



The PB Unit

Learning from Europe

"Participatory Budgets from a European Comparative Approach."

A comparative analysis, from research undertaken by the Centre Marc Bloch. This paper contains interim findings of the study, compiled May 2005.

Scope of Study: Researchers from at least 5 European countries tracked and recording information from approximately 20 cities that have identified themselves as doing some form of Participatory Budgeting.

Each case study included a national analysis, structured information on the Local Authority, including population, democratic systems, historical background, demographic data and types and levels of economic activity. Interviews and observations of events were conducted during 2004 and early 2005. Country reports were compiled by July 2005, though the results have been produced in German only at this time. However information is planned to become available in English or other languages.

The main comparative tool has been the comparative tables, that aim to create a digest of the research. These are available on request for more in depth information, used alongside a key to the comparison tables. The table on page 3 is an extract from them.

Four early criteria for models of PB:

- The financial and/or budgetary dimension must be discussed. PB is based on the problem of limited resources
- Not only neighbourhood-level: the city (or district) level, with some (direct or delegated) power over administration, must be part of the consideration in the participatory process
- It has to be a repeated process (one meeting, or one referendum, is not a PB)
- Some deliberation must take place

Six Models of Participatory Budgeting in Europe, and some possible examples

1. The Porto Alegre model adapted for Europe:

Examples: Cordoba, Seville;

2. Association-based participatory budgeting:

Examples: Albacete; Puente Genil.

3. Consultation on public finances

Examples: Hilden, Esslingen, Rheinstetten, Berlin Lichtenberg, Salford?

4. The public/private negotiation table:

Examples: Pock (Poland)

5. Proximity (deliberative) participation:

Examples: Bobigny, Mons. Saint-Denis, Palmela and Venice, Harrow?

6. Neighbourhood funds and city level dimension:

Examples: Pont de Claix, Morsang, Paris XX, Saint-Denis, Palmela, Venice, Bradford, Salford

Other possible models of Participatory Budgeting?

7. Stakeholder PB in autonomous public institutions (e.g. NHS/LSP money)

Examples: Social housing office in Bobigny and Poitiers

8. PB at a regional Level

Example: Poitou-Charente: Based on secondary schools



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Participatory Procedures which are not PB,

But could be used for it or are helpful to better understand it

- **Neighbourhood funds** without participatory connection to city-level (e.g. Utrecht, Sunderland?)
- **Responsiveness of public management:** Feedback, quality management, “proximity” administration, information through internet, right to information (e.g. Hämeenlinna, and a lot of UK councils)
- **Neighbourhood councils and assemblies:** consultative council at district level; communication between inhabitants and local government, no city-level link.
- **Citizens’ Juries**
- **Referendum on financial questions** (E.g. Milton Keynes and Bristol in 1990’s?)
- **Consultative Commissions-** (e.g. NHS service reform. Power enquiry?)
- **Petitioning**
- **Local Agenda 21**
- **Community Development and capacity building**
- **Participatory Strategic Planning** (city-wide) / **community development planning** (neighbourhood-level)- (Local design frameworks, Planning for real etc)

Some very general points, born out by my own observations.

PB ideas often begin within authorities with an autonomous mayor. It can form his route to communicating with citizens, and be a check to the power of councillors. It can therefore be used as a populist tool, to demonstrate the mayor’s commitment to ‘listening’. Examples may be Bobigny, and some of the Italian and Spanish models.

PB can also begin as a way of demonstrating a desire to modernise local authority services, or in response to charges the local authority has become remote or over-bureaucratic. Examples include some of the German cases and Salford.

PB experiences have often begun in areas with marginal or unstable local authorities, as a tool to claim greater local connectivity, generally with left or broad left parties. Examples might be the Italian models, and some from Spain. Often they get halted soon after they start through a change in political leadership.

Some socialist politicians in Europe are a bit suspicious of PB, as a form of ‘shadow democracy’ that undermines socialist models. They don’t have strong Unionised or NGO forums, which may be their traditional power bases.

There maybe a connection on a political level in European models with Porto Alegre and Brazil. The mayor may have been on an exchange in Brazil, or there may be other links with socialist networks. Examples would be strong in Spain, Portugal and Italy. A possible strand also involves faith networks as a transmitter of PB ideas. There are some links between Brazil and Europe through this method. Some of the northern European models may have this link (E.g. to some degree Community Pride, and some of the German and Dutch experiences.)

Most experiences are still too new to show up direct impacts, if any, on democratic voting, anti-poverty initiatives, and gender based budgeting or the modernisation of local government.



Extract from draft comparative tables,
 Showing the range and some characteristics for the cities in the study.

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Country	Town/City	Urban population 2003	Political party of the mayor/LA	Town budget in 2004 (Million Euro)
Germany	Emsdetten	35,655	CDU (christ-demo)	55
	Esslingen	91,980	SPD (social-demo)	207.5
	Hilden	56,000	SPD (social-demo)	124
	Rheinstetten	20,529	SPD (social-demo)	37
	Berlin-Lichtenberg	260,994	PDS (communists)	433
Belgium	Mons	15.000 (91185 Mons)	PS (social-demo)	259
Finland	Haemeenlinna	46,909	social-demo	258
France	Bogigny	45,000	PCF (communists)	93.2
	Pont Claix	11,600	PCF communists	30
	St. Denis	86,871	PCF communists	198
	Morsang	20.000	PCF (communists)	40.2
	Paris 20 Arr.	183,083	PS (social-demo)	8
GB	Bradford	467,668	Conservative	
	Salford	220,000	Labour (social-demo)	420
Italy	Grottammare	14,732	civic list (left)	20.058
	Pieve Emanuelle	17,000	DS (social-demo)	29
	Rom XI	140,207	Rifondazione Comunista (communists)	46.6
	Venedig	57.930 (271.251 Venice)	La Margherita (left)	921.9
Netherlands	Utrecht	270,243	PvdA (social-demo)	noch nicht verf.
Portugal	Palmela	53,353	PCP (communists)	46
Spain	Albacete	151,000	PSOE (socialists)	136.66
	Cordoba	318953	IU (communists)	212.67
	Puente Genil	29,405	IU (communists)	21.866
	Sevilla	713,404	PSOE (social-demo)	