

***Participatory Budgeting in Argentina. An analysis of the results in
political-institutional matters and citizen participation.***

Panel: T02P06 Public Participation, Democratic Accountability and the Budgetary Process

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Summary

Over the past thirty years we have been witnessing profound and accelerated changes in the field of politics and public policy. The effectiveness and competence of governments to give answers on key areas of social structure appears stressed by these changes. In Argentina in particular, the implementation of a model of participatory intervention is best understood in the context of state reform processes, which were implemented late last century and led to a strong redefinition of state-society relations and jurisdictional levels with greater involvement of local governments since decentralization processes. The neoliberal reform challenged the state-centric model that had led the developmental public policy era, opening new spaces for both private sector and civil society involvement, through policies of privatization, deregulation and assuming new roles in policy design and implementation respectively. Later in the last decade, when state role won place, the participatory mechanisms appeared in institutional designs, positioned as a guarantee of democratization of state-society relations. Thus, in recent years participation mechanisms have expanded at various levels, constituting a field of state action in itself with specific roles and administrative structures. In this context, different experiences of Participatory Budgeting gained singular importance at the local level, with results and significant implications for social, political and institutional matters.

In this article, we expose some results of a larger research process that seeks to analyze different cases and dimensions of the Participatory Budget in Argentina, a decade-old policy that expanded mainly during the last five years. It seeks so to examine the scope of PB i) in *political-institutional matters*: as a way to legitimize local authorities and transform municipal bureaucratic structure; and ii) *in*

participation issues: strengthening a pattern of active citizenship to influence public policy debates and implementation processes.

These issues are addressed from a qualitative and quantitative research at the subnational level, which considers fifteen municipalities of Argentina, identifying and comparing potentialities and tensions that emerge from the interaction between government and citizens.

As preliminary conclusions, we emphasize that the Participatory Budget in Argentina, i) works mainly by strengthening the legitimacy of local authorities, with limited impact on municipal institutional political structure; and ii) its implementation usually leads to greater local democratic openness and introduces new forms of participation and collective action in the territory.

1. Introduction

The Participatory Budgeting (PB) emerged in Latin America as an innovative public policy in response to the neoliberal model by the end of the eighties, in order to strengthen the democratic experience and redirect a portion of local public expenditure to the effective needs and demands of population. This mechanism was born in the south of the continent-specifically in Porto Alegre (Brazil)- under the mandate of Olívio Dutra of the Workers Party and then it was expanded throughout the world as an innovative mechanism aimed at improve the living conditions (material, symbolic and political) of citizens in local contexts.

In Argentina, the rise of participatory intervention model is best understood in the context of the state reform process implemented at the end of the last century. This reform process generated a redefinition in state-society relations and in inter jurisdictional levels with greater involvement of local governments since decentralization process. The neoliberal reform challenged the state-centric matrix opening new spaces for private sector involvement, through policies of privatization and deregulation, as well as for civil society, which began to assume new roles in the management of policies. Later, when the recovery of the state's role won place in the last decade, participatory principle appeared in institutional designs and took place as a guarantee of democratization of relations between the state and society. In this way, in the recent years participation mechanisms have been expanded to various levels and have begun a field of state action with specific functions and administrative structures. In this context, this project emphasizes the deployment of different experiences of participatory budgeting at the local level with important results and implications in social, political and institutional issues.

This paper analyses the main scope assumed by the PB in Argentina, investigating mainly two questions: i) its role in the legitimation process of political and institutional power and in the improving of municipal management, and ii) its impact in the deployment of citizenship. These questions are approached by an analysis perspective that focuses on the role of political institutions and state and social actors, discussing new ways of public involvement and participation and democracy expansion in terms of governance. In order to do this, we present the main results of a

qualitative and quantitative approach of the PB in Argentina study, examining in depth a sample of 15 cases and also working with a survey made for national level.

2. Some debates on the development of new local policies

The "neoliberal" economic reforms deployed in Latin America in the nineties, and the decentralization process and transfer of functions from the national level to subnational levels shaped new dynamics at the territorial level. These policies had a double impact on local governments. On the one hand, municipalities have witnessed an expansion in their roles and responsibilities and -to a lesser extent- in these attributions, having to provide a greater and more diverse set of services to the community without an increase in technical, legal, financial, human and administrative resources according to the growth in the number and complexity of their tasks. On the other hand, the local level has been resigified and ensured. Municipalities have begun to have a greater importance because of the proximity between rulers and ruled, enabling the creation of new organizational practices and ways of solving problems and conflicts as strategies to deal with the withdrawal of the state, specially the National State¹.

This situation led to the emergence of new policy mechanisms and public management which became more participatory, in a scenario that challenged traditional ways of representation. Indeed, the participatory budgeting appears as an innovative tool that seeks to rethink the way to plan and manage the territory incorporating the perspectives of different actors in a scenario of increasing complexity and promoting more direct ways of participation in government business². This perspective compared to more generalist policies in dealing with local problems highlights the importance of considering territorial specificities to adapt the agenda and modalities of intervention to the particularities of each place. This promotes processes of change based on a strategic approach that combines a transverse and intersectoral logic management and

¹ In relation to this issue, consult Cravacuore and others (2004), Cabrero Mendoza (2005) and Carmona (2012).

² See Sánchez (2002) and Cabannes (2005).

the development of various interactions / networks between local actors from a governance perspective³.

It can be said then that, in general in the literature, governance refers to the gradual transition from one type of government action sustained in the exclusive primacy of the government in terms of direction and political leadership, to a stage where a greater degree of interactions and interdependencies between political, institutional and social aspects are established⁴. This way, the basic sense we identified from this concept is the political decision, more or less voluntarily, made by the authorities in order to create an opening in government decisions and renew/democratize the state-society relationship, incorporating non state actors (whether this is because of its representativeness or importance in relation to all social interests involved) in the deployment of public policies.

Indeed, various elements make functional the *governance model*, as being the legitimacy of political authorities, the ability of representation of different groups from the society, or institutional conditions (game rules) that lead to cooperation relations between actors and allow wider decision making and implementation processes. In this way, an institutional framework centered in a *governance model* is more likely to be effective in the social, political and administrative conditions of the contemporary world. This is so because of the increasing democratization process of public life and structural processes embodied in recent decades that affect in at least two lines: i) recognizing the need to decentralize the management of public affairs closer to citizenship; ii) deriving a greater involvement of various non-governmental actors in the governmental processes, from design to implementation and evaluation of public policies⁵.

The notions of governance is more evident at the local level in particular, because the municipal administration may -in principle for its greater proximity and flexibility- have a better respond to the different needs of citizens and create new opportunities for discussion and inclusion. Thus, the concept and its various related mechanisms, such as the participatory budgeting, evidence the recent transformations in local public

³ See Blanco and Subirats (2008).

⁴ Consult Blanco and Gomá (2006), Aguilar Villanueva (2007), Carmona (2012) and Martínez and Arena (2013).

⁵ See Lozano González (2009) and Canto Chac (2008).

policies deployed in relation to a more participative management model which allows to respond to social demands with a greater legitimacy and effectiveness. In the deployment of PB it would mean specifically the division of power with society in the definition of public policies and decision-making about local government spending. This mechanism generates direct impacts such as promoting local development, greater citizen participation and therefore, better democracy; and indirect impacts such as transformations in the way that local institutions work.

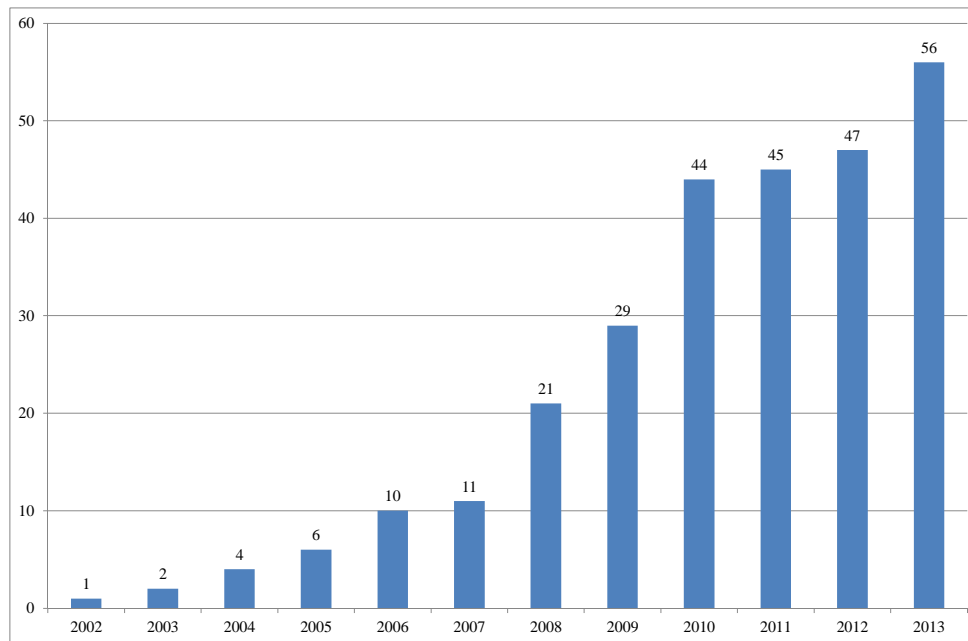
Therefore, on a *level of governance*, the effectiveness of the response to public problems will depend on multiple aspects such as institutional design, the involvement degree of the actors involved and the consistency of the developed actions; being that more a continuous exercise with gradual resolutions over time than a quick or automatic solution.

3. The Participatory Budgeting in Argentina

The Participatory Budget begins to develop in Argentina after the social upheavals of late 2001, in a scenario marked by a serious crisis of political and social representation and in a state of "economic collapse".

From the first experiments, dating from 2002, Argentines local governments have gradually developed the participatory budget, with a major quantum leap in the amount of experience in 2008 (when it goes from ten to twenty-one Municipalities with PB) and then having grown gradually and sustained over time (Chart 1).

Chart N°1: Number of Argentine municipalities with PB



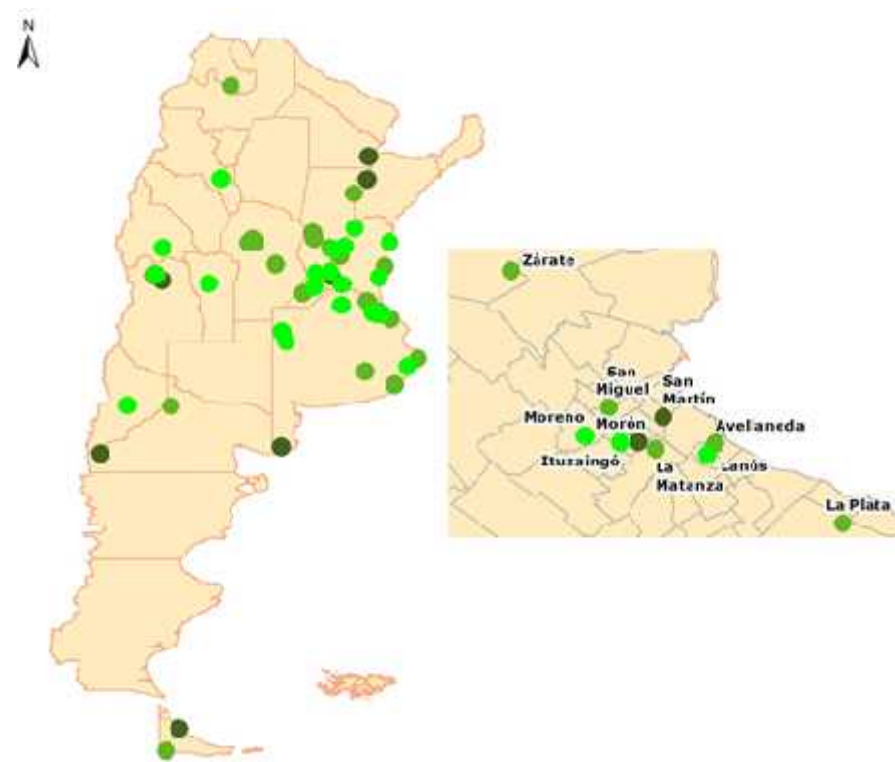
Source: Compiled by authors based on information supplied by “Red Argentina de Presupuesto Participativo” (“Argentine Net of Participatory Budgeting”)

To all this expansion have, in part, contributed the involvement and the technical advice and support in the promotion of the PB from an articulated program between the “Secretary of Parliamentary Relations of the Cabinet of Ministers” and the “Secretary of Municipal Affairs of the Ministry of Interior and Transport” entitled “National Programme for Participatory Budget”, which -among other activities in this area- have created the “Argentina Red Participatory Budget” as a forum for exchanging experiences between the different municipalities that develop or are interested in developing this policy. Also, there are civil society organizations, international experts and some public universities collaborating with the project.

It is important to highlight the profound heterogeneity in matter of resources, functions, range and scale that Argentine municipalities present, depending on the institutional framework provided for them in the respective provincial legislation and the historical, social, political, cultural and geographical characteristics of each one of them.

In 2013, one in three Argentines were living in a municipality or district with PB. Districts that in sum have put into population consideration the fate of more than \$ 450 million of municipal resources (about U \$ S 100 million), which have resulted in more than 1,000 projects, with a close average cost of \$ 450,000 (U \$ S 71,400). In turn, 200,000 people have participated in the selection of such projects, while 50,000 have been part of the assemblies of diagnosis of problems, priority determinations and elaboration/ development of projects. This can be conceptualized as a *participation* of high density and counted with the support of 500 municipal officials and functionaries and with the background of guidelines, regulations and laws treated by 300 local legislators.

Map N°.1: Districts with Participatory Budgeting by initial year of implementation and geographic area



References:

Year of implementation:

- 2002 - 2007
- 2008 - 2010
- 2011 - 2013

Source: Prepared by authors in LABSIG based on information supplied by “Red Argentina de Presupuesto Participativo” (“Argentine Net of Participatory Budgeting”)

With regard to geographical distribution by year of implementation, the vast majority of experiences corresponds to the central region, historically the relatively more developed (Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, Córdoba, Entre Ríos and Mendoza). By contrast, in the North-West which is a region characterized by political paternalist leaderships no cases were recorded, except for two recent cases (Jujuy and Catamarca). This seems to show some relationship between the adoption of PB and the territorial development degree, influenced by socio-political and cultural factors, such as management styles deployed in different regions and institutional traditions of each place. Moreover, a fifth part of the experiences develops in the Metropolitan Region of Buenos Aires at different years of implementation (Map 1).

4. Methodological aspects of work

The analysis of the PB scope in the recent Argentine scenario will be considered from different levels. First, a *political-institutional dimension* that shows the influence this mechanism generates in territorial political relations, its potential as a tool to extend democracy and “construction of citizenship” when it comes to the implemented institutional designs and the impacts produced within the local unit. In this regard, the variables and indicators considered are:

1) *PB and political relations in the territory*. i) Linking of the PB with a particular political party force or emergence of a new type of local politics; ii) Place occupied by the municipal legislature in this process; iii) Political support to the PB into municipal government and iv) prominence of social territorial organizations in its development.

2) *The Participatory Budgeting and democracy models*. i) Scope of the PB as an instrument of democratic innovation; ii) Potential of the instrument in the creation of new rights and new state-society relations; iii) The importance of the mechanism in terms of "proximity" democracy, limited to the neighborhood, or extension of this horizon.

3) *Institutional design and implementation methods*. i) type of institutional design of the PB (territorial, thematic); ii) Institutional Anchoring of the PB into the local

government; iii) Development of the process and characteristics of the implementation.

Secondly, a *participatory dimension* that considers the distinctive features that characterize the different types of citizenship: participation, multiactoral joint spaces generated around public debates and depending on the different styles of municipal management. It includes the following variables and indicators:

1) *Participative structures*: i) tradition and level of organization of local institutions; ii) Presence of citizen networks in local life; iii) The existence of social movements.

2) *The dynamics and types of participation*: i) Overview of the district and neighbors' opinion about the meaning of public participation; ii) Citizens' level of participation in the PB (turnout); iii) Predominant type of participation in the process (individual participation or through organizations); iv) Degrees of openness in decision-making and ways of selection and implementation of projects; v) The emergence of new demands and strengthening of new actors from the PB.

The investigation mainly used a qualitative research design, analyzing 15 cases in depth, so as to grasp the impact of institutional hearings on government actions and social actors, and thereby enabling to reconstruct the dynamics, tensions generated and results.

Such information was also triangulated with the analysis of quantitative data collected from the National Survey of Argentine Municipalities with Participatory Budgeting (ENMAPP in spanish), which is currently completing its third wave (2008-2011-2014).

5. Main results of the dimensions analyzed

Political- Institutional dimension

In relation to the political and institutional dimension, in all the cases analyzed it is possible to notice the absence of a clear identification of the PB with a particular party force. Thus, almost half of the municipalities (La Matanza, Rafaela, Villa Maria, Lanús, La Plata, Gualeguaychú and La Costa) have mayors who are within the “Frente

para la Victoria – Partido Justicialista”⁶. Moreover, in three municipalities there are neighborhood or socialist parties allied to the national government (Moron, Zarate, Mar del Plata) and four others linked to opposition forces, whether radical mining (Rio Grande, Mendoza), socialist (Rosario), dissident peronist (San Miguel) or another (Unquillo).

Regarding to the PB and political relations of the territory, in general we see that this public policy (while looks for unorganized population -with little previous history of participation)-, it has strong support in territorial socio-political figures and established parties. In some cases, the organizations influence is explicit and direct in the operation of the instrument (General Pueyrredón, La Matanza) and in the others its influence is intermediate or relatively low. Moreover, in almost all cases, the protagonist role of regional organizations in the process appears markedly determined by the actions of the local government and the Mayor will to facilitate their development.

As regards to the scope and modality of the PB, in the analyzed cases dominates a strongly territorial approach, which does not go beyond the neighborhood (General Pueyrredón, Gualeguaychú, Lanús, La Matanza, La Plata, Mendoza, Rafaela, San Miguel, Villa Mary, Unquillo), the town (La Costa, Rio Grande, Zarate) or area or decentralized area (Rosario, Moron). Only Rio Grande ´s PB -suspended today in order to accomplished goals of previous years- presents, in terms of design, a common forum for the whole city apart from the territorial zonal forums. At the same time, the PB of Villa Maria has evolved to a territorial multiyear planning scheme called Participatory Triennial Plan, which combines elements of PB and of the “Strategic Plan” (“Plan Estratégico, in Spanish) and allows citizenship plan the city as a whole.

In the same line, the role of the legislature (organ that is supposed to have a global perspective of the municipality or district) has in most of PB experiences a very little relevance, limited, at best, to the approval of the ordinances in cases that such type of local law exists in order to create or regulates the PB. As extreme cases, in La Matanza and Rio Grande, for example, the role of the legislature regarding to the PB appears quite blurred, while in Rosario, Morón and Villa Maria takes a little more prominence even though it only has the support of local management or administration. In some experiments, like Mendoza, some legislators usually attend to the meetings of the PB

⁶ The party force governing the country since 2003, conventionally called “Kirchnerism”.

that take place in their neighborhood, and only in Lanus (both ruling and opposition) have motorized projects under the PB.

The fact that the mechanism is related to a specific management more than a political party leads to threats to its continuity when the authorities of local executive are changed, even for leaders of the same party. This way, the PB operates predominantly as an instrument to legitimize local authorities instead of being part of an special political and ideological platform.

In these terms, an analysis of the PB as an innovative instrument of democracy raises interesting scopes in terms of giving visibility to certain demands and local issues, enhancing in some cases the creation of new rights or improving the relation between State and society. These results are mostly related to a "proximity" factor: claiming the needs of the neighborhood or of a more limited territorial nature, although when the visibility achieved by these issues (which are problematized at social level and enter into the public agenda from PB) has involved its approach to the whole municipal territory (such as gender violence in San Miguel) and even regional / provincial (such as attention to General Development Disorder in Rio Grande).

It is clear then that the PB has operated in most of this experiences as a mean to legitimize local governments bringing the local management to the people and strengthening representative democracy, rather than operating as a mechanism of direct democracy. Likewise, it has allowed local management the opening to new ways of operating and to new decision models in terms of governance, although circumscribed to each neighborhood without generating – in most cases - a common vision of the city.

In all the cases, the greatest challenge that the tool faces inside the municipal/local government is breaking with the traditional bureaucratic logic and the ways to structure the problems (and solutions) at sectoral level, which implies the prominence of each area on the technical knowledge and the monopoly of the intervention in relation to relevant aspects for the citizenship.

In the implementation of PB different results are observed. Several of the experiments has attempted to develop the operations through a strong political support of the mayor to the tool, and even in some of them, the area has been nested, being given the category of secretariat or similar (Lanús, La Plata). In this context, providing more

political support to the coordinators of the PB has allowed them to par with the officials of other areas on the table for discussion, so as to expose the internal problems of communication and promote the search of solutions, not always with the expected success. A widespread aspect has been to prioritize some PB projects through its differentiation from other sectorial projects, to facilitate their control and monitoring by the executive and coordination of the PB.

However, these actions have slightly helped to modify the behavior of traditional municipal or local offices -such as “Obras Públicas y Hacienda”⁷- with a largely procedural and vertical way of operation. Similarly, facing the lack of coordination and communication with other areas, they perceive the PB office as a "parallel city" that performs tasks of their proper, interfering in the respective sectorial planning. This creates an isolation that violates the internal legitimacy of the tool and significantly hampers its development.

In some cases, it has been managed to redefine some missions and functions of existing units. Being by the collaboration between officials or by direct mandate of the executive, several areas have taken input demands that were the result of PB diagnosis, making room in its schedule to certain projects. Moreover, in the most successful experiences that have implemented PB, as Morón and Rosario, reforms have been achieved and have favored the deployment of a more relational model of management over the segregation of duties of the bureaucratic original structure. In them, the demands arising from participatory forums permeate the entire municipal institutional framework, nurturing areas and adjusting their planning to them.

In this context, in places where the PB has managed to exist for more than five years and represents a positive evolution, it is linked to the development of administrative decentralization processes in the territory. This determines a revalorization of proximity factor and the deployment of a wide range of participatory policies from the local government, even in detriment of the PB itself, which, without losing its massiveness, runs the risk of restrict some of its most active participants, challenged fitter for other areas of participation that best accommodate their sectorial interests (tables of participation in health, safety, childhood, old age, disability, culture, etc.) or which suggest to the city as a whole in the medium term.

⁷These offices implement public works or infrastructure and administrate local income respectively.

Participatory Dimension

The PB has had a significant impact on the municipal/local level since the proximity between the citizen and local authorities facilitates cross relations of social involvement in public affairs.

The deployment of an active pattern of citizenship and governance depends, in general, on several factors. Although, as we noted above, the municipal executive has a central role in the initial impulse of the PB, the scope of the tool varies greatly depending on the social networks that are deployed in the territory. The type of social organizations and their level of institutionalization are generally the *key* in the development and sustenance of the experiences of the PB, because they can promote broader and more institutionalized networks and therefore more stable ones.

The PB, especially at the stage of diagnosis and project formulation, is a broadcast channel -more or less extensive- of public debates with a different scope depending on the case. Because of its territorial engagement, municipalities with large deficits in infrastructure (paving, lighting, isolated areas of connectivity, transportation problems, etc.) usually have a strong agenda of public works proposals articulated by the actors of the neighborhood.

Tradition and the type of participatory structures also affect the content and depth of the discussions. When there is a neighborhood participatory tradition (clubs, building societies, senior centers, for example) usually emerge projects for the organization of sporting and artistic workshops. In the presence of social movements or claiming organizations, emerge deeper demands, for instance of employment or poverty, that often exceed the PB as a means of resolution; although they function as triggers to extend discussions, resulting in some cases in innovative projects (like the organization of occupational training, awareness workshops on various problems such as family-violence, social problems, health prevention, etc.)

The quantitative and qualitative extent of participation promoted by the PB is also variable. The quantitative importance of the tool shows generally increasing trends of high turnover of residents involved but with a core that holds the participation. The municipalities that have the highest rate of participation (voting and / or assembly) are those who take more than five years of implementing the PB (La Costa, Rosario,

Rafaela, Morón, La Plata and Villa Maria). The allocated amounts and the number of projects, as we can see in the appendix, indicate the scope of the tool. Municipalities that allocate more resources (La Costa, San Miguel, Villa Maria, Rio Grande and La Plata) allocate over \$ 50 (pesos) per inhabitant, while cases that are most active in preparing briefs (Rosario, San Miguel, General Avellaneda and Gualeguaychú) designed between 115 and 225 proposals, far above the rest which commonly spend less resources and produce on average 50 projects. It is observed, on the other hand, more participation involved when the deficiencies in urban infrastructure are deeper. Finally, the proximity factor is decisive in promoting participation, being stronger the community ties in municipalities with smaller scale or in less developed areas.

The qualitative impact of the tool appears to be higher in cases with less participatory tradition. We say that in areas with less background on participation and / or municipal administrations that have historically maintained a tighter style, its implementation functions as a "spearhead" in the way of experimentation that participation opens. At the same time, when the PB is implemented, it enables a channel of complaints and demands that must be addressed or at least registered by the authorities under any compromise resolution. Otherwise, the instrument becomes a weapon that discredits the government management because it reflects all that citizenship "want" or "need" and can not obtain, reducing the chances of the government to remain in the period. Otherwise, and related to the implementation of selected projects, citizen participation may be higher at initial stages of design and lower in implementation, monitoring and control stages.

In different experiences it is also possible to identify which are the actors that are at the forefront or are more creative in building of the agenda. In some cases (Lanús, Morón, Rosario) a broader social awareness of certain problems is driven from the local government trying solutions that involve all citizens: for example reducing the production of waste and not just thinking about the actions of municipality through its collection; or reflecting about crime prevention mechanisms that exceed the installation of security cameras or the increase in police patrols, etc.

In other cases, the citizenship shows a more innovative vision. This causes that some neighborhood groups promote issues that exceed the usual of this tool promoting innovative issues, such as universal access of youth to sport (through the construction of heated swimming pools in the city of La Costa), the possibility of funeral services

near the places where relatives live (thanks to the institution of communal rooms wake in Gualeguaychú), the attention of the private medicine services at certain diseases (Rio Grande) or a prevention and comprehensive care of certain types of violence (thanks to its incorporation in the health area in the municipality of San Miguel). Sometimes proposals entering government areas are precedent and then are included in the municipal agenda in a more permanently way.

6. Conclusions

The strong social and political transformations generated in recent decades enable the deployment of new ways to look at the articulation and participation of different actors in public policy. This development requires the incorporation of larger formats in terms of opening decisions and legitimizing of implemented actions. In this context, the Participatory Budgeting extends in Argentina's recent local scene with various achievements in political, institutional and participatory issues.

A more specific exam of the dimensions considered can highlight some distinctive aspects of its operation. Regarding to the political-institutional dimension, the PB is not clearly identified with a particular political party; it is more identified with the specific governance administration that implements it. Because of it, the major threats to the continuity of the PB arise mainly with the change of the Municipal Executive. Thus, the PB operates predominantly as an instrument to legitimize local authorities rather than a political-ideological platform with supra local impact.

The PB generally aims to promote the participation of unorganized population, with little previous involvement in public affairs, though their support is usually based on territorial figures and / or consolidated parties. In democratic terms, one of its most significant impacts has been the rapprochement between citizenship and local government through the configuration of new spaces of joint and deliberation different from traditional ones, restoring some confidence in politics and state capacity to solve specific and new demands in terms of governance.

Also, institutional design is a factor which operates as a limitation of the transformative potential of PB. Its territorial approach allows it to act as a mechanism of "proximity or closeness", preventing to take a more global view to think about the

problems that affect the whole city, though in some cases it articulates with other policies and/or decentralization of municipal management. Another weakness seems to be the low articulation level with the local legislature. This conspires against the institutionalization and formalization of this policy and restricts their sustainability.

An additional problematic aspect is its difficulty to coexist with more traditional areas of municipal government characterized by a vertical, rigid and procedural ways of operation. In cases where the PB has endured over time and has successfully developed, it has settled into a model of open management with significant levels of territorial administrative decentralization, though it has lost on the other hand, some importance in favor of other participatory policy -more sectorial ones (to attend gender or childhood issues for instance) or those that allow to think the city from a broader planning framework.

A greater impact of the PB is registered in those municipalities where participatory initiatives are less developed. When the range of instances is wider, the PB appears with a more limited impact but when is one of the first initiatives it hits as a "spearhead" displaying various demands and dialogue channels between rulers and ruled. This, in some way, is due to consultative form of the PB and its future evolution involves opening new and more specific instances of treatment and citizen involvement.

As regards the introduction of new ways of participation and collective action, it is noted, first, that the type of participatory structures (predominantly related to the neighborhood or social organizations with more thematic demands) determines the forms assumed by the PB. On the other hand, a heterogeneous impact is registered depending on the level of relative development of the social networks. In cases with relative lower development in economic and social terms, social intervention is limited and subject to the state-centric logic, with a little emergence of innovative content. The dependence on municipalities to promote and sustain the activities is quite significant with a large rotation on the social actors involved in participation and with limited autonomy in developing contents.

Instead, in more developed context, we registered wider and more institutionalized networks; relatively more stable and autonomous (both in the generation of innovative agendas for discussion and in the interference of the actors in the implementation of projects). In these cases we can see higher levels of participation (and even tensions)

in the tool design and definition of its regulations itself, functioning also as an instance of questioning and citizen control.

Finally, within local areas, a use of different tools can be seen, depending on the strength of community ties within the different zones or neighborhoods (which depends on the scale of the municipality and the level of urbanization / fragmentation of its territory). It is noteworthy then that the PB, while strengthening the decentralization of local management, allows the appreciation of proximity factor favoring the opening of local management to new forms and modes of operation in terms of governance decision, although circumscribed to each space (mostly neighborhood without generating a comprehensive perspective of town).

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Appendix 1: Characterization of fifteen cases of PB in Argentina

District	La Costa	Mendoza	Rosario	San Miguel	Zárate
Province/ County	Buenos Aires	Mendoza	Santa Fe	Buenos Aires	Buenos Aires
Population in 2010	69.633	115.041	1.028.658	281.120	114.269
First year of implementation	2009	2010	2002	2008	2010
Party in Government	FPV-PJ	UCR	PS	PJ	Nuevo Zárate
¿Aly to nacional government?	YES	NO	NO	NO*	YES
Regulations or laws of creation of PB	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
PB Assemblies	5.217	158	1.396	1.160	1.011
PB Voters/electors	5.217	158	29.027	1.160	1.011
% Assembly participation PB	74,92%	1,37%	1,36%	4,13%	8,85%
% Voting participation PB	74,92%	1,37%	28,22%	4,13%	8,85%
Existance of Joung PB	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Amount PB (\$)	7.500.000,0	w/i	30.000.000,0	17.380.953,0	1.450.000,0
Amount PB (U\$S)	1.884.422,1	w/i	7.537.688,4	4.367.073,6	364.321,6
% PB of total Budget	3,03%	w/i	1,72%	7%	1,25%
\$ per habitant	107,71	w/i	29	62	13
U\$S per hab.	27,1	w/i	7,3	15,6	3,3
\$ per voter/ elector	1437,6	w/i	21490,0	14984,0	1434,0
U\$S per voter/ elector	361,2	w/i	5399,5	3764,8	360,3
Number of Projects	13	w/i	224	141	32
Average amount per Project (\$)	576.923	w/i	133.929	123.269	45.312
Average amount per Project. (U\$S)	144.955,5	w/i	33.650,5	30.972,1	11.384,9

District	Villa María	Rafaela	Río Grande	La Matanza	Morón
Province/ County	Córdoba	Santa Fe	Tierra del Fuego	Buenos Aires	Buenos Aires
Population in 2010	80.006	92.945	70.042	1.775.816	319.934
First year of implementation	2008	2008	2004	2009	2006
Party in Government	FPV-PJ	PJ	UCR	FPV-PJ	Nuevo Encuentro
¿Aly to nacional government?	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
Regulations or laws of creation of PB	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
PB Assemblies	2.230	730	408	370	10.497
PB Voters/electors	2.230	6.500	408	370	26.627
% Assembly participation PB	27,87%	7,85%	5,83%	0,21%	32,81%
% Voting participation PB	27,87%	69,93%	5,83%	0,21%	83,23%
Existance of Joung PB	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO
Amount PB (\$)	4.000.000,0	5.361.962,0	5.049.187,0	2.000.000,0	3.500.000,0
Amount PB (U\$S)	1.005.025,1	1.347.226,6	1.268.639,9	502.512,6	879.397,0
% PB of total Budget	1,69%	3,68%	1,20%	0,20%	0,81%
\$ per habitant	50	58	72	1	11
U\$S per hab.	12,6	14,6	18,1	0,3	2,8
\$ per voter/ elector	1794,0	825,0	12371,0	5405,0	131,0
U\$S per voter/ elector	450,8	207,3	3108,3	1358,0	32,9
Number of Projects	74	38	29	75	54
Average amount per Project (\$)	54.054	141.104	174.110	26.667	64.814
Average amount per Project. (U\$S)	13.581,4	35.453,3	43.746,2	6.700,3	16.284,9

District	General Puyrredón	Guaileguaychú	Unquillo	La Plata	Lanús
Province/ County	Buenos Aires	Entre Ríos	Córdoba	Buenos Aires	Buenos Aires
Population in 2010	618.989	109.461	15.369	666.887	459.263
First year of implementation	2008	2012	2010	2008	2012
Party in Government	Acción Marplatense	FPV	Frente Cívico	PJ	FPV-PJ
¿Aly to nacional goverment?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Regulations or laws of creation of PB	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
PB Assemblies	6.000	1570	40	2.682	2013
PB Voters/electors	6.000	1570	302	49.581	7550
% Assembly participation PB	9,69%	14,34%	2,60%	4,02%	4,38%
% Voting participation PB	9,69%	14,34%	19,65%	74,35%	16,44%
Existance of Joung PB	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Amount PB (\$)	6.000.000,0	1.260.000,0	100.000,0	40.000.000	3.000.000
Amount PB (US\$)	1.507.537,7	258.196,7	25.125,6	10.050.251,3	614.754,1
% PB of total Budget	w/i	0.73%	0,42%	w/i	w/i
\$ per habitant	10	11,5	6	59	6,5
US\$ per hab.	2,5	2,4	1,5	14,8	1,3
\$ per voter/ elector	1000,0	802,5	331,0	806,0	397,4
US\$ per voter/ elector	251,3	164,5	83,2	202,5	81,4
Number of Projects	221	118	5	40	6
Average amount per Project (\$)	27.000	14140	19.700,00	800.000	350.000
Average amount per Project. (US\$)	6.783,9	2.897,5	4.949,7	201.005,0	71.721,3

w/i: Without information

Source: Prepared by authors on the bases of data informed by the Directors of PB at municipalities of every District in the “II Encuesta Nacional de PP” (Second national survey of PB).The information is of 2010 (2nd wave- 2011), except for Gualeguaychú and Lanús where we use data from 2012 (first year of the implementation of PB) .Given the annual changes in nominal exchange rate, it is considered the value for each year of the survey (3,98 dollar dic-2010, 4,88 dollar dic-2012. Source: BCRA – Banco Central de la República Argentina).