

Civil Society, Public Space and Local Power:

a study of the Participatory Budget in Belo Horizonte and Porto Alegre

author: Leonardo Avritzer

research assistants: Glória Pepétuo and Marcelo Kunrath da Silva

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co-ordinator: Prof. Evelina Dagnino (Unicamp)

The democratisation processes in Latin America integrate the third wave of democratisation. The third wave of democratisation had, from the perspective of collective action, a different trait from the second wave: in the course of the struggle against authoritarianism, the social players succeeded in limiting the power of the State (Manor, 1998:1) and, at the same time, generated organisational and institutional potential at the level of the civil association (Manor, 1998:1), creating alternatives for social and political organisation.

In the Brazilian case, the process of conflict against authoritarianism and of transition to democracy was distinguished by the following characteristics: the construction of a sphere of more democratic social praxes in the interior of which the dominant and excluding practices were questioned (Alvares, Dagnino and Escobar, 1998); the re-assessment of an ambiguous cultural tradition in relation to democracy (Weffort, 1989); the defence of a demarcation field between civil society and the State (Avritzer, 1994; 1998a). In this way new cultural potentials of democratic construction emerged and new praxes, movements and institutions became possible.

The struggle for democratisation in Brazil developed fundamentally at local level, for the Brazilian cities were the central locus of construction of the authoritarian project in the country. Authoritarianism, in the Brazilian case, implied a project of modernisation whose main axes were industrialisation and urbanisation. Most of the large Brazilian cities grew dramatically between 1950 and 1980. The population of Porto Alegre grew in this period from 394.000 inhabitants to 1.125.000; the population of Belo Horizonte grew from 352.000 to 1.780.000 inhabitants (IBGE, 1983). The majority of decisions relating to the place of settlement, the transport, and the access to health and education of this enormous population were taken during the authoritarian period. These

decisions led to the removal of the lower income population to the outskirts of the large cities, to areas where infrastructure was precarious, sanitation was scarce and schools and health centres were few in number. In this sense, in the Brazilian case authoritarianism determined practices in everyday life that express themselves in the relation between State power and the population of the large cities.

From the mid-70s there began to take place in Brazil what is conventionally denoted as the emergence of an autonomous and democratic civil society. This fact has been related to different phenomena: the exponential growth of civil associations, specially of community associations (Boschi, 1987; Santos, 1983; Avritzer, 1998a); a reassessment of the idea of rights (Dagnino, 1994); the defence of the idea of organisational autonomy in relation to the State (Sader, 1988); the defence of public modes of presentation of demands and of negotiation with the State (Costa, 1994; 1997). Especially in the large cities, these new practices redefined the manner of making politics, leading to a significant increase in the number of community associations and in their form of relating to the State.

If Brazilian democratisation can be analysed with reference to the changes in the practice of the social players at a local level, it can also be analysed in the perspective of the continuity of traditional political practices, since the transition to democracy and the Constitutional Assembly took place under the control of political players connected with the authoritarian regime (Avritzer, 1998a; Martins, 1987). In this perspective, what happened in post-democratisation Brazil was a conflict of players and of praxes, some linked to the innovations introduced by social movements at public level and others linked to the elements of continuity peculiar to the reproduction mechanism of the Brazilian political system.

This research report is part of the project “Civil Society and Governance” which has among its objectives that of analysing the limits of State policies and the role of civil organisations in improving the quality of democratic life. Our object of study, the participatory budget, consists in the most innovating practice of democratic management at local level to have appeared in Brazil in the post-authoritarian period. This report will be divided in three parts, in each of which we will seek to cover some of the main preoccupations of the “Civil Society and Governance” research. In the first part we will describe the participatory budget in detail, emphasising its participatory elements and the public mechanisms of decision-making; in the second part we will analyse the mechanism of institutional innovation, showing how the pre-existence of participatory practices at civil society level increases the chances of success of the participatory arrangements introduced by the public administrations at local level. In the third part, following the orientation of the concept paper (Manor, 1998:2), we will analyse the forms of inter-relation between the players of civil society and the participatory forms; in the concluding section of the paper we will discuss the potentialities and limits of the close inter-relation between State and civil society, such as it exists in the case of the participatory budget (PB).

## Participatory Budget: a New Form of Democratic Public Management

The participatory budget was introduced by the administration of the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores – PT) in Porto Alegre starting from 1989 and in Belo Horizonte from 1993. Both cities represented, during the authoritarian period, good examples of the interference of the authoritarian players in the patterns of everyday life of the low income population. Porto Alegre had a population increase of more than 5% a year during the authoritarian period; Belo Horizonte saw its population multiply nearly 5 times during the same period. During authoritarianism, two types of “urban policies” predominated in the two cities. As regards Porto Alegre, whose associative tradition goes back to the 1950s and 60s, (Baierle, 1998), the areas occupied by the low income population received practically no works of urban infrastructure. The less organised part of the population was removed and transferred to a region distant from the centre of the city, called Restinga.

A similar process occurred in Belo Horizonte, the first planned city in Brazil, founded in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its planned structure was not able to cope with the migration of the low income population from the countryside to the city. In 1960 there already existed in the city 70 *favelas* in which lived more than 25.000 people (Moreira, 1999:56). During the authoritarian period, due to the weaker organisation of the low income population of the city, many of the more central *favelas* were moved to the outskirts of the city. Only from the mid-1970s was there a significant increase in the organisation of the low income population of the two cities, through the formation of community associations that were independent and autonomous from the State. These associations the legalisation of the inhabited urban areas; the improvement of the infrastructure of the periphery of the two cities and the improvement of the quality of the health and education services. This process lead to an increase of community association in Belo Horizonte the number of community associations rose from 71 to 534 in this period (Avritzer, 1998a). In Porto Alegre, a significant renewal of leadership and the creation of Uampa – Union of the Association of Residents of Porto Alegre – took place in 1983.

The Workers' Party<sup>1</sup> won the elections for the City Hall of Porto Alegre in 1989 and, within one year, began to implement the participatory budget. The Workers' Party won the elections for the City Hall of Belo Horizonte in 1992 and immediately put the participatory budget into practice. The objective of the first part of our work is to comparatively describe the PB in the two cities.

Porto Alegre: the participatory budget in Porto Alegre consisted of a decision process by the population on the priorities to be given to the works of the City Hall. This process involves two rounds of regional assemblies interspersed by a round of assemblies at local level. In a second phase, the sitting of the Council for the

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<sup>1</sup> It is beyond the objectives of this work to trace a history of the Workers' Party in Brazil. It would be worthwhile, however, to point out that the PT was created in the process of Brazilian civil society's organisation to combat authoritarianism and had as its founders members of the so-called new unionism, members of the Catholic Church's *Comissões de Base*, intellectuals and members of the middle class movements. In this sense, it has been close to the struggle of the community movements in Brazil since its foundation, although its concept of government was not initially directed towards these players. See (Keck, 1991, and Utzig, 1996)

Participatory Budget takes place, a body of councillors representing the decisions taken in the regional assemblies. The administrative elaboration of the budget takes place in Gaplan- Planning Cabinet of the City Hall – body connected with the mayor’s Cabinet.

Detailed description of each of the phases of the participatory budget:

First round of regional assemblies: Porto Alegre is a city divided in 16 administrative regions (see attached map). In the first phase of the PB 16 regional assemblies and the thematic assemblies take place. The regional assemblies are assemblies in which the neighbourhood residents of each of these regions meet. Therefore, the criterion for participating is that of residence and the decision is taken by the majority.

The thematic assemblies are held in five areas – health and social assistance, transport and traffic, organisation and development of the city, culture and leisure, economic development. The criterion for participation is the interest in the theme and here the decisions are also taken by the majority. The thematic assemblies obey the same calendar as the regional assemblies.

Meeting period of the assemblies: the month of April. The assemblies take place in each of the neighbourhoods in the presence of the mayor. The number of participants forms the basis for the calculation of the number of delegates that will participate, in the following phase, in the intermediary assemblies and the delegates’ forums. The residents register in the assemblies as organised groups. Criterion for the definition of the number of delegates: up to 100 participants in the first regional assembly, 1 delegate for every 10 participants; between 101 and 250 participants, 1 delegate for every 20 participants; between 251 and 400, 1 delegate for every 30 participants; more than 401 participants, 1 delegate for every 40 participants. The assemblies take place in each of the 16 regions. All those present have the right to a vote.

Intermediary round of local assemblies: the participatory budget contains up to twelve thematic areas which are the following: sanitation, paving, organisation of the city, housing policy and land regulation, social assistance, health, transport and traffic, education, leisure areas, sport and leisure, economic development. In the second round of intermediary assemblies the delegates/ the population (this varies between regions) work in two types of activities: the construction of a hierarchy of priorities and the definition of the works in the sub-regions. The ranking of priorities is the process through which the community elects its five main priorities among the twelve themes mentioned above. The ranking of priorities balances three criteria: the previous access of the population to the public good in question, the population of the region and the population’s decision. The first of the cited criteria, the population’s previous access to the public good, is quantified in some areas such as paving, as shown in Table 1, below:

**Table 1: Need of paving elaborated for Participatory Budget 1999**

Regions	Total of streets (in meters)	Paved	Not paved	Need (in %)
Humaitá/Nave-	117.704	100.808	16.896	14,35

gantes/Ilhas				
Noroeste	147.375	146.345	1.030	0,70
Leste	154.545	136.402	18.143	11,74
Lomba do Pinheiro	90.310	39.818	50.492	55,91
Norte	130.910	110.819	20.091	15,35
Nordeste	56.470	37.233	19.237	34,07
Partenon	122.080	98.969	23.111	18,93
Restinga	73.109	65.110	7.999	10,94
Glória	77.665	47.517	30.148	38,82
Cruzeiro	71.658	62.325	9.333	13,02
Cristal	28.590	27.420	1.170	4,09
Centro-Sul	178.710	128.710	50.000	27,98
Extremo-Sul	183.290	40.148	143.142	78,10
Eixo da Baltazar	83.145	81.555	1.590	1,91
Sul	147.015	130.446	16.569	11,27
Centro	346.155	345.015	1.140	0,33
Total amounts	2.008.731	1.598.640	410.091	

Source: Prefeitura de Porto Alegre

Therefore, in the case of paving, the percentage of paved streets is classified between 0,1 to 20,9%, from 21 to 40,9%, from 61 to 79,9%, and from 80% on. The total population of the region is also quantified and the regions classified making use of grades from 1 up to 4. With up to 30.999 inhabitants the region gains grade 1, from 31.000 to 60.999, grade 2, and so forth. The first stage of the intermediary rounds consists of this process of voting the five main priorities of the sub-regions, to which will be attributed grades increasing with priority. For instance, priority number one receives grade 5, priority number two grade 4, and so forth. Therefore, the highest number of points a proposal from a regional assembly can receive is 15: 5 points if it has more than 120.000 inhabitants, 5 points if it had less than 20% of previous access to the public good in question and 5 points if this good becomes its first priority and the first priority of the city. The first stage intermediary rounds closes with the choice of the region's priorities.

Once the regional priorities are determined, the second stage of intermediary rounds involves the competition for specific works by the different communities in the interior of the sub-region. Sub-regional assemblies gather once more for the different groups of the population to compete to decide which project will be contemplated, among the previously determined priorities.

The third moment consists in the second round of regional assemblies. In this phase the hierarchies and demands of the regional assembly are ratified and the counsellors of the region are elected for the Conselho do Orçamento Participativo (Participatory Budget Council). Each regional assembly elects two regular councillors and two substitutes.

Participatory Budget Council. The participatory budget council is convened each year in the month of July. Its composition is the following: two councillors for each region (32) + two councillors elected for each thematic assembly (10) + a representative from Uampa – Union of the Resident Associations of Porto Alegre – and a Syndicate of civil servants from the City Hall. Total members: 44. Its attributions are: to draw up a budget proposal for the municipality based on the decisions on rankings and priorities taken in the intermediary assemblies; to review the final budget proposal elaborated by the City Hall, to accompany the execution of the approved works and discuss the technical criteria that impede the execution of the approved works. In Porto Alegre the final elaboration of the budget takes place in GAPLAN, a body connected to the mayor's cabinet named.

Belo Horizonte: In the case of Belo Horizonte the elaboration mechanism of the budget is different: three rounds of regional assemblies until 1998, reduced to two from 1999. The election of delegates for monitoring the works through COMFORÇA takes place in the third round of assemblies. The budget is drawn up in the Planning Department. Detailed description of each of the phases:

In Belo Horizonte the participatory budget involves three rounds of regional assemblies. In the first round, the Planning Department, through the Co-ordination of the Participatory Budget, presents, in each of the regional assemblies, the result of the previous year, i.e., the number of works approved by the PB in the region and their current state, that is, whether the works are in a phase of assignment, execution, or already completed.

In the second round the City Hall presents the availability of resources for the PB works. This availability is determined in the following manner: 50% of the available resources are equally divided between the 9 regions and 50% of the resources are partitioned according to the regional classification of the IQVU – Indicator of the Quality of Urban Life, an indicator that involves a balance between population and income in the municipality. The greater the IQVU of a region the smaller the quantity of resources destined to it through the following formula:

$$PVR = \frac{popr^2}{e \cdot 1/y}$$

Still in the second round the main proposals of works to be carried out in each of the sub-regions are presented (there are 37 sub-regions) and the City Hall begins an evaluation process of their technical viability.

The third moment of regional assemblies involves voting the works to be executed in the region. In the third round delegates are elected according to the following criteria: from 1 to 200 participants, 1 delegate for each 10 participants present; from 201 to 410 participants, 1 delegate for each 15 participants; above 410 participants, 1 delegate for every 20 participants. Despite the similarity of this criterion to the one adopted in Porto Alegre, in Belo Horizonte each region has the right to one delegate for each community association legally established in the region. Still in the third round the so-called Priority Caravans take place. The caravans are a process of negotiation between the members of each of the communities (or sub-regions) of each administrative region of the PB. They involve a visit on the part of the elected delegates to each of the work proposals presented. We believe these visits are propitious to a process of internal debate. There have been cases in which less disadvantaged communities have withdrawn their demands of works in favour of poorer communities after visits to these communities during the caravans. In other words, different proposals of works emerge after visits to the regions and these proposals are voted against one another in the Forum for Regional Priorities. As opposed to Porto Alegre, in Belo Horizonte there is no voting for the individual works but for political compositions between the delegates present in the Forum of Regional Priorities. Therefore, a list containing different proposals of works is voted against another list with different proposals of works. At the end of the last round of regional assemblies the delegates who will participate in COMFORÇA are elected.

COMFORÇA: is the commission for the inspection of the works approved by the participatory budget. The number of members of COMFORÇA varies from year to year according to the number of participants in the PB assemblies. COMFORÇA is composed of 20% of the delegates elected in the third round of assemblies. The responsibilities of COMFORÇA are as follows: to inspect the execution of the works' progress; to follow the process of assignment of the works; to discuss technical problems related to the works with the technical bodies of the City Hall, especially with Sudacap – public works company of the City Hall of Belo Horizonte.

**Table 2: Comparison between Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte Participatory Budgets**

	Scope	Support to civil society organizations	Form of resources distribution	Form of deliberation	Form of monitoring	Current Main action
Porto Alegre	All the city's investment resources.	Organized sectors indicate their	Combine needs and population	Intermediate meetings and PB Council	Centralized	Support to social programs involving

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<sup>2</sup> popr is the virtual population of the region, y is the average income of the region and e is a constant with the value of 2,7182818.

		delegates	as criteria			specialized personnel
Belo Horizonte	50% of regional level investment resources	More delegates for more organized regions	Combine average income and population as criteria	Third round and regional priorities Forum	Decentralized	Support to participation in non material issues

The differences between the methods of elaboration and implementation of the participatory budget in the two cities seem to indicate some relevant elements. Firstly, the element that seems to be the most relevant in the structure of the PB is exactly the one that repeats itself, that is, the regional assemblies. The importance of these assemblies stems from the fact that they create a public method of decision of the works by the population, supplying an alternative to the particularisation and the obscure form of decision making that are common practice in municipal administrations in Brazil. The regional assemblies introduce some important elements: a democratic and public mode of negotiation among the population. Democratic because the participation of the population is the criteria through which delegates and counsellors are appointed, transferring to this same population a decision-making power that it did not previously possess. Public because the necessity criteria are known, the population of the region is known and the meetings where the decisions of ranking are taken are open and speech is free. In this manner, participation and discussion with clear criteria have substituted the fragmented mode of resource distribution that existed previously.

In the second place, there is a form of monitoring the decisions taken by the regional and/or thematic assemblies, and this seems to be decisive. This form of monitoring varies: in Porto Alegre, monitoring is exercised by the PB Council itself, while in Belo Horizonte it is exercised by a body created especially for this end. Monitoring constitutes a political answer of the PB to a tendency common in local administrations in Brazil of insulating technical bureaucracies. Through monitoring the population is able to influence the execution of its decisions.

Participatory Budget: Evaluating the Dynamic of the Innovation and the Relation between State and Civil Society.

The investigation of the origin of the process of institutional innovation that lead to the creation of the PB is justified in that it permits the determination of civil society's capacity to introduce changes into political life and improve those policies directed to the low income population (Manor, 1998: 2). At the same time, the investigation of the manner in which a participatory policy at public level influences civil society could help us to know which policies are capable of strengthening society as an agent able to improve the quality of political life (Manor, 1998: 2).

The centrality of the issue of the participatory budget as a centre for competition between different political practices at local level is certainly a new phenomenon in Brazil. Its origin is not only unknown but is also an object of dispute and of articulation between different political positions. Within the Workers' Party there exists a position that clearly articulates the proposal of the participatory budget to the aggregation of majorities by PT. Genro e Souza (1997) defend such a position when they affirm that "... the idea of the participatory budget in the city of Porto Alegre began with the election campaign [of PT] for the City Hall in 1988". (Genro & Souza, 1997: 23). However, the authors recognise curiously that the expression "participatory budget" was not present in the electoral platform of the campaign of Olívio Dutra for the City Hall in 1988. "In that moment the government programme of the Workers' Party proposed to democratise the decisions of a new management through popular councils". (Genro e Souza, 1997: 23). The authors omit to discuss the mode of transition from the proposal to govern with popular councils to the proposal of the participatory budget.

In this study, based on the hiatus between the existence of a proposal that became central for the government of Prefect Olívio Dutra and its absence from the government programme elaborated in 1988, we carried out a research using interviews and the consultation of documents to try to determine how this institutional innovation came about. The first document we identified in which the term participatory budget appears is a document of Uampa – the Union of Residents' Associations of Porto Alegre. In a meeting that took place on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 1986 with the objective of discussing the participation of the popular movements in the Alceu Collares' government, the diagnosis of the centrality of public budget appeared: "the most important aspect of the City Hall is the collection of taxes and the definition of where the public money will go to. It is based on this that we will have or not the funds with which to attend the demands of the popular estates and neighbourhoods. This is the reason why we want to intervene directly in the definition of the municipal budget and control its application". And further ahead the document says: "we want to decide the priorities of investment in each estate, neighbourhood and in the city in general". This seems to have been the starting point for a process in which the budget and its elaboration increasingly became the central elements of the political debate in the city of Porto Alegre. The budget issue was still present in the preoccupations of Uampa between 1986 and 1988. In the document that emerged from its second congress (1987), the budget issue reappears in the part dedicated to the activities of the community movement in the following form: "to seek to increase the participation of the community movement in the municipal administration, in the elaboration and definition of the municipal budget, is the element that will make the changes in the urban political structure possible". However, it is important to perceive that, if Uampa and the community movement had a central role in the identification of the contentious nature of the budget issue, on the other hand the specific form of elaboration of the participatory budget was not yet clear.

In the initial stage of the Olívio Dutra government a proliferation of decentralised forms of participation were proposed by each of the departments of the different areas of the municipal administration. The areas of health, education and housing, among others, began to present proposals for participation, which was to be expected given the generic concept of participation peculiar to the PT's political proposal. (Feddozzi, 1999). It was in this context that the Planning Department thought of increasing participation in the elaboration of the city's budget. Concurrently, many demands were directed to each of these departments, stemming from previously repressed

demands and the perception, on behalf of the social players, of the possibility of having demands answered by a popular administration.

The first step towards the creation of the participatory budget as an organised political proposal of relation between the local administration and the popular movements was the decision, taken during the first sixty days of the Olivio Dutra government, of centralising all the demands in one organ: the CRC – Co-ordination of the Relations with the Community. “Thirty days of government and we understood that we had to establish, inside the mayor’s cabinet, a centre to co-ordinate the relations with the population, to begin a large dialogue with the city. We didn’t know exactly what it was, but the dialogue had to exist”. (Lima, 1999). The choice of the CRC was merely casual, since its role was that of a municipal body charged with supplying certificates of public utility to the bodies of civil society. However, its existence as a structured body permitted it to fulfil the role of centralising the demands of the whole city.

A third element was still lacking for the constitution of the participatory budget and that was its specific format. The format of the PB followed neither the proposal of Uampa nor the concept of PT. Some elements were central in this discussion: on one side, the City Hall introduced the idea that the population’s participation in the budget should be individual and not through organisations as demanded by Uampa. It was in this way that the idea of the resident’s associations at local level emerged. Secondly, the PT, due to its identification with a neo-Marxist concept of policy, defended the idea of advisory bodies parallel to the administration capable of constituting a germ of parallel political power (Abers, 1996). And finally, the public administration maintained compatibility between the process of production of the PB and the legal demands for the production of a budget, that is, terms, submission to the chamber of councillors and legal format. Table 3 below identifies the original proposal made by each of the sectors and the final format of the PB.

**Table 3: Original proposal and final design of the PB**

	original proposal	form of deliberation	final design
neighborhood associations	local assemblies and control of the population on budget decisions	based on direct deliberation at the local level.	Neighborhood Associations proposal Prevailed at the local level.
Workers Party	workers councils and a mechanism for the election of city councils	based on delegates electing new delegates	Workers Party proposal prevailed at the intermediary level (municipal budget council)

Local Administration	inversion of priorities on the city process of decision-making  concentration of claims at the level of the CRC	based on a combination of participation and administration	Administration proposal kept the connection between participation and the operation of administrative institutions (Gaplan, CRC, CROP)
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It is possible, therefore, to affirm that the proposal of the participatory budget was generated in the intersection between civil society and state administration, permitting the transformation of a contentious theme – the budget, as identified by the community movements of Porto Alegre - into a proposal for the participation of the community players in the elaboration of the budget. It is quite clear that without the decisive contribution of the administration of the Workers' Party in the implementation of the proposal it would not have become reality; but it is equally correct to affirm that the absence of the budget theme in the government proposal of PT for the City Hall of Porto Alegre demonstrates that the identification of the budget issue was work of the community movement. As for the specific format of the PB, it seems quite clear that it does not possess an individual authorship: it neither corresponds to the format proposed by the community movements nor to the format proposed by PT. It is the result of proposals made by each of the players and of the institutions available to implement them. It is interesting also to observe that the existence of a proposal of multiple authorship accentuated the collaboration between local administration and civil society.

Participatory Budget: Evaluation of the Participatory Dynamic

The first point that seems relevant to us is to evaluate the success of the participatory budget from the perspective of its capacity to make the population participate in the process of elaboration of the budget. Table 4 below contains some data on the participation in the PB in the two cities.

**Table 4a : Participation in the Participatory Budget in Belo Horizonte**

PB/year	Firs round	Second round	Third round	Regional forum (delegates)
94	3.671	4.215	6.202	1.128
95	5.796	5.323	14.461	1.243

96	5.801	11.796	17.597	1.314
97	2.938	9.586	17.937	1.334
98	3.416	3.081	11.871	1.050
99/2000	Suppressed step	2.905	16.323	1.947

Source: Prefeitura de Belo Horizonte

**Table 4b: Participation on the Participatory Budget in Porto Alegre**

regional/ year	1990		1991		1992		1993		1994		1995		1996		1997		1998	
	Ilhas	14	80	33	90	32	132	148	129	58	77	19 5	103	131	72	246	10 4	271
Navegantes	5	10	15	32	37	128	68	337	112	227	27 3	136	215	75	476	91	498	12 6
Leste	52	100	90	705	125	385	235	467	166	409	24 3	229	214	409	204	19 5	591	11 9
Lomba	24	40	44	119	55	514	207	419	124	551	82 3	827	679	294	792	36 2	129	50 9
Norte	34	50	47	97	90	511	208	224	209	141	24 0	380	175	317	339	48 9	538	38 6
Nordeste	5	28	NA	363	55	221	604	668	323	388	48 5	283	396	286	530	18 4	696	21 0
Partenon	22	53	74	264	174	922	210	569	270	826	59 5	205	638	171	500	21 6	465	34 0
Restinga	N A	36	NA	181	66	303	144	206	196	768	40 4	480	589	174	834	31 1	922	42 6
Glória	10	20	55	142	104	206	127	226	164	350	29 9	70	321	151	251	13 3	234	12 0

Cruzeiro	91	90	101	128	62	235	293	345	59	423	283	283	426	223	430	132	399	205
Cristal	6	10	NA	81	80	388	107	252	157	215	195	74	240	98	278	290	251	81
Centro-Sul	49	52	44	458	89	502	320	1268	156	1051	108	293	1159	354	1571	239	1162	299
Extremo Sul	16	25	64	80	118	569	485	397	238	484	380	420	403	251	542	247	749	257
Eixo da Baltazar	0	28	23	152	97	455	304	405	127	517	376	563	352	391	287	189	528	332
Sul	14	0	NA	29	85	378	119	501	219	390	654	449	492	155	553	424	282	306
Centro	6	6	18	165	173	319	181	562	60	183	329	171	147	153	350	119	669	305
Total	976		3694		7610		10735		9638		11821		10148		11908		13687	

Tables 4a and 4b show some relevant facts relative to the dynamic of participation: firstly, the participation in the first years in Porto Alegre was generally low, and very low in some regions like Glória, for instance, where only 10 people participated in the first year.

Secondly, it is interesting to note how participation in Belo Horizonte begins at a higher level than in Porto Alegre but varies more. In Belo Horizonte, participation is initially high because the effectiveness of the method is already clear to the community actors due to knowledge of the experience of Porto Alegre. At the same time, uncertainty as to the continuity of the PB affected participation after 1996. In that year, election for the City Hall of the city posed the problem of the continuation of the PB, leading to a decrease in participation. Due to the identification of the PB with the Workers' Party administration its effectiveness is questioned in electoral moments, where the continuity of the political proposal of PT is not guaranteed. However, the case of Belo Horizonte is also interesting as it shows the relative independence of the participatory budget's credibility in relation to the PT administrations. The credibility of the PB in Belo Horizonte was constructed in the relation between the public administration and the social actors during the execution of the participatory budget. This is shown by the recovery of the indicators of participation in the PB during the term of Célio de Castro, Mayor of the PSB (Brazilian Socialist Party) who continued the PB in his administration.

A second factor that appears to be important in relation to participation is the question of inequalities in the population and the form it has affected participation in the PB. A study of the non-governmental organisation *Cidade* in association with the City Hall of Porto Alegre shows an evolution in the pattern of participation of

women in the PB. Their participation grew from 46,7% in 1993 to 51,4% in 1998 when women became the majority of the participants in the PB<sup>3</sup>. This fact seems to be positive with regard to the possibility that participatory politics constitute egalitarian forms of participation, but it is necessary to note that the participation of women diminishes as we pass from participation in assemblies to qualified participation as councillors of the PB, as shown in Table 5 below. The data in Table 5 allow us to affirm that equity between genders expresses itself in the increased participation rather than in a choice of leadership compatible with the profile of the participants.

**Table 5: Participation by gender in the Participatory Budget**

sex	Ibge/Poa	1993	1995	1998	Deleg PB	Cons PB
women	53,2%	46,7%	46,8%	51,4%	45,3%	48,7%
men	46,8%	47,6%	52,2%	48,4%	54,7%	51,3%
nr	-----	5,7%		0,2%		

Source: Cidade

With the objective of determining which are the dominant praxes at PB level and in what manner these praxes are transforming the relationship between State and civil society we applied a questionnaire<sup>4</sup> to 10% of the leaders of the associations that participate in the PB in Belo Horizonte (73 people) and to 5% of the leaders of the associations that participate in the PB of Porto Alegre (122 people). Firstly, it was possible to notice the presence within the PB of the community players that emerged in the 1970s and '80s. In the case of Belo Horizonte, among the interviewees, 53,4% are members of associations created during the '80s. In Porto Alegre, the novelty of community association is not so significant but, all the same, 17,7% of the interviewees were members of community associations created during the '70s and 44,8% were members of community associations created during the '80s. It seems clear, therefore, that community association is previous to the PB in both cities. What happened was a certain change in its dynamics after the creation of the PB.

Through this survey we sought to verify two kinds of changes: the first, in the sphere of the associations themselves, are the possible changes in praxes brought about by the existence of a public form of participation; we sought also to investigate in what manner a public form of participation implies important changes in the relation between the associated players and the political system. The first set of questions sought to determine who are the associated participants of the PB in Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte. In Belo Horizonte they are 60,3% men and 39,7% women, the great majority is over 40 years old (76,7%); a large part has complete or

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to mention that the margin of error of the research is of approximately 5%. However, the margin of error of the research does not invalidate the existence of a time series with a similar margin of error and in this series the participation of women increased in each of the surveys carried out.

incomplete primary education/schooling (42,5%), even if the percentage of those with higher education is high: 23,3% has complete or incomplete high school education. A large part has family income between 2 and 5 minimum wages (30,1%).

The data for Porto Alegre does not vary greatly in relation to Belo Horizonte. Also in Porto Alegre the predominant group is of men (58,5%), which accentuates the already mentioned tendency of unbalance between the presence of women and their participation in positions of leadership. In Porto Alegre the average age of participants varies in relation to Belo Horizonte: in Porto Alegre the most significant participation is encountered in the 50-59 years old age group (31,3%), while participation of younger age groups is also important. In relation to income and schooling there are small variations between the two cities: the most significant part of participants, in both cases, is of individuals with complete or incomplete primary education, 42,5% in Belo Horizonte, 40,6% in Porto Alegre. The number of participants with complete or incomplete secondary education is slightly higher in Porto Alegre: 38,5% against 30,1% in Belo Horizonte, showing a higher indicator of average schooling in the case of Porto Alegre. With regard to income, there is a coincidence in terms of income group (2 to 5 minimum wages).

It is worthwhile to separate the average schooling from the average income of the associated participants of the PB and to compare them with the averages for the totality of PB participants, both associated and non-associated. The average income of the participants of the PB, according to the research data from the NGO Cidade, does not differ significantly from the average income of the inhabitants of Porto Alegre. However, when we go from the average income of the participants in general to the average income of the associated participants we find a greater discrepancy. This discrepancy becomes more accentuated as we pass from the income variable to schooling. In this case, the number of participants with complete or incomplete secondary education is 26,3%, therefore superior to the number of participants with complete primary education (19,5%). There is, in this case, a great hiatus between the schooling of the participants of the PB and that of its associated participants. (see Table 6 below).

**Table 6: Education and family income among individual participants** and members of associations

	All participants in Porto Alegre	PB participants who are members of associations in Porto Alegre	PB participants who are members of associations in Belo Horizonte
Education (highest level)	Incomplete elementary school (46,1%)	Incomplete high school (26,3%)	Incomplete elementary school (27,4%)
Income (highest level)	(up to 2 minimum wages 30,3%)	2 to 5 mw (34,4%)	2 to 5 mw (30,1%)

Source: Cidade and Civil society and governance research project.

<sup>4</sup> The survey was applied to a sample of members of civil associations that participate in the PB. The data bank of the associations was elaborated in a slightly different form in the two cities. In the case of Belo Horizonte it was elaborated from a list of civil associations supplied by the city register of civil associations. This list was completed with a register of the community participating in the PB. In the case of Porto Alegre, the data bank was formed from a register of the participants in the PB kept by the city hall. One date base contained 800 associations and the other 2.440 associations. A sample was drawn of 80 associations in Belo Horizonte and 122 associations in Porto Alegre.

The data presented above are relevant for the discussion on participatory policy. They seem to demonstrate three phenomena previously ignored by the literature on the subject: in the first place, that the participation of the low income population in the PB is similar to its representation in the population of the city. Therefore, other than supposed by authors such as Reis (1995) who argue that participatory politics privilege extracts of the population distinguished by higher income and greater organisation, in Porto Alegre they are compatible with the participation of the lower income group of the population.

Secondly, it is important to note that the contrast in participation between associated and non-associated players is more significant for the variable of schooling than for that of income. In Porto Alegre, the greater part of the associated participants is concentrated in the group of complete secondary schooling (26,3%), with a significant concentration of participants in the complete higher education group (16,1%). In Belo Horizonte, despite primary schooling being the most represented group, it is important to note that 23,3% of the associated participants have complete or incomplete higher schooling and 21,9% have complete secondary schooling, proportions much higher than those of the participants in general and of the population in general. Thirdly, there are discrepancies between the income, schooling and gender of the participants in general and those of the so-called leaderships. It is not clear, however, if these discrepancies imply differences in the distribution of material resources (we will return to this issue further on when we discuss the distribution of the PB resources among the population).

The second element we sought to verify in the survey were the predominant participatory praxes among the associated players. In this case we sought to observe the following aspects: average number of people brought together in a community association that participates in the PB; the frequency of the meetings of these associations; the average number of people present at the meetings; the relation between the associations and other bodies of civil society. Our objective here was to determine the quality of associative life, so as to subsequently discuss the type of participation in the PB that it permits and, finally, discuss how the interactions between civil associations and public power changed after the emergence of the PB.

The associate actors that participate in the PB have a similar history of association in the two cities. In Porto Alegre, as shown in Table 7 below, the origin of the associations and community praxes is slightly previous to that of Belo Horizonte, if we consider the series until the end of the 1980s.

**Table 7: Foundation time of associations whose members participate in the PB**

Foundation	Porto Alegre	Belo Horizonte
1945 a 1959	4,2%	5,5%
1960 a 1969	7,3%	8,2%
1970 a 1979	17,7%	15,1%
1980 a 1989	44,8%	53,4%
1990 a 1999	24,0%	13,7%

Source: Civil society and governance research project.

Two differences call attention in this case: the first is that, as we affirmed above, community association movements were more active in the 1970s in Porto Alegre than in Belo Horizonte and this may explain the PB's origin in that city. Secondly, it is interesting to perceive that the PB also had a greater associative impact in Porto Alegre than in Belo Horizonte if we compare the percentage of associations created in the 90s in the two cities.

Comparing the associative praxes we perceive great similarity between the two cities. In Belo Horizonte the majority of associations meet once a month (56,2%) and the average number of people who attend the meetings varies between 16 and 30 people in most of the cases. Among the associations, 95,9% maintain relations with other organised groups, among which stand out other community associations. In Porto Alegre, greater part of the associations also gather monthly (46,9%) and the average number of people that attend the meetings of a body varies between 31 and 100 people, so there is a greater tendency for participation among the community players of Porto Alegre. Among the associations 91,7% maintained relations with organised groups, among which stand out other community associations (82% of interactions). Therefore, it is possible to observe a similar pattern of associative praxes in the two cities.

When we analysed the praxes previous to the existence of the PB we observed a significant difference between the two cities. In the two cities we asked whether the body or community obtained material benefits before the existence of the PB and in what manner these benefits were obtained. In Belo Horizonte the interviewees were divided in two equal groups: 49,3% said that they obtained material benefits before the existence of the PB and 49,3% said they didn't. When asked about the manner in which these benefits were obtained 60% affirmed having obtained them through contacts of personal relations with politicians. Only 34% answered that they obtained benefits through mobilisation or pressure on behalf of the community. In Porto Alegre, 69,8% of the interviewees affirmed that the associations/communities obtained material benefits before the existence of the PB. However, even if the possibility of obtaining benefits was greater in Porto Alegre than in Belo Horizonte, the percentage of associations that turned to politicians was smaller: in Porto Alegre 41% reported having turned to politicians while 54% affirmed having resorted to mobilisation. The profile of the praxes of the associated players allows us to confirm what the literature on the two cities suggests: Porto Alegre has a more active historical formation, with greater participation, lesser dependence on political mediators and greater mobilisation of the community players themselves. Belo Horizonte has a more conservative historical formation, with less mobilisation and a greater presence of political mediators. This tradition only changed recently.

It is interesting, however, to observe that, if we analyse the praxes of the community actors after the implementation of the PB, they tend to converge in most aspects. We sought to verify the following aspects in relation to the praxes subsequent to the implementation of the PB: the quantity of material gains obtained by the communities; the manner in which these gains were obtained; the forms of political negotiation with the City Hall in each of the two cities and the participation or not of politicians in these negotiations. In Porto Alegre, in 89,6% of cases, the communities obtained material gains. In many cases (26%), some kind of intervention on the part of the community was necessary to ensure the implementation of the approved works. In these cases we asked the manner of the intervention: interventions from politicians receive zero percent answer in Porto Alegre. Among the interviewees, 30,8% had turned to the regional assemblies, proving the effectiveness of the existing institutional forms in the relation between State and civil society. On the other hand, in Belo Horizonte, 60,3% declared that their communities obtained material gains through the PB. In 32% of the cases it was necessary to intervene to ensure the good progress of the works. In these cases, 20,5% of the community players interviewed had turned to COMFORÇAS and 27,3% directly to the regional assembly. In only 6,8% was there intervention on the part of politicians.

If we compare the associative tradition and the praxes subsequent to the implementation of the PB in the two cases we can make the following observations:

- The two cases demonstrate the existence of a strong movement of community players that, in our opinion, is at the core of the success of the of the participatory budget proposal. It was not by chance that the proposal was first presented by the popular movement of Porto Alegre. It is also due to the adaptation of the of the institutional form of participation to the pre-existing praxes between community players that the participation of these players is so big. In other words, from the institutional point of view it seems to be of fundamental importance that the proposals for public participation operate according to pre-existing praxes. The formation of the PB in Porto Alegre seems interesting exactly for this reason: despite the appearance of different proposals of political participation at the beginning of the Olívio Dutra administration, those that proved viable were based on pre-existing praxes, with their origins in civil society.
- Secondly, it seems clear that the existence of a previous associative tradition is only one of the factors involved and that the public format of the PB is just as relevant as the associative tradition element. The success of the PB as a participatory policy is connected to the fact that it offers an alternative to the so-called tradition of the political mediators, a tradition in which politicians distribute material goods as a favour (Avritzer, 1998a). The relevant phenomenon, in the case of the PB, is the capacity it has of transferring from the political mediators to the population the decision on the distribution of material goods through the creation of a set of public elements: assemblies, lists of the previous access to goods, necessity criteria. All these elements, publicly known, create an impediment to fragmentation and contribute to the success of the PB.

#### Participatory Budget and Democracy at Local Level: Some Concluding Observations

An evaluation of the participatory budget shows that it constitutes a practice that democratizes the relation between civil society<sup>5</sup> and local power. Still more relevant, an evaluation of the PB shows that the form of public deliberation is superior to other existing institutional forms, due to its capacity of creating more administrative efficiency and more equality.

Navarro (1998) shows how, as we evaluate of the city of Porto Alegre's capacity to construct its public sewage network, we can see a clear improvement of this capacity after the introduction of the participatory budget.

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<sup>5</sup> Some authors, however, have exaggerated in an empirically inconsistent manner the strengthening effect of the PB on civil society. The most striking case is that of Baiocci (1999). Based on an incomplete list of civil associations in Porto Alegre, the author makes two mistakes: firstly, he argues for an extremely low associative density in the city prior to the existence of the PB, as opposed to all the existing works on civil associations in that city. Secondly, he argues for an exponential increase of civil associations after the implementation of the PB. According to the author, an 80% increase in the number of associations had occurred during the '90s, a fact that is not sustained by any of the empirical studies on the associations. Our data point to a growth of 24% in the number of civil associations in Porto Alegre after the creation of the PB and of 13% in Belo Horizonte. See Baiocci, 1999.

Between 1983 and 1987 an average of 5.296 metres of sewage systems were built per year. The average in 1988 when Olívio Dutra was elected mayor was of 8.091 metres. Between 1989 and 1992 the annual average rose to 21.674 and between 1993 and 1996 the average reached 61.334 metres. Therefore, it is possible to observe, with regard to the efficiency of public administration, an improvement of performance.

It is important also to note that the improvement in performance is not only quantitative, in terms of metres of sewage networks or paving, but is also qualitative. Both in Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte it is possible to show that equity in the distribution of public funds is improving. Table 8 below shows the percentage of resources of the PB invested in estates and *favelas* in Belo Horizonte.

**Table 8: Resources allocated in improvements in slums (*favelas*) and poor neighborhoods in BH (*vilas*)**

OP	total R\$	<i>favelas</i>	% <i>vilas</i> and <i>favelas</i>
94	15,360,390	5,149,126	33.52%
95	18,185,909	5,520,636	30.35%
96	27,165,470	6,624,831	24.38%
97	26,948,339	6,686,719	23.20%
98	15,974,186	3,713,775	23.49%
99/2000	60,208,600	14,144,400	23.49%
Total	163,842,894	41,839,487	25.53%

Source: Secretaria Municipal de Planejamento of Belo Horizonte

It is possible to perceive both the potential for increase in efficiency and the potential for increase in equity in the distribution of resources obtained through the participatory budget. The relevance of the PB as participatory policy seems to be its capacity of becoming an instrument for the participation of the lower income population and for the transfer of material public resources to this population group. There is no doubt that, in this aspect, the PB is a highly successful public policy. It inverts the priorities established in the city decades ago and is able of placing clear limits on the activity of the political mediators, substituting them with forums in which the population makes the principal decisions as to the distribution of material resources.

If these seem to be the principal virtues of the PB as mode of relation between State and civil society, it is necessary to point out some limits of this proposal, identified in our study. Two limits seem very clear: insufficient democratisation in relation to the social players themselves and incapacity of extending the PB into social areas in which alternatives of public policies are at stake.

A first limit that seems very clear to us is the insufficient democratisation in relation to the community players themselves. Although the great virtue of the PB seems to be its contribution to the democratisation of the relation between State and society, some data seem to indicate that, with regard to the relation within communities, a hierarchic and not very democratic situation remains. When asked if the choice of delegates was easy or difficult, 60,4% of the interviewees in Porto Alegre answered that it was easy. Between those who answered it was difficult, in 30,2% of the cases the reason of the difficulty was that nobody wanted to be delegate. Asked about the mode of selection of the priority works of the community, some significant differences between the two cities could also be observed: in Porto Alegre, in 77,1% of cases the community assembly chose the priorities. On the other hand, in Belo Horizonte the assemblies are cited in 42,4% of cases and choice by the board of directors in 28,8% of cases. These seem to be elements of a culture historically characterised by weak participation, expressing themselves in the PB. Another element, already touched on above, is the reduced participation of women and low income population in leadership levels. The two facts may indicate kinds of stratification whose consequences it is still hard to determine. Our data seem to indicate that the reduced participation of the lower income groups is not affecting the distribution of resources in its favour. However, it is possible that the lower participation of women in leadership levels may be influencing aspects of the political agenda approved by the PB.

The second limit of the PB that seems to be quite clear is its concentration on the issue of distribution of material resources. Evidently, as we have defended in this study, this dimension has a central importance at local level in Brazil. However, public policies at local level do not and cannot limit themselves to the distribution of material goods. Several social policies are, in Brazil, decided at local level and there exists a set of options relating to these policies that must be decided democratically. For instance: different alternatives of educational policies, different alternatives of health policies, among other examples of social policies. Until now, most of the PB's decisions refer to material issues only, as shown by table 9 below.

Table 9: Chosen priorities in Porto Alegre in 1999

Region	1 <sup>st</sup> Priority Note 5	2 <sup>nd</sup> Priority Note 4
Humaitá-	Health - health centers renovation and	Sanitation - Pluvial sewage - PEP
Noroeste	Leisure areas	Housing Policy
Leste	Housing Policy - land regularization	Paving
Lombado Pinheiro	Paving	Sanitation - sewage ESCOLOCAL
Norte	Housing Policy - land regularization	Sanitation - Arroio (Pre-n. E. Prág.)
Noroeste	Education - Elementary school	Housing Policy - urbanization

<b>P artenon</b>	<b>P aving</b>	<b>H OUSING P Olicy - lanD reGularization</b>
<b>R estinga</b>	<b>S anitation - S ewage</b>	<b>E DUCation - kinD erGarten</b>
<b>G lória</b>	<b>P aving</b>	<b>S anitation - S ewage</b>
<b>C ruzeiro</b>	<b>H OUSING P Olicy - lanD reGularization</b>	<b>P aving</b>
<b>C rystal</b>	<b>H OUSING P Olicy - lanD reGularization</b>	<b>S anitation - S ewage</b>
<b>C entro-Sul</b>	<b>P aving</b>	<b>S anitation - S ewage</b>
<b>E xtrem O-Sul</b>	<b>P aving</b>	<b>S anitation - W ater SUPPLY P M A E</b>
<b>Eixo Da B altazar</b>	<b>H OUSING P Olicy - settlement</b>	<b>H ealth centersÊ renovation and</b>
<b>Sul</b>	<b>P aving</b>	<b>S anitation - P luvial S ewage - P E P</b>
<b>C entro</b>	<b>H OUSING P Olicy - house CONSTRUCTION</b>	<b>E DUCation - S E JA P ROgram</b>

Source: Prefeitura de Porto Alegre.

The analysis of Table 9 shows that, in the so-called regional assemblies of Porto Alegre, the majority of decisions still involve material resources and not government programmes. With regard to the first priorities in Porto Alegre in 1999, 6 decisions were related to paving, 6 were related to housing policy, making up 12 decisions related to material issues in a total of 16. Only in one region did education seem appear as a priority. In other words, the great majority of decisions are on public works. In 1999, Belo Horizonte began a movement in the sense of delegating to the population that participates in the PB the control over some government policies in a process called “PB Cidade (City)”. It is too early to evaluate the results of this process but it seems clear that a movement in the direction of popular participation in the establishment of priorities between programmes is the path the PB must follow to widen the population’s participation in local management.

The analysis of the PB in Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte shows that in the third wave of democratisation there is a change of perspective with regard to the institutional problem. The problem of how to create stable institutions is linked less to the rules of political competition and the forms of the political system and much more to the public relation possible between State and society. It is the transfer of potentials of cultural innovation that emerge from the civil associations or of renovation of the public culture that can engender democratic configurations, not the search for stable but not participatory political arrangements. Our data on the PB clearly points to the benefits of participation in its capacity to create stable forms of democratic management. It is the new praxes, capable of radicalisation the exercise of democracy, who legitimate the latter in the eyes of the citizens, on whose authorisation democracy will always depend. Especially that of the excluded citizens which, in a county like Brazil, continue to make up the greater part of our population.

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1- Humaitá/Ilhas/Navegantes

2- Noroeste

3- Leste

4- Lomba do Pinheiro

5- Norte

6- Nordeste

7- Partenon

8- Restinga

9- Glória

10- Cruzeiro

11- Cristal

12- Centro Sul

13- Extremo Sul

14- Eixo Baltazar

15- Sul

16- Centro