

## The Participatory Budgeting Towards a New Governance and Accountability

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### Abstract

*Public sector governance covers responsibility tasks in relation to the specific objectives of this sector, which are not only limited to the provision of services but include the impact of policies on the community or on society in general. New public management and new public governance in local authorities highlight the growing need for accountability towards stakeholders and the evolution of the concept of citizen, from the customer / service user to that of an active stakeholder able to contribute to the definition of company conduct. The phenomenon of the Participated Budget is identified and examined considering five fundamental criteria that have the potential to indicate aspects that are always present in the participated budgets and which at the same time must analyze the various stakeholders. In the analysis through the comparison between representative and participatory democracy, we try to highlight the right path to defining the participatory budget and the choices of the citizen. In particular, the research analyzes the main characteristics and functions of the participatory budget as an instrument of accountability. The analysis conducted is of a qualitative nature supported by the use of a case study. In particular, the phases and characteristics of the participatory budget are analyzed starting from the case of the Municipality of Collegno (Italy) in order to highlight characteristics and future prospects.*

**Keywords:** participatory budget; accountability; public governance; deliberative democracy, participative democracy

### 1 Introduction

#### 1.1 Performance, accountability, and transparency, the role of information

The reforms linked to the public sectorization of public bodies (Farnham et al., 2016) assume that improving the mechanisms of governance and accountability, the performances of public sector provisions improve too (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004, 2011). In the literature analysis, public sector governance regards the responsibility tasks related to the specific objectives of this sector, which are not only limited to the provision of services (for example, cost and quality of services), but include the impact of policies on the community or society in general (e.g. political results or results related to taxation (Jacobs & Goddard, 2007). The governance includes, in particular, various types of mechanisms and structures that clarify the responsibilities of the various stakeholders as regards the organization, the implemented approaches and the ability to meet the demand for transparency linked to responsibility through tools such as the systems for internal control and external responsibility (Goddard, 2005) The New Public Management (Hood, 1991) turns the attention of public administrations to the use and redefinition of services based on the needs of the citizens. Currently, the government and accountability of public bodies is turning the attention to the entire public group aimed at the realization of the needs expressed by the citizen, and to the horizontal control through different levers between the local authority and participated, controlled companies, or companies linked also through public service contracts (Osborne, 1992). The ability to increase the decision-making process of the public body, citizens and stakeholders require some tools that can put together and synthesize the different information flows, guaranteeing a true accountability process. Performance evaluation becomes one of the essential requirements for transparency and accountability in the organization of public services (Reichard, 1998, Pollit & Summa, 1997). But transparency is a form of weak response. Often when only information access is present, an institution is transparent but not responsible. Responsibility includes the ability to sanction or compensate. The intermediate category refers to the ability to request explanations, which is here placed as an area of overlap between transparency and responsibility (Fox, 2007). Since very often in public bodies the citizen becomes a service provider unconsciously defining the quality and quantity required (Brusca & Montesinos, 2006), providing transparent information to guarantee a choice is an element that cannot be separated from the definition of public spending and consequently also from the taxes and duties which the public body will collect. The possibility to request information and the kind of available data is, therefore, a topic of analysis. Furthermore, literature has always emphasized the fact that companies are inserted in a dynamic environment, with which they are called to evolve, catching up with environmental changes and in some ways trying to influence them (Joskow, 1974; Roome, 1992; Oliver & Holzinger, 2008;). In this perspective, among others, some features that characterize the environment of local authorities are represented by the growing need for accountability towards stakeholders (Sternberg, 1997; Belal, 2002; Bäckstrand, 2006; Collier, 2008 Caperchione, 2003) and from the evolution of the concept of citizen, shifted from that of client / user of services to that of active stakeholder (Doh & Guay, 2006; Chess & Purcell, 1999) capable of contributing to the definition of company conduct. What has just been said has contributed to shaping a new approach to decision-making and reporting, based on the active involvement of

civil society and on a multi-sector perspective (Moon, 2004, Chen & Delmas, 2011), and is concretely well supported by the remarkable dissemination of experiences of inclusive decision-making processes and social reporting (Adams, 2002; Deegan, 2002). This is because only the adequate understanding of the received information allows those who come into possession to contextualize them correctly, to report them, at least potentially, to actual dynamics of participation and then give a responsible reading, not influenced in a prejudicial manner by the culture of suspicion and distrust on everything that is done in the exercise of public functions or, in any case, with the use of public resources. Several studies affirm that the revitalization or renewal of local democracy has been characterized by four elements: to improve the turnout in local elections; to improve community leadership; to reform the internal management of local authorities, largely following the guidelines of the private sector and to provide opportunities for citizens to be involved in the decision-making process of local authorities (Boston & Pallot, 1997; Burns et al., 1994). The relationship between choice and response conducted by the same subjects reports the introduction of new forms of democracy market in local administrations. New mechanisms have been introduced to improve citizen participation and local affairs for them, make local authorities more sensitive to citizens' concerns and increase the choices available (Boston and Pallot, 1997, Wallis & Dollery, 2001; Northcott et al., 2012). The involvement of citizens and public employees in the choice thus becomes one of the key elements to lead to a renewal of democracy where the key decision makers and stakeholders are involved in the evaluation system in terms of efficiency and effectiveness (Kelly & Swindell, 2002) but also in terms of social well-being (Biancone et al., 2017). In the mechanisms introduced to guarantee new forms of democracy, it is necessary to address the issue of transparency and the use of information. Transparency is the ability to provide credible policies avoiding conflict of interests, open information and sharing of budgets, freedom of information and participation of citizens in the formulation and implementation of public policies by making state enterprises accountable (Turnpenny et al., 2009). Transparency therefore concerns the ease of access and use of government and non-profit information. The more open and easier it is for the public to obtain information, the greater the transparency. Knowing to decide starting from economic, capital, quantitative and qualitative information through various instruments such as the Social Report and the Popular Financial Reporting (Rainero & Brescia, 2016; Biancone et al., 2016; 2017), becomes the basis to guarantee stakeholders the participatory and deliberative capacity to choose with the possible expression through the participatory budgeting.

## **1.2 Participatory budgeting and governance**

The reconstruction work on the forms of Participatory Budgeting (Allegretti & Sintomer, 2009) must be taken as an initial point of reference; more generally on the logic of shared administration in which the citizen is the protagonist. Furthermore, it is appropriate to clarify which the main aspects are that characterize the traditional participation to better understand in which different declinations this real concept can extend. Participatory democracy, with the strength that the adjective assumes from being used as a qualifier of the concept of democracy, differs from the generic concept of participation within which it was born. Participation, as a notion deriving from politics and as an ancient need for fullness of implementation, required by the idea and by democratic practice, is normally conceived within the institutions, which will be elective on the one hand and on the other hand purely of the administrative organization, this second meaning must not be forgotten, as an equally essential element of the former, in the way of being of the modern-contemporary state (Rosanvallon & Goldhammer; 2008). This can be seen as the quality, that is, present or desirable of both the components of democracy that we call representative. There are numerous ways that enrich the way of being representative institutions, think of a rich participation in the elections, the action in the functioning of the institutions made in parties, the unions, concertation procedures with associations and categories, the presence of associative or even corporate representatives in numerous administrative bodies and finally the participation of those involved in the administrative procedure, which thanks to a social element (Allegretti, 2010) are able to value those institutions that are representative in nature, sometimes linked by excessive bureaucracy. It is therefore necessary to pay close attention to a series of frequent confusions, on a cognitive level and that generate inappropriate attitudes in practice, such as the one that leads to the belief of sufficient participation in the administrative procedure of subjects holding individual situations of law already protected and susceptible to jurisdictional protection, such as property (Romolini, 2007). The phenomenon of the Participatory Budgeting is identified and examined considering five fundamental criteria: a) the accounting and / or economic-financial dimension must be explicitly discussed; b) the city dimension, i.e. the budget must refer to the entire city, or to the entire territorial administrative unit of reference (and therefore the fact that the Participatory Budgeting is an aspect of the local government); c) the participatory process must reiterate over time, or must have the annual cycle character repeating; d) this process must include and provide for some forms of public deliberation; e) the animators of the participatory path must report the results achieved, in short, there must be reporting. These criteria have the potential to indicate aspects that are always present in the participatory budgeting, but risk omitting an assessment on the subjects of these processes (whether they must be self-selected individual citizens, or intermediate subjects permanently structured or trained on single instances, or set of all these types of actors) and the characteristics of

participation and the form of participatory or deliberative democracy put in place (Gbkpi, 2005). In their survey, assuming a perspective proper to the sociology of politics, an approach is proposed that allows to identify six different models of Participatory Budgeting. The aspects related to the ways in which civic participation is born and developed are considered: (a) the origins of the experience, considering what is called path-dependency (Piersona, 2000), i.e. the level of continuity and integration with the previous participatory practices; (b) the methods for mobilizing and structuring the participation (thematic or territorial assemblies, open or closed meetings, existence of delegation mechanisms, popular reporting, etc.); (c) the nature of the resolution, having regard to the scope of the dealt issues and the manner in which the decision is formed (voting mechanisms, use of innovative instruments, etc.); (d) the weight of civil society in the procedure, the role it covers, assessing the types of citizens involved, the level of procedural autonomy, the degree of constraint for the governing bodies, the methods for reporting on the decisions taken and actual achievements present on the territory. It is appropriate that the analysis be extended to further profiles, moving from a merely technical level to a more political-cultural dimension. In particular, the following are considered: (1) the socio-political and economic context of reference; (2) the regulatory framework and the political will of the actors; (3) the social dynamics underway, with particular regard to the organizational modalities of civil society and the trends expressed by the various intermediate bodies; (4) the relationship between conventional politics, normally based on mechanisms of representative delegation, and participatory dynamics, which tends to idealize the various forms of direct democracy. In this sense, the six types of Participatory Budgeting have been identified and associated with as many models of civic participation, which take into consideration several significant aspects within the different theoretical approaches of participatory governance, such as the weight of citizenship understood as the role which is attributed to the citizen as part of the participatory process, also attributing weight to the organizational model chosen for the implementation of the participatory project; all these aspects can be summarized through the following tables that take into account the most salient features of each participatory budget models developed in the numerous international experiences. In practice we can group the various experiences into three models: public-private negotiation table, management of funds for neighborhoods, participation of organized interests (Bertocci, 2010). The differences between the various models are nuanced and the various experiences taken over the years, as well as those in progress, present characters common to several models at the same time. In the proposed classification a particular weight is attributed to the “ideological charge” of the various experiences and their ability to contribute to the development of a “cooperative counter-power”, thus contrasting with the conventional models of government. In this sense, the case of Porto Alegre is taken as reference model and placed at the top of the proposed scale of value (Allegretti et al., 2010). The model of participatory democracy, of which the case of the Brazilian town has become a reference model for many European countries, is probably the most widespread; it is characterized by the implementation of a process concerning the involvement of segments of citizenship (usually of individual citizens) for the definition of spending priorities and in some cases also for the determination of projects in a concrete way, through collaboration with technicians municipalities. The expenditure in question is mostly related to investment expenditure. In this model the citizen is called upon to decide on a part of the budget, this type of involvement foresees or can foresee an interaction of a deliberative nature, which therefore relies on the possibility that the discussion is based on the action aimed at finding an agreement that you consider the reasonableness of the arguments to transform preferences. This model, which is preferably built on a local scale, turns out to be the most productive, both considering the original theme addressed to the implementation of greater social justice (present in the situation of Porto Alegre and instead absent in most of the European experiences), but above all in relation to the definition of spaces of participatory and deliberative democracy that flanked and linked to the traditional representative democracy. It is also considered, as correct as it is a model that promotes the empowerment of citizenship, the attitude adopted by citizens, which can be critical and at the same time constructive, with the aim of consciously intervening in the budgetary policy of an institution local (Gangemi, 2015).

### **1.3 Deliberative and participatory democracy**

The border that delimits participatory and deliberative democracy is particularly subtle, although this is not the mere field of organization of procedures, but we focus on the substantial functioning of the public decision-making machine. On the basis of attention to the argumentation that was already typical of Greek culture - the memorable discourses of Herodotus and Thucydides as well as a whole line of thought that in the United States found among its philosophical referents John Dewey (Dewey & Rogers, 2012), and among its analysts numerous scholars including Elster and Gastl, and which in Europe finds the greatest exponent in Habermas (Habermas & Habermas, 1985; Habermas, 1991), it inspires the invention of new debate procedures ranging from town meeting to the focus groups to the deliberative polls introduced by Fishkin to the consensus conference and so on (Regonini, 2005; Bobbio, 2005), which have their roots, as well as in the Athenian experiences, also in experiences in colonial New England. This is a strand of enrichment of participatory procedures that presents different affinities and intersections with participatory democracy. The latter occur because instruments born under the guise of deliberative democracy are used in the context of

participatory democracy procedures (considering that some of the proposals and experiences of deliberative democracy remain only on the theoretical level or are realized without a direct reference to an institutional action). Participatory democracy finds its essential element in the deliberative moment, and on the other hand, deliberative democracy finds its privileged place precisely in the procedures of participatory democracy<sup>23</sup>. However, important differences remain between the two streams of ideas, mainly linked to the fact that in the participatory democracy the deliberative component is only an element of a more complex phenomenon that is not limited to the interest in the value and techniques of rational argumentation, which instead represents the main concern of deliberative democracy. The reasons that support participatory democracy practices, giving it its meaning, show a great complexity. As we can learn by looking at existing experiences, there are many motivations with which the actors establish them, lead them and give them a public justification. They can be more or less rich or instead rather limited, correct or sometimes not correct (in the sense that they can present purposes strictly instrumental to the construction of a previously researched and artefact consensus), the correct ones are compatible but nevertheless they, only some, can inspire the conduct of the actors giving reality to the experiences in which they translate a particular declination. However, it is possible to make an objective analysis of the various purposes, they will not be the only ones that are admissible and useful and that will nevertheless show areas of overlap among the different categories thus constructed. Below we try to present four large groups, summarized in table 1, comparing the flaws of representative democracy with those of participatory democracy. A first order of finality aims at the enrichment of democracy as a form of political government of society; a second order looks at the extension of the rights of people, as individuals and social groups, the development of their dignity and capacity, which in a certain way constitutes the face of democracy itself; a third one leads to define and discuss the aims of social and redistributive justice present in at least some versions of participatory democracy; a fourth order addresses the search for effectiveness and efficiency of public action, the verification of adherence to public and personal needs.

Table 1 The aims of participatory democracy

Limits of representative democracy	Benefits of participatory democracy
Democracy as a form of political government of society: - Lack of real representativeness; - Strong dependence on administrative and technical apparatuses; - Forming of oligarchies; - Possible crises of legitimization of representation; - Leaders and populism; - Unresolved Conflict.	Democracy as a form of political government of society: - Self-representation of the company; - Expert control; - Dissemination of power; - Improvement of trust on the public action; - Valorization of particularities; - The composition of conflicts.
Extension of people's rights: - Social discrimination and inequality	Extension of people's rights: - Social justice, redistributive effects
Purpose of social justice: - Social exclusion: women, minors, young people, minorities	Purpose of social justice - Empowerment: gender mainstreaming, the democracy of young people and children, promotion of minorities
Effectiveness and efficiency in public action: - Inability of experts to deal with complexity; - Inability to resolve uncertainty - Inefficiency.	Effectiveness and efficiency in public action: - Roles of everyday knowledge and alternative expert knowledge; - Discussion of alternatives; - Overcoming of inertias.

Source: Own processing

Therefore, the Participatory Budgeting is proposed as an instrument of local government, which provides from the forming of budgeting, from the preliminary and preparatory phase of the estimated budget, participation of citizens in the preparation of the expenditure chapters, with particular reference to the capital expenditure. Therefore, the accounting dimension of the Participatory Budgeting must be discussed through involvement, participation, and deliberation of segments of citizenship. The empirical experiences show that the deliberative moment does not exclude the forms of aggregation and choice through the voting mechanism, indeed the main feature of the Participatory Budgeting is that, after the deliberative phase, there is a choice, by voting, of the priorities of the spending proposals, which could contrast with the pure ideal of deliberation (Freschi, 2004, Amoretti, 2006, Di Maria & Micelli, 2004). Finally, there must be a statement of what has been chosen, the result of participatory intervention is explicit and can be explained in the preparation of the final balance sheet; account must be taken of spending limits



and therefore the stability of the budget or its annual variability dictated by factors that are not always predictable in advance (for example a reduction of any budget revenue or changes in the stability pact), the particular variability capital expenditure, the amount of expenditure, the timing of approval or even the degree of devolution of decision-making capacity and cooperation that is given to citizens. In any case, the path of the Participatory Budgeting, taking as data the possible constraints along the path dictated by the context, is presented as a cycle which includes a conception and diffusion phase, a territorial animation phase and the implementation of the process, which involves the movement of citizens and officials dedicated to the participatory process, and a final phase of implementation of the decisions, reporting and monitoring of the same.

## **2. Methodology and objectives**

The objective of the research is to analyze the main characteristics and functions of the participatory budgeting as an instrument of accountability. The analysis conducted is of a qualitative nature supported by the use of a case study. In particular, the phases and characteristics of the participatory budgeting are analyzed starting from the case of the Municipality of Collegno (Italy).

## **3. Discussion**

### **3.1 The participatory budgeting**

In light of the differences involved in the different theoretical approaches to governability of a territory, the instrument of the Participatory Budgeting can also be considered as the evolution of the social balance sheet, while the social report simply illustrates the results achieved, the Participatory Budgeting requires the institution to actively involve the “stakeholders”, i.e., the social partners, volunteering, associationism, from the preparation of the first draft budget, continuing, therefore, the route and the corrections of course underway. The Participatory Budgeting is therefore organized on a territorial basis, calling the inhabitants of a certain area but also those who live in that part of the city without having their residence: they are so-called “active citizens” or “stakeholders”, while the public administration undertakes to include even traditionally excluded items such as, for example, what concerns children, immigrants or people with disabilities. The experience of the Participatory Budgeting consists of a methodology to build a “dialectical” path aimed at orienting, on the basis of citizens’ preferences, the process of allocating a part of the financial resources available in the budget of a public body. The phenomenon is recent, and it is, therefore, difficult to find elements of generalization with reference to a single structured and standardized cycle; it is not possible to identify a single model of the Participatory Budgeting; on the basis of the experiments and the projects carried out, it is possible, indeed, to identify different paths of definition and implementation of this tool: the administration, through moments of confrontation, can collect the needs and proposals of citizens and on the basis of them decide the use of financial resources included in the budget in order to answer emerged needs and suggestions, or it is possible to provide a more direct participation of citizens, who through appropriate moments and tools are called to choose how to invest a share of the economic resources of the body. The existence of a series of contextual requirements is important for the success of the participatory budgeting testings. Citizens’ assessments and proposals generally do not cover the entire budget, but a part of the institution’s budget, one or more budget expenditure chapters directly affecting citizenship such as local transport or cultural and social policies. A first difference between the various forms of Participatory Budgeting is the provision of a precise quota: the institution establishes the amount of the budget and citizens are called to discuss how to invest the available resources. The discretionary ability of the institution in financial matters can be an important requirement of the various forms of financial statements. Participatory, precisely because it affects the possibilities of allocating a significant portion of the budget to participation. The preventive quantification of the resources to be allocated to the coverage of the projects, the result of co-decision, however appropriate, is far from obvious. It is also possible to provide a Participatory Budgeting addressed to a specific target or to a particular group of citizens. For example, a municipality can expect to involve young people and ask them to make proposals on how to invest municipal resources or to involve the inhabitants of a certain area of the municipality in the decisions of investments for that area of the city. In addition to these differences, the Participatory Budgeting may include different theoretical approaches distinguishing the “level” of participation and involvement of citizens (Bertocci, 2010): (a) citizens are informed in advance of the contents of the administration’s budget through moments and tools set up ad hoc, and a consultation on the budget is opened; (b) citizens are called to evaluate and vote on some projects or interventions identified by the administration, in order to decide which project to budget and then implement; (c) citizens are called to make project proposals that the administration must take into account when defining the financial statements; (d) citizens are called to discuss and decide how to spend a precise share of the administration’s budget. In doctrine, a participatory process in the public budget can include, for its implementation, three macro phases: (1) information and communication, communication with citizens is planned, tools are prepared (website, social network, forum, communication, publications, leaflets, etc.) and citizens are informed about the

initiative and how to carry out the project; (2) consultation and participation, the consultation and participation process is activated, the meetings are organized and carried out, the instruments and the moments of participation are managed; (3) evaluation, definition, and dissemination, the administration assesses the feasibility of the proposals and decisions collected, defines the budget and informs its citizenship. It is also necessary to identify a series of actions that should be included in the planning of a Participatory Budgeting process, such as: definition of objectives, choice of model, definition of subjects to be involved, choice and planning of instruments, definition of participation procedures (physical / virtual, timing and methods, voting, etc.), definition of a regulation and dissemination / planning of the program of meetings, dissemination of results, planning of the balance based on results, dissemination of the budget and feedback of the participatory process, etc. All these actions favour the development of participatory democracy. By increasing the attention to participation and to inclusive decision-making processes by the public administration, the Participatory Budgeting is today more and more widespread and is used by an increasing number of bodies. The danger that may arise in the use of this tool is the failure to implement the proposals collected, and the failure to align the budget and public policies to decisions taken by citizens; just as dangerous, given the political connotation erroneously attributed to this instrument of governance, is that the promotion of the participatory process remains an announced electoral commitment that is not really realized, thus becoming an instrument of participation and direct democracy as an instrument of political propaganda. Despite the lack of existence of a pre-constituted model it is possible to identify, among the various experiences observed, some common phases that are articulated and follow each other in the drafting of the document, in order to outline a sort of reference model available for dissemination. Without diminishing the processes necessary to compose the document, it is possible to simplify the procedures by identifying: the first phase which consists in identifying the inputs of the Participatory Budgeting, i.e. the requirements and needs expressed by the community, which are collected through the use of structured questionnaires, focus groups, online forums and neighborhood assemblies. In this phase the ability of the figures in charge of following the participation process is fundamental in including and involving the greatest number of possible social categories; indeed the greater the number of subjects involved is, the more truthful the representation of the expression of the needs of the community will be, expressed in the form of power exercised by citizens according to their needs. Human power is by nature a complex phenomenon and, as such, requires different levels of approach and perspectives of analysis, with regard to the latter, with an analytical perspective, it is intended to represent the angle of the community opposed to that of the individual. On the structural level, power is caught in its immediate visibility of objective function and social factor in action. Indeed, in the context of social processes, power is a function that, on the one hand, postulates the convertibility of various material and symbolic resources into a potential structured of persuasion, and on the other hand, assumes its receptivity by individuals who participate in a system of values and relations compatible with it. The second phase consists in defining a grid of priorities, i.e. going to structure the needs and requirements encountered in the first phase in terms of ranking, in this way a "weight" is attributed to each emerged necessity, always following the response emerged from the community, and from here to identify, subsequently, the priorities to be assigned to the decisions that will be taken. It is only after the definition of these priorities that there is the integration of what emerged from the early stages of the Participatory Budgeting through an instrument produced by the institution such as the actual estimated Budget. The estimated budget has the task of providing authorization, at the beginning of each year, on the expenses that each individual department will be able to support and guarantee the adequate financial coverage through the planning of the revenues. The components of this sort of "classification" to be implemented need projects, which, in order to be implemented, require the allocation of financial resources, so I allow their quantification then included in the Budget. In the third phase, the so-called "pilot projects" come out, structured as much as possible to satisfy the need considered primary by the community; they are subjected to specific feasibility studies, not only in financial but also technical and structural terms. The feasibility study is a cognitive tool useful to support evaluations related to the opportunity to adapt choices of an associative type or to widen the scope of operations. On the basis of the contents of the study it should be possible to make a first technical verification of feasibility from an organizational-management point of view. The level of detail of the study may vary depending on the dimensional and organizational characteristics of the bodies involved and the functions and services that may be associated. From the content point of view, in general, the object of the study is the detection and analysis of the aspects of: (a) regulatory framework of reference; (b) institutional and organizational structures of institutions (size, population, territory, articulation of the structure and levels of responsibility, organic allocation, etc.); (c) functions and services: lines of activity, forms of management, assigned personnel, product and process indicators, level of computerization, etc. On the basis of the elements gathered, hypotheses of the evolution of the structure and of the forms of management are formulated, the feasibility is verified with respect to a series of variables, e.g. organic resources, financial resources, logistics, spaces and constraints of a legal nature, and a gradual process of adjustment is outlined. From the methodological point of view, the realization of the study is based on two main sources of information which are the interviews and the analysis of documentation. The interviews are addressed, based on the size of the institution and the scope of the study object (all the functions / services of the institution, only some functions or services, only some activities of larger functions and services, etc.), to directors, executives and staff of

the body connected to the activities subject to assessment of alternative management forms. The analysis of the documentation includes the study of acts and documents of the body and other legislation (statute, regulations, resolutions, organigram, organic plan, budgets, Peg, etc.) that helps to build a framework for contextualization and possible development of the functions / services on which the study is based. At the end of the analysis, the study should allow to have a clear picture of the institutional and functional characteristics of the bodies involved; to focus points of attention on which to base the associative choice; to evaluate the dimension of added value for institutions and citizens of an association choice and its enlargement; to have, ultimately, an exhaustive picture of technical evaluation elements which, together with other elements of opportunity and feasibility of a "political" nature, supports the choices to be adopted. Once the projects have been identified, not only considered to be pre-eminent, but also concretely practicable, it will be the Administration's task, verifying the financial resources included in the Budget, deciding how much to allocate and moving resources from one item of the budget to another and then in advance meet the expectations of the community, without forgetting the path to be taken to subsequently measure the degree of achievement of what was established in the previous phases. The Participatory Budgeting therefore allows a concrete comparison between what has been declared and what has been achieved by public administrators. The three phases indicated, the identification of the need, the definition of the priorities and the study of the pilot project, are strictly connected to each other and furthermore must be subjected to continuous monitoring. In particular, needs are revolutionized, society evolves so quickly, changing its cultural, social, structural and economic aspects, which make reflect on the impossibility of creating a grid of priorities that has a stable nature over time. This is why it is important, and it is one of the success factors of the Participatory Budgeting, the creation of a period and continuous dialogue between citizens and decision-making bodies, which is delegated to the capacity of the actors that accompany the participatory budgeting process, through recurring moments of verification of the stages of progress of the adopted projects. The communication and the involvement between the various actors of the Participatory Budgeting are two, among the various aspects that characterize this path, which are fundamental in the procedure leading to the drafting of the document. The institution, through brochures, letters delivered at home, neighborhood assemblies, informs citizenship not of the objectives to be achieved and the tools used to implement them, but also carries out the monitoring function, as well as evaluative feedback on the behavior in the whole participatory process. In particular, the informative feedback process in the preparation of the Participatory Budgeting must be independent from the top-down view, while the information must start from the bottom up, starting from the involvement of the electorate up to the decision-making bodies of the administration in a continuous process of confrontation and also of reasonable interdependence among all the actors (Alfiero, 2007). As already mentioned, in doctrine, there are numerous examples of experimentation, among them different, which is possible to watch with interest. The Participatory Budgeting should not be considered as an exclusive "tool" to stimulate an active sense of citizenship, and the participation of the inhabitants in the choices concerning their territories of life or work. It should only be a component of the "Citizen Participation System" to be coordinated with other areas or areas of participation that involve the "upstream" and "downstream" citizens of all the choices concerning their territory. Summarizing to the extreme, it is currently possible to recognize two large families of participatory budgetings: objectives of democratization of local institutional powers, and it provides greater margins of autonomy in the decision for citizens participating in the processes of discussion of budgets. Participation in a more consultative form, primarily pursuing objectives of transparency and efficient management of public resources. Both types of process place their intervention upstream of the decisional moments by law reserved for the signing of choices by the Municipal Councils (Regional, etc.), on which the citizens are called to exert pressure and control because the indications provided by citizens are not disregarded too easily and without explanation given by the elected representatives. As can easily be seen, the forms of Participatory Budgeting are many and the numerous experiments around the world have varied the characteristics of this method of citizen participation; one of the characteristics that unites the various discussion processes and that is at the highest degree "including" and therefore does not favour only the already structured groups of citizens, who could act as "pressure lobbyists" and in this case they should be adequately identified because each pressure is exercised "in the open air" and remains in a framework of transparency, basic to offer all citizens certainty of the rules that characterize the path of discussion and decision. To this day, Participatory Budgetings tend to act as important places to rebalance the voices within the territories: therefore they try to involve, with positive forms of discrimination, categories of inhabitants not in possession of formal political rights (for example minors and foreigners). Generally, participatory budgetings mix assembly moments of direct democracy and moments of representative democracy in which new representatives with "mandate constraints" discuss the city's spending addresses (with relative localizations of the interventions) that the Councils then harmonize with their own autonomous proposals, refer to the citizens for an evaluation, and finally make their own presenting them to the Councils that by law remain generally the only ones responsible for approving the financial statements. In the public assemblies of the Participatory Budgeting, it is useful that the representatives of the institutions have the obligation to attend, but do not have the right to vote in the votes of the addresses or priorities indicated by the citizens, to ensure the preservation of organizational autonomy and decision-making of citizens and a kind of frank dialogue between society and institutions, without excessive

commingling of powers. The principle of self-management of processes by citizens is often decisive for the success of participatory budgeting processes: in this case, internal regulations can guarantee clear organizational rules within each year of discussion, but able to be flexible and change annually in pre-established critical review periods implemented with the equal participation of inhabitants and institutions.

### **3.2 Case Study, the Municipality of Collegno**

With resolution of the Municipal Council n. 379 of 22/12/2014, the municipality of Collegno kicked off the participatory process in the city, establishing a regulation that dictates the cardinal principles and the rules of the participatory process. The Participatory Budgeting is a process of direct democracy, through which citizens participate in decisions concerning the use and destination of the Body's economic resources in the areas and sectors in which the Body has direct competence. The possibility of including the citizen in the processes of government and management of public administrations is therefore a breaking point with the past, coming to configure a two-way relationship system in which the citizen is seen as a co-actor with respect to the current system in which the type of relations with the Public Administration is of a unilateral type. For Participatory Budgeting we can understand a way of constructing the Estimated Budget of a local public company (e.g. Municipality) that is activated, through a participatory path, for the direct involvement of citizens. Therefore we can define as a first purpose of the Participatory Budgeting to prioritize social needs and to promote its initiatives. The process of constructing the Participatory Budgeting cannot be generalized with reference to a structured and standardisable cycle, as it is a phenomenon susceptible to continuous changes. The Participatory Budgeting consists, therefore, in a method of constructing an orientation and dialectical path aimed at orienting the process of allocating the financial resources available in the budget of a public body. Thus, we can outline various profiles that characterize the construction of the Participatory Budgeting process: The promoters: The Participatory Budgeting is a Top-Down process, it is a situation in which there is the formal initiative of the governing bodies (Mayor, Council, one or more councilors), but it is also possible sponsorship of another political subject (the council or a superordinate institutional body). Another hypothesis is the establishment of a technical staff that has a proactive role, composed of some managers (general management or managers of specific sectors or services) presumably interested in the organizational and management effects of such instruments. In the Participatory Budgeting project in the municipality of Collegno, the Mayor Francesco Casciano and the public administration play the role of promoters participating in defining the general and operational characteristics of the initiative: "Collegno Bilancio Partecipato". Participation is based on a process that can be structured differently and requires the selection of some organizational solutions. In the Participatory Budgeting, various forms and combinations of inclusion modalities can be found, such as: referendums, assemblies, forums, focus groups, meetings at neighborhood committees. The assembly method is the most widespread, essentially consisting in informing citizens, gathering opinions, drawing up proposals. Often the assemblies are carried out at the level of territorial division and are aimed at informing and making needs emerge; while assemblies divided into subject categories or themes are of a decision-making nature. The conduct of these assemblies can be coordinated by political or technical figures of the body, by citizens who have been appointed for this purpose (drawn) or through external figures. The committees take on an increasingly prevalent role in this dynamic, as they themselves are permanent bodies and formed by citizens who are in close contact with the territory and connected with the institution's political and administrative apparatus. They mainly play an informative role towards the community and a role of control over the administration. A further figure is the possible internal institution of a reference body for participation (participation office) that has the task of planning and coordinating activities. The mode of participation adopted by the Municipality of Collegno is a shareholders' meeting, through which citizens have been informed of the general and operational characteristics that characterize the "Collegno Bilancio Partecipato" initiative within the broader topic of the Participatory Budgeting. In addition, other assembly meetings of a strictly formative nature were planned open to all citizens, within which the workgroup of the Participatory Budgeting will give its support in the presentation of the project. Furthermore, the neighborhood Committees play a central role in the project, they are responsible for stimulating citizen participation in neighborhood meetings or other events, presenting the project (with the support of the members of the Participatory Budgeting working group), during the project presentation phase they will be able to participate in the drafting of a proposal and help the citizens of their neighborhood to present projects or ideas and finally in the voting phase they will have the right to choose whether to install polling stations in each district. The development of the participatory process requires the support of appropriate tools to encourage participation. The technological supports that allow the dissemination, the gathering, the exchange and the management of information are of particular importance: newsletters, weblogs, mailboxes and mailing lists, public telematic forums. It is also possible to use questionnaires and opinion polls to be used to map needs, collect judgments and evaluations, to understand the community's perception of the ongoing participatory process and the degree of participation achieved. It is very important that during the whole participatory process, the mediators of the procedure keep the citizens' perception of the project under control and above all their degree of participation in public initiatives. In the case of



use of the assembly form, the use of priority grids is frequent, i.e. a list that contains all the proposals made by the citizens who took part in the meeting, the latter being a particularly important instrument in the area of Participatory Budgeting as it constitutes a structured and rational method for determining priorities and coherently distributing resources, such as money or time. In its simplest form, the priority grid is a particularly useful tool for managing the time resource. With a few modifications, however, it can be used for a better distribution of resources even in different areas, for example with the budget. In the project started by the municipality of Collegno, the main information channels used to communicate the initiative to citizens are: information through posters throughout the city with the creation of posters specifically made by the group of technicians dedicated to the project, preparation of informational paper material, in this phase all the district committees and the associations present in the municipal territory were involved with the aim of stimulating citizen participation in order to have direct contact with the citizens and collect first impressions and evaluations on the project in question. In addition, the social channels of the Municipality and its affiliates (youth project) were used. Finally, a section of the Municipality's website was dedicated exclusively to the Participatory Budgeting initiative in which the citizen finds all the information and useful materials to participate in the project. The resources allocated to the project, as a rule, are finalized in general guidelines for the construction of an annual budget. The themes that are usually involved in the process of Participated Budget, directly affect the interests of the population and the results. Furthermore, the municipality has the task of increasing the dialogue with the citizens in order to seize their needs in the best possible way. The institution must possess an important discretionary requirement in financial matters, since it affects the possibilities of allocating a significant share of the budget to the participation with the aim of guaranteeing the coverage of the projects or interventions resulting from the co-decision. The municipality of Collegno decided to allocate a significant share of its budget to participation, making available to citizens an amount of € 160,000 that will be used for the realization of the eight projects, one for each district of the city, which will be presented and chosen by the citizens themselves in the context of the initiative. The budget is divided into 40,000 € current expenditure and 120,000 € capital expenditure, which can be used over the three-year period 2016-2018. Time frame in which the winning projects are planned (the most voted project for each district of the city). The Council of the Budget of the Municipality of Collegno is responsible for the organization and management of the participatory process. In order to optimize the process of identification of the need and implementation of the Participatory Budgeting, there have been several phases. The information constitutes the first level of participation in which the presentation of the course of participation and the materials for participation take place. The Municipality of Collegno has announced its willingness to involve citizens through the public assembly where citizens have been informed about the timing, objectives and methods of participation. The information was initiated through the publication of a specific public notice to be posted on the municipal territory, as well as with the inclusion of the same notice in the specific section of the Municipality's website. Furthermore, in this phase the internal competencies necessary to structure the process, to set the various internal organizational aspects and the opening of the information channels are defined. This phase in the project started by the Municipality of Collegno was initially carried out through a public assembly to present the participatory process for citizenship, held on November 30<sup>th</sup> 2015 and subsequently with a series of organizational meetings and technical meetings, during which has come to define the characters of the initiative and the rules of operation. During these meetings it was defined how to support and incentivize citizen participation through adequate information and use of institutional social channels. The social media tool as an information channel in this type of initiative is widely used, making information with citizens very simple, streamlined and direct; in the specific case of the Municipality of Collegno, the district committees of the city were used as points of information and monitoring of citizen participation in the process of Participatory Budgeting. The municipal administration promotes the participation of citizens both individually and informally in the municipal area. To this end, the municipal administration recourse to assisting figures through the Participatory Budgeting group composed of internal or external figures of the Administration aimed at facilitating participation. The Administration has the task of making known and publicizing, through the tools that are necessary from time to time, the methods to adopt the choices emerging from the participatory procedure, the phases of planning, financing and implementation of the planned works. Finally, the Administration promotes citizen participation also through the use of new information and communication technologies. The following is a document dedicated to this phase, produced during the organizational meetings and technical meetings held during the month of December 2015. As part of these meetings, with the input of the municipality of Collegno, the "Thematic areas" in which the institution intends to make the projects presented by the citizens relapse. The thematic areas include support for work, childhood and adolescents, seniors and social policies, urban planning, culture, volunteering, smart cities, city locations and interculture. The thematic areas were presented during the public presentation assembly and included in the information brochures distributed in the public events of the project presentation that took place during the entire month of December 2015. Furthermore, the time schedule of the various operational phases and the path that we will go along will be defined and communicated to the citizens, and it will culminate with the proclamation of the winning projects for each district. The training phase constitutes the level of participation in which public meetings are organized in order to facilitate the drafting of the project form, completing it correctly in all the items indicated. In the context of these meetings, the

needs of citizenship emerged in relation to the neighborhood to which they belonged. Some project ideas were examined together with the citizens, furthermore the objectives of the Participatory Budgeting and the thematic areas of reference for the development of project ideas were examined in depth. Five training sessions were held in December, which touched on many topics: clarification on the concept of Participatory Budgeting, tutoring on the correct compilation of the project form to apply for an idea in this participatory process, elaboration of project ideas brought to the discussion from the citizens themselves and finally information was collected on the needs of citizenship, especially related to the neighborhood of belonging. At the end of this phase, a document for the evaluation of the participation was prepared, as a survey of the entire participated process, transmitted to the City Council, which is highlighted in the following paragraph dedicated to the results achieved. During the project application phase, citizens are asked to present their project materially through the "project form", prepared by the administration with the support of the scholars of the Department of Management - University of Turin, it can be withdrawn in the Public Relations Office - PRC, in the Meeting Centers designated or downloaded directly from the Municipality's website. It has been predicted that the presentation of the project form must be carried out by hand delivery at the municipality's protocol office, directly by the proposer. All citizens residing in the municipality of Collegno can present their project idea for a maximum of one project idea for each citizen, the neighborhood Committees can also nominate a project, in this case the project candidate from the board of directors District Committee excludes the possibility of presenting a project to the members of the board of the same committee, just to maintain the main rule that provides for the maximum presentation of a project for each citizen of Collegno. The project sheets signed by the entitled may be accompanied by additional documentation (e.g. photos, documents, descriptions) that can integrate the document. Each participant interested in the participation process will be able to present only one participation form and, for each thematic area indicated in the form, will be able to identify only one project. The selection of the eligible projects sees the analysis of the proposals, observations and projects presented in the terms established in the Regulations are verified by a Commission of selection, which is made up of technicians of the organization and in this case is represented by members belonging to the Commission already set up under a previous initiative (different in content) called "Collegno Rigenera". The Municipality reserves the right to ask the proposing subject for additions, modifications or clarifications regarding the content of the projects and documents presented. In order to pursue the objectives of the Participatory Budgeting, the equitable distribution of projects between the thematic areas on the whole territory must be guaranteed, this means that the realization of at least one project will be guaranteed for each district of the city, this is a choice on the part of the municipality of Collegno that together with the participatory path pursues an objective of fairness between the districts of the city. The criteria with which the proposals, observations and projects are evaluated are the following: Clarity of the project and the objectives; Technical and legal feasibility of interventions; Compatibility with respect to acts already approved by the Municipality; Cost estimation; Estimation of the time of realization; Characteristic of the pursuit of general interest; Alignment to the electoral program. The objective of the second phase - Training, is aimed at sending to the commission projects that are suitable from the point of view of clarity and completeness, therefore the role of the commission is mainly focused on the evaluation of the feasibility of the project and its effective implementation, naturally considering the pursuit of the general interest and that does not conflict with the guidelines of the current administration. Through the public presentation of the projects all citizens are guaranteed the possibility to know the candidate projects and to verify the effects produced by the presented contributions. In this phase public exposure of the candidate projects is expected. The modalities with which this phase is realized are the most varied and can go from the electronic exhibition through the institutional portal of the institution up to the organization of public events in which the proponents are asked to expose their project idea to the citizens, this last is one of the ways that the municipality of Collegno could choose, the conditional is being used since currently in the project of Participatory Budgeting the third phase is in progress, the characters and aspects of the subsequent phases are in the decision phase. All data and information relating to the participation process, including the outcome of the submitted contributions, as well as the changes made to the acts during the entire process are also made available through the municipal internet site. In the voting phase of the projects every citizen is called to express a preference through the vote, on the projects that the Administration has evaluated suitable for the candidacy. At the vote, the participant can only express one preference and vote only once. Of course, only residents who have reached 16 years of age can take part in the vote. The vote can be expressed in various ways: Online, through the institutional portal, after authentication through identity card or fiscal code; In paper form, by filling out a ballot paper, at the Meeting Center and the Public Relations Office of the Municipality. The projects that will receive the most votes within each project will be implemented by the municipal administration in the 2016-2018 three-year period, as described in the project presented and evaluated by the technical commission of the municipality of Collegno. The projects that have collected the highest number of votes for each district of the city (the municipality of Collegno is divided into 8 districts) will be proclaimed winners and as such will acquire the right to be achieved over the three-year period 2016-2018. As part of the participatory process, a moment is announced for the publication of the winning projects, mainly through the institutional website but also through the posting of paper material (posters) in special institutional bulletin boards. As previously

mentioned, the municipality has the task of carrying out the winning projects over a period of 3 years, the implementation methods are those predicted in the project presented by the proposer and evaluated by the jury; during its implementation, the body undertakes to provide reports on the status of the works in progress, through periodic reports that will be made available to citizens through the IT and social channels of the municipality of Collegno. The procedure chosen by the municipality of Collegno is a streamlined process that is very simple, with the main purpose of encouraging citizen participation through a simple and transparent procedure open to all.

#### 4. Case study results

Results of the Participatory Budgeting in the Municipality of Collegno mainly focus on participation in the various public moments organized to encourage citizen participation and to train them towards a proper participation in the participatory process. As part of the training, the meetings scheduled and subsequently carried out by the mediators of the Participatory Budgeting, were 5. In all the meetings some interesting and feasible ideas emerged on the neighborhoods in which they were proposed, these were used by the mediators as excellent examples to conduct informative meetings and to convey the philosophy of this participatory process, which has as its main objective the participation of citizens in an active and direct way, through a transparent and defined path, so as to be able to restore the relationship between public administration and citizen who has the opportunity to feel part of the process in an active and leading way, deciding what to propose and especially by voting the most useful initiatives for their neighborhood. The collection phase of the projects presented and registered by the municipality of Collegno, each district has presented at least one project, so the risk of not having projects proposed by citizens in some neighborhoods of the city has been exceeded; as can be seen from table 2, the object of the projects presented is very varied, the themes of the projects range from innovation to social aggregation, from territorial requalification to health.

Table 2 - List of projects presented and relative planned implementation costs, divided for each district of the city.

Neighborhood	Residents	Projects and planned expenditure
Borgonuovo Villaggio Dora Centro Storico	10.276	Urban Furniture (€ 7500); Sports (€ 20,000); Interculture - Social integration (€ 19,000); Tourism - environment (€ 9,000); Redevelopment of the disused area (€ 20,000); Sports - social aggregation (€ 20,000); Educational farm (n.d.)
Leumann Terracorta	7.890	Environment (n.d.); Historic building redevelopment (€ 20,000); Education - sociology (n.d.); Healthcare - first aid (n.d.)
Paradiso	12.352	Innovation - technology (€ 16,000); Digital divide - information training (€ 16,000); Environment - ecology (n.); Technology in public spaces (€ 20,000); Skatepark extension (€ 16,000)
Regina Margherita	8.974	Meeting Center - social gathering (n.d)
Santa Maria	8.507	Tourism - Christmas markets (€ 20,000)
Savonera	2.266	Social aggregation (n.); Education - computer courses (n.d.)

Source: Own processing

The projects presented were then reworked and redefined with the help of facilitators who evaluated and collaborated in the realization of the economic and technical feasibility of each project and redefined the objectives by supporting the priorities of citizenship and the municipal council. The projects were voted after online registration at the municipality's site through staff relations office and through seats set up on the territory. The citizens who participated

in the voting were 1,024, confirming the victory of eight projects, one for each district. In particular, the winning projects were the Centro Storico "Journey into the heart of the origins"; Borgo Nuovo "Creation of a polyvalent plate and an attached tensile structure"; Villaggio Dora "Dora Village Multimedia Room"; Leumann - Terracorta "Structural and functional redevelopment of little station"; Santa Maria "The Village of Santa Claus and the Skating Rink"; Regina Margherita "Col-labor-A-Collegno"; Borgata Paradiso "Structure called Pump Track for mountain biking"; Savonera "Hit the mark: a dream for tomorrow".

## 5. Conclusions

The rapid examination of the experiences highlights the impossibility of defining the lines of a unique European model of Participatory Budgeting (Sintomer et al., 2008; Alegre, 2003; Walker, 2013; Lerner & Schugurensky, 2005). However, it leaves the existence of two large families or lines of development; in one, the Participatory Budgeting is seen above all as a political project of the parties of the parliamentary left, possibly in dialogue with the altermondialist movements and the organized tissues of citizenship, especially in Spain, Italy, France, Portugal, and Belgium. This family aims above all to develop dialogue on investment budgeting projects and tends to have as a reference horizon the experience of Porto Alegre (Baiocco, 2001) and other Latin American cities. The other family tends to concentrate its objectives mainly on the modernization of the administrative machinery and on the efficiency of public services such as Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom, where there is also an interest in jointly tackling some strong social imbalances. Although many experiences are still in the embryonic phase, there is a reconfirmation of some results that emerge from the first comparative texts between Latin American experiences of Participatory Budgeting. For example, the outcome of an experiment always tends to be proportional to the presence of four basic factors: the political will that supports a participatory budget path; the associative density and the self-organization capacity of the social issues of the territory; the consistency, refinement and adequacy to the context of the organizational "design" elements of the process; the administrative and financial capacity of the institution that experiences the path of involvement. The Participatory Budgeting is one of the tools that best answers to the governance needs of New Public Governance, starting from transparency and social accountability tools. By reading the results and allocations of the resources collected, the citizen, in a new accountability perspective, can define the allocation, the priorities and the socially relevant projects in the territory they belong to. The participatory budgeting is also a useful tool for the needs of participatory and deliberative democracy that can best train and empower stakeholders. In the future the participatory budgeting will have to adapt to the new technologies put in place through the web and new applications, adapting it over time to the tools and instances of the population in a continuous process of redefinition (Caceres et al., 2007; Efremov & Rios Insua, 2007).

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