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PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING POLISH-STYLE. WHAT KIND OF POLICY PRACTICE HAS TRAVELLED TO SOPOT, POLAND?

Introduction

By the early 2000s, the idea of participatory budgeting (PB) in Poland exuded an air of a remote South American utopia. Today, only about a decade later, PB has become part of Polish political reality. As the number of cities engaged in PB is rising, the popularity of PB has surprised — if not perplexed — local and national politicians, policy advisors, urban activists and academics alike. It remains unclear what kind of policy practice has arrived to Poland and travelled across the country.

The first PB-like initiative occurred in the city of Płock, a mid-sized city in the centre of the country. Between 2003–2005, within the framework of the United Nations Development Programme a public-private partnership was formed between the municipality, local NGOs, PKN Orlen (i.e. major Polish petrochemicals and gasoline company, headquartered in Płock), and Levi Strauss, allowing for the establishment of the Grant Fund for Płock, in which projects submitted by NGOs were evaluated by a jury (Płaszczyk, 2005). The first project labelled "participatory budgeting" emerged some years later, in 2011, in Sopot, a small city on the Baltic shore. The latter project is now widely and officially recognised as the first ever PB project in Poland. As of January 2014, PB has been embraced by approximately 80 cities — including Warsaw, Kraków, Łodź, Wrocław, Poznań, and Gdańsk. It is furthermore officially supported by the Ministry of Administration and Digitization of Poland, as well as by Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

However, despite increased recognition and popularity, the debate concerning PB in Poland, while addressed at diverse grassroots and NGO conferences, policy papers as well as in the local and national media, has acquired a rather limited character: captivated with the ever-increasing quantity of PB cases, various commentators seldom provide a consistent analysis of their quality. Few accounts (e.g. Gerwin, 2013, Kębłowski, 2013) have attempted to critically investigate the methodologies and impacts of PB in Polish cities. The key issue — signalled by Ganuza & Baiocchi (2012) who provide examples from Europe, Latin America and Asia — of what actually has travelled under the PB label, has not yet been fully addressed in Poland.

As in the case of other "travelling" policy models, we argue that the mobility of PB should be approached as an "acutely political" process (Ward, 2006, p. 70) that is

historically, politically and socially constructed, "in which policies are subject to change and struggle as they are moved." (Ward, 2011, p. 90). In the Polish case, it remains unclear whether the sudden surge in political support for PB, as seen in the rocketing number of PB cases between 2011 and 2014 in the country, should either be interpreted as a sign of a participatory and deliberative turn in Polish urban policies – hence allowing for a lasting citizen influence over urban development, or rather as a "hype" among local policy-makers merely considering PB as an instrument of city marketing – or even as a way to boost one's chances in upcoming local elections in autumn 2014.

Herein lies the aim of this chapter: to help understand more comprehensively what kind of participatory policy and practice has actually travelled to and within Poland – or what PB Polish-style really is about. The chapter does not provide an analysis of all 80-odd PB cases in Poland (see Kębłowski, forthcoming). Instead, we focus here on the case of Sopot as a symbolic case, not only due to its pioneer-like character, but also due the template-like role it has acquired in inspiring dozens of other PB projects across the country. We argue that looking at Sopot can provide key insights on the achievements and flaws of Polish PB.

Constructing an analytical framework: the right to the city as reference.

Unlike ubiquitously implemented policies associated to the urban entrepreneurial repertoire (Harvey, 1989), the model of participatory budgeting seems rooted in another approach of the contradictions raised by contemporary processes of urban change. Instead of focusing on the attraction of selected target groups of "creative" populations, "innovative" activities or the "visitor class", and on delineated areas ("growth areas" or "leverage zones"). Instead, PB appears as possibly engaging the entire urban society in a process of co-decision about the ways and goals of (re)development of the entire urban space. We assume therefore here that PB should be expected to function as a policy practice potentially providing an alternative to the mainstream agenda of urban entrepreneurialism.

To verify this alleged "alternative" character of PB, and address the lack of studies critically assessing the actual character of allegedly "alternative" urban policy models and practices, we have established a theoretically-informed, yet operational analytical framework (see Figure 1) (Kębłowski & Van Criekingen, forthcoming). This framework is composed of three layers derived from three literatures. First, it builds on core ingredients of Henri Lefebvre's conceptualisation of "the right to the city", which in our view provides a powerful intellectual remedy for urban entrepreneurialism. We therefore expect PB to become part of a strategy providing a "right to totality, and complexity" (Marcuse, 2012, p. 35). This strategy — as highlighted by a number of recent re-interpretations of Lefebvre's work (i.e. Harvey, 2012; Mayer, 2012; Purcell, 2013) — intends to discharge the market and state from their current responsibility over appropriation and production of space, and hand it over to inhabitants. In this view, PB should therefore challenge and reach beyond existing configurations of power over all aspects of urban development — be it in its social, political, built or aesthetical dimensions — and join a call for "utopias of spatial form" (Harvey & Potter, 2011, p. 46): a new urbanity.

RIGHT TO THE CITY	PARTICIPATION	PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING
Enabling appropriation and production of urban space by inhabitants	Inclusive; Reconciling topdown and bottom-up elements	Based on prior participatory traditions; Supported by a political will to implement it and respect is rules and outcomes; Bringing together top-down and bottom-up processes and motivations; Bridging the divide between "articulate" and "non-articulate" actors;
	Deliberative	Incorporating an elaborate system of ofra: - providing framework for deliberation between not only participants and the local admistration, but also among participants themselves; - incorporating tensions dereving from plurality of views represented
	Interactive	Integrating elementsof representative and direct democracy; Including of a profound and mutual learning experience.
Challenging the existing configurations of power	Redistributive	Empowering participants, and enabling them to determine: - rules behind PB; - subjects for discussion with in PB; - city-wide criteria for selection of proposals; Delegating key responsibilities to new, directly elected bodies,
	Political character	
Concerned with total sum of aspects regarding urban environment	Holistic and multi-scalar	Reconciling various scales (neighbourhood, district, city) Finding balance between specific projects and broad political agendas.
	Effective	Swift realisation of investment proposals
Utopian	Transformative	Including the majority of investment expenditures; Deriving from (rather than intending initiate) an administrative reform.

Table 1 What makes PB an alternative urban policy? An analytical framework.
Source authors' elaboration.

Second, our analytical framework is grounded in the critical literature on citizen participation in urban planning. Although an undoubtedly crucial element of Lefebvre's theory, citizen participation in urban policy-making has often been observed as embracing highly controversial practices "entirely appropriate to the neoliberal age" (Pearce, 2010, p. 14). In order to avoid being harnessed as "thinly veiled attempts at securing legitimacy for and cooperation with policies already adopted that favour capitalist growth" (Silver et al., 2010, p. 454), participatory projects should remain inclusive (i.e. responding to unequal capacities among potential participants and reconciling institutional/top-down and non-institutional/bottom-up elements), deliberative (i.e. providing space for conflict/dissensus and deliberation/consensus) and interactive (i.e. involving participants in a mutual learning experience) (Pretty, 1995). These factors determine the redistributive quality of participatory projects such as PB, which — by being created by and with citizens, rather than for them — should transfer significant power toward city-dwellers (Malewski, 2012). Consequently, instead of a representative function (i.e. providing no more than a voice for the citizens), an instrumental one (i.e. providing means of increasing efficiency of pre-established policy schemes), or a nominal one (i.e. providing an instrument of display for some politicians), participation should have a political character (White, 1996). Participation should furthermore resist parochialisms by becoming holistic

and multi-scalar, that is, embrace the whole urban society and territory, and reach beyond administrative boundaries, parochial spaces and interests. Finally, the transformative potential of participation depends on its effectiveness (producing tangible, yet not forced outcomes) and capability to produce a genuine and lasting change of power relations reaching beyond existing institutional frameworks.

The third layer builds on the theoretical insights brought out by researches on PB (i.e. Baiocchi, 2003; Cabannes, 2004; Górski, 2007; Shah, 2007; Sintomer et al. 2008; Wampler & Hartz-Karp, 2012). Combined, these elements have enabled us to establish an "urban alternative checklist" (see figure 1), that will now be used to empirically confront the experience of PB in Sopot. Our aim is thus to understand and interpret motivations of actors and networks involved in its implementation, its actual content and mechanism, and the results produced. Our empirical research is based on (1) an analysis of documents and publications concerning PB in Sopot, and (2) a series of 11 semi-structured, face-to-face interviews conducted in June–July 2012 with key actors involved, including local politicians, City Councillors, members of the Town Hall administration, NGO representatives, and citizen groups.

The context for PB in Sopot: "a technology that Sopot, like a company, has to invest in"

The first Polish case of PB emerged in Sopot, a middle-sized (38,000 inhabitants) sea and spa resort part of a larger agglomeration of 742,432 inhabitants[1]. Sopot is one of the richest Polish cities, with the highest level of municipal income and expenditures per capita[2] and low unemployment rate.[3] Ever since 1998, Sopot municipal council has been headed by Jacek Karnowski, a centre-right mayor, now in his fourth term. Centre-right and right-wing parties openly supporting urban entrepreneurial agendas have the majority in the City Council. According to the Polish legislation, the mayor holds the responsibility for drafting and executing the municipal budget, while the City Council each year officially approves the mayor's budgetary draft, and has the possibility to amend it. Both the Council and mayor are directly elected in a public vote.

The context in which PB emerged in Sopot effectively prevents it from becoming a transformative project. First, it cannot relate to any prior or existing participatory traditions and experiences. Characteristically for Eastern Europe, interest in civic activity in Poland is low, which to a large extent derives from the communist discouragement of citizen participation until late 1980s and drastic post-1989 transformation that dismantled or significantly weakened the civic movements that contributed to the fall of the regime, and still maintain a weak position of the so-called "third sector" vis-à-vis the local urban regime. Therefore, except for budgetary consultations held by the Town Hall, which had a purely informative character, there were no genuinely participatory traditions on which PB could be established.

Second, although PB in Sopot brings together top-down and bottom-up actors, their aims are far from converging. Three groups of actors can be identified: (1) Sopot Developmental Initiative (SIR – Sopocka Inicjatywa Rozwojowa) an informal citizen group who first proposed to implement PB; (2) pro-PB city councillors from Law and Justice (PiS — Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) and I Love Sopot (KS — Kocham Sopot); and (3) the Town Hall administration led by the mayor and supported by PB-sceptic councillors from Civic Justice (PO — Platforma Obywatelska) and Self-Governance (Samorządność).

SIR's objectives appear genuinely transformative. They perceive PB as way of reaching out to city-dwellers as actors whose perspective on the city is not limited by 4-year electoral terms

[1] Together with Gdańsk and Gdynia, two immediately neighbouring cities from south and north, Sopot belongs to the so-called "Tricity".

[2] According to Poland's Central Statistical Office. Data available respectively at http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_8478_PLK_HTML.htm and http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_8483_PLK_HTML.htm.

[3] In November 2013 the unemployment rate in Sopot amounted to 4,8%, while the average unemployment rate for Poland was 13,2%. Source: Poland's Central Statistical Office. Data available at http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_1487_PLK_HTML.htm.

[4] Interview with a PiS councillor.

[5] Interview with a member of the Town Hall administration.

[6] Interview with a PiS councillor.

[7] Interview with a member of the Town Hall administration.

[8] Interview with a SIR representative.

[9] Interview with a member of the Town Hall administration.

[10] In 2011, 7,47% of eligible citizens cast 2410 valid votes. In 2012, this figure fell to 4,67% (1506 valid votes cast), to rise in 2013 to 6,67% (2119 valid votes cast). The authors have calculated the voter turnout using data provided by the National Electoral Commission (see http://wybory2010.pkw.gov.pl/geo/pl/220000/226401.html). As their figures concerning the number of citizens of Sopot with voting rights exclude 16- and 17-years-old citizens that were allowed to partake in PB in 2013, the turnout for that year might be slightly lower.

(Leszczyński, 2011), empowering citizens in public deliberation about urban development, and providing them with significant decision-making power (Gerwin & Grabkowska 2012, p. 102).

Councillors supportive of PB (from from PiS and KS) appear to have a similar motivation, expecting PB to help build relations among city-dwellers, promote profound participation and civic values. Some of their visions go further — PB is imagined as part of a platform allowing citizens to decide on virtually any urban issue, and thus initiating a systemic change involving redistribution of power; as one councillor declares, "even if PB was to reduce the power of some politicians, so be it, all the better."[4]

However, deliberation is not an objective here — citizens are supposed to merely express their support or disapproval regarding projects prepared beforehand by the local administration. Therefore, the pro-PB councillors' aims are representative: their primary focus is on providing a voice for as many citizens as possible, while the quality of the discourse in which they are to participate becomes a secondary issue.

Finally, Sopot's mayor as well as the councillors sceptical of PB (representing PO and Samorządność) seem to follow purely nominal objectives. When pro-PB PiS and KS gained majority in the City Council after the 2010 local elections, the mayor and the PB-sceptic councillors were forced to partake in PB, fearing that it might help their political opponents gain popularity. Thus, the Town Hall reluctantly agreed to engage in PB, but continues to officially call it "budgetary consultations," strongly indicating that it is by no means a new initiative. In their view, PB should centre merely on raising awareness and providing information, and is therefore to sustain existing power relations. As one of the mayor's representatives confessed, PB should involve city-dwellers only to show them that "nothing is for free"[5]

in the debate over urban development. Consequently, it is meant to co-opt them, allowing politicians to "rescue themselves from a lynch".[6] In line with the Town Hall's entrepreneurial orientation, participation is approached not as a right in itself, but as a means of increasing overall effectiveness of urban policy making. PB is therefore seen as "a technology that Sopot, like a company, has to invest in."[7] It is expected to focus on quantitative aims and results rather than qualitative ones: gathering high numbers of participants and proposals for investments appears more important than achieving high quality of citizen debates and projects. Thus, instead of benefitting from mutually reinforcing objectives of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' actors, PB in Sopot has developed without significant political will to approach it as a transformative practice, lacking support of the mayor as the key actor in local politics. Thus, SIR has been forced to defend the legitimacy and capability of PB to represent city-dwellers against actors whose aims are purely representative, if not nominal.

The mechanism of PB in Sopot

Each of the PB rounds held thus far in Sopot — in 2011, 2012, 2013 — followed nearly the same mechanism (see Figure 2). PB begins with establishment of the Committee on PB — as one of many committees operating along the City Council — that gathers city councillors and members of the Town Hall administration. The Committee requests the Town Hall to launch an informational campaign: materials about PB, including a form for submitting project proposals, are sent to every household in the city. This step is followed by meetings held in each of Sopot's four electoral districts, facilitated by members of the Town Hall administration, during which citizens can briefly discuss their ideas about investment needs, and, most importantly, elaborate actual proposals by submitting a form prepared beforehand by the Committee on paper or via e-mail. No thematic restriction is applied: proposals can concern any issue within the competence of the Town Hall. Once the proposals are gathered, the Committee assesses their legal feasibility, financial cost, and accordance with existing urban development plans and regulations. While in 2011 the Committee further pre-selected proposals according to their "relevance" and "rationality", and in 2013 it looked at their "entrepreneurialism",[8]

in the 2012 round no administrative pre-selection was applied. The Committee applies a territorial criterion, separating proposals into district-wide and city-wide ones, and arranges them on voting ballots including two lists of proposals: one for the particular district and one for the whole city. The ballots and the voting procedure are subsequently presented to citizens at several meetings in all electoral districts — held to initiate a citizen debate on the proposals — and via the Town Hall's website. Every registered Sopot citizen can cast his/her vote either at polling stations (since 2012, located in each of the electoral districts) or by e-mail. The 2013 PB round included also citizens older than 15 years of age. The cast ballots are passed on to the Committee, who determine most popular district- and city-wide proposals. Their list is included in the mayor's draft of the municipal budget, while their implementation is further monitored by the City Council.

SIR criticises the PB procedure in Sopot as a "hopeless", "rotten compromise"[9] that does not enable citizens to appropriate and produce urban space. While many citizens partake in the final vote,[10] citizen meetings — at which the actual citizen proposals

are elaborated and discussed — rarely gather more than a dozen participants. SIR point out three main reasons for this low attendance. First, poor information strategy that, instead of relying on mass media, internet or direct mail, uses inexpensive mass mailing, probably causing city-dwellers to mistake PB-related leaflets for another advertisement. Second, the lack of participatory traditions translates itself into low interest and belief in participation as such. City-dwellers are said to "feel like they cannot change anything"[11] and participate post-factum, expressing their disappointment with decisions taken without their involvement. Third, SIR criticise the small number of polling stations (since 2012: 2 in each district).

Consequently, PB in Sopot does not appear to reach the wide social spectrum of the city. Although the socio-economic profile of participants cannot be precisely established as no data concerning meetings attendees and — for obvious reasons — voters can been collected, nearly all interviewees have pointed out that too few young people were involved in the process, and local deprived groups were not at all represented. The exclusive character of PB thus reflects the emphasis of the local administration on reaching out to a high numbers of voters, rather than a wide variety of participants.

The lack of profound deliberative qualities further limits the potential of Sopot's PB. As most interviewees have reported, the methodology applied at PB meetings has been of very poor quality: they are usually facilitated exclusively by members of the Town Hall administration (often by the mayor's official representative), and provide no room for interaction among participants, let alone building relations among citizens. Neither do these assemblies allow for expression of difference or productive conflict. Existing tensions between SIR, the councillors and the Town Hall are articulated within the formal environment of the Committee on PB, whose proceedings — although open to the public — are hardly ever attended by other citizens. The lack of deliberation further derives from the Committee's goal to produce a procedure that is not "too demanding for participants."[12] Simplifying the process by "offering citizens a template and [...] dragging them to the meetings[13] is thus preferred over creating a high-quality mechanism capable of empowering its participants through a genuine and attractive learning experience, and engaging them using elements of both representative and direct democracy.

Thus, as the level of interaction within PB in Sopot is very low, it explicitly fails to address the issue of unequal capacities of city-dwellers, and to approach them as equal partners in the urban decision-making process. Local administration openly doubts of the citizens' capability to grasp the technical and legal context of the process, or to co-supervise it. According to a member of the Town Hall administration, PB can lead to "a situation in which a student, nurse, vegetable vendor, dentist and academic teacher plan our roads and streets [...] — we have professionals hired to do this."[14] As a result, PB has very little to offer to the few citizens embraced by it, and clearly incorporates a division into 'articulate' and 'non-articulate' participants. It fails to provide space for deliberation about general 'rules of the game' behind each PB round of PB, subjects for discussion within it, or criteria for selection of proposals emerging from PB. Neither does it channel any decision-making power to citizen meetings, nor does it create new political bodies, such as territorial and thematic boards, or a city-wide PB council. Hence, it provides no alternative political framework for citizen deliberation. In the 2011 and 2013 citizens had no influence over the pre-selection of proposals by the Committee on PB, conducted according to vague criteria of "relevance" and "rationality" (in 2011) and "entrepreneurialism" (in 2013). The councillors openly admit having rejected or altered the content of proposals reaching beyond existing development strategies. In neither of the PB rounds were

[11] Interview with a PiS councillor.

[12] Interview with a KS councillor.

[13] Interview with a KS councillor.

[14] Interview with a member of the Town Hall administration.

[15] Interview with a member of the Town Hall administration.

[16] Interview with an I Love Sopot councillor.

[17] Between 2011 and 2013, the approximate exchange rate for 1€ was approximately 4.2 zł.

[18] Interview with a PiS councillor.

citizens invited to supervise the final vote over proposals, leading to, as SIR points out, lack of control over how many ballots could be cast by each citizen, and allowing for double voting to occur. Finally, the actual implementation of proposals chosen by citizens is fully monitored by the City Council.

Consequently, as the priorities behind PB practice in Sopot are judged by the Town Hall as "correct and obvious."[15] PB does not constitute an attempt to question or alter the existing configurations of power. Instead, it depends on them: while the PB procedure is formally delineated by a resolution or bill of the City Council, each year the respect for its outcome is a question of "social contract" (Czajkowska, 2011) or "gentlemen's agreement" (Gerwin, 2011) with the mayor. As he retains the right to dismiss investment proposals emerging from PB — even if they might nonetheless be included by the City Council in an amendment — their implementation relies primarily on the mayor's good will, with who "every year a separate agreement has to be made."[16] Furthermore, the mayor decides upon the fundamental issue of the amount of funds allocated to PB, yet each year refuses to provide a specific figure. The rules of PB state a minimal figure that can be increased by the mayor: this was the case in 2011, when having acknowledged the high amount of citizen proposals, the mayor altered the rules by enlarging the scope of PB from 4m zł to 7m zł.[17]

The process has thus become fully controlled by the key political actor; as one councillor reports:

"there has been a discussion within the Committee [on PB], whether we play it 'hard' or 'soft' with the mayor; but both solutions are good and bad at the same time — if we play it 'soft,' the mayor will impose his rules; if we play it 'hard', he will ignore our rules and manipulate the process anyway."[18]

Although initiated by an informal citizen group (SIR), PB in Sopot has acquired a fully institutional character, placing formal actors at the centre of the debate. Despite SIR's regular efforts to inspire a critical debate on the project, they do not seem powerful enough to prompt effective improvements in the methodology of PB.

Finally, since all PB-related meetings take place at the district level, PB in Sopot fails to acquire a holistic character. Although its thematic scope is not limited, at no point does it provide space for a citywide debate concerning the total sum of aspects concerning urban environment, including broad political agendas. Instead, it remains focused on small-scale projects, which are divided into district- and city-wide ones according to unclear criteria.

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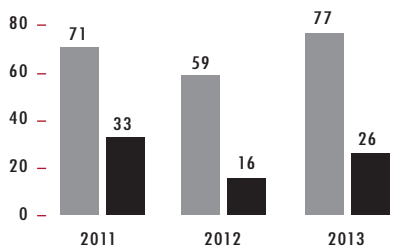
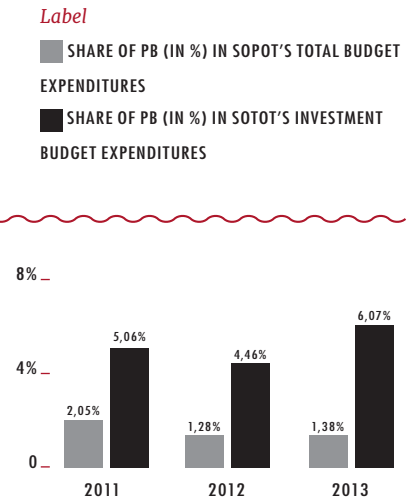
Tangible results, yet minimal impact

PB in Sopot appears to produce tangible results: between 2011 and 2013, a total of 67 citywide and 140 district-wide proposals have been positively verified by the Committee on PB; among them, 14 citywide and 61 district-wide proposals have been chosen in the public vote (Figure 3). The chosen citywide proposals include implementation of a waste recycling system and public recycling bins, redevelopment of green areas, redevelopment of district streets (including

Graph 1 The amount of citizen proposals emerging from PB



Graph 2 The amount of citizen proposals emerging from PB



construction of new bike paths), redevelopment of facades of 19th century tenement houses, public bus line connecting Sopot with Gdańsk, and financial support for local housing co-operatives and small businesses. The projects that have emerged from PB do not follow the urban entrepreneurial agendas: in the 2011 round, for instance, citizens rejected the project for a 40m zł flagship art museum.

However, several indicators suggest that PB has clearly been unable to effectively transform the existing power relations. First, PB constitutes a small fraction of the municipal budget (see Figures 4). Second, as the implementation of proposals is not monitored by citizens, but by the Committee on PB only, the governing coalition is not obliged to fully respect the outcome of PB. Actually, the realisation of a number of projects has been delayed, or have not at all begun (Gazeta Wyborcza, 2013), while several of them have been altered. Third, PB does not derive, entail or produce any kind of administrative reform. Nearly all councillors and Town Hall representatives interviewed admit that PB has not fostered any change in the way they operate; instead, it is increasingly perceived as an organisational burden.

Conclusion: lessons from Sopot

Given the global aura of PB as a 'best practice' of participation in urban planning that "offers citizens at large an opportunity to learn about government operations and to deliberate, debate, and influence the allocation of public resources [while] educating, engaging and empowering [them]" (Shah, 2007, p. 1), what has functioned in Sopot since 2011 under the PB label is certainly disappointing. Although PB may intensively travel as a benchmark for "alternative" urban policy, the case of Sopot reveals that importing PB to a city does not automatically entail creating policy-making practices at odds with urban entrepreneurialism. Dominated by the established urban regime — whose support for PB is very mild and conditional — Sopot's PB actually provides very little room for citizen groups, their demands and visions. It deliberately fails to establish a new, more inclusive, participatory and deliberative paradigm of urban politics that would enable inhabitants to appropriate and co-produce urban space. Instead of creating forms of urban decision-making that are alternative to the agenda of urban entrepreneurialism, PB follows it in nearly every respect (see the summary of our analysis in Figure 5), being incorporated as another governance technology while failing to challenge the existing configurations of power.

The minimal impact of PB on Sopot's development also derives from its narrow financial scope and its incapability to produce tangible and timely results. Thus, PB in Sopot has been instrumentalised, implemented as a governance tool to increase the effectiveness of urban policy-making along the urban entrepreneurial lines. While SIR keep on proposing small amendments to the rules of PB, it seems unlikely that under the current political context any genuine improvement could occur without any fundamental change of Town Hall's approach to PB.

The Sopot case does not exist in isolation: it has inspired many municipalities across Poland. Actors involved in its implementation — members of the City Council, Town Hall administration and SIR — have acted as speakers at numerous conferences and as policy advisors to other municipalities (including Dąbrowa Górnicza, Kołobrzeg, Poznań, and Toruń); they have also authored numerous articles in mass media and NGO publications. PB in Sopot has become a policy "exemplar" (Nasze Miasto, 2013) applied in a more or less verbatim manner by several dozen cities seeking ways of implementing PB. Although the reasons for which local authori-

ties in those diverse cities engage now in PB remains unclear, some preliminary results of an ongoing research (Kębłowski, forthcoming) suggest that motivations behind several PB cases in Poland are quite similar to those pointed out in Sopot. This would mean that PB in Sopot — very much a symbolic, frontier-like case in Polish local politics — reflects few achievements and many flaws of PB in Poland. These flaws are fundamental, as PB Polish-style "actually preserves the current, criticised system of urban management and power, [and] conserves the status quo" (Mergler 2014). As it focuses on "voting on what shall be done with 0,3 % of the budget [that] has no implications for the remaining 99,7 %, we lose sight of the overall [systemic] budgetary problems." (Ibid.)

FEATURE OF PB	PRESENT IN SOPOT?
Based on prior participatory traditions	X
Supported by a political will to implement it and respect is rules and outcomes	X
Bringing together top-down and bottom-up processes and motivations	o
Bridging the divide between "articulate" and "non-articulate" actors	X
Incorporating an elaborate system of fora: - providing framework for deliberation between not only participants and the local administration, but also among participants themselves	X
- incorporating tensions deriving from plurality of views represented	X
Integrating elements of representative and direct democracy	X
Including of a profound and mutual learning experience	X
Empowering participants, and enabling them to determine: -rules behind PB; - subjects for discussion within PB; - city-wide criteria for selection of proposals; Delegating key responsabilities to new, directly elected bodies, in particular the citywide PB council	X
- subjects for discussion within PB	X
- city-wide criteria for selection of proposals	X
Delegating key responsibilities to new, directly elected bodies, in particular the citywide PB council	X
Reconciling various scales (neighbourhood, district, city)	X
Finding balance between specific projects and broad political agendas	X
swift realisation of investment proposals	x
Including the majority of investment expenditures	X
Deriving form (rather than intending to initiate) an administrative reform.	X

Table 2 Features of PB in Sopot.
Source authors' elaboration.

Label

X - ELEMENT NOT PRESENT

x - ELEMENT NOT QUITE PRESENT

o - ELEMENT RATHER PRESENT

O - ELEMENT PRESENT