory that could be employed inside other projects. The direct consequence of this has been an appropriation of the idea of PB by all parties across the political sector<sup>316</sup>, in particular PB is presented as «*fostering “community cohesion,” “innovation,” “social entrepreneurship” and “restoring trust” in government*»<sup>317</sup>.

The ductility of PB is one of the key elements that has allowed this idea to diffuse in so many different local realities.

In Europe, in particular, Participatory Budgets have gained a central place in discussions on decentralisation, on governance and on the reform of relations between local contexts and ‘global flows’. It has also allowed us to rediscover, develop and enrich ‘organic experiences’ developed independently in different parts of Europe, creating dialogue between them and sometimes ‘hybridising them’ constructively with the management practices and routes tested in some countries of the Global South<sup>318</sup>.

Europe has experienced maybe the most diversified practices of Participatory Budgeting. Spain, Italy, France and Germany have had each their PB with specific characteristics and limits.

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<sup>314</sup> Ganuza, E., Baiocchi, G., (2012) “The Power of Ambiguity: How Participatory Budgeting Travels the Globe” *Journal of Public Deliberation* Volume 8 | Issue 2 Article 8

<sup>315</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>316</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>317</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>318</sup> Allegretti, G., & Herzberg, C. (2004) “Participatory budgets in Europe. Between efficiency and growing local democracy” in *Participatory budgets in Europe. Between efficiency and growing local democracy*, pp. 1-24., pg. 5

## 4. Diffusion of Participatory budgeting in Europe

As mentioned at the end of the last chapter, in the following part the diffusion and diversification of participatory budgeting practices will be further analysed. The choice of dedicating an entire part to European experiences is not casual but is necessary given the particular nature of those aforementioned experiences.

The arrival of participatory budgeting practice in Europe has been seen as the *return of the caravels* by Yves Sintomer<sup>319</sup>. This return had happened at the perfect timing. Europe in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had become a place filled with unrest: movements against globalisation, against neoliberalism and in favour of an alternative way were emerging at an exponential rate. In addition to this the political situation in some of the European states was not at all optimal, for example, Germany was still going through its reunification and Italy had faced its largest political scandal, the criminal investigation named *Mani Pulite* (Clean Hands).

In this panorama filled with social unrest, the *return of the caravel* found fertile ground. The Global Justice Movement (GJM) had spontaneously emerged in Seattle in 1999 to protest against the WTO and its neoliberal ramification. The strength and the push of the GJM were further channelled through the WSF of Porto Alegre. The WSF was used as the meeting point of all those movements that sought an alternative way to the *status quo*, such as the anti-neoliberal movements, the movements seeking an alternative way of doing democracy etc<sup>320</sup>. The WSF

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<sup>319</sup> Sintomer, Y., Herzberg, C., Allegretti, G., Röcke, A., & Alves, M. L. (2013) "Participatory budgeting worldwide", *Dialog Global*, (25), pp. 1-93, pg. 41

<sup>320</sup> Longuemare, E. (2019, December 13), Semi-structured interview with Mr. Vittorio Agnoletto

of Porto Alegre has allowed associations, NGOs and groups from all over the globe to meet and to confront themselves over widely shared issues.

Within this wide variety of groups and associations, members of municipalities from all over the world were present and had the opportunity to experience one of the reasons why the city of Porto Alegre had been chosen to host the first WSF: its advanced and successful participatory practice<sup>321</sup>. There is no need to go over this practice again, since it has been already explained in the previous chapter. But what is important to underline is the social impact that this practice had. The Participatory Budgeting experience of Porto Alegre had proved itself to both the domestic and the international level.

The WSF was the key event that put in contact most of those local and national actors and made them realise that they had common problems and that solution could be only found if working together toward the same goal<sup>322</sup>. But the diffusion of participatory budgeting in Europe did not happen solely thanks to the will of the delegates that participated to the first WSF of Porto Alegre. In Europe, even more than in regard to the other continents, local associations and groups have played a significant role. The association ATTAC in France had the role of diffusing the knowledge of the existence of participatory budgeting and helping those municipalities that needed technical assistance. Likewise, the *Associazione Rete Nuovo Municipio* (ARNM) played a very important role in creating a community of local municipalities that were implementing participatory practices<sup>323</sup>. Other important networks, such as the OIPD that is currently located in Barcelona, also played a role in the diffusion and support of PB throughout Europe.

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<sup>321</sup> Longuemare, E. (2019, December 13), Semi-structured interview with Mr. Vittorio Agnoletto

<sup>322</sup> Longuemare, E. (2019, December 13), Semi-structured interview with Mr. Vittorio Agnoletto

<sup>323</sup> Nuovomunicipio.net, *Associazione Rete Nuovo Municipio*, last visited on the 29th of October 2019, website: <http://www.nuovomunicipio.net/chisiamo.htm>

This chapter will be dedicated to a brief overview of the diffusion of participatory budgeting practices in Europe and a more specific analysis of the French and Italian experiences.

## 4.1 Why Europe?

As mentioned above, before going into more detailed description of the Italian and French participatory experience, some of the most notable European experiments will be presented.

Europe has played a major role in promoting these processes, by becoming the region with the largest number of cases currently identified, namely from 4577 to 4676, representing around 39% of all Participatory Budgeting cases identified worldwide<sup>324</sup>. Domestically, Participatory Budgeting in Europe are distributed as follows: 46% in Eastern Europe, 46% in Southern Europe, 5% in Western Europe and only 2 to 3% in Northern Europe<sup>325</sup>. This uneven distribution of participatory practice around Europe can be found in the differences of central, both local and national, administration to actually provide support to their citizens<sup>326</sup>.

The dissemination of Participatory Budgeting in Europe started at the beginning of the new millennium and has been ensured by different types of institutions:

1. Approximately 62% of the identified processes are promoted by local governments, while approximately 34% are supported by other entities, and the leading role of educational institutions, in particular public schools, deserve to be highlighted at this level. This result is mainly due to the approximately 1500 Participatory School Budgeting existing in Portugal;

2. The dynamics of the European regional governments in promoting these processes are still modest, with only nine experiences, five of which in Poland, two in Portugal, one in Slovakia and one in Ukraine;

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<sup>324</sup> Dias, N., Enríquez, S. & Julio, S. (Org.) (2019) “The Participatory Budgeting World Atlas”, *Epoieia and Oficina*, Portugal, pg. 31

<sup>325</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>326</sup> Allen, J. (2006) “Welfare Regimes, Welfare Systems and Housing in Southern Europe”, *European Journal of Housing Policy*, 6:3, pp. 251-277, DOI: 10.1080/14616710600973102

3. There are fifteen major European cities, with populations of more than one million inhabitants, which are currently developing Participatory Budgeting<sup>327</sup>.

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<sup>327</sup> Allen, J. (2006) “Welfare Regimes, Welfare Systems and Housing in Southern Europe”, *European Journal of Housing Policy*, 6:3, pp. 251-277, DOI: 10.1080/14616710600973102, pg. 32

## 4.2 Iberian peninsula

The importance of countries such as Portugal, Poland or Spain has become in recent years more and more important for the diffusion of Participatory Budgeting in Europe as the abovementioned number demonstrate.

Spain has been one of the first states, together with Italy and France, to import and adapt PB from South America. This relevant role has been mainly due to the special relationship that ties Spain with South America. The cultural similarities and the sharing of the same language have had a strong influence on the participatory experiences that have been implemented in Spain<sup>328</sup>. It is not a case that the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (OIPD), that is one of the most active supporters of PB throughout the world, is to this day located in Barcelona. This closeness between Spanish and South American experience can be found also in the fact that Spanish experiments have kept the redistributive setting of the PB that the rest of the European states had lost<sup>329</sup>.

Even though the presence of strong and widespread networks of supporters, both institutional and private, has played a major role in the diffusion of participatory experiences, an almost equal role was played by the legislative framework that has institutionalised participation throughout Spain. Many of the municipalities that have implemented PB have had a regulatory framework that “legalised” participation<sup>330</sup>: for example, the city of Cordoba in southern Spain has in place a normative on participation since 1979<sup>331</sup>.

In Spain, there is a strong municipal network of PB experiments, which in 2007 was responsible for the approval of the *Antequera Charter* which defined the main characteristic that a PB must have in order to act as a radical instrument of

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<sup>328</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) “I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente”, Ediesse editore, pg. 174-175

<sup>329</sup> Ivi, pg. 174

<sup>330</sup> Dias, N., Enríquez, S. & Julio, S. (Org.) (2019) “The Participatory Budgeting World Atlas”, *Epoieia and Oficina*, Portugal, pg. 183

<sup>331</sup> Ivi, pg. 179

cultural and political change<sup>332</sup>. This strong municipal network has played a major role in the diffusion of participatory budgeting practices throughout the Iberian peninsula and has found an important supporter the culture of participation that was present throughout Spain.

Similarly, as in other European countries, the destiny and the longevity of PB experiments has been closely linked to the political forces that had initially implemented them, in fact the beginning and the end of PB in Spanish municipalities still depends predominantly on the shifting of political parties in the administration<sup>333</sup>. After the elections of May 2011, a shrinkage in the number of Spanish PBs took place, but in 2012 the network of Spanish municipalities merged with Portuguese municipalities in a new Iberian umbrella-network, supported by the region of Andalusia<sup>334</sup>.

The independent province of Andalusia has hosted two of the major experiences of participatory budgeting of Spain, both in terms of the experience itself and of the influence it had on the state-level framework: Sevilla and Malaga. The first one has been until 2008 the biggest municipality to implement PB and has laid down solid procedural bases that influenced other Spanish experiences<sup>335</sup>. Malaga instead has had a great influence on its surrounding municipalities in the form of economic and technical support<sup>336</sup>. This city has been very active on the national and international promotion of panels, where municipalities of Latin America and Europe have met and shared best practices<sup>337</sup>.

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<sup>332</sup> Sintomer, Y., Herzberg, C., Allegretti, G., Röcke, A., & Alves, M. L. (2013) "Participatory budgeting worldwide", *Dialog Global*, (25), pp. 1-93, pg. 43

<sup>333</sup> Dias, N., Enríquez, S. & Julio, S. (Org.) (2019) "The Participatory Budgeting World Atlas", *Epoieia and Oficina*, Portugal, pg. 184

<sup>334</sup> Sintomer, Y., Herzberg, C., Allegretti, G., Röcke, A., & Alves, M. L. (2013) "Participatory budgeting worldwide", *Dialog Global*, (25), pp. 1-93, pg. 43

<sup>335</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) "I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente", Ediesse editore, pg. 187-188

<sup>336</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) "I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente", *Ediesse editore*, pg. 190-191

<sup>337</sup> Ivi, pg. 187-188

The diffusion of PB in Portugal had reached its peak late, compared to other European countries and to the role that Portugal has nowadays. Democracy in the Lusitanian state has appeared late in the 1970s and with great struggle. This relatively young democracy has caused the state apparatus to underperform in some cases<sup>338</sup>. Even though democracy was still young in Portugal, a strong sense of dissatisfaction and electoral abstentionism appeared early throughout the Lusitanian state<sup>339</sup>.

It is worth noting that Portugal has experienced two main waves of participatory budgeting experiments, which were very different in nature, quality and distribution across the country<sup>340</sup>. The first wave has been mainly influenced by leftist political parties such as the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) and its greater example can be seen as emerging in 2002 in Palmela, a small municipality in southern Portugal<sup>341</sup>. Those experiences were mainly based on face-to-face participatory mechanisms (public meetings) aimed at creating a proximity democracy and strengthening institutional legitimacy<sup>342</sup>.

Between the first and the second generation of PB, a widespread training campaign has taken place to educate administrations and NGOs, thus enabling the participatory experiences of Portugal to grow and become more self-aware<sup>343</sup>. The effects on this training campaign has been seen throughout the second generation of Portuguese PB. These practices that started after 2007 saw a considerable increase in number and a shift in the decision-making process: many of these experiences started to use a co-decisional practice<sup>344</sup>.

Despite the great impact that PB practices had on the Portuguese municipalities, the number of said experiences steadily declined over time. The

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<sup>338</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) "I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente", *Ediesse editore*, pg. 238

<sup>339</sup> Alves, M. L., & Allegretti, G. (2012) "(In) stability, a key element to understand participatory budgeting: Discussing Portuguese cases", *Journal of Public Deliberation*, 8(2), 3, pg. 5

<sup>340</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>341</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>342</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>343</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>344</sup> Alves, M. L., & Allegretti, G. (2012) "(In) stability, a key element to understand participatory budgeting: Discussing Portuguese cases", *Journal of Public Deliberation*, 8(2), 3, pg. 6

disappearance of PB practices in Portugal presents a great challenge, because unlike Brazil and other experiences, PB disappearance is not closely linked with the change in municipal mayors and parties<sup>345</sup>. In fact, in most cases the interruption of PB was done by the same municipality that had started it, using excuses such as the financial crisis or the shrinking in resources<sup>346</sup>.

The diminishing in the number of PB practices in Brazil was linked to a rise in the difficulties of fully implementing the selected projects by local authorities<sup>347</sup>. In fact, the rise in complexity of the requests that came out from the participatory meetings forced the municipalities to seek external funding, from federal to national institutions, thus delaying greatly the completion of the projects<sup>348</sup>.

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<sup>345</sup> Alves, M. L., & Allegretti, G. (2012) “(In) stability, a key element to understand participatory budgeting: Discussing Portuguese cases”, *Journal of Public Deliberation*, 8(2), 3, pg. 17

<sup>346</sup> Ibidem

<sup>347</sup> de Paiva Bezerra, C., & de Oliveira Junqueira, M. (2018) “Why Has Participatory Budgeting Adoption Declined in Brazil?”, *International Observatory on Participatory Democracy*, pg. 8

<sup>348</sup> Ibidem

## 4.3 Germany

The German experience of participatory budgeting particularly stands out on the European landscape. Since its conception in the late 1990s, German PBs have looked up at a different model than Porto Alegre: the city of Christchurch in New Zealand<sup>349</sup>. This difference in inspiration is crucial because it shifted German PBs from the “simple” redistributive and anti-corruption to the modernisation and improvement of the administration through participation<sup>350</sup>.

Given the particular organisation of the German federal state, legal grounds for municipal budgets in Germany only regulate the formal procedures within the public administration and the municipal council and procedures to involve citizens in settling budgets of municipalities are not foreseen in the traditional budget planning procedures in Germany<sup>351</sup>. Despite this, citizens cannot participate directly on the budget bye-law and thus on the budget<sup>352</sup>. Nonetheless, citizens’ participation is generally possible at municipal level, as the bye-laws do not preclude this<sup>353</sup>.

The role of institutional networks and federal agencies has been crucial for the implementation of PB throughout Germany. *Local authorities for the future* network has connected the first experiences of PB and has allowed municipalities to gather together and to test new administrative reform towards a more inclusive participation<sup>354</sup>. Another example of actors that supported PB diffusion in Germany is the Bertelsmann Foundation, that cooperated with the Länder North

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<sup>349</sup> Ruesch, M. A., & Wagner, M. (2013) “Participatory budgeting in Germany: citizens as consultants”, *Relatório para Buergerhaushalt. org.*, pg. 3

<sup>350</sup> Ibidem

<sup>351</sup> Scherer, S., & Wimmer, M. A. (2012, September) “Reference process model for participatory budgeting in Germany”, *In International Conference on Electronic Participation (pp. 97-111)*. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg, pg. 98

<sup>352</sup> Ivi, pg. 99

<sup>353</sup> Ibidem

<sup>354</sup> Ruesch, M. A., & Wagner, M. (2013) “Participatory budgeting in Germany: citizens as consultants”, *Relatório para Buergerhaushalt. org.*, pg. 2

Rhine-Westphalia, to the *Pilot Municipalities in North Rhine Westphalia project*, in which six local authorities tested the instrument of participatory budgeting<sup>355</sup>.

Despite all this institutional support for PB, in Germany PB arose not as a party political programme, but came rather from local governments themselves; It was explicitly not their aim to introduce greater direct democracy<sup>356</sup>. This has been one the most characteristic elements of German PB. Their nature have been more of a consultative one, even though starting in 2004 a greater push for citizens' vote has been observed within German PBs<sup>357</sup>. This push for a greater role of the citizens has been sought after by the Federal Agency for Civic Education, another important advocate for citizens' participation<sup>358</sup>.

The most important development of PB in Germany has been the online turn. This turn has started in 2007 and has further widened the horizons for PB practices. The online participation, or e-participation, has played a major role in the diffusion of PB throughout Germany<sup>359</sup>. Despite this widening of possibilities, the experiences of participatory budgeting in Germany have been strongly limited to a simple role of advisory practices: «*In other countries, citizens decide, whereas in Germany they advise*»<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> Ruesch, M. A., & Wagner, M. (2013) "Participatory budgeting in Germany: citizens as consultants", *Relatório para Buergerhaushalt. org.*, pg. 2

<sup>356</sup> Ivi, pg. 4

<sup>357</sup> Ibidem

<sup>358</sup> Ibidem

<sup>359</sup> Ibidem

<sup>360</sup> Ivi, pg. 5

## 4.4 United Kingdom

The history of local democracy in the United Kingdom has been troubled in the last thirty years. It all started when, in 1979, Margaret Thatcher was elected as Prime Minister. The Iron Lady, as she was nicknamed, and her government were strongly committed to reducing the power and competence of the British municipalities with fiscal and administrative reforms<sup>361</sup>. After the year 1997, when Tony Blair became the Prime Minister, the situation of the municipalities improved a little: instead of facing a dismantling plan, municipalities had to face a carrot and stick approach<sup>362</sup>. Nonetheless, the Labour government strengthened and created tradition participatory practices such as the citizens jury or interactive websites<sup>363</sup>.

New Labour slightly improved the legal status of local government with the introduction of the ‘powers of well-being’ in the area of economic, social and environmental development and improvement (*Local Government Act 2000*)<sup>364</sup>.

The growing emphasis of the previous government on the topic of citizen participation definitely provoked a spread of participatory practices, especially in England; the effects of this development on social movements or other bottom-up organisations, which flourished in the 1960s and 1970s, remains an open question. The great majority of local councils established some form of citizen involvement, be it user- or citizen oriented. In a survey carried out in 2007 of 102 councils, for example, the following picture emerged<sup>365</sup>

Participatory budgeting, as in many other cases, arrived in UK thanks to the interaction between two English and two Brazilian local municipalities sponsored

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<sup>361</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) “I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente”, *Ediesse editore*, pg. 268

<sup>362</sup> Ivi, pg. 271

<sup>363</sup> Ivi, pg. 272

<sup>364</sup> Röcke, A. (2014) “Framing citizen participation: participatory budgeting in France, Germany and the United Kingdom”, Springer, pg. 89

<sup>365</sup> Ivi, pg. 91

by the Community Pride Initiative in 2000<sup>366</sup>. In Salford, the situation remained blocked for a couple of years because no compromise was possible between two perspectives: one influenced by the Porto Alegre model and thus aiming at structural changes within the established institutional framework for citizen involvement; and one that seeks a greater participation of citizens and communities, but within the existing structures<sup>367</sup>. When things actually took off, the Community Pride Initiative «*aimed to combine the existing forms of budget-related engagement (community committees, devolved budgets and the budget consultation process) into a more complex approach aiming to reinvigorate democracy and community participation, to create more user-oriented services and to tackle poverty and social exclusion. The goal was thus to combine elements from the Porto Alegre process of PB with the existing institutional structure in Salford*»<sup>368</sup>.

The Salford case is interesting in the framework of the present study for at least three reasons: First, it witnesses the problems of PB ‘UK style’ in form of small grant-spending processes with no secured financial basis and organised at the margins of the political system, seriously limiting the powers of local participants<sup>369</sup>. Second, the final outcome of the participatory budgeting practice in Salford did not respect the initial plans that the CPI had envisaged; on the contrary the progressive nature of the PB envisioned did not find any kind of institutional support from both the local administration and the public service managers, and thus ended in a “classical” top-down approach<sup>370</sup>. Third, and finally,

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<sup>366</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) “I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente”, *Ediesse editore*, pg. 273

<sup>367</sup> Röcke, A. (2014) “Framing citizen participation: participatory budgeting in France, Germany and the United Kingdom”, Springer, pg. 153

<sup>368</sup> Ivi, pg 154

<sup>369</sup> Ivi, pg. 162

<sup>370</sup> Ibidem

the lack of support from institutional advocates seriously limited the outcome of the whole process, limiting it to small-scale short-term project<sup>371</sup>.

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<sup>371</sup> Röcke, A. (2014) "Framing citizen participation: participatory budgeting in France, Germany and the United Kingdom", Springer, pg. 162

## 4.5 Poland

For the first time in Polish reality a form of PB appeared in Plock, where in 2003 – 2005 Town Hall, the company PKN Orlen and the UN created the so-called “grant fund”, where local NGOs applied for funding for their projects (Grant Fund for Plock)<sup>372</sup>. By the end of 2013, at least 72 towns and cities in Poland had decided to implement PB with top-down approaches, in the form of the city council’s resolution or the mayor’s directive<sup>373</sup>. For example, in the city of Gdansk the lobbying for PB came from within the administration, in particular from the district councils, was the driving force of participation that led to the approval of a procedure for a PB cycle that saw representatives of local NGOs, the City and the municipal council<sup>374</sup>.

PB has been implemented mostly as a break with the traditional methods of financing public services. But citizens have a rather weak position, they do not influence the methodology, which makes it more similar to the “Representation of organized interests” model. Every local government unit introduces its own PB rules, often being guided by examples of other towns and on many occasions not having social consultation and not working on the principles of PB together with citizens<sup>375</sup>.

The Sopot case is very much important because it set the tone of other experiences of PB in Poland. This municipality was in fact the first to implement

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<sup>372</sup> Džinić, J., Svidroňová, M. M., & Markowska-Bzducha, E. (2016) “Participatory budgeting: A comparative study of Croatia, Poland and Slovakia”, pp. 31-56, pg. 41

<sup>373</sup> Ibidem

<sup>374</sup> Ibidem

<sup>375</sup> Ivi, pg. 44

such a participatory practice that had been inspired by other European practices, such as the ones from Italy and France<sup>376</sup>.

Centre-right and right-wing parties openly supporting urban entrepreneurial agendas have the majority in the City Council in Sopot<sup>377</sup>. Although PB in Sopot aimed at bringing together top-down and bottom-up actors, the objectives are far from converging. The two sides had both institutional and informal components: the pro bottom-up part was composed of the Sopot Developmental Initiative (SIR – *Sopocka Inicjatywa Rozwojowa*) an informal citizen group who first proposed to implement PB, the pro-PB city councillors from Law and Justice (PiS - *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*) and I Love Sopot (KS - *Kocham Sopot*)<sup>378</sup>. The PB sceptic part was led by the mayoral Town Hall administration supported by councillors from Civic Justice (PO - *Platforma Obywatelska*) and Self-Governance (*Samorządność*)<sup>379</sup>. As shown here the city council within the municipality was divided on what kind of participatory practice they wanted to implement: the mayor and some other councillors wanted to have simply nominal or consultative practices, while on the other side, councillors of the SIR stoutly defended the added value brought by increased participation<sup>380</sup>. The exclusive character of PB thus reflects the emphasis of the local administration on reaching out to a high number of voters, rather than a wide variety of participants<sup>381</sup>.

What is today maybe the most important aspect of Polish PBs is the fact that there is a national law regulation about Participatory Budgeting that unifies the shape of PB local law regulation, while until 2018 the regulation provided a legislative framework for only national practices<sup>382</sup>. In addition to this, PB will be

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<sup>376</sup> Džinić, J., Svidroňová, M. M., & Markowska-Bzducha, E. (2016) "Participatory budgeting: A comparative study of Croatia, Poland and Slovakia", pp. 31-56, pg. 44

<sup>377</sup> Kęblowski, W., & Van Criekinger, M. (2014) "Participatory budgeting Polish-Style. What kind of policy practice has travelled to Sopot, Poland?", *Hope for Democracy. In Loco Association*, pg. 372

<sup>378</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>379</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>380</sup> *Ivi*, pg. 373

<sup>381</sup> *Ivi*, pg. 374

<sup>382</sup> Dias, N., Enríquez, S. & Julio, S. (Org.) (2019) "The Participatory Budgeting World Atlas", *Epopeia and Oficina*, Portugal, pg. 170

also mandatory for “big towns” from 2019 due to the aforementioned regulations<sup>383</sup>.

In the previous part of this chapter the most relevant cases of the diffusion of participatory budgeting have briefly presented. But PB did not limit itself to these countries, in fact nowadays nearly all of the European countries have participatory practices in place. In Belgium for example, the existing mechanisms, with the exception of a few processes, really integrate the democratic and budgetary learning dimension<sup>384</sup>. More limited public funds operate on the basis of a call for projects formulated and implemented by citizens, rather than an exercise around the prioritization of issues and the distribution/redistribution of public financial resources<sup>385</sup>.

Ukraine is now preparing to join the list of countries that implemented PB on the national level after Portugal and South Korea. This year, Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted all the necessary legislation and documentation to launch pilot nation-wide PB in 2019 and adopted 500 mln UAH (\$20 mln) on the most voted projects implementation<sup>386</sup>.

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<sup>383</sup> Ibidem

<sup>384</sup> Dias, N., Enríquez, S. & Julio, S. (Org.) (2019) “The Participatory Budgeting World Atlas”, *Epoieia and Oficina*, Portugal, pg. 147

<sup>385</sup> Ibidem

<sup>386</sup> Ivi, pg. 186

## 5. Two case study: Italy and France

The story of the diffusion of participatory budgeting practices, as shown above, is long and very complicated. How this idea came into Europe is generally accepted and to this *return of the caravels* two countries have played a major role: France and Italy.

The historical role that these two countries played is not accidental, both countries were between the first to successfully implement participatory practices at municipal levels and both countries had a strong connection with the Participatory Budgeting of South American. In fact, one of the founding association of the WSF was the *Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for Citizen's Action* (ATTAC), whose first president was the French intellectual Bernard Cassen. The presence of Bernard Cassen within this process is very much important: in the early 2000s, Cassen was the director of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, one of the most influential newspaper on International Affairs, both in France and throughout the world and one of the most important intellectual supporters of the GJM and the WSF<sup>387</sup>.

A similar role, without the international influence of ATTAC, in Italy has been played by the *Associazione Rete Nuovo Municipio* (ARNM). This association gathered together around 60 municipalities all over Italy that shared the need to engage in participatory practices. Similarly to ATTAC, the ARNM was actively involved in local and national events, by promoting and lobbying its objectives to local and national stakeholders. In fact, one of the main objectives of ATTAC was that «ATTAC intends to participate in the public debate by calling out to citizens and playing a role as a “democratic stimulus”<sup>388</sup> It is not easy to fully comprehend

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<sup>387</sup> As shown by the many articles written by Bernard Cassen over the course of his journalistic career on issues of participation

<sup>388</sup> Ancelovici, M. (2002) “Organizing against globalization: the case of ATTAC in France”, *Politics & Society*, 30(3), pp. 427-463, pg. 448

*the impact that the WSF had on the diffusion of the idea of Participatory Budgeting. The thousand local administrators and NGOs that have taken part to this process have come back to their realities with new and refreshed experiences that fostered change. In addition to this, many local and domestic associations and groups have picked up the torch of spreading participatory practices at their own level»<sup>389</sup>.*

What particularly favoured the diffusion of participatory practices in Italy was also the political situation in which the country had found itself in the last decade of the 1990s and early 2000s. In 1992 a criminal investigation bulldozed its way into Italian politics and claimed the head of some of the most important and influential politician in the country. This investigation “simply” uncovered practice of corruption that were present on all political level, from municipalities to the national government.

The impact of *Mani Pulite*, as the criminal investigation was called, on civil and political society was so strong that it further increased the gap between the citizens and their political elite<sup>390</sup>, even though some steps had been previously taken by the national government to bring closer representatives and represented<sup>391</sup>.

On the other side of the Alps, the election of the Socialist Lionel Jospin as Prime Minister in 1997 gave a fresh start to neo-Keynesian ideals<sup>392</sup>. The leftist government led by Jospin obtained discrete results on issues such as unemployment and economy growth<sup>393</sup>, but what is maybe the most important act

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<sup>389</sup> Ancelovici, M. (2002) “Organizing against globalization: the case of ATTAC in France”, *Politics & Society*, 30(3), pp. 427-463, pg. 444

<sup>390</sup> Zamagni, V. (2018) “L’economia italiana nell’età della globalizzazione”, editore *Il Mulino*, Milano, pg. 50

<sup>391</sup> Bartocci, L., Grossi, G., Natalizi, D., Romizi, S. (2016) “Lo stato dell’arte del bilancio partecipativo in Italia”, in *Azienda pubblica: teoria e problemi di management*, n. 1/2016, pp. 37-58, pg. 40. Trad. “The main step taken by the Italian government was the law n. 241/1990, on administrative procedures and accessibility to institutional documents, that tackled the problem of transparency of public institutions”

<sup>392</sup> Clift, B. (2002) “The Jospin Way”, Blackwell Publishers Ltd, pg. 4

<sup>393</sup> Ivi, pg. 14

of Jospin's government as the law Vaillant of 2002 on *democracy of proximity*<sup>394</sup>. This law envisaged the creation of *conseils de quartier* (neighbourhood councils) for municipalities over 80000 inhabitants, thus in some ways institutionalising participatory processes throughout France<sup>395</sup>. However, this was not the first attempt to institutionalise participation in France: «*France relied a lot on legislation to foster public participation, embodied especially in the 'proximity democracy' bill, passed in 2002. The first direct reference to citizen participation in French law appeared in 1977, however, with the 'Housing and Social Life' (Habitat et Vie Sociale) programme, emphasising the necessity to support urban projects promoting citizen participation. Participation was also encouraged in the first programmes of the 'Politique de la ville', like the 'Social Development of Neighbourhoods', stressing the role of civic engagement in the improvement of the quality of life in deprived suburbs. The spirit of French urban rehabilitation policies is thus full of references to public participation*»<sup>396</sup>.

Despite the presence of participation in French law, the struggle over what kind of participation was heated: on one side there was the French government with its conception embodied by the *proximity democracy* bill and on the other side there were the movements that demanded more active participation<sup>397</sup>. These groups denounced the *proximity democracy* law as a simple play to feel the pulse of the citizens without having to seriously commit to the idea of active participation<sup>398</sup>, they demanded that people had to be included in the decision-making process of the administration, taking great inspiration from the participatory experience started in Grottamare<sup>399</sup>.

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<sup>394</sup> Blondiaux, L., & Sintomer, Y. (2002) "L'impératif délibératif", *Politix. Revue des sciences sociales du politique*, 15(57), pp. 17-35, pg. 31

<sup>395</sup> Ibidem

<sup>396</sup> Talpin, J. (2012) "Schools of democracy: How ordinary citizens (sometimes) become competent in participatory budgeting institutions", ECPR Press, pg. 37

<sup>397</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) "I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente", Ediesse editore, Roma, pg. 197

<sup>398</sup> Ibidem

<sup>399</sup> Ibidem

The Italian legislative situation on participation proceeded on a very different track: public administration in Italy was considered an employment sector that was not under the pressure of efficiency. As the world has become so much more rapid in decision-making, the slowness, inefficiency and often corruption of the Italian public administration has become a real burden to the system, contributing to its overall loss of productivity and making the Italian welfare system costly and unsatisfactory<sup>400</sup>. In addition to this, the Italian legal system envisaged the direct elections of mayor only starting from the year 1993 (law n. 81/1993), thus showing that participation of the people to the local political project was granted by the Constitution but did not go further than it; in fact, it was only thanks to European norms that the perspective over participation began to broaden<sup>401</sup>.

The real shift happened in the 1990s, when Italy *«has become a laboratory for reform in economics and politics. The established equilibria have been broken, but the outcome has not yet established a new equilibrium. The old state-owned enterprises have been privatized, but few of them are successful. Italy remains with too few large corporations. The old political parties have been replaced by new ones, but none of these has yet shown an enlightened strategic leadership in the long-term»*<sup>402</sup>. It was in the 90s that the emergence of civic movements began to present itself in a strong fashion<sup>403</sup>. Civic lists are movements that *«jump into the political competition under their own banners»*<sup>404</sup>. They were the response of civil society to the raising distrust in regard to everyday politics and politicians. The

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<sup>400</sup> Malanima, P., Zamagni, V. (2010) "Introduction in 150 anni di storia economica italiana", *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 15(1), pp. 1–20, University of Bologna, pg. 17

<sup>401</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) *I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente*, Ediesse editore, pg. 107

<sup>402</sup> Malanima, P., Zamagni, V. (2010), *Introduction in 150 anni di storia economica italiana*, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 15(1), pp. 1–20, University of Bologna, pg. 16

<sup>403</sup> Colloca, C. (2003) *I sindaci degli anni 90* in Saggi ne *Il Dubbio*, rivista di critica sociale

<sup>404</sup> Lazar, M. in Galli, C. (29 marzo 2012) "Liste Civiche. Quando i candidati locali contano più dei partiti", *La Repubblica*

distance from the civil society was so big that the 1994 national elections were won by a figure that had had no previous political experience.

On the other hand, the political system of France is highly politicised and based on conflict rather than on cooperation or interest mediation. Nonetheless, the political elite also seem to account for a more profound scepticism towards the idea of a direct inclusion of citizens in political affairs, especially when it goes beyond the micro-local level of neighbourhood initiatives<sup>405</sup>. This scepticism is a central element in the traditional French Republican political culture and is one that transcends the right-left division<sup>406</sup>. In addition to this, the role of the state has been central throughout the whole history of France and its power and influence have constantly expanded through time, thus making the French state one of the most centralised in Europe<sup>407</sup>.

With the passing of the decentralisation laws of 1982, all levels of government gained more resources, and greater powers and legitimacy. Municipalities, for example, received powers in the areas of town planning, culture and primary education<sup>408</sup>. The shift in political and administrative responsibilities from the state to sub-national levels of government through decentralisation policies has provoked a substantial organisational and personal expansion of the latter. Furthermore, it has led to (and was influenced by) a modification of the ideological foundations of the Fifth Republic. One of the most visible signs of this development is a changed perspective on the relationship between state and society. This relationship is no longer characterised by the idea of distance but by that of proximity and a growing emphasis on the participation of citizens in political affairs<sup>409</sup>.

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<sup>405</sup> Röcke, A. (2014) "Framing citizen participation: participatory budgeting in France, Germany and the United Kingdom", Springer, pg. 59

<sup>406</sup> Ibidem

<sup>407</sup> Ibidem

<sup>408</sup> Ivi, pg. 61

<sup>409</sup> Ivi, pg. 62

Unlike the United States, however, the idea of participatory democracy or of a democracy of participation did not spread in this period; it did so only 30–40 years later, together with the diffusion of the Porto Alegre model of participatory budgeting<sup>410</sup>.

## 5.1 Legislative framework

The fact that the French political system is very sensible can be found in the first emergence of the idea of *democracy of proximity*. The French politician Jean-Pierre Raffarin presented himself as the embodiment of proximity, even though he clearly did not invent the term nor the concept<sup>411</sup>. The idea of Raffarin is that the French state is very much distant from the citizens because all of its representatives come from the same background, mainly the *Ecole Nationale d'Administration*, and thus cannot fairly represent the will of the people, as it should be the case<sup>412</sup>.

Even though the model proposed by Raffarin seems to transfer some of the power to the citizens, it is still a top-down approach with serious limitations to the democratic participation, such as leaving the power of representatives intact and using the same centric state overall framework<sup>413</sup>.

Royal had only slightly earlier supported an initiative to change the title of the Law on Proximity Democracy voted by the Jospin government (2002) to the Law on Participatory Democracy<sup>414</sup>. In this initial phase, which lasted roughly until the Presidential elections of 2007, Royal followed a quite far-reaching discourse

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<sup>410</sup> Röcke, A. (2014) “Framing citizen participation: participatory budgeting in France, Germany and the United Kingdom”, Springer, pg. 62

<sup>411</sup> Ivi, pg. 63

<sup>412</sup> Ibidem

<sup>413</sup> Ivi, pg. 64

<sup>414</sup> Ibidem. The Vaillant Law of 2002 on *démocratie de proximité* envisaged participation of the citizens in a purely consultative fashion. Instead the idea that Ms Royal had, was one in which citizens could actively participate throughout the whole process. The change of name had also a symbolic meaning, because it further reinforced the idea of the citizens being involved into the decisional process.

on participatory democracy. This position was close to the French academic literature on the topic: it was based on a critique of the idea of proximity participation and underlined the need to include citizens into the making of public policies<sup>415</sup>. Royal's run for presidency in 2006-2007 had a great influence on her discourse over participatory democracy. The need to reflect the qualities of President took the toll on Royal's innovative characteristic of her call for participatory democracy. The consequence of this has been that her discourse seemed to be used only for political purposes<sup>416</sup>.

Despite the ambivalent nature of the discourses of Ms Royal over participatory democracy, the simple fact that someone on the national stage was talking about it gave this alternative way of doing democracy visibility. The fact that this notion had also been supported by intellectuals inside and outside politics further reinforced this concept. In addition to this, the electoral situation both on national and on local stages pushed the left and centre parties in search for a new identity and new answers<sup>417</sup>.

The regulatory framework, thanks to the 2002 Vaillant law on democracy of proximity, gave one possible alternative: the Neighbourhood Councils (NC). These councils were one of the first ways in which citizens could find space to express their concerns and suggestions. These neighbourhood council presented many flaws in the eyes of true citizens' participations advocates, one of this being the fact that they were merely used as consultative meetings and the citizens did not have real decision-making power. Another problem of said NC was the fact that the power of local representative, within these assemblies, did not suffer any

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<sup>415</sup> Röcke, A. (2014) "Framing citizen participation: participatory budgeting in France, Germany and the United Kingdom", Springer., pg. 66

<sup>416</sup> Ivi, pg. 67

<sup>417</sup> Röcke, A. (2014) "Framing citizen participation: participatory budgeting in France, Germany and the United Kingdom", Springer., pg. 68

kind of limitations and the local officers and politician were seen as “local kings”<sup>418</sup>.

Despite these limitations, many advocates, both institutional and not, claimed more participatory methods. These advocates had been mainly influenced by the WSF of Porto Alegre, by having attended this forum or by having been indirectly contacted<sup>419</sup>. One can mention for instance the network DRD (*Démocratiser Radicalement la Démocratie*, founded by members of the Trotskyite Party LCR), academics (particularly L. Blondiaux and Y. Sintomer), the association ADELS (*Association pour la démocratie et l'éducation locale et sociale*) and the editors of the monthly journal *Le Monde Diplomatique*, which was one of the initiators of the World Social Forum<sup>420</sup>.

Nonetheless, despite all these advocates for local participatory democracy, what was really missing in the French system was a follow-up organisation that gathered all the participatory experiences together and thus continued the tradition by helping other municipalities start participatory projects<sup>421</sup>

Similarly, to what happened in France, in Italy the political situation started to move towards participation in the 1970s, pushed by the socialists party, and materialised in the form of collective bodies within schools and district councils in municipalities<sup>422</sup>. These forms of participation were complemented by other forms of participation such as the Women Council, the Council of Immigrants and Youth Forums<sup>423</sup>.

From the 1960s onwards, however, experiences of resident participation at local level mushroomed in the newly created circumscriptions and

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<sup>418</sup> Röcke, A. (2014) “Framing citizen participation: participatory budgeting in France, Germany and the United Kingdom”, Springer., pg. 70

<sup>419</sup> Ibidem

<sup>420</sup> Ibidem

<sup>421</sup> Ivi, pg. 71

<sup>422</sup> Bobbio, L., & Pomatto, G. (2007). “Il coinvolgimento dei cittadini nelle scelte pubbliche”, *Meridiana*, pp. 45-67, pg. 46

<sup>423</sup> Ibidem

neighbourhoods. These informal experiences were institutionalised in the 1970s with the creation of neighbourhood councils, in the framework of the Decentralisation Law No. 278 of 1976, which also brought the regionalisation of the country<sup>424</sup>. The Consolidated Act for Local Authorities, voted in 2000, and the reform of the Title V of the Constitution in 2001 restated the autonomy of local government and insisted on the necessary ‘communication’ between citizens and administration and on the development of ‘co-decision’ mechanisms. The Italian government also implemented an important urban renewal policy, comparable in its scope to those of France and the UK, involving some participation of residents. Neighbourhood agreements (*Contratti di Quartiere*) are aimed in particular at involving residents in the design of deprived neighbourhood renewal programmes<sup>425</sup>.

But the real forward progress starts from 1992 under the technical government of Amato and Ciampi and later under the centre-left government of Prodi (1996-1998) and D’Alema (1998-2000). It was in those years that a series of fiscal procedures intended for regeneration of troubled neighbourhoods had been set up by the *Directorate General for Territorial Coordination* (DICOTER) of the Office of Public Works<sup>426</sup>. All of these procedures contain a specific provision that renders mandatory public participation in the form of making the development process of any social, economic and urban policy a participatory one<sup>427</sup>.

In addition to this, two laws allowed some of the powerful municipalities to break free from the national legislative constrictions and to regain control over their local affairs<sup>428</sup>. One of the events that had strongly impacted this development

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<sup>424</sup> Talpin, J. (2012) “Schools of democracy: How ordinary citizens (sometimes) become competent in participatory budgeting institutions”, *ECPR Press*, pg. 38

<sup>425</sup> Talpin, J. (2007). “Schools of Democracy: how ordinary citizens become competent in participatory budgeting institutions”, pg. 38

<sup>426</sup> Pasquier, R., & Pinson, G. (2004). “Politique européenne de la ville et gouvernement local en Espagne et en Italie”, *Politique européenne*, (1), pp. 42-65, pg. 48

<sup>427</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>428</sup> *Ibidem*

is the criminal investigation of *Mani Pulite* (Clean Hands), that wiped out some of the most important political players both on the national and local level, allowing the emergence for new fresh forces<sup>429</sup>. And from that municipalities became the first institutional units that could experiments other ways of doing democracy, other than the classical party politics, that were more attentive to urban policies<sup>430</sup>.

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<sup>429</sup> Pasquier, R., & Pinson, G. (2004). "Politique européenne de la ville et gouvernement local en Espagne et en Italie", *Politique européenne, (1)*, pp. 42-65, pg. 48

<sup>430</sup> Ivi, pg. 49

## 5.2 Waves of Participatory practices

As it has been presented in the previous part of this chapter, the normative framework in which participatory experiences appeared in France and Italy differs a lot. One thing that these two countries have in common is the fact that both experiences included PB practices inside of past participatory experiences in order to implement and modernise them.

Italy present a very unique national administrative system, in the form of a very high number of municipalities. In fact, the number of municipalities in 2008 was around 8000, of which less than 150 over 50.000 inhabitants<sup>431</sup>. Given the great number of municipalities is easily understandable the complexity of PB diffusion in Italy. Moreover, this wide range determined a «*chaos creativo*» (creative chaos) of participatory practices throughout Italy<sup>432</sup>. From this *creative chaos* it is possible to single out three main generations of participatory budgeting, each with its specific features and characteristics. The first generation of participatory experiments relies very much upon the Porto Alegre experiment, that had been hailed as a new international role model for local administrations.

Of this first generation of PB in Italy, the very first experience in order of time was the one of Grottammare. This small municipality in the Marche region had been troubled by political crisis, in the form of scandals and criminal investigations of the local political class. Therefore, Grottammare civil society decided to form a civic movement to run for local elections. One of the main objectives of this civic movement was to open up the municipality for participation, thus fostering a more active role of the citizenry<sup>433</sup>. What makes the

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<sup>431</sup> Elenco codici statistici e denominazioni territoriali. Istat.it, *Istituto Nazionale di Statistica*, visited last on the 4th of December 2019, website: <https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/6789>

<sup>432</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) “I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente”, Ediesse editore, pg. 105. Trad. *The outcomes of such [participatory] experiments have generated a ‘creative chaos’*

<sup>433</sup> *Grottammare Informa*, n.2 2016. Comune.grottammare.ap.it, *Comune di Grottammare*, visited last on the 10th of August 2019, website: [www.comune.grottammare.ap.it](http://www.comune.grottammare.ap.it)

Grottammare's experience all the more important is the fact that all of this happened few years before the international emergence of the Porto Alegre experience. The mayor of Grottammare, together with other Italian delegates, went on to participate at the first WSF and imported the alternative way of doing democracy that Porto Alegre was successfully implementing at their local level, in order to strengthen the participatory mechanism of Grottammare. Another participatory experience of the first wave in Italy was the municipalities of Pieve Emanuele. Similarly, the Pieve Emanuele experiment had looked at Porto Alegre at its role model and had been in contact with the Brazilian experience through the participation of one of its municipal councillors to the WSF of Porto Alegre.

The encounter the Porto Alegre and other Brazilian experiences had a significant impact on the first French experiments. Municipalities such as Saint-Denis and Bobigny greatly benefitted from their Brazilian trip at the WSF of 2002. Even though the WSF had greatly promoted the participatory experience of Porto Alegre, in France were imported also other role models: for example, the city of Bobigny found inspiration in the participatory practice of Belem<sup>434</sup>. The appearance of PB in these two cities has been pushed by their governing coalitions led by the French Communist Party (PCF), that had sent delegates to the first WSF. It is important to notice that the two cities of Saint-Denis and Bobigny had similar social and political issues: having a high presence of non-French individuals within their territory and a high index of unemployment<sup>435</sup>. Moreover, both municipalities shared the same framework and the same procedures for their participatory process<sup>436</sup>.

What these first four experiments of participatory budgeting have in common is that they all took inspiration from the Latin American experiences. Councillors, representative of institutional stakeholders or local NGOs all had

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<sup>434</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) "I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente", Ediesse editore, pg. 205

<sup>435</sup> Ivi, pg. 202

<sup>436</sup> Ivi, pg. 205

direct contact with the Brazilian realities. The dependency tough articulated itself following very different cultural and political paths. In France in fact, the nature of the political and administrative system ensured that the experiences of Saint-Denis and Bobigny developed using a *participation of proximity*<sup>437</sup>. On the contrary, the first Italian experiences had been classified as a *Porto Alegre adapted for Europe*<sup>438</sup>. This is even demonstrated by the municipality of Pieve Emanuele that named their participatory practice as *Pieve Alegre*<sup>439</sup> and by the nickname of the Grottammare as the European Porto Alegre<sup>440</sup>.

The importance of these first experiences cannot be underestimated for the national diffusion of PB practices. The city of Bobigny for example created a strong bond with some important networks and groups that were promoting participatory budgeting and increased level of participation<sup>441</sup>. In addition to this, the municipality of Bobigny has been an active promoter of participatory practices by organising seminars and conferences in order to promote its method<sup>442</sup>. The city of Grottammare has done a similar job in Italy<sup>443</sup>. By breaking the ice and gradually diffusing its model throughout the Italian peninsula by organising training events and sharing its experience through the *Associazione Rete Nuovo Municipio*. In order to secure a successful diffusion of PB practices in France and Italy, the role of national and domestic associations cannot be underestimated. Associations like ATTAC or ARNM have been already mentioned as playing an important role, but they are not the only ones: the association *Démocratiser Radicalement la Démocratie* (DRD) was essential in diffusion information and translating

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<sup>437</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) "I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente", Ediesse editore, pg. 86

<sup>438</sup> Ibidem

<sup>439</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) "I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente", Ediesse editore, pg. 117

<sup>440</sup> Ibidem

<sup>441</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) "I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente", Ediesse editore, pg. 212. The municipality of Bobigny had strong ties with the associations *Démocratiser Radicalement la Démocracie* (DRD) that actively promoted the participatory experience of Porto Alegre throughout France.

<sup>442</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) "I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente", Ediesse editore, pg. 212

<sup>443</sup> Ivi, pg. 221

documents from other languages into French to provide technical support for French municipalities<sup>444</sup>.

As PB practice started to gradually spread nationally in France and Italy, these experiences became more and more diversified. In Italy, the second wave of PB started despite a political situation not favourable to the local institutions: the fading Berlusconi's government had drastically diminished the amount of resources allocated to municipalities and the subsequent Prodi's government, even though more generous, was more concerned with tightening the regulatory framework of local entities<sup>445</sup>. In addition to the political situation, the ideology behind the first wave of participatory budgeting was fading: an analysis of the first experience has shifted the focus of participatory practices from the great hope of *democratising democracy* to a more attentive perception of the difficulties arising from the implementation of said participatory practices<sup>446</sup>.

The element that mostly characterises the second generation of PBs in Italy has been its attention to the communication processes: municipalities started to call experts and to outsource some of the more technical proceedings such as facilitators for the assemblies and try to expand and widen the communication between all the parties involved, especially the citizens<sup>447</sup>. As it happened in Italy, the diffusion of PB in France had mainly resulted in implementation by communist led municipalities. A methodological shift in the process of diffusion came in 2005 when the region of Poitou-Charente, under the lead of Ségolène Royal, decided to implement participatory budgeting at the regional level. The second wave of PBs in Italy coincided with the French experience of Poitou-Charente.

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<sup>444</sup> Dias, N., Enríquez, S. & Julio, S. (Org.) (2019) "The Participatory Budgeting World Atlas", *Epopeia and Oficina*, Portugal, pg. 159

<sup>445</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) "I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente", Ediesse editore, pg. 132

<sup>446</sup> Ibidem

<sup>447</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) "I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente", Ediesse editore, pg. 138

The most notable experiences of the second wave PB in Italy are Modena and Paderno Dugnano. Both these experiences used as a role model the experience of Pieve Emanuele for its clear and precise method through which the PB developed itself<sup>448</sup>. The municipality of Paderno Dugnano was particularly successful because they deliberately decided to limit the number of resources for the participatory process, by doing this they did not impede the development, but they made it more defined by giving it precise boundaries<sup>449</sup>. The case of Modena is particularly important given the size of the city<sup>450</sup> and its economic relevance<sup>451</sup>. Given the size of the municipality, the mayor and the city council decided to implement a patchy PB process: every year four areas of the municipality would be selected, using specific criteria<sup>452</sup>, and in these the participatory process would take place<sup>453</sup>. The experience of Modena is important because for the first time technology was widely used throughout the process. An *e-District* has been conceived by the municipality and the assemblies are webcasted through webcam in order to further widen attendance<sup>454</sup>. Moreover, Modena has contributed to shape a cultural change in the PB culture because its practice has worked on the transparency of the institutions and the overall process and has strengthened the communication between all actors involved in the Participatory budgeting<sup>455</sup>

The footsteps of Bobigny have been followed by the French department of Poitou-Charente that in 2004 went from a right governing coalition to a leftist one, that had the aim of implementing PB in their political programme, headed by

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<sup>448</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) "I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente", Ediesse editore, pg. 138

<sup>449</sup> Ibidem

<sup>450</sup> Around 180000 inhabitants

<sup>451</sup> Factories of Ferrari and other Italian excellence are located in the surrounding areas of Modena

<sup>452</sup> Cultural, urbanistic and economic homogeneity

<sup>453</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) "I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente", Ediesse editore, pg. 141

<sup>454</sup> Ivi, pg. 142

<sup>455</sup> Ivi, pg. 143

Ségolène Royal<sup>456</sup>. The participatory project of Poitou-Charente has had a great impact on the diffusion process, both in France and in the rest of Europe, because it introduced a new level: the regional one<sup>457</sup>. The relevance of this participatory experience is further reinforced by the presence of Ségolène Royal who will run for the national presidency in 2007 and had fiercely advocated citizens participation into state affairs on the national political stage<sup>458</sup>. But the most important aspect of this process is the fact that, maybe for the first time in France, some decisional power was actually given to the participants in the form of voting power<sup>459</sup>.

As it happened for the second wave of participatory experience in Italy, the experience of the Poitou-Charentes heavily relied on outside experts and council, in order to reach an optimal level of proceedings<sup>460</sup>. Despite the will of the Department council, the participatory practice was not applied to administrative procedures, but was implemented in the organisation of departmental high schools<sup>461</sup>. To this participatory procedure a budget of 10 million Euros was given (one tenth of the overall budget allocated to high school education in the French region of Poitou-Charentes); this budget was specific competence of the assemblies made up of high school students that actively participated to the meetings<sup>462</sup>.

The meetings were organised over the period of a year divided in two cycles: in the first cycle priorities were discussed in local assemblies, animated by facilitators, by students, parents, teachers and technical personnel of the high schools and local representatives. Parallel to this the technical personnel of the

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<sup>456</sup> Sintomer, Y., Rocke, A., & Talpin, J. (2009). "Démocratie participative ou démocratie de proximité? Le budget participatif des lycées du Poitou-Charentes", *L'Homme et la société*, (172-173), pp. 303-320, pg. 304

<sup>457</sup> Ibidem

<sup>458</sup> Ibidem

<sup>459</sup> Ibidem

<sup>460</sup> Ibidem

<sup>461</sup> Ibidem

<sup>462</sup> Ibidem

departments analyses the proposals and evaluates the feasibility of the same. In the second moment of the cycle, the results of these local meetings are presented in a general assembly in which all the participants vote the order of priorities and the Department commits itself to implement the projects that have been adopted<sup>463</sup>. The novelty in this process is the presence of the association ADELS that animated the citizens meetings<sup>464</sup>.

The level of participation to the assemblies over the course of the process were undeniably high, making this experience a successful one: in the years 2007-2008, around 16400 people were accounted for in the PB meetings. At every assembly roughly around 7-8% of the people called upon actually showed up, this is a very high percentage that is almost as much as the percentage of the participatory practices in Porto Alegre<sup>465</sup>. Despite this success in numbers, the Participatory Budget of high schools has been opposed by some regional deputies of the governing majority, by the school boards, by the local high schools administrations and it was only thanks to the strong will of Ségolène Royal that the project was implemented and took off<sup>466</sup>.

The only other experience that took off at regional level after the Poitou-Charentes one, was the PB of Tuscany in Italy.

In December 2007 the Italian Region of Tuscany proclaimed Law no. 69 (henceforth, the Law) concerning Rules on the promotion of participation in the development of regional and local policies<sup>467</sup>. This novel Law encourages and guarantees the right of citizens and organizations in the Region to convene and

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<sup>463</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) "I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente", Ediesse editore, Roma, pg. 216

<sup>464</sup> Sintomer, Y., Roche, A., & Talpin, J. (2009). "Démocratie participative ou démocratie de proximité? Le budget participatif des lycées du Poitou-Charentes", *L'Homme et la société*, (172-173), pp. 303-320, pg. 307

<sup>465</sup> Ivi, pg. 309

<sup>466</sup> Ibidem

<sup>467</sup> Carson, L., & Lewanski, R. (2008). "Fostering citizen participation top-down", *International Journal of Public Participation*, 2(1), pp. 72-83, pg. 72

participate in public meetings (*Dibattito Pubblico Regionale*) regarding infrastructure and other initiatives or issues of contentious local interest<sup>468</sup>. Similarly to what happened in Poitou-Charentes, the political will of the Governor was the main reason why the participatory process actually saw the light of day<sup>469</sup>. The Law that instituted citizens participation created also the *Authority for Participation*. The most important feature of this *Authority* is the fact that it is an external body created by regional decree but with a high degree of autonomy<sup>470</sup>. The two main tasks of the *Authority* are<sup>471</sup>:

1. to promote participation by providing support to public and private agencies and individuals who are interested in carrying out such processes;
2. to guarantee the impartiality, neutrality and correctness of the processes.

The *Authority* evaluates public debate proposals concerning large infrastructure projects and decides how regional support is to be allocated to local participatory processes<sup>472</sup>. It also establishes criteria and helps and advice and can even propose changes to original proposals along the priority lines indicated by the Law<sup>473</sup>.

The innovative element of the Tuscan PB is the fact that: «*rather than reducing the decision-making to a negotiation between elites behind closed doors, the Tuscan Law brings the discussion into the public sphere. Somewhat along the lines of the French Débat public, the potential environmental, social and/or economic impacts relevant to the region are aired in an organized, public manner*»<sup>474</sup>. This PB still follows the top-down style of PB implemented throughout Italy but

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<sup>468</sup> Carson, L., & Lewanski, R. (2008) "Fostering citizen participation top-down", *International Journal of Public Participation*, 2(1), pp. 72-83, pg. 72

<sup>469</sup> Ivi, pg. 74

<sup>470</sup> Ivi, pg. 76

<sup>471</sup> Ibidem

<sup>472</sup> Ibidem

<sup>473</sup> Ibidem

<sup>474</sup> Carson, L., & Lewanski, R. (2008) "Fostering citizen participation top-down", *International Journal of Public Participation*, 2(1), pp. 72-83, pg. 77

envisages a greater role for the citizens and a higher degree of transparency<sup>475</sup>.

The regional experience of Tuscany was one of the two cases of PB on a bigger stage in Italy, the second one being the Lazio region. Nonetheless, PB diffusion did not stop there: a third generation of practices took off after 2008 and continued along the line established by the second wave of Modena and Paderno. The most notable experiences of this third generation are the IX District of Rome and Bergamo.

The experience of the District IX of Rome is emblematic: The District Council benefitted from the help of the University of Roma Tre, meaning the involvement of both professors and students, that helped monitoring and guiding the whole participatory process<sup>476</sup>. The base structure of the process remained the same, a yearly cycle of meetings, but was complemented by many technological aspects, both in the monitoring and the procedural part, such as an online platform with which the situation of the different areas could be monitored and consistently updated. The students involved in the process acted also as facilitators in the assemblies and a multicriteria method was created by the University of Roma Tre in order to classify the proposals on a cost/benefit basis<sup>477</sup>. The experience of the IX District of Rome is important because it showed that with the help of technology and the political will the situation could even change in the Eternal city. This process had the merit of not shying away from difficult situation, instead it tried to solve some of the problems that had affected the District area<sup>478</sup>.

Similarly, to the experience of the IX District of Rome, the municipality of Bergamo has implemented a participatory practice after 2006-2007<sup>479</sup> to try and tackle some of its social problems. The process implemented in this municipality

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<sup>475</sup> Ivi, pg. 78

<sup>476</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) *I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente*, Ediesse editore, pg. 165

<sup>477</sup> Ivi, pg. 166

<sup>478</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) *I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente*, Ediesse editore, pg. 167

<sup>479</sup> Ivi, pg. 168

took as model the experience of Modena and elaborated a patchy Participatory Budgeting experience, in which specific districts of the municipality would be at the centre of the yearly process<sup>480</sup>. In this sense the first areas affected by participatory budgeting were the ones that had strong social issues, such as a high percentage of migrants in the neighbourhood or overcrowded housing<sup>481</sup>. In addition to this, every district had its own specific plan, there was no general blueprint for the overall municipality and the contact with residents was particularly important because of the social nature of this participatory budgeting experience. In fact, in most of the districts affected a discussion between associations, groups or single citizens in the assemblies was used to improve the efficacy of the diagnosis instrument<sup>482</sup>. Also, in this case outside council was sought by the Municipality and the Polytechnic University of Milan was consulted as an expert on social and urban development<sup>483</sup>.

The Participatory Budgeting of Bergamo has been so far successful because it was able to go beyond the simple political affiliation and to successfully tackle the social issue present over the municipal area, maybe because the final aim of the initiators of this process was to active the local society in order to give them the tools to finally solve some of their neighbourhood's issues<sup>484</sup>.

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<sup>480</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) *I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente*, Ediesse editore, pg. 168

<sup>481</sup> Ibidem

<sup>482</sup> Ibidem

<sup>483</sup> Sintomer, Y., Allegretti, G., Herzberg, C., Röcke, A. (2009) *I bilanci partecipativi in Europa. Nuove esperienze democratiche nel Vecchio continente*, Ediesse editore, pg. 169

<sup>484</sup> Ibidem

### 5.3 Participatory Budgeting Today

In recent years, many PB have disappeared. Nowadays the majority of the PB practices is situated in Poland and Portugal<sup>485</sup> and very few of the historic experiences are still in place. One that lasted until today is the PB of Saint-Denis, even if today it has lost its revolutionary element and has become much more institutionalised within the municipal structure. Like Saint-Denis, the experience of Grottammare still stands.

The decline in the number of PB in both Italy and France, and also in other European countries, can be related to the economic crisis that has swept Europe greatly changing the economic and political equilibrium. In addition to this, the ever changing cycle of municipal election did not spare some of the parties that used PB as their flagship project. In countries such as Spain, after the 2015 series of municipal elections, some critics have even doubted the existence of PB<sup>486</sup>.

In Italy the fall in PB number has been related also to the normalisation of the phenomenon. More and more mayors and local administrators have started to look upon other methodologies to solve their problems<sup>487</sup>. Plus, the absence of a real academic and intellectual movement that supported PB, further influenced the disappearance of this phenomenon. Nonetheless, some associations and groups still push for a more participatory democracy and manage to convince some municipalities to embark in forms of PB.

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<sup>485</sup> Dias, N., Enríquez, S. & Julio, S. (Org.) (2019) “The Participatory Budgeting World Atlas”, *Epoieia and Oficina*, Portugal, pg. 26

<sup>486</sup> Ivi, pg. 41

<sup>487</sup> Longuemare, E. (2019, December 13), Semi-structured interview with Mr. Massimo Allulli

## 6. Conclusions

Since its birth, Participatory Budgeting has faced harsh criticism and opposition. This has mainly depended on the fact that PB is not a neutral element within politics, as the experience of the state of Rio Grande do Sul has showed. In addition to this, PB has always dealt with the question of legitimacy<sup>488</sup>. How could the small numbers of participants of the assemblies/meetings of the participatory processes decide for the whole neighbourhood/city? Who gave them the authority to do so?

In the Latin American examples it is fairly easy to assess from where the participatory meetings obtained their legitimacy: the mayor's office. The example of the GAPLAN, the office that examined and approved the final outcomes of the citizens assemblies, of the Porto Alegre's PB a good example: this office was officially instituted by the mayor and on purpose left outside of the administration in order to operate freely. Despite this righteous example, in many other cases the independence of the assemblies was not guaranteed, thus resulting in a severe manipulation of the participatory practices such as it happened in many French experiences.

Leaving aside the critics, the success that Participatory Budgeting had during the 1990s and early 2000s is undeniable. There are PB experiences that are being implemented even today. What this international diffusion has showed is that PB can be, and has been in many cases, one of the answers to the "crisis of democracy", thanks to its potential and its inclusive nature<sup>489</sup>. Furthermore, what

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<sup>488</sup> Benedikter, T. (2013) "Il bilancio partecipativo. Decidere sulle finanze del proprio Comune - un'introduzione", *POLITIS - Centro sudtirolese di formazione e studi politici*, Bolzano, pg. 28

<sup>489</sup> Allegretti, G. (2011) "La democrazia partecipativa in Italia e in Europa", Published in Associazione Italiana dei Costituzionalisti n. 01/2011

the international diffusion of PB has shown is the fact that this practice has come at the right time.

The last and the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century respectively, had been characterised by a great social and political unrest. Movements against neoliberalism, both in its economic and political aspect, were surging as well as feminist movements. This social unrest presented itself in full force in the protest against the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Seattle in 1999. These protests gathered a wide variety of point of views. As Mr. Agnoletto has said «*at that time we*<sup>490</sup> [...] *understood that if we did not partner up with one another we will never change the rules of the game*»<sup>491</sup>.

The protests in Seattle were the first visible example of the socio-economic unrest that was mounting throughout the 90s. The next step was to try and reunite all these local, national and international voices in one place. The chance came in 2000 when Oded Grajew, Chico Whitaker and Bernard Cassen met in Paris and firstly conceived the idea of a World Social Forum (WSF), as opposed to the World Economic Forum (WEF). These three figures were much important for the development of the WSF: Grajew was a businessman with a long experience as a leader in Brazil's business community, Whitaker was socialist leader that was exiled during the dictatorship and Cassen at the time the Director of *Le Monde Diplomatique* and founder of ATTAC France<sup>492</sup>.

The choice for the location for the WSF fell on the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre. At the time, the city had been implementing a participatory budgeting practices for almost a decade and had received international praise for its participatory experiment. The first WSF took place in 2001 and was even bigger

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<sup>490</sup> Mr Agnoletto was, and still is, an important advocate of *Lega Italiana per la lotta contro l'AIDS* (Italian League for the fight against AIDS, LILA). Here he's referring to all the other movements that fought against the neoliberal principles and that converged into the Global Justice Movements

<sup>491</sup> Longuemare, E. (2019, December 13), Semi-structured interview with Mr. Vittorio Agnoletto

<sup>492</sup> Inmotionmagazine.com, *In Motion Magazine World Eyes*, last visited 17<sup>th</sup> of January 2020, website: [https://inmotionmagazine.com/global/ogwsf\\_int.html](https://inmotionmagazine.com/global/ogwsf_int.html)

than anticipated: the city was flooded by participants from all over the world. Throughout the WSF many meetings and workshops have been organised on a wide variety of topics, all of them concerned with alternative forms of development. Within these workshops, there was also the one that presented to the international delegates the participatory practice of the city of Porto Alegre. This workshop has had an enormous impact on the delegates that represented local authorities, such as small municipalities.

The success that the WSF had in those years can be seen by the great number of participants that took part in this process, but also by the fact that the WSF of 2001 was only the first one of a long series of WSFs. This event provided a great platform to actually put in contact many different groups and associations. Furthermore, it provided also a friendly almost politically free environment in which it was possible to confront each other. I say politically free because even though many of the delegates were part of local administration, thus necessarily having a political overtone, politics was not an element of division. In fact, contrary to the WEF, the WSF did not issue a political statement at the end of its proceedings.

The WSF has been a platform in which all these movements that were seeking an alternative, being it economic, political or social, could come together and start sharing ideas and practices. This forum has been of a paramount importance for the development of participatory budgeting practices all over the world. By allowing people to interact and to meet, this forum has helped the Participatory Budget to diffuse first through Europe and then all over the world.

The European delegates that participated to the WSF of Porto Alegre in 2001 came from various countries, the most important being Italy, France and Spain. It is thanks to these three countries that the Participatory Budgeting has spread throughout Europe. France, Spain and Italy not only helped by implementing the first domestic experiences throughout their national territories,

but these same domestic experimentations, with the help of supranational actors such as the European Union, created stable networks that provided technical support and active information diffusion. For example, the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (IOPD) located in Barcelona, that actively promotes participatory experiences by sharing best practices and organising yearly conference on participatory democracy<sup>493</sup>.

The importance of advocates has been, and still is, paramount for the successful diffusion and implementation of Participatory Budgeting processes. The social nature of this particular form of Participatory Democracy implies a very close relationship between all the parties involved: the administration has to commit to this experience and has to include its citizenry throughout the whole process. In addition to this, the local social fabric needs to actively participate to this experience in order to make it successful.

In this sense, the work that network like *Démocratiser Radicalement la Démocratie* (DRD) and the *Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for Citizen's Action* (ATTAC) in France or the network *Associazione Rete Nuovo Municipio* in Italy has been of crucial importance for the successful implementation of Participatory Budgeting in those two countries. These networks have provided local technical assistance and the possibility of sharing best practices. In the case of ATTAC, its link with the WSF of Porto Alegre has allowed to further strengthen its importance, both nationally and internationally.

The diffusion of Participatory Budgeting in Europe and throughout the world, has been further helped by a great intellectual involvement. Figures like Giovanni Allegretti or Yves Sintomer have provided much literature on this matter. In addition to this, throughout the first years of the 2000s, there was much

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<sup>493</sup> Oidp.net, **International Observatory on Participatory Democracy**, last visited on the 23rd of January 2020, website: <https://oidp.net/en/>

coverage of the Participatory Budgeting by *Le Monde Diplomatique*, which director at the time was Bernard Cassen, one of the founding members of the WSF. The involvement of this journal has provided mediatic coverage, in particular in France, of this phenomenon.

The path that the diffusion of Participatory Budgeting practices has followed can be compared to the path that Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink have traced in their paper “*International Norm Dynamics and Political Change, International Organization*”. The first step that Finnemore and Sikkink have identified is *norm emergence*. In this step there is the emergence of particular norm, in this case Participatory Budgeting, that is presented and promoted to other actors<sup>494</sup>. Even though there is trace of single contacts between Porto Alegre and other municipalities, the role that WSF has played has been a crucial one: it has allowed delegates from all over the world to have a first person contact with the first successful experience of Participatory Budgeting.

The second step envisaged by Finnemore and Sikkink in the life cycle of international norms is the *norm cascade*. In this step a norm starts to be broadly accepted and it reaches a tipping point by being more and more implemented throughout the world. In the case of Participatory Budgeting the tipping point came in the first years of the 2000s, in particular between 2004 and 2006. Throughout these years Participatory Budgeting took off in many countries all over the world. For example, immediately after the first WSF in 2001, there were limited cases of Participatory Budgeting practices that were implemented in key states, such as France, Italy and Spain. In these states the number of practices implemented through 2001 and 2004 was still limited but served as an icebreaker for other experiments.

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<sup>494</sup> Finnemore, M., Sikkink, K. (1998), “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change, International Organization”, Vol. 52, No. 4, International Organization at Fifty: Exploration and Contestation in the Study of World Politics, Published by: The MIT Press, pp. 887-917, pg. 895

Experiences such as Grottammare in Italy, Saint-Denis and Morsang-sur-Orge in France or the Andalusian practices in Spain have played a pivotal role in the diffusion of participatory practices in Europe. These first generation experiences laid down the foundations that allowed the next generation of PBs to learn from previous mistakes and to have models to follow. In fact, the next generation of Participatory Budgeting practices that started in 2006 achieved greater results and explored other forms of inclusion, such as the Modena experience and the Roma VIII in which technology has been extensively employed.

With the help of Governative Organisations and Foundations, starting from 2006 it was also possible to expand the horizon of Participatory Budgeting practices to other continents, such as Africa. In this case the role played by international and external actors has been crucial: the African experiences have heavily relied on the funding from exogenous sources in order to implement Participatory Budgeting practices.

The third and last stage that Finnemore and Sikkink have detected in the life cycle of norms is the *norm internationalisation*. This stage envisages, as the name suggests, an internationalisation of the norm. Despite the great diffusion of Participatory Budgeting, a true internationalisation of this practices did not happen. The complex and multifaceted nature of this specific practice do not allow to find a univocal and comprehensive practice. The flexible essence of this particular concept does not allow to find an international and unilaterally implemented practice.

All the different experiences have had in common the aim of closing the gap between the represented and the representative and to include the citizens in the decisional process of the administration. But the different degrees through which the level of involvement of citizens has varied greatly throughout the Participatory Budgeting experiments. For example, the Latin American practices

have had a level of involvement and participation that has been rarely reached by other experiences. In addition to this, the challenges that the plethora of Participatory Budgeting practices had to face differed greatly from one another: the needs of Latin American municipal citizens were very differently from the one of North America or Europe and the needs of African municipalities differed significantly from the necessities of Asian cities. Thus, missing the step of internationalisation, Participatory Budgeting, that develops itself in such a great number of practices, fails to be identified as an international norm in the life cycle of norms model proposed by Finnemore and Sikkink.

Amitav Acharya has proposed an alternative on how a norm diffuse itself that might be more suitable for Participatory Budgeting. The idea proposed by Acharya is the one that he terms *localization*. The author sees *localization* as process through which the ideas are absorbed by the local context from an outside source, in the case of Participatory Budgeting an international one, and implements it at the local level by morphing the external norm into its own context with the help of local entrepreneurs<sup>495</sup>. In the eyes of the author the external idea is “pruned” and inserted into the local system<sup>496</sup>.

What distinguishes *localization* from other processes of norm diffusion is the fact that this mechanism is progressive, not regressive or static; It reshapes both existing beliefs and practices and foreign ideas in their local context<sup>497</sup>. Localization is an evolutionary or "everyday" form of progressive norm diffusion<sup>498</sup>. Throughout this mechanism great importance is given to local entrepreneurs that strongly push for the implementation of this norm in their specific local context<sup>499</sup>. In particular this is the case of many of the Participatory

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<sup>495</sup> Acharya, A. (2004) “How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism”, *International Organization*, Vol. 58, No. 2, pp. 239-275 Published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of the International Organization Foundation, pg. 244

<sup>496</sup> Ivi, pg. 246

<sup>497</sup> Ivi, pg. 252

<sup>498</sup> Ibidem

<sup>499</sup> Ivi, pg. 250

Budgeting experience throughout the world: the momentum in favour of participatory practice has come from the administrative side of the barricade. In many cases this has happened thanks to great help by civil society and external advisors, but still the key role has been played by the local administration.

Following the *localization* model as illustrated by Amitav Acharya in his paper “*How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism*”, Participatory Budgeting could still have reached the level of international norm.

As I have mentioned above, the idea of a norm that is taken from exogenous sources and then pruned into the local system could fit very much how Participatory Budgeting has diffused itself: the first successful example of PB is generally identified with the participatory process of Porto Alegre. From this experience the model of the Brazilian city has been imported by many other local municipalities and has been “pruned” by the domestic legal framework of each different experience. In France for example, Participatory Budgeting has been fused and mixed with the previously existing mechanism of neighbourhood councils, building on a prior practice.

In addition to this, the role of local norm entrepreneurs is stressed by the *localization* model of Mr. Acharya. As it underlined throughout this work, both local and international formal and informal advocates, have played major roles in every setting in which Participatory Budgeting practices have been implemented. From the first emergence of this practice to its international diffusion, networks, organisations and single citizens have greatly impacted the outcome of this diffusion. The credibility of those actors that actively advocate for the norm, in this case Participatory Budgeting, is also an important aspect in the process of *localization*.

In fact, since its own first implementation in Latin America, Participatory Budgeting has served the purpose of mending the relationship between the

representative and the represented. Its features of transparency and accountability are two elements that have allowed this particular participatory practice to flourish. For example, in the case of Saint-Denis and Bobigny in France, Participatory Budgeting helped the municipality by fighting the abstentionism that had affected the municipal elections of these two cities.

One of the main reasons of this has been the fact that Participatory Budgeting heavily relies on social interaction between participants, thus fostering clashes and encounters between the different actors involved throughout the process. It forces people to express their point of view and it allows parts of the citizenry to be included in some of the decisional-making processes. Participatory Budgeting became the answer to which specific part of society and of the political world could turn to try and tackle some of the problem that the representative system has been facing in the last twenty to thirty years.

But one of the aspects that, in my eyes, makes Participatory Budgeting so interesting is the fact that this particular practice has been used to complement the standard representative system and not as a substitute. In almost all of the cases in which Participatory Budget was implemented, the normal representative structure, composed by the many administrative offices directed by the mayor's office, remained firmly in place. The choice of which type of participation to implement is entirely in the hands of the first initiator of the process, and even if in many cases there is a *selective listening* of the citizenry, in many other more by implementing a Participatory Budgeting practice new voices emerge.

By working as a safety valve for some parts of the citizenry, Participatory Budgeting has changed and shuffled any of the previously established relations between the representative and the represented. And given the nature and complexity of such well-established relations, it is very hard to say that Participatory Budgeting has become an International Norm. I say this because, as I hope it has emerged throughout this work, the many different experience

compose a very various panorama. There is no single and unique version of PB that could be taken from one context and smoothly inserted in another setting without triggering great repercussions.

So, despite the *localization theory* of International Norms, as expressed by Amitav Acharya, seem to fit into the diffusion scheme that I have presented, the level of pruning required by Participatory Budgeting to adapt to the different context is too high and, in many cases, results in the serious changing of core elements of PB. In addition to this, a crucial element that an International Norm requires is a single definition. For example, the Human Rights Norms that have certainly reached the level of International Norms, are almost univocally accepted and have a single definition that can be more or less interpreted. On the contrary, as it is also mentioned previously in this work, there is not a single definition of Participatory Budgeting that can cover all the different experiences that have emerged throughout the years.

# Appendix: Interviews

## Interview Questions

Secondo la sua esperienza, come nasce e per quale motivo nasce (dibattito sul futuro degli enti locali) e si sviluppa la Rete Nuovo Municipio? Qual era l'obiettivo che questo network si era posto di realizzare? Come era strutturata questa associazione? (nel senso aveva un segretariato tutto suo o era all'interno di altri enti pubblici)

Qual è stato il contesto socioeconomico e normativo italiano in cui questa associazione ha iniziato a muoversi?

La Carta del Nuovo Municipio è stata presentata al WSF di Porto Alegre, quanto è stato importante per la ARNM avere come punto di partenza proprio questo forum internazionale? Qual è stato il rapporto che questa associazione ha avuto con il WSF?

Nelle mie ricerche ho trovato spesso riferimenti alla RNM come ad uno dei primi promotori di pratiche partecipative in Italia. Secondo la sua esperienza quanto è vera questa affermazione? E quali sono state le difficoltà che l'associazione ARNM ha incontrato?

In che ruolo si è strutturata questa spinta da parte dell'ARNM verso le pratiche partecipative? Si è trattato di un ruolo attivo o passivo? (nel senso avete operato sia attraverso la promozione e l'educazione)

Qual è stato, secondo la sua esperienza, il momento decisivo che ha sancito l'adozione di pratiche di budget partecipativo in Italia? Qual è stata la caratteristica principale del PB in Italia?

Perché le pratiche partecipative hanno trovato delle difficoltà a partire al sud Italia? ci sono state delle cause strutturali o si tratta di una mancanza di convinzione da parte degli amministratori locali?

Perché secondo lei è stata scelta proprio questa particolare forma di democrazia partecipativa? (PB)

Perché secondo lei il WSF è stato così importante? Cosa ha rappresentato avere un forum di quella portata in quegli anni e quanto è stato importante che il WSF sia stato creato proprio in quegli anni?

Qual è stata secondo lei la caratteristica principale del WSF di Porto Alegre che ha permesso a questo forum di diventare così importante?

Secondo lei qual è stato il ruolo di Porto Alegre all'interno del WSF? *Prompt*: qual è stato il ruolo che lei ha percepito di questa città? E come è cambiata la posizione della città nel corso del tempo?

All'interno del WSF erano presenti delle assemblee tematiche? Se sì, qual è stata quella che secondo lei era la più importante? Quanto è stato presente l'aspetto educativo di questo evento? Com'è stato riportare e raccontare questa esperienza una volta tornati in Italia? Come sono cambiate le cose dopo il WSF del 2001?

La delegazione proveniente dall'Italia come era costituita? C'era una grande varietà tra gli attori o era piuttosto omogenea? *Prompt*: quali erano, se c'erano, le persone, le associazioni o i gruppi che hanno avuto un ruolo più di spicco rispetto agli altri? Nelle mie ricerche è emerso che la componente di attori istituzionali sia stata molto alta, secondo la sua esperienza questo si può dire vero?

Dopo l'esperienza dei WSF, sono nate delle esperienze anche Europee e nazionali. Lei ha partecipato ad una di queste esperienze europee? Se sì, quali sono state le differenze e/o le somiglianze che ci sono state?

Lei cosa pensa della definizione di Parlamento mondiale in esilio che è stata data al WSF? È una definizione che condivide o a cui è contrario?

Se dovesse descrivere il WSF con una sola parola quale sarebbe?

## Interview with Massimo Allulli

On the 20th December 2019, interview conducted over the phone. Duration time 36:28

E.L.: Qual è stata la tua esperienza di questa rete? Com'è nata e qual è stato il processo che ha portato alla nascita di questa rete? Anche secondo quello che tu hai studiato e visto.

M.A.: Quando la rete è nata esattamente come associazione, cioè quando sono andati a depositare l'atto costitutivo non saprei dire la data esatta, ma è nata dal 2002 dalla presentazione a Porto Alegre al Forum Sociale Mondiale della Carta del Nuovo Municipio. E di questa cosa il cui promotore fu Alberto Magnaghi, che ne è stato l'estensore principale, il principale ispiratore e che da lì fu sostenuta da alcune municipalità italiane. In particolare in Italia i soci fondatori, quelli che hanno seguito Alberto Magnaghi, Giovanni Allegretti e una serie di altri studiosi, che hanno seguito questo processo erano il comune di Grottammare nelle Marche guidato dall'allora sindaco Massimo Rossi, il municipio Roma XI, che adesso è diventato Roma VIII, per capirci il quartiere Garbatella, il cui presidente era Massimiliano Smeriglio, che ha anche scritto un libro che si chiama "Città Comune", in cui lui racconta in un capitolo che si intitola "il ritorno delle caravelle" come abbiano ripreso l'esperienza del bilancio partecipativo da Porto Alegre. Infatti, lui è stata una persona molto attiva all'interno di questa rete, così come Salvatore Amura che allora era assessore a Pieve Emanuele. Loro, a partire dalla Carta del Nuovo Municipio, fondarono questa rete in Italia. In quegli anni c'era il Movimento No Global che sfociò prima nella manifestazione di Genova poi nel forum di Firenze e diciamo un po' tutti gli amministratori locali, sindaci, assessori che si riconoscevano in quel movimento hanno usato la Rete Nuovo Municipio come luogo per organizzarsi e tenersi in contatto per poi tradurre nelle loro pratiche amministrative le proposte e la cultura del movimento No Global. Questo è stato il ruolo della rete.

E.L.: Ovviamente la rete si è sviluppata in contesto molto particolare. In Italia gli anni '90 sono stati un decennio molto forte soprattutto per il movimento No Global e poi i primi anni 2000 con l'arrivo del Forum Sociale Europeo a Firenze è stato un momento di scatto. La rete come si è collocata all'interno di questo contesto? È stata uno dei primi promotori? Quali difficoltà ha dovuto incontrare in particolare?

M.A.: Ha avuto un ruolo importante, come ti dicevo, di essere un po' il ponte tra il Movimento e i sindaci, gli amministratori e gli assessori. Da questo punto di vista non c'erano difficoltà perché era assolutamente coerente con quelli che erano gli scopi del Movimento. Molti di quelli che facevano parte della rete avevano anche dietro l'impegno di alcuni partiti politici come Rifondazione Comunista e un po' anche i Verdi. Quindi le

stesse persone, che poi sono anche quelle che ti ho nominato, facevano parte della Rete Nuovo Municipio come amministratori e poi magari come politici erano anche quelli che animavano il Movimento. Da questo punto di vista quindi c'era un doppio ruolo di queste persone che però, per quello che ho potuto osservare io, non ha mai creato problemi perché poi quello era un movimento molto critico verso governi nazionali e istituzioni globali, come la Banca Mondiale, ma che allo stesso tempo invece proponeva un nuovo municipalismo e aveva molti rapporti con i comuni e le città e in particolare quando gli amministratori erano di quella parte politica.

M.A.: Quella rete lì aveva dietro un gruppo di professori e intellettuali che curavano la parte più teorica della rete, il programma. Loro, a partire da Alberto Magnaghi, oggi hanno costituito la associazione Società dei Territorialisti che è un po' la prosecuzione ideale di quella Rete. La cosa che però ti segnalo è che la Rete Nuovo Municipio non era solo bilancio partecipativo, ma aveva uno scopo ben più ampio. La loro idea era un'alternativa politica complessiva basata su una democrazia partecipativa nelle città e anche una nuova economia locale, sostenibile e circolare basata sui diritti e il rispetto dell'ambiente. Un'idea di società diversa, una diversa organizzazione sociale, non capitalista diciamo così. C'era una rivista chiamata "Carta", il cui direttore era Pierluigi Sullo, che pubblicava tutti i documenti delle assemblee della Rete, e faceva un costante lavoro di informazione.

E.L.: Quanto è stata importante la presentazione della Carta del Nuovo Municipio a Porto Alegre a livello di visibilità internazionale ed europea?

M.A.: È stato un vero momento di svolta perché senza quella non ci sarebbe stata la Rete. È stata tra l'altro una cosa in cui l'Italia è stata pioniera. Anche grazie al fatto che l'Italia ha una storia di democrazia comunale antichissima, e quindi l'Italia dei comuni si è presentata lì, a Porto Alegre, e gli italiani hanno presentato questa cosa che ha incontrato un consenso globale, tanto è che nel Forum Sociale Mondiale si è creata una organizzazione il Forum delle Autorità Locali (FAL) che di fatto è stata molto animata anche dagli italiani sulla base di quella carta e ha avuto legami con una serie di reti internazionali, per esempio in Francia c'è stata una rete che è esistita per qualche tempo, che si chiamava "Democratizzare la democrazia". Diciamo che l'evoluzione attuale è l'Osservatorio Internazionale sulla Democrazia Partecipativa con sede a Barcellona. In quegli anni c'era una grande aspettativa e c'era l'idea che la cosa potesse continuare a crescere perché ci sono stati anni in Italia in cui c'erano centinaia di esperienze, tantissimi comuni che seguivano la cosa e c'era una rete mondiale, ma purtroppo con la crisi economica sono arrivate altre priorità e la cosa si è un po' sgonfiata. Dopodiché però sono

arrivati molti altri movimenti su scala globale come i movimenti sul clima, lo Sciopero Globale del Clima, prima ancora c'era stato Occupy Wall Street. Sono ondate periodiche. Porto Alegre è forse stato per il 2000 un po' quello che nell'Ottocento era stata l'Internazionale, un punto di incontro di dibattito su cui si è costruito un punto di vista comune che non c'è mai più stata dopo. Alcune esperienze di governo che sono arrivate dopo in America Latina si sono ispirate a quei valori lì tant'è che un ruolo importantissimo nelle nuove costituzioni che sono state fatte è stato dato al municipalismo, la democrazia locale, in Bolivia, nel Venezuela di Chavez, nel Brasile di Lula. Forse in questi paesi, più che in Europa poiché erano Paesi in via di Sviluppo e c'era più margine di intervento, questi interventi hanno avuto effetti misurabili anche in termini di riduzione delle disuguaglianze e uscita dalla povertà di ampi settori della popolazione tramite politiche municipali di diritto alla casa, sanità, accesso al cibo. Non è democrazia solo in termini formali, ma anche in termini sostanziali di accesso ai servizi e di diritti.

E.L.: È stato anche possibile perché questi paesi hanno una storia di democrazia più recente di quella europea. Questa storia più recente ha lasciato più spazio di manovra alle istanze partecipative o di democrazia condivisa.

M.A.: Erano anche fasi storiche diverse. In questi paesi si sono trovati anche di fronte a conflittualità sociali dove un nuovo Governo decide di fare un minimo di redistribuzione della ricchezza e tira fuori dalla povertà milioni di Indios prima esclusi da tutto. Qui fortunatamente un movimento di emancipazione già l'avevamo avuto, dalla rivoluzione industriale in poi, per cui non abbiamo un milione di Indios da tirare fuori dalla povertà e dalla denutrizione. Da noi il cambiamento sociale si misura in altri modi e c'era stato negli anni '60 e '70 con le pressioni dei sindacati e dei partiti di sinistra che hanno ottenuto una serie di conquiste, tant'è che anche in Italia il municipalismo non trova solo radici nel comune medievale ma anche nei movimenti più recenti, il sindacato dei consigli, il consiliarismo e poi anche le rivendicazioni democratiche che hanno portato a creare nelle città le circoscrizioni o i consigli di quartiere, insomma non nasce dal nulla.

E.L.: Infatti anche in Francia per esempio è stato istituzionalizzato il consiglio di quartiere.

M.A.: Esatto. In Francia nel 2002 è stata fatta la legge sul consiglio di quartiere.

E.L.: In Italia una legge o un impianto normativo simile rispetto a quello francese esiste?

M.A.: No, in Italia noi abbiamo avuto negli anni '70 la nascita e l'istituzione delle circoscrizioni nei comuni più grandi come istituti di partecipazione, ma in realtà poi da allora non ci sono state innovazioni normative da questo punto di vista, anzi il problema è stato che poi il reflusso dopo la crisi economica ha fatto sì addirittura che siano stati eliminate le circoscrizioni nei comuni con popolazione inferiore a 250mila, cioè quasi tutti. E quindi noi siamo in piena fase di regresso.

E.L.: Anche dato dall'abolizione dell'ICI che ha tolto una buona parte della risorse comunali?

M.A.: In realtà non tanto quello perché non le pagavano con le risorse dell'ICI. I soldi dell'ICI i comuni li recuperano perché poi il Governo ha dovuto compensarli con altri trasferimenti. La democrazia ha comunque subito la logica dei tagli lineari, con i quali sono state tagliate molte cose molte che non erano la causa dei problemi finanziari.

E.L.: Quindi secondo la tua opinione le pratiche partecipative in Italia hanno avuto un reindirizzamento verso questioni un po' più di tipo decisionale, non nell'ambito economico, ma come indirizzare la città o la municipalità. visto che c'erano meno risorse a disposizione, si sono improntate verso una direzione di guida più che di decisione economica?

M.A.: A un certo punto i bilanci partecipativi non sono più stati fatti anche perché il bilancio partecipativo è sempre stato una parte degli investimenti lasciata alla decisione della cittadinanza. Poi a un certo punto molti comuni avevano talmente pochi investimenti disponibili che non aveva più senso stornarne una parte, diventavano cifre irrisorie. Un comune in gravi difficoltà finanziaria si trova anche in grande difficoltà a fare un bilancio partecipativo. Poi comunque sia non è che la democrazia locale si sia solo espressa solo attraverso il bilancio partecipativo, ci sono una serie di altri strumenti anche su questioni importanti che magari non sono il bilancio, come le decisioni sull'urbanistica, i piani regolatori, i regolamenti su cui ci sono comunque una serie di istituti di partecipazione, che esistono per legge, come la legge sull'urbanistica che prevede le osservazioni della cittadinanza. Sono strumenti che ci sono ancora, li usano soprattutto naturalmente le persone più competenti e organizzate in associazioni. L'idea del bilancio partecipativo è quella di essere aperto a più persone possibili anche quelle meno impegnate politicamente, o con meno risorse culturali. In realtà ci sono anche delle esperienze

contemporanee, non è che tutto è finito. Ci sono casi come quelli di Barcellona o di Madrid che hanno creato piattaforme partecipative.

E.L.: Anche Parigi.

M.A.: Anche Parigi esatto. In Italia adesso l'evoluzione sono i regolamenti sui beni comuni primo dei quali è stato quello del comune di Bologna che permettono ai cittadini di collaborare direttamente con il comune per realizzare dei servizi o per curare dei beni per esempio danno la possibilità a dei cittadini che lo vogliono fare di prendersi cura direttamente di un parco, di un'area verde o farci iniziative culturali o rimettere in sesto un edificio pubblico in disuso e farci un centro per la cittadinanza e sono iniziative molto interessanti, lo sta facendo Bologna, Reggio Emilia che dopo la chiusura delle circoscrizioni ha fatto il suo regolamento per i quartieri che si chiama Quartiere Bene Comune. Insomma, i quartieri cercano ancora modi per coinvolgere la cittadinanza e governare collaborando con la cittadinanza. Questo è importante perché è quello che sta succedendo oggi. Se vai a guardare il sito del Laboratorio per la sussidiarietà LABSUS loro fanno un elenco di tutti i comuni che hanno attuato un regolamento per i beni comuni. I Comuni mettono in atto questa pratica anche per risolvere un problema di ristrettezza finanziarie dicendo ai cittadini "decidiamo insieme le politiche e facciamole insieme. Se pensate che serva uno spazio verde per la città non venitecelo solo a chiedere ma facciamolo insieme."

E.L.: La differenza tra Nord e Sud da questo punto di vista? Centro e Nord Italia ci sono state molte esperienze e anche durature e di successo mentre al sud è stato più difficile questo coinvolgimento.

M.A.: Al sud c'è l'esperienza pugliese dove sono state fatte molte cose soprattutto dalla regione Puglia quando c'era Niki Vendola. Ma questo vale per tutte le regioni è un fatto di capacità e performance amministrativa che è più consolidata al Nord che al Sud, perché tendenzialmente sono comuni più ricchi, con più spazio per gli investimenti, con personale più formato non solo in questo settore ma in tutti i settori, ma ciò non toglie che ci siano state esperienze anche al Sud. Per esempio, uno dei promotori della Rete Nuovo Municipio era Tonino Perna il presidente del Parco dell'Aspromonte che addirittura sperimentò un moneta per il Parco dell'Aspromonte, ma anche oggi per esempio a Napoli il sindaco ha creato una delibera per riconoscere come beni comuni una serie di edifici pubblici per fare spazi sociali e culturali. È da tenere in considerazione che il contesto è un contesto dove i comuni hanno meno risorse e più problemi.

## Interview Vittorio Agnoletto

On the 13th December 2019, interview conducted over the phone. Duration time 51:09

Emile Longuemare: Buongiorno.

Vittorio Agnoletto: Buongiorno.

E: Prima di iniziare volevo solo chiederle se per lei fosse un problema il fatto che io registri questa conversazione.

V.A.: Per me non c'è nessun problema se lei registra la conversazione, però le chiedo, come siamo rimasti d'accordo, che prima di inserire qualunque pezzo che mi riguarda dentro il suo lavoro me lo manda da leggere.

E.L.: Assolutamente sì, nessun problema. Io vorrei iniziare un attimo parlando del World Social Forum e del ruolo che lei ha avuto dentro questo Forum. E la domanda da cui vorrei iniziare è qual è stato il ruolo che lei ha avuto all'interno di questo Forum, vista la grande importanza che poi questo evento ha avuto.

V.A.: Io non so se lei è andato a vedere quello che è il mio curriculum (*Emile: assolutamente sì*) Ecco, allora lei sa che ero stato il portavoce della delegazione italiana a Porto Alegre nel 2001. Sono stato membro, e lo sono ancora tutt'ora, del Consiglio Internazionale del Forum Sociale Mondiale e poi nel luglio 2001 sono stato portavoce del Genoa Social Forum. E adesso sono nel Comitato Esecutivo del Forum Sociale Mondiale sulla Sanità e sui Servizi Sociali. Quindi lei vuol sapere perché questo World Social Forum è stato così importante?

E.L.: Sì, perché questo evento è stato un qualcosa che ha riscontrato fin da subito un grande successo, infatti nel secondo anno i numeri sono pressoché raddoppiati rispetto al primo.

V.A.: Perché è stato un movimento globale. Paradossalmente ci hanno definito No-Global, ma è stato probabilmente il primo movimento veramente mondiale e globale. I Social Forum sono partiti da Porto Alegre e sono arrivati ovunque; c'è stato un Social Forum del Bangladesh, dell'Iraq, ci sono stati i Social Forum di varie nazioni africane e anche in America. È stato un movimento veramente globale. Inoltre, è stato un

movimento non solo di protesta, ma soprattutto di proposta. Ha rappresentato l'opposizione globale al neoliberismo ed è stato un movimento competente, preparato, che aveva la consapevolezza che i destini dell'umanità e del pianeta sono strettamente legati fra loro e che tutti abbiamo un destino che ci tiene insieme. Queste sono state le caratteristiche di questo movimento che ha sollevato delle questioni epocali, intrecciando problemi legati al modello di sviluppo a questioni di principio e di metodo e cioè che cosa significa nel terzo millennio parlare di democrazia.

E.L.: Quindi si può dire che questo evento è stato un grande movimento di unificazione di tante delle proteste e delle proposte che erano state, e si stavano ancora facendo, nei confronti del neoliberismo?

V.A.: Sì. Piuttosto che di unificazione, possiamo dire che migliaia e migliaia di persone che erano impegnate in battaglie in difesa della democrazia, della giustizia e di un futuro condivisibile per l'umanità ad un certo punto hanno avuto la consapevolezza che le battaglie che conducevano nel proprio settore erano insufficienti se non si legavano una all'altra e non mettevano in discussione l'insieme del modello di sviluppo e dell'orizzonte su cui stava correndo il pianeta in quel momento. Le faccio un esempio che penso possa esserci utile.

Io allora ero stato il fondatore e presidente della LILA, La Lega Italiana per la Lotta contro l'AIDS. Ero uno ricercatore e allo stesso tempo un attivista, coordinavo tutte le principali associazioni di lotta all'AIDS dell'Europa occidentale e avevo una serie di incarichi istituzionali: membro della commissione AIDS, membro della commissione per la lotta alle droghe della presidenza del Consiglio, dirigevo sei progetti europei di ricerca sulla sanità. Mentre eravamo impegnati in tutta questa attività nel mondo dell'AIDS, avevamo fatto una scelta, mi riferisco in particolare alla seconda metà degli anni '90, di batterci contro le multinazionali del farmaco, al fianco di Mandela e del Sud-Africa che si erano ribellati alle regole sui brevetti dell'OMC. Quando Mandela diventa presidente nel 1996, in Sud Africa il 30% delle donne tra i 30 e i 40 anni è sieropositiva. Per questo Mandela cerca di giungere ad una trattativa per ottenere farmaci a prezzi scontati, ma le multinazionali chiudono qualsiasi trattativa e così decide di fare una legge che autorizzi le aziende sudafricane a produrre farmaci anti AIDS ignorando i brevetti. 39 multinazionali, capeggiate dalla Glaxo Wellcome portarono Mandela e il governo

sudafricano davanti al tribunale dell'OMC accusando lo stesso governo di non aver rispettato gli accordi TRIPS e minacciando forme pesanti di sanzioni verso il Sud Africa. A quel punto in tutto il mondo scatta una campagna di solidarietà nei confronti del Sud Africa e di Mandela. Abbiamo organizzato denunce contro le multinazionali, il concerto degli U2 a Londra...Ad un certo punto noi della LILA ci siamo resi conto che non potevamo vincere la nostra battaglia per ottenere dei farmaci ad un costo accettabile, derivante da un corretto rapporto tra il costo di produzione e il costo di vendita, se non si fossero modificati gli accordi TRIPS. Modificare questi accordi però voleva dire modificare le regole di funzionamento dell'OMC e quindi eravamo immediatamente in sintonia e in rapporto con i sindacati dei lavoratori e gli studenti che a Seattle, nel novembre del '99, avevano protestato contro i lavori dell'OMC. Non potevamo vincere o fare passi avanti nella nostra specifica battaglia sull'AIDS se non veniva posta in discussione buona parte della struttura su cui questo mondo si basava, che era appunto l'OMC. Allo stesso modo coloro che si occupavano già allora dei processi migratori si rendevano conto che se non cambiavano le politiche del FMI e della WB (allora c'erano i famosi piani di aggiustamento strutturali), la loro battaglia, che non era solo di solidarietà verso i migranti, ma era anche incentrata sulla necessità di far sì che non si dovesse emigrare dall'Africa, non avrebbe potuto avere successo. Allora comprendemmo, e questo avvenne in tutto il mondo e anche in Italia che era uno dei Paesi con il maggior numero di associazioni della società civile, che l'avversario era comune e che era rappresentato dalla trilogia: WB, FMI e WTO. Allora Porto Alegre, che raccoglieva le proteste di Seattle e le rielaborava, rappresentava questa consapevolezza. E non è un caso che all'interno del comitato promotore, il comitato brasiliano, ci troviamo Via Campesina, i Senza Terra e la CUT, ma anche la Pastorale del Lavoro, molte associazioni cattoliche e una grande parte dell'episcopato, insieme ad una delle più grandi associazioni di industriali cristiani. È qualcosa che va ben oltre i confini della sinistra, che raccoglie una grande sensibilità anche nel mondo cattolico e che riesce ad utilizzare linguaggi innovativi che coinvolgono vasti strati di popolazione in tutto il mondo.

Inoltre, come disse Susan George, l'allora presidente di ATTAC Francia, nel suo intervento d'apertura del WSF di Genova il 16 luglio 2001: *«questo è il primo movimento che non chiede nulla per sé, ma che chiede qualcosa per l'umanità intera»*. Tutto questo era una novità, il mondo occidentale non veniva da una crisi economica e questo grande

movimento guardava al mondo intero e al rapporto nord sud, tant'è vero che gli obiettivi centrali erano il blocco del commercio delle armi, la critica ad un modello di sviluppo incentrato sugli idrocarburi solo per fare degli esempi. Tutte queste istanze si resero palesi a Porto Alegre e ancora di più a Genova. In quei luoghi si comprese che la figura del migrante, a causa di questa globalizzazione neoliberista, sarebbe stata la prima a pagare un prezzo molto alto; non a caso la prima manifestazione tenutasi il 18 luglio a Genova fu proprio incentrata sulla figura dei migranti. Ecco, erano queste le caratteristiche.

E.L.: Perfetto. Questo discorso è stato molto interessante e ha già risposto ad alcune delle domande che volevo porle. Una domanda che emerge anche da ciò che ha appena detto si riferisce al ruolo di Porto Alegre. Perché lei ha detto che Porto Alegre è stato l'inizio e l'iniziatore di questo processo che poi è sfociato nel WSF. Come è cambiato il ruolo di Porto Alegre nel corso dei vari WSF? Glielo chiedo perché dopo il 2004 è avvenuto un cambio al governo della città e quindi un riorientamento di quelle che erano le priorità e le pratiche cittadine.

V.A.: Bisogna prima distinguere quando si parla di Porto Alegre in quanto città e quando di Porto Alegre come WSF, perché le due cose hanno anche due percorsi diversi. Se parliamo del WSF, per parlare di Porto Alegre non si può ignorare Seattle. Porto Alegre è il tentativo di sistematizzazione ed elaborazione di una serie di contenuti che a livello embrionale si erano già pubblicamente manifestati alla grande opinione pubblica a Seattle. Porto Alegre è quindi il tentativo di sistematizzazione di tutte queste istanze e se qualcuno mi chiede che cosa ha rappresentato il primo Forum di Porto Alegre, posso dire che è stato una grande università mondiale. Migliaia e migliaia di giovani ascoltavano e prendevano appunti da attivisti esperti che provenivano da ogni parte del mondo. Questa spinta, che era presente a livello globale, si è incontrata da un lato con il protagonismo, la consapevolezza e soprattutto la capacità di stare uniti dei movimenti brasiliani e dall'altro lato con l'amministrazione progressista dello stato del Rio Grande do Sul. Bisogna aggiungere a tutto questo la municipalità di Porto Alegre che stava cercando di sperimentare una modalità di gestione democratica che intrecciasse, e questa era la novità interessante, la democrazia rappresentativa, senza sconfiggerla e forme di partecipazione di democrazia diretta. All'interno di questa grande novità, lo strumento più interessante è stato quello del *bilancio partecipativo*. Cosa significava allora bilancio partecipativo?

Significava che il consiglio municipale di Porto Alegre riconosceva che una parte del bilancio veniva dedicata a delle priorità che la popolazione avrebbe individuato. E proprio questa volontà della popolazione si manifestava attraverso un percorso strutturato. Alla base di tutto c'era un grande lavoro nei quartieri, un incontro con l'amministrazione, sia nella forma delle sue rappresentanze politiche sia nei suoi tecnici, una forma di sensibilizzazione che durava mesi e che solo alla fine culminava in assemblee che decidevano la lista delle priorità da presentare alle municipalità. Ecco, questo è stato un messaggio molto forte che è partito da Porto Alegre. Questa convergenza si realizzava tra movimenti e amministrazioni culturalmente aperte. Un percorso che è andato avanti per anni e che abbiamo cercato in seguito di portare anche in Europa. Ci sono state delle reti di enti locali che hanno cercato di realizzare qualcosa di simile, ma si sono subito scontrate, non solo su questo tema, con un differente comportamento e prima ancora con una differente sensibilità del mondo politico della sinistra, più precisamente del centro sinistra e ancora più precisamente ancora della famiglia dell'Internazionale Socialista. Cosa è successo? In America Latina si stabilisce un rapporto dialettico, che non vuol dire un dialogo sempre tranquillo e sereno, ma pur sempre un rapporto dialettico nel reciproco riconoscimento delle varie ragioni e dell'indispensabilità di uno all'altro. Questo rapporto dialettico tra i movimenti e le rappresentanze politiche della sinistra e in parte anche del centro sinistra, ha permesso che i movimenti, non solo quelli brasiliani, ma latino-americani in generale, diventassero fondamentali nelle trasformazioni di quel decennio politico in America Latina. Non dimentichiamoci che da Lula a Correas, a Morales sono tutti passati, ancora prima di essere presidenti, dal Forum Sociale Mondiale. Lula l'ho conosciuto a una riunione del Consiglio Internazionale quando non era ancora il presidente del Brasile. C'è stata da parte dei movimenti una capacità di contaminazione delle forze politiche e viceversa, da parte di diverse forze politiche, sicuramente con delle contraddizioni, una disponibilità a lasciarsi pervadere e a confrontarsi con i temi del movimento. È chiaro che questo ha avuto un impatto, prima ancora che sullo scenario continentale e nazionale dell'America Latina, sulle amministrazioni locali. Tutto questo invece, in Italia e in Europa ha vissuto uno sviluppo diverso. Soprattutto in Italia, ma anche in Europa, abbiamo assistito a una chiusura totale nei confronti del movimento da parte del centro sinistra. Non bisogna dimenticare che il PT brasiliano che, pur con delle contraddizioni, si è aperto ad una contaminazione nei confronti di alcuni movimenti, è

iscritto all'Internazionale-socialista. Il gruppo socialista europeo al contrario ha chiuso totalmente la porta e si è schiarato senza né A né B in difesa del liberismo. Se dobbiamo poi passare per dei simboli, il direttore Generale dell'Organizzazione Mondiale del Commercio per due mandati è stato il belga Pascal Lamy, che era stato un parlamentare socialista. Quindi, mentre in America Latina si assiste sul piano politico ad una radicalizzazione dei contenuti e ad uno scontro tra la sinistra, nelle sue variegata e contraddittorie forme e le forze politiche conservatrici e reazionarie, in Europa si assiste al formarsi di un blocco unico. Ragionando sul Parlamento Europeo, che è l'espressione più elevate di ciò che accade nei singoli Paesi, si è assistito ad un'alleanza tra il partito socialista e il Ppe, il partito popolare e quindi i conservatori, all'interno della quale sostanzialmente non c'era nessuna differenza significativa sugli aspetti economici e finanziari. Diverso è invece il discorso sui diritti civili e diritti umani. Ma sul modello di sviluppo non c'è stata grande differenza tra questi soggetti; e quindi anche gli enti locali, che hanno tentato delle sperimentazioni che potessero richiamare il *Bilancio partecipativo*, si sono ritrovati isolati come singole amministrazioni locali, spesso in contrasto con il partito centrale o comunque in mezzo al gelo e all'indifferenza o addirittura alla critica e ai sospetti del partito cui queste amministrazioni locali facevano riferimento. Non è un caso infatti che esperienze di questo tipo si siano sviluppate in piccole municipalità spesso guidate da liste civiche. In Italia non si ha nessun esempio di progetti di *Bilancio partecipativo* in una grande o media città.

E.L.: Qualcosa si c'è stato, per esempio Modena a metà degli anni 2000.

V.A.: O, per esempio, De Magistris a Napoli che attraverso l'istituzione di alcune consulte ha tentato un percorso di partecipazione e contaminazione con movimenti ecc. Ma sono state esperienze limitate.

E.L.: Anche il Lazio mi sembra lo abbia fatto sulla sanità.

V.A.: Ma non attraverso forme significativa di partecipazione.

E.L.: No, sempre forme di consultazione più sul modello francese.

V.A.: Esattamente. La cosa interessante del Brasile e di Porto Alegre è che tentano di superare una contrapposizione che per tanto tempo nei movimenti si è citata: quella tra

democrazia delegata e democrazia diretta. Un tentativo che vede intrecciarsi queste due forme democratiche che sono necessarie quando si deve andare a governare una grande città o addirittura delle regioni. L'Europa e l'Italia hanno perso questa opportunità, come ne hanno perse tante altre per quella scelta che, secondo me è stata sempre troppo poco indagata, dell'esistenza di un patto di ferro tra socialisti e conservatori e che poi a livello di dinamica continentale è diventata un patto a tre, tra socialisti conservatori e liberali, che però in Italia non ci sono. Lo scenario europeo è stato sempre dominato da queste tre famiglie. Io poi l'ho sperimentato anche in un'altra veste come parlamentare europeo dal 2004 al 2009 e posso dire che su questi temi non c'era differenza tra questi partiti. Spesso c'era differenza sui diritti civili, addirittura a volte i liberali erano più avanti dei socialisti. Però su ciò di cui stiamo parlando adesso purtroppo c'è stato proprio un muro che, oltre a rendere impossibile o quantomeno difficile la diffusione del bilancio partecipativo, ha costruito un'ulteriore barriera di isolamento attorno al movimento.

Quando mi si chiede come mai il movimento in Europa ha avuto uno sviluppo diverso da quello che avveniva da altre parti, inteso come America Latina o il poco conosciuto movimento indiano, che ha ottenuto risultati incredibili, sottolineo sempre che qui ci siamo trovati davanti ad un muro totale da parte del mondo politico; si sono schierate dalla parte del movimento solo quelle forze politiche che poi a livello europeo erano nel gruppo della Sinistra Europea, allora per l'Italia era Rifondazione (*Emile: il Partito Comunista in Francia...*) il partito comunista in Francia, certo. Poi proprio da Genova, non dimentichiamolo, e da quel movimento sono nati gruppi come *Synaspismos*. che poi si trasformò in *Syriza*. Anche gli attivisti spagnoli che arriveranno poi a fondare *Podemos* nascono politicamente proprio in questo momento a Genova.

C'è un altro elemento che pesa molto su quanto interessa a lei: cioè la mancata realizzazione del bilancio partecipativo. Da noi, a differenza di quello che avviene in America Latina, in Europa, a parte in Francia, manca completamente una sponda nel mondo culturale e scientifico al movimento, e le sponde che ci sono, sono proprio ridotte ai minimi termini. In America Latina quel movimento può contare su grandi alleanze dentro al mondo culturale delle università e dell'arte. Fatta salva la Francia, dove un'aggregazione intellettuale si sviluppa intorno a *Le Monde Diplomatique*, che svolge un ruolo importante, nelle altre nazioni c'è ben poco, qualcosa si trova in Germania,

attorno alla fondazione Rosa Luxemburg che prova a lavorare su questi temi, ma in Italia no. Anche quelle fondazioni che per storia avremmo potuto pensare fiancheggiatrici del movimento, per lo meno sul piano culturale e intellettuale, scompaiono totalmente da questa scena per due motivi: uno perché si spaventano fortemente per il livello repressivo che si scatena, repressivo non solo di piazza, ma anche sul piano della criminalizzazione mediatica del movimento, e dall'altra parte perché continuano a svolgere un ruolo di fiancheggiatrici delle rappresentanze del partito socialista o dei DS.

E.L.: Però ci sono stati comunque dei movimenti che si sono impegnati, per esempio, mi viene da pensare in Francia a Ségolène Royal che ha importato un bilancio partecipativo o comunque una forma, alla francese, di bilancio partecipativo a livello regionale e si è avvalsa molto di un aspetto educativo e tecnico servendosi di persone che hanno effettivamente aiutato tutto il processo.

V.A.: Sì, questo in Francia avviene. Ma al di fuori della Francia troviamo sicuramente dei singoli professori universitari, dei singoli docenti attivisti che collaborano con i sindacati e con i movimenti, ma sono una realtà che rimane, per esempio dentro al mondo universitario, assolutamente emarginata. Facciamo un esempio su un tema semplice: Parigi, che ha una popolazione sicuramente maggiore di Milano, ripubblicizza l'acqua con i socialisti al governo della città. Milano che ha una delle acque più buone anche qualitativamente in Italia, invece va verso un tentativo di privatizzazione, quindi si passa dall'acqua "del sindaco" all'acqua cogestita dal pubblico e dal privato e quando quattordici anni dopo arriva l'Expo, l'acqua scelta come simbolo dell'Expo dalla coalizione che amministra la città è l'acqua San Pellegrino che è Nestlé, quindi privata, mentre negli stessi anni Parigi ha pubblicizzato l'acqua. A Parigi puoi fare queste cose anche perché esiste un mondo intellettuale capace di influenzare la comunicazione i media ufficiali ecc. Non è che qui non troviamo professori interessati e disponibili su questi temi, ma che ruolo hanno nelle università? Sono loro che le guidano? Certamente no, sono in un angolo.

E.L.: No, c'è stata proprio una mancanza di politica. Se torniamo alla Francia, mentre in Francia c'è stato un grande coinvolgimento del Partito comunista, in Italia si è legato a esperienze di liste civiche, di cittadini.

V.A.: Per correttezza dobbiamo dire che in quegli anni la Rifondazione di Bertinotti c'era su questo tema e non stiamo discutendo su Rifondazione o su Bertinotti in quanto tale, ma io do atto che Rifondazione con il segretario Bertinotti su questi temi ci fu anche perché, io mi ricordo molto bene, quando c'è stato il SF del 2001 a Genova, dentro quel mondo lì si svolse una grande discussione. Alcuni tra i partiti comunisti europei dicevano «*questo non è un movimento comunista e rischia di essere sovrastrutturale...*». Il punto era il riferimento di classe. Fu Rifondazione Italiana che colse e capì l'importanza di quel movimento. Fu Rifondazione Italiana con Bertinotti che andò a parlare a Bruxelles per portare la Sinistra Europea, nel suo insieme, a Genova e vicino al movimento. Che poi la storia sia andata in modo diverso è un conto, ma in quel momento Rifondazione rappresentava la parte più avanzata culturalmente della Sinistra Europea. Per le amministrazioni locali in Italia la sponda erano le liste civiche o Rifondazione che non aveva centinaia di seggi. Invece la situazione francese era molto molto più articolata,

E.L.: Certo, e quindi questo aspetto della parte politica, quanto è stato importante all'interno del WSF nel senso c'erano tantissime istanze, tantissima partecipazione, lei stesso ha detto che c'era anche Rifondazione Italiana, c'era comunque una grande parte di sinistra, ma era solo legata alla sinistra o si espandeva anche su uno spettro politico più ampio? E in particolare quali erano le istanze politiche che poi sono state portate?

V.A.: Dipende se lei mi sta facendo una domanda a livello globale, europeo o italiano.

E.L.: Su tutti e tre i livelli.

V.A.: A livello globale il protagonismo del SF fu un protagonismo che non aveva la guida di un partito politico; c'erano forze politiche che erano all'interno di questo movimento, ma io mi sento di dire che fu proprio un'espressione di autonomia dei movimenti e questo a tutti i livelli, anche in Italia. Rifondazione stava dentro quel movimento ma non condizionava e non lo guidava, e dal ruolo che io ho avuto posso dire che c'è stato un appoggio, ma non c'è stato mai un tentativo di egemonia sul movimento.

E.L.: Che poi è un elemento che compare molto spesso nelle mie ricerche, l'indipendenza politica da parte dei movimenti di quello che è stato il WSF.

V.A.: Assolutamente, ma anche di quello italiano io lo posso testimoniare. E non era un caso, che si trattasse del movimento mondiale o italiano, la gente che vi partecipava e che l'animava andava ben oltre qualunque singolo partito. Voglio dire, a Genova, e io ne sono testimone, molti gruppi scout erano presenti, e per non citare solo i missionari che vengono sempre ricordati, a Genova c'erano i Focolarini tanto per capirci che organizzarono un'assemblea proprio in quei giorni nello spazio del Social Forum, assemblea alla quale partecipai; a Genova c'era uno schieramento molto più ampio della sinistra politica. Però anche il percorso dei Forum di Porto Alegre 2001, 2002, 2003 e poi 2005, così come avvenuto nel 2004 a Mumbai, nel 2001 a Genova, e nel 2002 a Firenze, si è sempre sviluppato nella piena autonomia, guida e consapevolezza dei movimenti stessi, dentro i quali alcune forze politiche hanno deciso di stare accettando le regole dei movimenti, le loro forme di organizzazione, di partecipazione ecc.

E.L.: Quindi questi Forum, chiamiamoli locali anche se poi non sono locali, come quello di Firenze o anche gli altri Forum che si sono sviluppati in Europa (*Vittorio: ecco la differenza è tutt'altro che locale, perché è un Forum Sociale Europeo*) Sì, è un Forum europeo che è stato tra l'altro il più grande.

V.A.: Firenze fu il più significativo. Da Firenze venne lanciata la manifestazione più grande che ci sia stata nella storia dell'umanità, perché è da Firenze che abbiamo lanciato il 15 febbraio 2003 la manifestazione contro la guerra (*Emile: contro la guerra in Iraq, esatto*) che si svolse contemporaneamente nelle città di tutto il mondo. Fu così importante che il New York Times uscì con il titolo "*il movimento pacifista è la seconda super potenza a livello mondiale*".

E.L.: Quali sono state le differenze o le somiglianze che ci sono state anche con il WSF da parte di queste esperienze, per esempio il Forum Sociale Europeo? A livello di organizzazione, di indirizzo dei movimenti?

V.A.: Io penso che sui contenuti ci siano state delle significative comunanze, anche perché tutti avevamo come base la Carta dei Principi che avevamo approvato a Porto Alegre. È chiaro che i contenuti venivano declinati a seconda della condizione nazionale, regionale o continentale dentro cui queste esperienze si realizzavano, ma non mi pare di poter dire che ci siano state delle divaricazioni troppo ampie. Certo, quando sono andato

al Forum dell'Amazzonia a Manaus, parlare di diritto all'acqua aveva degli aspetti diversi da quello che voleva dire parlarne in Italia.

E.L.: Certo, sono state delle divaricazioni che, come diceva lei, sono dipese più dal contesto dove si sono sviluppate.

V.A.: Io però non parlerei di divaricazione, perché divaricazione vuol dire che due realtà vanno sempre più distanziandosi. Direi che c'era un'unitarietà d'intenti e di contenuti che si declinavano a seconda della situazione storico e sociale in cui ci si muoveva.

E.L.: Sempre rimanendo su questi Forum, quali sono stati i rapporti che ci sono stati anche con i progetti intrapresi dalla Banca Mondiale o dall' UE, ricordo per esempio il Network Urban 9, cioè il capitolo 9 del Network Urban, quali sono stati tutti i Network istituzionali o comunque istituzionalizzati?

V.A.: Se si parla dei rapporti con la Banca Mondiale, bisogna dire che sono stati sempre molto conflittuali e di contrapposizione. Al contrario se si parla dei progetti, dei bandi etc., su questa tipologia di rapporti non credo di essere la persona più informata, nel senso che io ho lavorato su progetti, ma relativi a salute e diritti umani. Ho partecipato a progetti sull'AIDS, sulle tematiche dei diritti umani, non sull'Urban o su tematiche di questo tipo. Eviterei di parlarne per non rischiare di fornire delle risposte generiche, su questo punto non sono la persona più adatta a rispondere.

E.L.: Le chiedo ancora due informazioni. Io ho trovato molto spesso come definizione del Forum Sociale Mondiale come un "*primo tentativo di dare al mondo un parlamento in esilio*". Lei cosa ne pensa di questa definizione che è stata data? O comunque di questa ipotesi di "parlamento in esilio" del Forum Sociale Mondiale?

V.A.: In realtà non l'avevo mai sentita. Se si vuole ragionare in termini di proiezioni immaginarie, è evidente che un movimento globale come quello del Forum Sociale Mondiale poneva un problema di una rappresentanza, anche globale, e quindi poneva sicuramente un problema di inefficacia dell'ONU e delle grandi agenzie internazionali come l'OMS. Sicuramente questo Forum quindi criticava anche il modo di funzionare ed evidenziava i limiti che avevano queste agenzie internazionali. Collettivamente non si è arrivati mai a ragionare su un parlamento mondiale, anche se c'è stata l'esperienza

dell' *ONU dei Popoli* che in Italia si è realizzata in particolare attorno alla marcia Perugia-Assisi. Il Forum Sociale non ha mai elaborato un'architettura parlamentare alternativa compiuta da proporre, ma sicuramente ha posto il problema. Quindi più che un parlamento mondiale in esilio, io parlerei del fatto che il movimento ha posto il problema di una Governance democratica globale. Perché cos'è che stava accadendo e che poi è accaduto? La Governance fondata sugli stati nazionali è andata totalmente in crisi e nel vuoto che si è aperto si è formata una Governance determinata dai centri di potere finanziario, questo è quello che è accaduto, e quindi si sono ristretti fortemente gli spazi di democrazia. La nostra idea era che si potesse arrivare a costruire nuove forme di democrazia partendo da esperienze locali, che erano quelle dove si poteva intrecciare la democrazia partecipativa, la democrazia diretta e la democrazia rappresentativa, intrecciandola poi con forme di rappresentanza sovranazionale. Quando noi parliamo della Dittatura della Finanza diamo per scontato che si sia capito che c'è la crisi dello Stato Nazionale e del suo potere decisionale, come forma di democrazia fondata sulla partecipazione dei cittadini. Pensiamo ad esempio all'esperienza greca con Syriza che prende una direzione che si scontra subito con le scelte del potere finanziario e delle banche. Noi ponevamo questo problema. Non siamo mai arrivati a dire “*abbiamo un vademecum preciso su una nuova architettura mondiale*”; abbiamo indicato una strada, un percorso che, come giustamente lei coglie, parte dal bilancio partecipativo e poi si allarga con forme di partecipazione diverse. Partecipazione democratica che è destinata a scontrarsi con lo strapotere dei centri economici-finanziari riproponendo la necessità di connettere il locale al globale. Le lotte territoriali hanno la necessità di avere leggi e direttive a livello nazionale, europeo e mondiale finalizzate a limitare il potere dei fondi finanziari e delle grandi multinazionali, a cancellare i paradisi fiscali, che oltretutto non sono collocati solo in isolette sperdute nel mezzo dell'oceano ma si trovano anche nel cuore dell'Europa, a realizzare politiche fiscali orientate verso la redistribuzione della ricchezza. Noi proponevamo dei meccanismi di costruzione democratica dal basso nella piena consapevolezza che se non si fosse riusciti a smontare l'architettura neoliberista quegli spazi democratici avrebbero avuto una vita sempre molto difficile. Come infatti è avvenuto.

E.L.: Perfetto, è stato molto esaustivo. Cercherò ora di rielaborare e trascrivere questa intervista e poi, come eravamo d'accordo, le manderò la parte da leggere. Vuole solo la parte che la riguarda o tutto il percorso?

V.A.: Se mi manda tutto il lavoro, indicandomi poi la parte che mi riguarda, sicuramente mi interessa. Insegno Globalizzazione e diritto alla salute e questi temi non sono poi così lontani, perché la tematica di come il diritto alla salute, che è un diritto fondamentale, riconosciuto dalla Dichiarazione dei diritti Universali, riconosciuto dalla nostra Costituzione, riconosciuto dalla Convenzione sui Diritti Sociali, ecc., si può rappresentare e tutelare dentro l'attuale globalizzazione liberista non è proprio facilissimo da declinare. Quindi il suo lavoro mi interessa anche dal punto di vista universitario, sicuramente.

E.L.: Bene, io la ringrazio moltissimo.

V.A.: Complimenti per il lavoro che sta facendo. Arrivederci.

E.L. : Arrivederci.

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