



**EVOLUTION OF THE CIVIC BUDGET IN POLAND –  
TOWARDS DELIBERATION OR PLEBISCITE?**

**Jacek Sroka, Beata Pawlica, Wojciech Ufel**



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Kraków 2022

ISBN 978-83-67209-15-1

**Reviewer:**

prof. dr hab. Juliusz Gardawski

**Proofreading:** Jacek Sroka

**Layout and cover design:** Libron

**Graphic used on the cover:**

VectorAN

Publication financed from National Science Centre funds within the OPUS 17 programme, for realisation of the research project no. 2019/33/B/HS5/00353, *Evolution of the civic budget in Poland – towards deliberation or plebiscite?*



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# Introduction

In the theoretical, analytical and practical contexts participation, co-deciding and multi-faceted governance are associated with deliberation that is currently recognised as one of the key terms defining development trajectories of the public policy in the free world. Such defined deliberation is treated as both good itself, crucial in many social relations on the individual and group levels, and common good being very significant for preservation and development of democratic practices and procedures<sup>1</sup>.

As the term of deliberation is crucial in our research<sup>2</sup>, we decided to initially define its meaning already in the introduction in the following six paragraphs containing these preliminary comments and guidelines on deliberation, enabling interpretation and being useful during subsequent reading of the book. The purpose of the said suggestions is to include the context of budgeting attended by inhabitants in the participatory context with the leading role of deliberation. Certain threads will be differently continued in the book, while they did not define its structure which is

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g.: J.S. Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2002; J. Mansbridge, C.I. Martin (eds.), *Negotiating Agreement in Politics*, American Political Science Association, Washington 2013; J. Sroka, *Deliberacja i rządzenie wielopasmowe* [Deliberation and Multi-faceted Governance], Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 2009; A. Krzewińska, *Deliberacja. Idea – metodologia – praktyka* [Deliberation. Idea – Methodology – Practices], Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2016; M. Zabdyr-Jamróż, *Wszechstronniczość. O deliberacji w polityce zdrowotnej z uwzględnieniem emocji, interesów własnych i wiedzy eksperckiej* [On Deliberation in the Health Policy in Terms of Emotions, Own Interests and Expertise], Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2020.

<sup>2</sup> NCN OPUS 17 (2019/33/B/HS5/00353) project entitled *Evolution of the Civic Budget in Poland – Towards Deliberation or Plebiscite?*

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adjusted to theoretical and model-related inspirations (chapter 1), research methodology (chapter 2) and case studies of CB in the twelve cities (chapter 3). As a result, the content of these paragraphs is not a research *credo*. In turn, it constitutes the necessary conceptual *zoom* on the eponymous problems. We will once again address this focus in the conclusions, when we will discuss the phenomenon of *shifting baseline*<sup>3</sup> in perception, evaluation and practicing of budgeting participation of inhabitants in Polish local governments.

So, firstly, deliberation is a complex processual phenomenon which is definitely more often disclosed in fragments than as a whole. This happens, because institutional and systemic *in toto* deliberation is not possible and in some public policy fields it would be detrimental. Also, deliberation cannot 'replace' state or public authorities<sup>4</sup>, while it does not undermine the postulate by Jane Mansbridge and other researchers who see the deliberative paradigm as a characteristic code embedded in the entirety of systemic relations<sup>5</sup>. Such defined deliberative systemic code is not a kind of a universal key to consensual solutions. Its importance can be understood better when seen as a kind of hologram or a characteristic stamp marked on all typical day-to-day situations, constituting a possibility for deliberation to occur and giving the space for practitioners. This metaphor is justified, though with some exceptions, mostly for the Western political and administrative culture. Nevertheless, deliberation methods and tools, also in this circle (not only on its fringe), might not match multiple situations, states of affairs, processes and procedures, e.g. those related to the broadly defined security policy, though even within this policy some

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<sup>3</sup> See e.g.: M. Soga, K.J. Gaston, *Shifting Baseline Syndrome: Causes, Consequences and Implications*, "Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment" 2018, vol. 16, no. 4.

<sup>4</sup> G.B. Peters, *Bringing the State Back in, but Did It Ever Leave? And Which State?*, "Teoria Polityki" 2018, no. 2.

<sup>5</sup> See: J.J. Mansbridge, J. Bohman, S. Chambers, T. Christiano, A. Fung, J. Parkinson, D.F. Thompson, M.E. Warren, *A Systemic Approach to Deliberative Democracy*, [in:] J. Parkinson, J.J. Mansbridge (eds.), *Deliberative Systems*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2012.

participatory solutions are possible and justified, that can be applied in both planned and spontaneous ways in crisis situations. In turn, in spheres where deliberation 'fits', i.e. where its postulate is 'natural' and compliant with preserved habits, obligations, practices and local context, it might turn out its realisation may face procedural challenges to which the title of our research project and the resulting book refers.

Secondly, deliberation depends on various factors and is always relatively fragile, just because it includes the elements of participation, consensus and co-deciding. As a result, even in these spheres where deliberation 'fits', it should be practiced with involvement, even passion, but also in a responsible and careful way, in order not to transform to one of its opposites, namely the reinforced form of a distributive coalition within which actors can decide, though cooperatively, on how to 'split up the loot'. So, it is not the matter of 'ideological' compliance of the postulate of deliberation with the rules of democracy, as deliberation cannot be simply and effectively ordered in a given sphere, process or community without support of culturally embedded, pro-consensual and valid behaviour patterns that are favourable for initiation and maintaining of consensus-oriented dialogue. One of the main regulatory problems regarding deliberation is the fact that by 'ordering' (with use of formalisms) cooperative attitude and behaviour can only be improved, but not shaped from scratch, because the origin of this growth is natural. Formal origins of deliberation can be (moderately!) corrected only when they are sufficiently embedded.

Thirdly, formal establishment of deliberation resulting from doctrinal and ideological reasons or political election issues is also mostly pointless, when candidates standing in elections think such a solution will bring them support of citizens. As a result, top-down practices may smother elements that should be mostly developed in bottom-up practices, even if with some support from these top-down factors. The opportunities for voluntary, bottom-up creation of cooperative and bridging patterns useful in deliberation become reduced. It is pointless to search for a universal deliberation formula, and this fact is addressed by its critics, while, in

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turn, bottom-up shaped deliberative moments can be easily omitted and its importance is sometimes appreciated, when they start to disappear, annihilating human deliberative stance in people<sup>6</sup>.

Fourthly, most of all, deliberation is a public pre-decision communication process oriented on searching appropriate arguments for certain assessments and solutions of public problems being discussed. The tool used by communicating parties is persuasion and the essence of such defined deliberation is effort to reach consensus on discussed issues with mutual respect for emotions and knowledge group interests. As a result, deliberation is not free of emotions, that may be initially surprising, but it does not mean they can be freely expressed without limitations in the process. Unlike the emotional style of confrontation, that often occurs within 'real' *politics* (e.g. in parliaments), deliberation, naturally embedded in *policy*<sup>7</sup>, assumes that appropriately shown (and perceived) emotional states, interpretations referring to specific community knowledge and comments on how groups interests should be perceived may lead to consensual decisions on common and particular profits, releasing of emotions and mutual verification of what is 'really known' about certain decisions and their conditions.

Deliberation does not refer to each type of discussion or debate, because many of them are purposefully characterised by confrontation strategies, manipulation or information concealment. Voting, as several other solutions, can be and is used in deliberation as an auxiliary tool, however deliberation surely must not be reduced to voting. Deliberation is characterised by four main features: (1) persuasive method of argument

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<sup>6</sup> See: R.C.M. Maia, C. Danila, J.K.R. Bargas, V.V. Oliveira, P.G.C. Rossini, R.C. Sampaio, *Authority and Deliberative Moments: Assessing Equality and Inequality in Deeply Divided Groups*, "Journal of Public Deliberation" 2017, no. 2; J. Mansbridge, *Everyday Talk in the Deliberative System*, [in:] S. Macedo (ed.), *Deliberative Politics: Essays on Democracy and Disagreement*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1999.

<sup>7</sup> In fact, *policy* is not less important than *politics* and its advantage is close contact with realism of Habermas *lifeworld*. See: U. Steinhoff, *The Philosophy of Jürgen Habermas A Critical Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2009.

selection with some emotions still present, but being subject to 'procedural treatment'; (2) focusing on reaching consensus regarding perception and realisation of common good, considering and agreeing on particular interests; (3) public and transparent character of the discourse and (4) open access to this discourse that can be limited in justified conditions, but with clear description of reasons and parameters of such limitations and with the option to discuss their scope within respective appeal procedures. Openness of this access often requires not only limitations, but also purposeful support for participation of persons from marginalised and excluded communities. Social position and cultural competences, previously determined as the basis of occurrence and functioning of deliberation, may hamper or even make it impossible to participate in public life for these persons. As a result, one of leading democracy postulates is realised within deliberation, namely care for citizens living in the most challenging conditions.

Finally, deliberation is similar to workshop methods and different from marketing solutions that are more typical for voting. Deliberation builds public involvement (enhances participation), develops multi-layered communication and results in learning on the individual, group and organisational levels, so it is not only possible to develop and implement solutions in a cooperative way (co-deciding, co-governance), but also 'new knowledge' (*episteme*) about problems being discussed can be jointly created.

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Following these initial comments, it can be said that budgeting with participation of inhabitants in the form defined in Poland by the act<sup>8</sup> is not a good way to develop deliberation, but it also induces a search for answers how it can be locally slowed down or blocked.

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<sup>8</sup> Act amending some other acts in order to increase participation of citizens in the processes of election, operation and supervision of some public bodies of January 11, 2018 (Journal of Laws of 2018, pos. 130, 1349).

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The regulations of the act, referring to “civic budget” (CB), say that:

- CB is a specific form of public consultations;
- CB is a continuous process that is integral with operation of a local government unit (LGU);
- CB tasks (in form of previously submitted projects), voted and selected by inhabitants, are obligatorily included in a LGU budget and cannot be changed or removed;
- in municipalities being cities with *poviat* rights civic budgets are obligatory and respective assets must be at least 0.5% of municipality expenses included in a budget report for a previous year (the limit of 0.5% is not applied for *poviats* and voivodeships);
- assets spent within the civic budget can be divided into groups covering all unit or its parts (in municipalities: all municipality and its parts being formal ancillary units or ancillary unit groups<sup>9</sup>);
- the institution competent to regulate details of the local budget procedure is council or local parliament. The local law should define: (a) formal requirements for submitted projects; (b) vote rules, with respect to equality and directness, and rules regarding determination of results and making them available for public, including the number of signatures of inhabitants supporting a project (it must not exceed 0.1 of inhabitants of an area covered by the assigned civic budget amount); (c) rules of formal and substantive evaluation of submitted projects; (d) appeal procedure in case a project is not permitted for voting.

In Poland inhabitants had participated in budgeting procedures before the respective act was passed. Since the process was initiated in Sopot in 2011, local forms of participatory budgets have been introduced in hundreds of Polish municipalities of various status, tens of *poviats* and on the level of voivodeships. As there have been more or less developed local

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<sup>9</sup> In *poviats*: entire *poviat* and its parts in forms of municipalities or groups of municipalities and, similarly, in voivodeships: entire voivodehip and its parts in forms of *poviats* or groups of *poviats*.

practices, regulations introduced in the act in 2018, though only general, forced modification or withdrawal from some solutions. In plenty Polish locations we can witness deficiencies in references to model deliberation proposals and if this situation is still present in Polish local communities, it may block development of innovative and inclusive tools of contemporary democracy. The scale of various differences in more than three thousand Polish municipalities, *poviats* and voivodeships is significant. As a result, it is still unknown to what extent the act will lead to popularisation of such variants of local participation, in which, besides the option to submit and support projects, it will be genuinely possible to develop deliberative forms of consensus, not only in terms of project-related decisions, but also desired development tendencies within local CB. Our research gives some preliminary answers, while it will take time to see whether pro-deliberative trends turn out to be stronger than the CB-oriented implementation scheme specified in the act, in which regulations are strictly followed and the main tool is voting by inhabitants. Voting, including CB information campaign, may be locally seen as essence of deliberation which, in fact, is not, just because of the reasons presented in the six preliminary comments regarding deliberation

The book was prepared as a result of implementation of the National Science Centre OPUS 17 (2019/33/B/HS5/00353) project *Evolution of the Civic Budget in Poland – Towards Deliberation or Plebiscite?* The works, coordinated at the Pedagogical University of Krakow by Jacek Sroka, were supported to various extent and at different stages of the research process by Beata Pawlica, Joanna Podgórska-Rykała and Wojciech Ufel.

Gathering of research material was greatly and professionally assisted by Wiesław Zajac from the Social and Economic Research Centre.



# Chapter 1

## Conceptual and theoretical inspirations for civic budgeting research

### Liberal democracy between will of majority and consensus

The eponymous question our research project was focused on<sup>1</sup> refers to local public relations defined only as the budgeting process participated by inhabitants, however the problem can be addressed in broader contexts regarding variants of democratic imaginaries that have been in dynamic relations since the beginnings of modern democratic discussions and practices.

Supporters of democracy, inevitably referring to somewhat abstractive forms, such as will of sovereign, people power or local government community, are obliged to constantly search for valid connotations that will facilitate operationalisation and help to fill the ideal forms with actual practices.

By using a general category, we can say democracy should constantly search for answers to the crucial questions, namely what and, ultimately, who is power, how is its subject, i.e. sovereign (the people), constructed and how should the immanent conflict inside and between these actors be addressed? The eponymous differentiation between deliberation and plebiscite is embedded in liberal thinking, i.e. based on the rules of law

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<sup>1</sup> NCN OPUS 17 (2019/33/B/HS5/00353) project *Evolution of the Civic Budget in Poland – Towards Deliberation or Plebiscite?*

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enforced by institutions of representative democracy, which become an intermediary between “the people” and the executive authorities entitled to make and implement decisions in its name. This mechanism, though providing some order in terms of processing sovereign’s will into political decisions, does not address all aspects of essence, methods of forming and possible emanations of this will that is associated with power, i.e. the first agential rule of power and politics. How is it formed? Answers to these questions have been an element of discussions on democracy since their beginnings, taking various forms in ancient and modern models, while initiating discussions on this matter also in the present times.

The ‘one man, one vote’ rule and related decision-making by majority of votes was a key aspect already in ancient Athens and other ancient forms of Classical (Greek) and republican democracies<sup>2</sup>. The assembly of citizens was a type of referendum, but Agora constituted the space in which decisions were discussed and justified before voting, however it was more of rhetoric competition between various interest groups than deepened discussion based on substantive arguments. Decisions were legitimised by voting that could be attended by all adult citizens of the political community<sup>3</sup>. Only subsequent models of republican democracies paid attention to the principle of self-determination securing one’s right to be “their own master”<sup>4</sup>.

In their most basic description of democracy Aristotle and Plato underlined the feature of “power of majority”. Though they both criticised this form of democracy (Plato called it “the mob rule”, warning mostly against manipulation with collective emotions by proficient rhetoricians) and included elements of other systems and such features as officials randomly selected for time-limited terms in their descriptions of ideal models, the majority rule has preserved as essence of democracy until now.

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<sup>2</sup> D. Held, *Models of Democracy*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Let us mention these communities were not very inclusive, as they were limited to adult men with sufficient wealth, though they were still more open than in oligarchies.

<sup>4</sup> D. Held, *Models of Democracy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 43–49.

It can also be found in early modern works on political philosophy, i.e. in social conditions in which direct rule by citizens was not possible. Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes or John Locke, though because of various reasons, all underline differentiation between “citizens” or “people” and “sovereign” or “government”, whose task is to take care of peace (armistice in “the war of all against all”), execution of rights or realisation of interests of a community understood as a whole, namely national interest. Though they thought a sovereign ruler should have almost unlimited power, they should be elected (as a result of the social contract) and possibly deposed, if citizens demand so<sup>5</sup>.

As power institutions and techniques were transforming and as a result of the political revolutions of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, establishing the United States of America and the French First Republic, attention was given to representation as extension of legitimisation given by majority of citizens. Members of parliaments, selected for time-limited terms, negotiated and entered majority coalitions in legislative bodies and in some cases they also decided who would lead executive authorities. Legitimisation given by citizens could be revoked in a next election, if in a given constituency there was a candidate or a party winning greater support. Among the most important advocates of this type of political system organisation were Marquis de Condorcet<sup>6</sup> or John Stuart Mill<sup>7</sup>, who convinced that decisions made on the basis of majority of votes were not only just, but they would be probably more thought over and simply better. It seems this argumentation has been well preserved and based on “common sense” until now, in spite of often criticism against it.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Italian-German sociologist Robert Michels warned in his book entitled *Political Parties* against inevitable

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<sup>5</sup> I. Hampsher-Monk, *A History of Modern Political Thought: Major Political Thinkers from Hobbes to Marx*, Blackwell, Oxford, UK 1992, p. 108.

<sup>6</sup> N. de Condorcet, *Essai sur l'application de l'analyse à la probabilité des décisions rendues à la pluralité des voix*, L'imprimerie Royale, Paris 1785.

<sup>7</sup> J.S. Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, Parker, Son, and Bourn, London 1861.

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oligarchisation of political parties and all other democratic political institutions<sup>8</sup>. He proposed the “iron law of oligarchy” according to which large and complex political organisations required both strong leadership and efficient bureaucracy in order to achieve political success. All this leads to their inevitable internal oligarchisation, having impact on functioning of other political system elements. Another dysfunctions of representative democracy were discovered in subsequent years, proven in numerous examples by often unsuccessful practices of the Interwar Period. The ideas of parliamentarism and election-based politics were and are still criticised by advocates with all political views, the left, the centre and the right<sup>9</sup>. In this context it is often said that the answers parliamentarism can give to the problem of participation are not only insufficient, but they also show various problems related to:

- hampering of social mobility;
- preservation of asymmetrical relations and various forms of hegemony;
- growing opportunities to manipulate social and political mobilisation (and demobilisation) processes;
- weakening of social communities and contemporary *poleis* in their various forms co-existing in the mix of institutional democracy entities, from various forms of local government to diversified forms of state, and, subsequently, in less or more coordinated international and transnational relations.

In this approach we can see inconsistency between democracy and freedom, including the most popular one saying that democracy treats popular slogans favourably, which are sometimes extreme and may lead

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<sup>8</sup> R. Michels, *Political Parties; a Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, Jarrold & Sons, London 1916.

<sup>9</sup> A. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks. Vol. 1*, Columbia University Press, New York, NY 2011; J. Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses*, W.W. Norton, New York 1993; V. Pareto, *The Mind and Society*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York 1935; C. Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1992.

to dramatic results, if enforced. We know these results in examples of fascism referring to racial unity or communism referring to social class unity. In turn, it does not mean these problems were solved, as we can see what happens in our part of the world where we witness aggression in post-Soviet East dominated by Russia. This situation is mostly a result of preservation of the cultural elements constituting the dangerous syndrome of one-dimensional *homo sovieticus*<sup>10</sup>. On the other hand, in the West we witness the approach saying that certain rights should be differentiated, present in 'neutral' attitude to the aggression of this *homo sovieticus* 'culture', taking some form of segregationism. It is often presented in attractive, popular and 'anti-fascist' forms that are very popular and thoughtlessly internalised; they are also purposefully or unwittingly taken from propaganda messages. In this context popularity of such defined 'antifascism' looks similar to the well-known tendency of escapism<sup>11</sup>. This popularity is taken advantage of by advocates of one-dimensional approach to other people, so characteristic for *homo sovieticus* syndrome, while all those who genuinely want existence of open and pluralist social and political systems lose<sup>12</sup>. These problems are irrelevant in context of the Polish local context only for inattentive observers. The general issues are always related to local matters, especially when we talk of the most important things like showing humanity to others, freedom or rivalry patterns.

In Europe and all over the world democratic elections often resulted in establishment of various forms of authoritarianism, however elections, with all their defects, are understandably still one of the main tools of democracy. Additional explanations and interpretations are constantly needed regarding election mechanisms. After WWII Josef Alois

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<sup>10</sup> See: A. Zinovyev, *Homo sovieticus*. Wydawnictwo im. Odwilży Październikowej, Warszawa 1986; J. Tischner, *Etyka solidarności i Homo sovieticus*, Znak, Kraków 1992; H. Marcuse, *Człowiek jednowymiarowy* [One-dimensional Man], PWN, Warszawa 1992.

<sup>11</sup> Cf.: E. Fromm, *Ucieczka od wolności* [Escape from Freedom], PWN, Warszawa 2021.

<sup>12</sup> Cf.: K. Popper, *Spółeczeństwo otwarte i jego wrogowie* [The Open Society and Its Enemies], PWN, Warszawa 1987.

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Schumpeter, the well known representative of the Austrian School, aware of the aforesaid hazards, wrote about democracy as the system in which elites competed with each other for political leadership won in the election process<sup>13</sup>. This approach reduced the role of voters only to formal and procedurally-limited act of voting. Actual subjects are political leaders who are supposed to represent voters. The similar minimalist definition of democracy was once proposed by Samuel Huntington who characterised it as the system based mostly on free and equal elections<sup>14</sup>. The issue of election fairness, though officially appreciated, is a much more difficult matter to define and execute<sup>15</sup>. Huntington's approach had some methodological advantage, as it enabled him to present the process of democratisation incoming in certain phases, without being trapped in detailed considerations. Let us here mention that these incoming phases can, like waves, also go back whence it came, taking democratic thinking, discussions and attitudes with them. They endanger the essence of democracy, so it is so important to create and practice responsible thinking, inclusive discussions and open approach.

Doubts related to level of democracy and efficiency in terms of protection of civic freedoms in systems strongly based on election procedures encourage both researchers and practitioners of the issue of contemporary democracy to analyse possible introduction of systemic modifications that would give citizens the ability of better supervision over public decision-making processes. Besides elections, one of well known tools is referendum whose origins could be traced back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, at least when we talk about its present form<sup>16</sup>. It is probably the best example of plebiscite-type

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<sup>13</sup> J. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, Harper & Row, New York 1942, p. 269.

<sup>14</sup> S.P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman 1993.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. P. Norris, *Electoral Systems and Electoral Integrity*, [in:] E.S. Herron, R.J. Pekkanen, M.S. Shugart (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Electoral Systems*, Oxford University Press, New York 2018.

<sup>16</sup> B.R. Barber, *The Death of Communal Liberty: a History of Freedom in a Swiss Mountain Canton*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2015.

mechanism of democracy, though referenda are almost never applied within the political system without public debate and civic discussions. In turn, referendum have not deliberative and consensual components.

The need to supplement the existing solutions was addressed by the two classical political scientists, saying that it is the civic society that is a core and the primary reason of existence and shelter of democracy. Among many other researchers, Robert Dahl and Arendt Lijphart drew attention to importance of social communities and freedom of association and speech<sup>17</sup>, while, on the other hand, the necessity to protect minority rights and secure and restore the consensual decision-making model<sup>18</sup>. In practice and especially in Western European countries, numerous institutional mechanisms and protections have evolved with purpose to guarantee enforcement of the aforesaid principles, including warranted constitutional rights, proportional and mixed election systems enforcing building of parliamentary coalitions, mandatory public consultations or increasing public involvement. In context of this book we are particularly interested in the latter solutions, i.e. these related to so called civic or social dialogue.

Social dialogue has been developed in democracies for over 150 years. It originated from industrial relations that are traditionally defined as: (1) bipartisan relations between so called social partners identified with representations of two most populous functional groups of interests in a given society, i.e. employers and employees; or (2) tripartisan relations constituting interactions of social partners (in practice, trade unions and business organizations) with public power institutions (usually executive authorities, but sometimes with possible indirect legislative initiative). Industrial relations, social dialogue and social partnership helped to develop civic dialogue covering other social subject, while currently both social and civic dialogue supplement each other in multiple countries

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<sup>17</sup> R.A. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2006.

<sup>18</sup> A. Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-six Countries*, Yale University Press, New Haven 2012.

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(especially in Northern Europe). Industrial relations shaped the two leading institutional types of dialogue, namely pluralism, which is closer to market-type rivalry, and coordination-related corporatism. We also refer to both these types in the chapter 3 in the Scheme 1 and the Table 2 where pluralism and corporatism are considered as classical models from which the four new public decision participation variants emerge, which refer to participation in the budgeting process. Analyses on pluralism, corporatism and social dialogue can be found in separate papers<sup>19</sup>, so these issues are not going to be additionally addressed in this book. We are going to refer to this problem in the chapter 3, but also without providing detailed analyses on the subject.

As a result of (neo)liberal turn in the 1980s, mostly in the United States and the United Kingdom, the principles of the so called New Public Management (NPM) became more popular. Long story short, the essence of NPM is the postulate to supplement bureaucratic (hierarchical) administration with more market-oriented, flexible, effective and cheaper management methods that would stick to reality, while not going beyond limitations of administrative procedures, especially in relatively easily measurable, though still discussable aspects, like level of effectiveness of costs when compared to achieved goals. The NPM formula is close to the logic of aforementioned pluralism, free market ideas and privatisation of public tasks.

The key NPM component is delegation of execution of public tasks by private companies and social entities (NGOs) without delegation authorities. This solution is popular in European regulations, including these related to public benefit, voluntary activities and public and private partnership. NPM is favourable for decentralisation and deconcentration, while

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<sup>19</sup> See e.g.: J. Gardawski, *Dialog społeczny w Polsce. Teoria, historia, praktyka* [Social Dialogue in Poland. Theory, History and Practices], Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, Katedra Socjologii Ekonomicznej SGH, Warszawa 2009; J. Sroka, *Europejskie stosunki przemysłowe w perspektywie porównawczej* [European Industrial Relations in the Comparative Perspective], Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 2000.

it does not replace them. It is also good for transparency, but it does not release authorities from supervision and monitoring of the public matter enforcement process.

In recent years we have witnessed another change of paradigm on organised participation of citizens in power relations. As popularity of deliberative techniques has been growing and multi-faceted governance ideas have been developed (*governance, good governance, co-governance, multi-level governance*), there are new normative ideas regarding the issue of co-deciding. Participation of citizens and third sector organisations in these processes is permanent, inclusive (protecting civic society from authorities) and it even gives it some advantage in relations. In accordance with this approach, it is citizens, strictly cooperating with officials and politicians, who should be responsible for initiation of certain tasks, but also for their planning, implementation, evaluation and resulting subsequent activities. Citizens should not be only “allowed” to participate in the political process in its specified, most sensible moments, but they should be constantly present as partners equal to the position of authorities. This can be achieved thanks to well functioning NGOs, i.e. entities recruiting ‘common’ citizens, staying in closer touch with them and, at least in declarations, representing their interests. They can play various roles, like popularisation of new ideas and local solutions among inhabitants and less or more direct participation in public decision preparation processes. Thanks to their formal structuration and development of soft skills, organizational know-how and the network of relations with officials and other partners, they can potentially be subjects responsible not only before their local ‘voters’, but also become efficiently and professionally acting entities on behalf of various forms of so called common good. Existence of responsible and active civic entities constitutes the main condition of the *governance* model, i.e. multi-faceted (public) governance reaching even further, namely to active, responsible and effective participation and deliberation.

The idea of deliberation refers to general social consensus, i.e. not enforced, but commonly and continuously developed specific ‘unanimity’

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of citizens. The key to reach agreement is the general and, if possible, consequent method of deep and detailed analysis of public problems, providing arguments and persuasion, in compliance with constantly possessed knowledge, expected profits and considering power of emotions accompanying clashing interests.

The origins of similar thinking on democratic debate also reach back to the ancient times, but it was modern times republicanism that gave some consequence to thinking on deliberation<sup>20</sup>. In contrary to Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau did not see ‘the war of all against all’ in the state of nature, but rather in the period of peace and harmony among people. It was only establishment of the society and the social contract, imposing the order of property and tyranny of a ruler and law being emanation of their will<sup>21</sup>, that led to actual enslavement of humanity. Return to the state of nature is not possible, so Rousseau proposed the different vision of political harmony in the form of utopian community of citizens who could rightly and commonly recognise problems, understood them and worked out optimal solutions, while unanimity based on common work would establish the “general will”.

Deliberation as the method used to develop common good on the level of national parliaments was also addressed by Edmund Burke<sup>22</sup>, and direct fascination with Rousseau’s works could also be seen in the ideas of Kant, in the context of practical reason (ethics) and the idea of enlightenment and perpetual peace (politics)<sup>23</sup>. These concepts constitute the foundation for contemporary thinking on political community from the perspective of public reason, i.e. some idea referring to collective wisdom created by discussions, literacy, intellectual involvement in public life, etc. These ideas, though still actual in the republican or conservative discourse, became

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<sup>20</sup> D. Held, *Models of Democracy*, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>21</sup> J.-J. Rousseau, *Social Cotract & Discourses*, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London 1923.

<sup>22</sup> J. Elster (ed.), *Deliberative Democracy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998, p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> C.F. Rostbøll, *Kant, Freedom as Independence, and Democracy*, “The Journal of Politics” 2016, vol. 78, no. 3.

more popular in the public debate in times of main publications of John Rawls<sup>24</sup>, resulting in subsequent discussions on deliberation. As a result, first contemporary deliberative models were developed in the late 1980s and first authors of papers crucial for such understanding and development of democracy were Jürgen Habermas, Joshua Cohen, John Dryzek or Jane Mansbridge<sup>25</sup>.

The discussion on various forms of deliberation has become one of the most popular topics of contemporary debates held in context of philosophy and the theory of politics and in contact with political practices, especially in the field of public policy<sup>26</sup>. The more recent discussion draws attention to the need to adjust deliberative mechanisms to the conditions of current democratic systems, mostly by modelling its instances in forms based on so called mini-publics<sup>27</sup> and in the holistic systemic context whose deliberative elements should be protected from expansiveness of its non-deliberative contents, but somehow still connected to them, when possible<sup>28</sup>. In spite of various transformations within this theory, its core

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<sup>24</sup> J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1971.

<sup>25</sup> J. Cohen, *Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy*, [in:] A. Hamlin, P. Petit (eds.), *The Good Polity: Normative Analysis of the State*, Blackwell, New York 1989; J.S. Dryzek, *Discursive Democracy: Politics, Policy, and Political Science*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1990; J. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Vol. 1. Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, Beacon Press, Boston, Mass. 1984; *idem*, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Vol. 2. Lifeworld and System: a Critique of Functionalist Reason*, Beacon Press, Boston, Mass. 1987.

<sup>26</sup> A. Bachtiger et al., *Disentangling Diversity in Deliberative Democracy: Competing Theories, Their Blind Spots and Complementarities*, "Journal of Political Philosophy" 2010, vol. 18, no. 1; S. Elstub, S. Ercan, R.F. Mendonça, *Editorial Introduction: The Fourth Generation of Deliberative Democracy*, "Critical Policy Studies" 2016, vol. 10, no. 2.

<sup>27</sup> A. Fung, *Minipublics: Deliberative Designs and Their Consequences*, [in:] S.W. Rosenberg (ed.), *Deliberation, Participation and Democracy*, Palgrave Macmillan UK, London 2007.

<sup>28</sup> J. Mansbridge J. Bohman, S. Chambers, T. Christiano, A. Fung, J. Parkinson, D.F. Thompson, M.E. Warren, *A Systemic Approach to Deliberative Democracy*, [in:] J. Parkinson, J. Mansbridge (eds.), *Deliberative Systems*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2012.

has been preserved in subsequent versions<sup>29</sup>, which shapes democratic activities by presenting arguments and persuasion performed by ‘typical’ citizens, on the basis of possibly rational expertise, that is supposed to lead making consensual and optimal decisions. The indications of the potential of deliberation are mutual respect, fairness, openness of its participants, while deviations from providing arguments and persuasion (e.g. referring to particular profits or emotions) can be used, when they serve to support votes of those from whom it will be more difficult to construct arguments and persuasion only by means of rationalization actions, as result of various reasons. So, deliberation often consists an element of the simple *storytelling* technique by showing information of one’s situation or position in form of a free, though communicative statement. It is assumed that it will take similar tools to develop consensus constituting the foundation for the political decision that would be more easily accepted by all who are subject to it<sup>30</sup>.

In terms of the systemic approach, the goal of deliberation goes beyond democratic legitimisation of the public sphere. Jane Mansbridge et al. also underline other functions of deliberative decision-making, namely epistemic, ethical and democratic (inclusive) functions<sup>31</sup>. The epistemic function, mentioned for example by Cohen or Rawls as a primary function of deliberation, means it may lead to occurrence of new knowledge, creation of opinions or transformation of preferences into processes of mutual deepened argumentation. Some time later the discussion on two other functions was initiated, namely the ethical function, used to solve social conflicts, and the inclusive democratic function. The latter one differs from the common and universal democratic function of legitimisation, originally defined by Habermas

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<sup>29</sup> W. Ufel, *Apolityczność jako gnoza nowoczesności. Rekonstrukcja pojęcia polityczności w teorii i praktyce demokracji* [Apoliticism as Gnosis of Modernity. Reconstruction of the Term of Politicism in Theory and Practices of Democracy], [in:] *Polityka/polityczność. Granice dyskursu* [Politics/Politicism. Boundaries of the Discourse], Oficyna Wydawnicza ATUT, Wrocław 2016.

<sup>30</sup> J. Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1992, p. 107.

<sup>31</sup> J. Mansbridge et al., *A Systemic Approach to Deliberative Democracy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–12.

## Participatory budgets in terms of concepts of democracy

(or even earlier by Rousseau), indicating that deliberative mechanisms may constitute a platform assuring the ability to speak out and have some influence on politics for persons whose voice was omitted or excluded.

These issues do not say all about the goals that can be achieved by means of deliberative mechanisms. Public processes containing deliberative elements are still quite rare and unique. As a result, they draw more attention of the public and media and can also serve as forums to popularise some arguments, attitudes and specific problems. This signalling-like discourse function (similar to whistle blowing) is performed even if, finally, binding recommendations are not worked out during a single deliberative cycle. Deliberative also legitimises power institutions that initiate and organize it. It is a natural process and plenty depends on what premises encourage power institutions to initiate deliberation, namely whether they result from bottom-up social pressure, various trends and pressure, including cultural, international and regional processes. In fact, these premises are intertwined with each other in unique local configurations in which seemingly obvious problems turn out to be more subtle in context of practical participation.

## Participatory budgets in terms of concepts of democracy

When summing up the aforesaid comments, we can distinguish the two main types of civic involvement in creation of public decisions: plebiscitary and deliberative. First of them refers to arithmetic calculation in which decisions are made on the basis of majority of votes. In context limited to so called majority election formulas, it is reflected in elections to representative institutions. Referendums are, however, a better example of plebiscite. Preferences of citizens participating in plebiscites are considered as stable and independent from a certain political processes, while possible thinking process about the issue addressed in a given referendum is internal. Obviously, most of plebiscites are preceded by information and political campaigns merging public discussions with marketing of ideas, however they are not an integrated element of the plebiscitary approach.

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The deliberative approach is completely opposite. It is discussion, deliberation of opinions and getting acquainted with expert opinions and points of view, thus transformation of preferences, that are crucial for development of public decisions. In ideal conditions (i.e. unlimited transparency of the entire process and discussion and sufficient time) voting on final decisions should not even take place, as decisions are consensual. However, especially in context of institutional and systemic change in thinking and enforcement of deliberation this requirement is released and decisions are usually voted, though voting results become binding only if a given option is very popular. This may be a previously defined support threshold expressed in a percentage ratio, but it can also result from contextual approval by inhabitants, that, if intensifying, will be a signal for decision makers that a given decision was accepted.

In the Polish civic budget defined by the act<sup>32</sup> the leading approach is the simpler arithmetic solution, however participatory budgeting in our country is older than the act introducing “civic budgeting” we are going to refer to below. The first participatory budget in Poland was initiated in 2011 in Sopot, i.e. 26 years after its inauguration in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre whence its idea and scheme of practices come. In districts of that city selected delegates, after thorough discussion between each other and with authorities, voted for priorities for given districts, which were than discussed in the city budget commission and considered in budgetary plans for the next year<sup>33</sup>. Many researchers think of the participatory budget from Porto Alegre as the first contemporary innovative deliberation of a similar range, that seems just, though its impact was locally decreasing and, recently, its formula has been changed<sup>34</sup>. The deliberative character of

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<sup>32</sup> Act amending some other acts in order to increase participation of citizens in the processes of electing, operation and supervision of some public bodies of January 11, 2018 (Journal of Laws of 2018, pos. 130, 1349).

<sup>33</sup> A. Tanasoca, *Deliberation Naturalized: Improving Real Existing Deliberative Democracy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford–New York 2020, pp. 43–44.

<sup>34</sup> G. Baiocchi, *Participation, Activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre Experiment and Deliberative Democratic Theory*, “Politics & Society” 2001, vol. 29, no. 1; M. Calisto

the original participatory budget is also proven by its structure favourable for actual inclusion of excluded groups and prioritisation of their interest<sup>35</sup>. In this context let us mention that the Brazilian participatory budget is, in general, one of exceptional cases of democratic/social innovations transferred from Global South to Global North and its popularity is world-wide.

Though it was ‘radical democracy’<sup>36</sup>, focusing on social justice and empowerment, that primary assumptions of participatory budget were

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Friant, *Deliberating for Sustainability: Lessons from the Porto Alegre Experiment with Participatory Budgeting*, “International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development” 2019, vol. 11, no. 1; T. Núñez, *Porto Alegre, from a Role Model to a Crisis*, [in:] N. Dias (ed.), *Hope for Democracy. 30 Years of Participatory Budgeting Worldwide*, Epopeia Records & Oficina coordination, Fado 2018.

<sup>35</sup> G. Smith, *Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2009, p. 165.

<sup>36</sup> We use the term of ‘radical democracy’ citing authors of classical texts, but we have our own fears regarding usefulness of this term in practical contexts and its reception by so called ordinary people, that should be mostly strived for. We think of the reception in which the term of ‘radical democracy’ brought them closer to the idea that democracy can be healed by universality of participation and deliberation. We are also aware we should be very careful in terms of understanding and practicing this term, because very often radicalism is associated with coercion that opposes participation, deliberation, but, more importantly, freedom (with its significant component of individualism). We know from the history of mankind that in ordinary situations, when routine schemes are implemented, ambitious theories are usually distorted in specific radical-democratic examples. This is why radical implementations transform to coercion so easily. As a result, in the negative variant radical democracy is a way for democracy *per se* to perform dishonourable and possibly permanent self-mutilation. We can use the metaphor *harakiri* in which advanced precision of tool handling helps the tool bearer to lose their life. The advantage of *harakiri* is the fact it is a ritualised technique performed by self-aware individuals, while ‘radical democracy in action’ could make use of coercion without the awareness of cardinal mistake of its implementation, like ‘lesser evil’ could serve ‘the greater good’ of participation. Our history and contemporary times can produce the excessive amount of examples in this category. So, in terms of bold freedom-oriented ideas let us sometimes use this term, but only in quotation marks, knowing that ‘radical democracy’ is a promising path for theoretical discussions, only as a mental shortcut in context of implementation that should be treated as a metaphor and with safe distance, as practically useful tautology and not as a type of world-wide project healing relations among institutions of power.

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based on, features of this budget have been changing with global transfer of practices we are discussing here. In the EU they are adjusted to systemic contexts of European liberal democracies whose crucial element is still civic participation of individuals.

In the participatory budget versions popularised by the EU, World Bank our USAID transparency is usually highlighted and participation factors determined, being treated as a tool supporting *good governance* processes that is not very clear itself<sup>37</sup>. The deliberative character of these budgets is also being replaced by plebiscitary decision-making in the form of open project competitions and voting by inhabitants. It is an effect of simplification of participatory procedures in a way enabling their scalability proven by the data included in the paper published in cooperation with the World Bank, according to which 11,000 of such practices took place in 2019 worldwide (7,500 in 2018)<sup>38</sup>. Poland is among world leaders in terms of number of conducted participatory budgets. The authors of the report indicate 1,840–1,860 such cases in the entire country, while only Japan (1,865) and Peru (2,000) have more examples. The are two reasons of this situation. Firstly, in 2018 the Polish law on local government was amended obligating the city with *poviat* rights to perform the civic budgeting procedure<sup>39</sup>. Secondly, since 2009 the Polish law has defined the village fund as a budgeting form participated by inhabitants<sup>40</sup>, calling it “participatory budget form”, while in the amendment of 2018 the different term of civic budget was used. The data for recent years show that

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<sup>37</sup> B. Wampler, S. McNulty, M. Touchton, *The Global Spread and Transformation of Participatory Budgeting*, [in:] N. Dias (ed.), *Hope for Democracy. 30 Years of Participatory Budgeting Worldwide*, Epopeia Records & Oficina coordination, Fado 2018, pp. 56–57.

<sup>38</sup> N. Dias (ed.), *Hope for Democracy. 30 Years of Participatory Budgeting Worldwide*, *op. cit.*; N. Dias, S. Enriquez, S. Julio (eds.), *Participatory Budgeting World Atlas 2019*, Epopeia Records & Oficina coordination, Fado 2019.

<sup>39</sup> Journal of Laws of 2018, pos. 130, 1349, *op. cit.*

<sup>40</sup> Its legal basis is the Village Fund Act of February 21, 2014 (Journal of Laws of 2014, pos. 301) replacing the Village Fund Act of 2009 (Journal of Laws of 2009, no. 52, pos. 420).

the number of established village funds is decreasing (1,596 in 2018 and 1,498 in 2021), possibly to some extent resulting from difficulties related to the pandemics<sup>41</sup>.

The village fund is a proposal suitable for the bottom level of local structures, mostly in rural municipalities<sup>42</sup>, whose character is close to the primary ideas of participatory budget. Partnership, trust and, as a result, deliberation is easier to achieve in smaller groups. On the other hand, limited budgetary assets and local conditions, including often poor level of participation culture, may effectively hamper deliberation that we are not going to analyse in this book, as the issue is subject to other papers<sup>43</sup>.

Nevertheless, even after omitting village funds Poland is still among leaders with the highest number of budgets attended by inhabitants. Except already mentioned Japan and Peru, in 2019 only Portugal, Brasil and Indonesia had more of them<sup>44</sup>. In case of undertakings beyond villages and regarding relatively smaller financial assets when compared with entire budgets of self-government units, it is more difficult to organise techniques based on deliberation in cities with *powiat* rights. Plebiscite remains the main form of decision-making, not only in Poland, and is supported by the procedure of voting for submitted projects, however there are some exceptions, for example Seville or Helsinki, as well as Polish innovations highly evaluated world-wide and presented in the chapter 3 of our book<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> See: <https://www.gov.pl/web/mswia/fundusz-solecki>, available on May 1, 2022.

<sup>42</sup> It can be concluded that in Poland rural municipalities are averagely poorer than urban municipalities. Though the difference is minor and rural municipalities are very diversified, there is the significantly greater risk of poverty in them. Polish Economic Institute, "Tygodnik Gospodarczy PIE", 30 lipca 2020, no. 30.

<sup>43</sup> J. Olejniczak, D. Bednarska-Olejniczak, *Participatory Budgeting in Poland in 2013–2018 – Six Years of Experiences and Directions of Changes*, [in:] N. Dias (ed.), *Hope for Democracy. 30 Years of Participatory Budgeting Worldwide*, op. cit.; D. Sześciło, B. Wilk, *Can Top Down Participatory Budgeting Work? The Case of Polish Community Fund*, "Central European Public Administration Review" 2018, vol. 16, no. 2.

<sup>44</sup> N. Dias, S. Enriquez, S. Julio (eds.), *Participatory Budgeting World Atlas 2019*, op. cit., pp. 18–26.

<sup>45</sup> OECD, *Better Governance, Planning and Services in Local Self-Governments in Poland*, OECD Publishing, Paris, p. 291.

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In general, the purpose of our research presented in this book is to analyse how the act of 2018, defining participatory budgets in Poland, impacts their implementation. The act assumes to popularise this type of solutions both with purpose to increase involvement of citizens in the process of creating local municipality budgets and to increase local activism and create civic skills. We also use this research to look closer at local conditions of participatory budgets, including their specificity from the period preceding the act of 2018. In order to better understand evolution of this tool in Poland, we also have to consider various political and social changes, limitations and contexts occurring in the cities we investigated. Some of these opportunities and limitations have only local context, while others result from national history and are connected to location, role and perspectives of development of Poland in the present times.

In the following two parts of this chapter we are going to outline the problems useful in our analysis and related to institutional limitations of public policy and political culture, i.e. the ‘mysterious’ ingredient doing deliberation hardly ‘from nothing’, but it has also dangerous power to annihilate deliberative efforts into dust or even to deteriorate local conditions.

### **Institutional limitations of public policy**

In the academic literature, civic involvement guidelines or articles on civic participation and deliberation critical voices on its institutional surroundings are relatively rare, as in the systemic approach of the deliberative democracy theory it is, indeed, assumed that there are various interactions between deliberative and non-deliberative elements of political system, but symptoms of deliberative practices are still treated as some original accessories, annexes to the system, still somewhat separated from the core of public decision-making processes. The role of expertise and everyday talk is, indeed, recognised and analysed, but e.g. the role of “professional” politics is paid insufficient attention. Meanwhile, various

actors have influence on real capabilities and final shape of deliberation. They are not only politicians and officials, but also clerks working in state institutions, analysts, experts and various local unaffiliated leaders. The important element of the decision-making process is also influence of standards, expectations and political goals and often informal knowledge on 'location of goalposts', co-creating systemic position of certain actors and often limiting the space for uncontrolled and direct impact made by citizens.

Also, the public policy on the local level should be obligatorily analysed after considering legal, political and institutional aspects of the central level, but also horizontal relations between local governments, local politicians and other stakeholders of central and local actors of *politics* and *policy*, who create networks of cooperation, inspiration and exchange of various assets, including knowledge and experience.

In context of analysed civic budgets in Poland, we need to remember about both vertical and the horizontal levels. CB are not only defined in the acts of law, but they are partially an effect of imitation, duplication and adjustment of solutions that were introduced by other local self-governments, that should positively prove existence of the learning process. Since inauguration of Polish participatory budgeting in Sopot in 2011, the number of its implementations has been rapidly growing, especially in 2014 (39% of cities with *poviat* rights), 2015 (27% of urban municipalities, 26% of urban-rural municipalities). In less than 4 years almost all cities with *poviat* rights, more than a half of urban municipalities and over 40% of urban-rural municipalities introduced civic budgeting procedures, being inspired by solutions successful in other locations.

It is not easy to answer the question to what extent the mentioned distribution of mostly procedural and organisational patterns is followed by improved quality of participation and understanding of the essence of deliberation. Valuable lessons in this regard are provided by critical social concepts that analyse with some reservation all symptoms of "liberal", "open" or "democratic" political practices, noticing their numerous institutional, social, local and contextual challenges. These theories

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belonging to the post-foundational thought<sup>46</sup> allow to expand the subject of the analysis of participatory practices by political elements creating their direct or indirect surroundings. For us the two inspirations were of particular great significance, namely governmentality of Michel Foucault and the policy paradox of Deborah Stone.

In his criticism Foucault did not focus on specific symptoms of power or their general description, but on methods used to “transform humans into subjects”<sup>47</sup>. Subjects are not autonomous, though often described in theories and common thinking as such. So, the electron of democracy is not free, because subjects are not independent actors having less or more, though still independent influence on politics. According to his theory and observations, subjects do not precede power, it is rather power that creates them, using discourse (propaganda, education) and institutional tools. The term of Foucault’s *governmentality*<sup>48</sup> underlines both the governing aspect of these practices, i.e. specific techniques and “art” of power, and the subjective aspect, namely creating, management and exclusion of discourses, thoughts, reasonability or social imaginations. The process of development of such defined governing mentality is complex and attended by various subjects playing different roles, so we should remember about limitations of the metaphor that personifies ‘power’. Indeed, narration becomes easier, but we should not simplify the thinking process regarding the sphere of politics.

In the aforesaid context deliberation and participation of citizens in budgeting is also a set of practices and methods of cooperation between citizens, that is partially natural, partially duplicated and, in Poland since 2018, specified in the act. In some cities, particularly in those from the first period of participation in years 2011–2013, participatory budgeting was

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<sup>46</sup> O. Marchart, *Post-foundational Political Thought: Political Difference in Nancy, Lefort, Badiou and Laclau*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2008.

<sup>47</sup> M. Foucault, *The Subject and Power*, “Critical Inquiry” 1982, vol. 8, no. 4.

<sup>48</sup> *Idem*, *Governmentality*, [in:] G. Burchell, G. Colin, P. Miller (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, transl. R. Braidotti, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1991.

introduced as a response to bottom-up pressure and in cooperation with social activists. At the next stage (2014–18) these solutions were copied and adjusted and they were introduced in the vast majority of cities with *poviat* rights. During the third stage, as a result of the obligatory character of civic budget imposed on the act of 2018, all cities from this group introduced this solution and, according to Foucault's concept, it closed some cycle of development of mentality ruling over understanding and practices of budgeting processes attended by inhabitants. Using Foucault's term, we can say that the Polish legislative authorities determined the CB template and the parameters of "the regime of truth"<sup>49</sup>, obligatory within the sphere of participation attended by inhabitants. However, let us not deviate from practical aspects by focusing too much on Foucault's stylistic figures, so we would like to sum up that, according to his theory, some 'CB regime' was established in Poland in form of a legally defined pattern, while we are asking about justification of some standards referring to CB, especially to voting. We also underline the role the institutions of power play in development of complete civic relations at governed areas, also in case of seemingly bottom-up participatory activities. In case of Poland we need to mention two contexts, i.e. central and local aspects. On one hand, this research was motivated by the said act addressing the issue of civic budgets at the central level, that unified their implementation in few key spheres, mostly in terms of how CB projects are realised. As a result, some local procedures needed to be significantly changed, having some influence on civic budgeting participation patterns. On the other hand, central regulations are differently interpreted and implemented on the local level, causing this great variety in local forms of CB, reflecting (or trying to transform) some already existing power structures and systemic positions of certain local stakeholders. CB forms will be a reflection of some way of thinking about citizens, politics and power by the latter itself especially in areas where CB is introduced top-down, usually duplicating

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<sup>49</sup> *Idem, Rządzenie żywymi* [On the Government of the Living], PWN, Warszawa 2014.

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solutions from cities or municipalities laying nearby or similarly organised (by participation in national self-government networks).

We can conclude the above with Deborah Stone's comments on public policy reminding us that even individuals that are seemingly independent from authorities, namely experts, officials, third sector, are still entangled in various political relations. As a result, in our analysis we pay attention to the fact that each goal of *policy* is somewhat correlated with a goal of (*politics*) of certain actors, i.e. with their will to achieve or maintain formal or informal influence on authorities<sup>50</sup>. When analysing politics and interests in local political and social arrangements in the municipalities we investigated, we paid attention not only to persons having executive and legislative powers, because the process of development in implementation of CB is also actively and significantly influenced by officials working at specific CB- and participation-dedicated positions or as representatives of departments participating in the technical assessment process and subsequent project implementation. They are not passive executioners of political will, but they interact with inhabitants, local elites and politicians. As a result, officials can often and better see problems hampering participation, hear out complaints and suggest solutions. Obviously, they do not all do this to the same extent and with style, but most of them play their roles well. Relations between officials and the third sector, project leaders or voting inhabitants, as well as informal position in local political mini-systems, are crucial factors supporting or hampering the flow of assets and information. In some CB cases we observed it has also become the sphere for deliberation on needs and expectations of local communities, by influencing operation of institutions and authorities in fields exceeding the tasks directly related to CB, for example by realising interesting and necessary investments within main city budgets. However, finally, the role of officials and style of their work remains in strict relation with expectations and political interest of local authorities that, willing to improve civic involvement and include

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<sup>50</sup> D. Stone, *Policy Paradox: the Art of Political Decision Making*, W.W. Norton & Co, New York 2012, p. 3.

inhabitants into the decision-making process regarding some local expenses, do not forget about next election and the need to win votes among their target groups.

The process of distribution of the trend and resulting common knowledge on practices of budgeting attended by participants can also be found 'political' (not to be confused with 'party dependant' or 'politicised'). When analysing our cases, we could notice that inspirations to introduce CB were taken from the pioneer (Sopot) or the most original and recognised examples (Dąbrowa Górnicza, Gorzów Wielkopolski). In next years CB was often introduced with use of expertise coming from other nearby cities (or local self-government associations), but also from experts, private organisations or the third sector which analysed reports and recommendations on this basis. Within our research we even encountered the situation that CB regulations were prepared on the basis of the advertising brochure of the company offering the CB service platform. Even before enforcement of the act, popularization of CB was mostly heterogeneous. Introduction of these solutions as a result of bottom-up pressure was rarer, while it mostly occurred because of some trend or market pressure popularised among power circles and companies or organisations active in the field of popularisation of participatory practices. These are the origins of relative similarity between certain cases of CB in many municipalities, though, as mentioned above, they always have some characteristic features. However, too extensive generalisation would be harmful for cities in which good practices from other places were copied, but bottom-up initiatives were addressed, while cities themselves had plenty to offer in forms of certain organisational solutions.

The critical approach to participation and deliberation is characterised by some reservation to these practices, drawing attention to the fact that the process of their implementation, creation and change significantly impose institutional and discourse frameworks of things that citizens can work out within this process. Regardless of a role of CB (more plebiscitary or more deliberative), the role of local authorities may be both supporting and limiting towards free and open discussion on needs and problems of local communities. As a result, CB should be treated as a bilateral relation,

not only as the process by which inhabitants have influence on municipal expenses, but also as an attempt to create or transform attitudes of these inhabitants by authorities, in order to realise their political goals, but not exceeding the customarily defined boundaries in democracies. CB should be also seen as a tool of *public relations* and the way enabling to confront advantages and disadvantages of local political culture, e.g. civic passivity, lack of leaders or withdrawal from community life.

### Political culture as primary factor and main challenge for civic budgeting

Some aforementioned features of functioning of inclusive political institutions can be seen as tendencies of modernity, but they do not unify mechanisms of participation in contemporary democracies. On the contrary, a level of success of participation (and whether it works at all) and its limitations has the particular character and depends on regional, national and local conditions. Some of them are related with social positions and are embedded in social and structural contexts, while some are based on culturally defined patterns of behaviour, among them the most important for us are related to political and administrative culture. Structural and cultural conditions are intertwined, they depend on each other and evolve. As a result, analysis of social participation, whose origins in political science could be traced back to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is full of various progressive and normative classifications and participation models, i.e. treating improvement of civic involvement as the purpose of evolution of social relations. One of the most frequently referred classifications is “a ladder of citizen participation” by Sherry Arnstein<sup>51</sup>, which has also been often criticised and its modifications have been proposed<sup>52</sup>. The metaphor of a ladder is

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<sup>51</sup> S.R. Arnstein, *A Ladder Of Citizen Participation*, “Journal of the American Institute of Planners” 1969, vol. 35, no. 4.

<sup>52</sup> A. Davis, J. Andrew, *From Rationalism to Critical Pragmatism: Revisiting Arnstein's Ladder of Public Participation in Co-creation and Consultation*, 8<sup>th</sup> State of

also problematic, as it assumes some progressivism, i.e. unconditional preference of higher levels over lower ones. Meanwhile, in public policies, especially these performed in unstable conditions, crises or where decisions result in significant social costs (e.g. in terms of adaptation to the climate change), the high level of participation is not always the most efficient solution. However, in this book this problem is not so important, because during our analysis of civic budgeting we purposefully draw attention to this segment of social life, that underlines importance of participation itself more than technocratic quickness and optimization of decision made.

Arnstein's model specifies 8 levels of participation, divided into the 3 categories. In the lowest category there is no participation of citizens in authority activities at all. Citizens are subject to manipulation by information (by hiding some information or providing them with distorted image of reality) or some kind of "therapy". In the latter case any differences in opinions between authorities and citizens become subject to PR activities or intrusive "education" with purpose to finally make them express support for actions of authorities. The next three levels are called "deceptive activities" or "tokenism", i.e. relations in which citizens are recipients of public policies, however their capabilities to influence actual politics are minor or non-existing. They are only informed by actions of authorities, invited to non-binding consultations of political decisions or perfunctorily included (as representatives of minorities) to power structures, though without real impact on actual politics. These actions are called deceptive, because there is no genuine division of power, while the only goal is to execute the decision-making process in which it would seem

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Australian Cities National Conference, 28–30 November 2017, Adelaide, Australia 2018; M. Hurlbert, J. Gupta, *The Split Ladder of Participation: A Diagnostic, Strategic, and Evaluation Tool to Assess When Participation Is Necessary*, "Environmental Science & Policy", 06.2015, vol. 50; P. Norton, M. Hughes, *Public Consultation and Community Involvement in Planning: a Twenty-first Century Guide*, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, London–New York 2018; M. Zabdyr-Jamróz, *Preventing the Atrophy of the Deliberative Stance: Considering Non-Decisional Participation as a Prerequisite to Political Freedom*, "AVANT" 2019, vol. 1, no. 10.

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that democratic rules were preserved to greater extent that if decisions were made behind closed doors.

Genuine division of causative powers between authorities and citizens does occur within the third category, at the level of socialisation, in situations where voices of citizens become an important (partnership) or even key (delegation) element in the process of final political decision-making, mostly by participation in various collective bodies. Participatory budgets are, however, a tool based on the majority voting, so opinions expressed by inhabitants are then binding for authorities. The highest level of the ladder is civic supervision, when citizens are fully responsible for the entire decision-making process, from planning, expert opinion analysis and decision-making to its implementation, obviously by assuring necessary assets from public funds. It seems that participatory budgets are mostly embedded between these two levels, especially in forms involving applicants at all project stages, including investment implementation. However, even by referring to voting as a final instance deciding on projects to be implemented, authorities do not give to inhabitants all influence on civic budgeting, imposing their control over this process via content of resolutions and regulations, as well as operation of project evaluation teams. As a result, it is possible that some cases of civic budgeting in Poland will remain closer to the category of deceptive actions than to actual socialisation of decisions made, while other will escape, or have already escaped, from this trap<sup>53</sup>. Plenty depends on constructive practices in

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<sup>53</sup> Root embedding and resulting decreased effectiveness of dialogue-oriented institutions are relatively popular in Poland and they are known and being analysed. Also, similar conclusions were present among other researchers of formally established solutions with purpose to serve participation and agreeing on public decision trends. See, e.g.: A. Pawłowska, R. Kmieciak, A. Kołomycew, K. Radzik-Maruszak, P. Antkowiak, *Spoleczne rady i komisje jako (nie)obecny uczestnik procesu decyzyjnego* [Social Councils and Commissions as “Absent” Participant of the Decision-making process], Scholar, Warszawa 2020. Results of research also prove there is visible progress in embedding of constructive relations with stakeholders of local public policies that may sometimes be transformed in more durable patterns of behaviour. Polish papers on the subject included some interesting proposals to

which deliberation is used in a customised way, i.e. at all locations where its usefulness can be naturally shown in the process of creating space for public decisions, mostly occurring during the brainstorm phase in terms of original public decisions<sup>54</sup>.

Obviously, the ladder does not say everything about all possibilities for citizens to participate in power, as additional steps in the ladder could be activism, contestation and civic disobedience. In civic budgeting in which success requires not only good ideas, but also organisational activities and efficient promotional campaign, activism is particularly distinguished as a crucial factor. On one hand, existence of local leaders, even in very small numbers, is required for civic budget to occur at all, so there will be people wishing to submit and popularise projects. Also, relative simplicity and definite attractiveness of this participation form is used to involve civic society, so it could become a 'forge' of local leaders and an incubator of social trust relations. In the broader public context importance of good NGO relations cannot be addressed without considering their contacts with authorities and various communities in the name of which NGOs speak out and participate in public life. Openness, cohesion and bridging

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correct procedures and practices, that could empower deliberation in certain spheres of public policies. See, e.g.: M. Zabdyr-Jamróz, *Preventing the Atrophy of the Deliberative Stance...*, *op. cit.*; A. Zubrzycka-Czarnecka, *Social Actors in the Housing Policy Process. A Constructivists Perspective*, Elipsa, Warszawa 2019. Similar conclusions indicating chances and hazards were reached by researchers of public hearing institutions. See, e.g.: P.W. Juchacz, *Deliberatywna filozofia publiczna. Analiza instytucji wysłuchania publicznego w Sejmie Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z perspektywy systemowego podejścia do demokracji deliberatywnej* [Deliberative Public Philosophy. Analysis of Public Hearing in the Lower House (Sejm) of the Polish Parliament in the Systemic Approach to Deliberative Democracy, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Instytutu Filozofii UAM, Poznań 2015; P. Dobrowolski, *Dekada publicznego wysłuchania w Polsce. Główne wnioski. Propozycje kierunku rozwoju*, Łódka Wolności, 2018, [https://www.lodkawolnosc.org/books/Dekada\\_publicznego\\_wysluchania.pdf](https://www.lodkawolnosc.org/books/Dekada_publicznego_wysluchania.pdf), access on May 22, 2022.

<sup>54</sup> A. Krzewińska, *Deliberation for Public Policies, Public Policies for Deliberation – Cooperation or Strained Relations*, [in:] J. Sroka, J. Podgórska-Rykała (eds.), *Deliberation in the Public Policies Planning Process: Experiences and Future Challenges*, Libron, Kraków 2022, p. 45.

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character of these relations constitute one of characteristic features of the developed civic society bonded by means of social capital and characterised by the high level of generalised social trust. In similar conditions inhabitants cooperate, make mutual decisions and share public responsibility for decisions and undertaken activities, while the number of 'silent' community participants is decreased and voices of citizens are no longer idle criticism resulting from lack of empowerment, but are rather gradually filled with ideas and attitudes towards genuine network cooperation.

However, some members of community always remain 'silent' and it is one of serious problems in democracies that have been applying advanced forms of civic participation for a long time and it is a main problem in majority of Polish local self-governments, though it is not "to be or not to be" for participation and civic society, as various cooperation forms are official and preserved. We could discuss justification of certain regulations, however systemic practices are more important than formal stipulations and these practices often derive from local mini-oligarchies and oligopolies, under the cover of seemingly high level of social involvement, in which elites of activists control the major part of systemic assets (not only financial assets, but also contacts with local politicians, know-how or numbers of volunteers). Such situation makes activism of other people more challenging.

There are plenty of options to analyse the role of silence in participation and deliberation, while empirical data that could be used to challenge these forms of social life withdrawal can be searched in social enclaves and such research has already been giving some promising results. We are not going to discuss them here, however we should be still aware of the profound role of social silence in terms of communication processes and public activities. Silence of the majority is a symbolic touchstone checking to what extent power strategies being implemented are elitist (i.e. constructed *a priori* by decision-makers and their associates) or egalitarian (*a posteriori* and consensual). The power strategies become elitist in a directly proportional way to the scale of dissonance between declared and implemented standards of operation and socially accepted values. Robert Merton mentioned that

preservation of this dissonance enhanced the tendency of anomie<sup>55</sup>, the state in which individuals are significantly less interested or not interested at all in collective, group and public efforts and results, while focusing mostly or solely on their own goals and even their participation in certain forms of cooperation as subject to these individual goals. It is a situation in which *calculation of personal profits and fear of penalty constitute the only existing regulation factors*<sup>56</sup>.

Various inclusive strategies and activities, currently available in democracies, have potential to just reduce anomie, as it is impossible to eradicate. Civic budgeting is contextually connected with these problems, as it is based on social involvement, while trying to generate it at the same time. As a relatively simple mechanism to introduce for both local self-governments and inhabitants, CB seems to be a promising tool in terms of long-term activism, but even in this case we should consider its limitations related to the risk of oligarchisation, increase (or return) of anomie or deceptive participation.

In order to complete the image of participation proposed by Arnstein, we should also consider the role of the private sector or functions of public institutions, such as cultural or educational centres. Their role in civic budgeting is sometimes doubled, popularising the CB idea itself and its next editions, holding stationary voting, etc., as public institutions, and getting involved in submitting applications. It is not surprising, because as public institutions they are supposed to play the role that integrates and involves local communities, however it becomes problematic in some situations. The typical problem encountered in many cities introducing civic budgets is domination schools among winning projects that is obviously a result of more than average mobilisation capabilities. This limits implementation of other projects or involvement of other groups of inhabitants, that could discourage communities in the long-term perspective.

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<sup>55</sup> R.K. Merton, *Social Structure and Anomie*, "American Sociological Review" 1938, vol. 3, no. 5.

<sup>56</sup> *Idem*, *Teoria socjologiczna i struktura społeczna* [Sociological Theory and Social Structure], PWN, Warszawa 2002, p. 222.

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However, during our research we found out this problem was identified locally and solved in ways customised to local capabilities and conditions.

Finally, single ladder steps will not usually be able to show character of the relations between power and citizens in details regarding certain decision-making processes, especially in terms of general issues. This process is dynamic and scope and intensity of relations change depending on decision-making sphere, procedure stage, etc. Nowadays, we can see more intense use of methods theoretically associated with egalitarian strategies, but practices are different and they often uncover double face of leading systemic features formally included within consensual standards, while, in fact, they are only an addition to dominant elitist strategies. We can see it in civic budgets that in such conditions can take just symbolic form in the background legitimising the role of elites. Sometimes this role is somewhat 'enlightening', proven by competences, accurate decision of authorised bodies and persons or general professionalism that excludes participation in so called 'dirty communities', as defined by Adam Podgórecki<sup>57</sup>.

In other situations the role of elites may transform to so called Caesarism<sup>58</sup>. Its purpose is personal enhancement of executive authorities whose parameters are formally within systemic boundaries of democracy, though they distort them, limiting democratic participation to less or more faked forms of plebiscitary acceptance. We could describe it as cancer-like form of democracy (polyarchy) intertwined with the currently analysed forms of development of contemporary capitalism. In local contexts these large processes could seem remote as distant thunderstorms, however we know from the present history that globalisation also means rapid distribution of negative phenomena and processes whose force is sometimes destructive in the less prepared regions to be able to think of advanced,

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<sup>57</sup> See: A. Podgórecki, *Kontrola społeczna trzeciego stopnia* [The Third Stage of Social Control], vol. 1: *Problemy profilaktyki społecznej i resocjalizacji* [Problems Related to Social Prevention and Rehabilitation], Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 1976.

<sup>58</sup> See: M. Weber, *Gospodarka i społeczeństwo. Zarys socjologii rozumiejącej* [Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology], PWN, Warszawa 2002, p. 697.

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pro-active or involving activities. Caesarism, also in local context, solidifies together with personalisation of ruling (holding posts or functions) and lack of real alternation of power, while its strength results from mighty informal position, not of a single person, but specific environment. Also, the legal and procedural role resulting from formal position of certain actors may be very mediocre or even marginal (e.g. ordinary member of parliament, midlevel official, business counsellor, religious leader, priest, social activist, lobbyist or relation management expert). Caesarism grows deep into networks using power of informal position and constitutes itself in all fragment of relations via personalisation of decision and popularisation of relations taking form of distributive coalitions, while blocking occurrence of genuine and desired advocacy coalitions.

Rivalry between political parties and election results, eagerly cited by advocates of Caesarism as arguments proving the democratic character of government, cannot prevent erosion of polyarchy. Analogically, not all cases of civic budgets, even those well evaluated by inhabitants and characterised by large numbers of submitted projects and high turnout, will indicate that local democracy works well. Nevertheless, popularisation of this mechanism, or even its subsequent recognition as obligatory in the multiple self-government units, may give some opportunities for local authorities and communities. As an element influenced by local social and political relations and as a factor that can actively create them, the civic budget can be used to audit and analyse them, but also in long-term correction of relations. However, this dual character of CB rather suggests that is pro-active implementation will be possible in locations with already present social capital and dialogue-oriented authorities. In different conditions implementation will be more difficult, depending on local forms of asymmetric relations accompanied by poor involvement of inhabitants, often cited by authorities when in need to justify preservation of asymmetry in their relations with citizens.



## Chapter 2

# Research methodology

### Purpose, subject and significance of the research project

The purpose of this research project<sup>1</sup> focusing on analysis of public policies is to characterise and describe the tendencies in evolution of the participatory budget, an important tool in contemporary democracies, described and standardised in the Polish law as “civic budget”<sup>2</sup>. Considering this lack of term uniformity and in spite of differences in connotations of both terms, we sometimes used both of them alternately in our research. We did it purposefully, though in a way customised to a given context, differentiating solutions closer to participatory budgeting (in the broader definition referring to tools of democratic deliberation) from solutions introduced by the act that imposed civic budgeting in cities, in which decisions are voted. The scope of our research covered both local implementations of the formal institution of legally defined civic budget and actual participatory practices characteristic for the process.

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<sup>1</sup> NCN OPUS 17 (2019/33/B/HS5/00353) project called *Evolution of the Civic Budget in Poland – Towards Deliberation or Plebiscite?*

<sup>2</sup> Act amending some other acts in order to increase participation of citizens in the processes of electing, operation and supervision of some public bodies of January 11, 2018 (Journal of Laws of 2018, pos. 130, 1349).

## Research problems, hypothesis, summary question

The main research problem was to try to determine whether and to what extent Polish practices of budgeting attended by inhabitants contain and preserve plebiscitary (including project evaluation and the main role of voting) and deliberative threads (including detailed discussion on projects and the consensus reaching process). We were interested in differences in implementation and practicing of the act-defined pattern.

Some auxiliary research problems we used in analysis of certain cases helped us to contextually specify the main problem. They referred to:

- purposefulness introduction of legal civic budget regulations – whether did these goals turn out to be closer to popularisation or education themselves or also to enhancement of cooperation and responsibility for management of public matters in local communities;
- criteria on the basis of which it is possible to classify Polish solutions, interpret them in the broader comparative context and identify main differences in certain types of local practices;
- scope of procedural changes and practical results constituting the effects of implementation of CB-related legal regulations in the twelve cities subject to more detailed analysis;
- estimation of capabilities of Polish local self-governments in terms of ‘interfering’ with results of budgeting process attended by inhabitants, as well as activities preventing similar influence to excessive extent;
- indication of differences in practices and effects of application of deliberative and plebiscitary solutions in the twelve cities subject to more detailed analysis and estimation to what extent the plebiscitary character of the act-defined CB formula determines superficiality of participations and contradicts the idea of self-aware civic community;
- scope in which the legal CB regulation led to enhancement or weakening of cooperation in the twelve cities subject to more detailed analysis;

- identification of local CB beneficiaries and estimation of their profits and possible deficiencies resulting from introduction of the legal regulations;
- identification and estimation of efficiency of previous and actual participatory budgeting solutions and practices in the twelve cities subject to more detailed analysis, as well as estimation of their durability in terms of the CB procedure imposed by the act;
- identification and estimation whether and to what extent bearing of costs related to CB leads to development or limitation of pro-deliberative activities in the analysed cases.

The indicated issues enabled to customise analysis to each case in order to operationalise the main hypothesis assuming that the act-defined institution of civic budget does not create an efficient procedure leading to the increased level of local co-governance by intensification of the collective thinking process and that it may even limit the civic budget to the role of a standard plebiscitary tool. Following the hypothesis, we also worked out the summary research question referring to the well known psychological and social phenomenon of shifting baseline<sup>3</sup> occurring in situations in which institutional, group or individual routines, preserved in patterns of certain activities, evolve in a seemingly unnoticed way from the day-to-day perspective, but can generate change in the long-term context in terms of binding patterns of activity (perception, evaluation, behaviour) to such extent that this 'silent' revolution ultimately leads to genuine revolution ousting the primary patterns. Referring this theoretical concept to our research in a short way, the CB routines induced by the act regulations may lead to erosion of the previously locally developed participatory budgeting deliberative practices. As a result, the summary research question is related to the anti-development trap endangering the Polish variant of the democratic self-government revolution: can the act-defined CB regulations contradict its idea of a local community participating in the decision-making process?

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<sup>3</sup> See e.g.: M. Soga, K.J. Gaston, *Shifting Baseline Syndrome: Causes, Consequences and Implications*, "Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment" 2018, vol. 16, no. 4.

## Research stages

We started with the query helping us to specify our research and model frameworks. All query results were archived and analysed. As a result, we selected publications which were the most useful for our research assumptions, presented in the bibliography. This process was based on our knowledge and experience in the subject being analysed.

Then we asked authorities in 940 cities (rural municipalities, urban-rural municipalities, cities with *poviat* rights) for information on local budgeting practices attended by inhabitants. Research was performed using the CAWI method and the standardised questionnaire was sent to city halls via e-mail as a public information request. We were sent replies from 932 entities. In this way we acquired basic information on the fact of existence of participatory budgeting in certain cities and its local regulations and practices. The data were processed in a way enabling their grouping, comparison and selection, with purpose to determine facts and group cities according to dates of CB implementation and selected variables related to elements of the city regulations referring to “plebiscitary” or “deliberative” character of procedure planning and adopted methods in decision-making processes regarding selection of tasks and projects to be funded).

During the third stage the completed material was analysed with purpose to find cities (initially 6, finally 12) – with cases of six cities with poviat rights (Dąbrowa Górnicza, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Kraków, Krosno, Legnica, Sopot), three municipal communes (Hrubieszów, Nowa Ruda, Rypin), three urban-rural communes (Opatów, Puławy, Tuchola) – that would fit into the three categories related to dates of implementation of participatory budgeting, namely:

- cities in which participatory budget had not been introduced before the amendment of the act and where the act-enforced civic budget, imposing voting, was a first solution trying to increase influence of inhabitants on some budgetary expenses in their cities;

- cities in which participatory budget had been present for four years before the act-imposed obligation to apply civic budget, i.e. it was introduced in the term of 2014-18;
- cities in which participatory budget had been present long enough (2011–2013) to be integrated within local public policies before introduction of obligatory application of civic budget, as specified in the act.

Also, it was important to have in the selected group both cities with clearly identified districts and those where, formally, there were no ancillary units. This enabled more detailed research in terms of criteria used in development and adjustment of local solutions. We also analysed the formal context of participatory budgeting and evolution of local regulations after enforcement of the already cited legal act of 2018. The content of the material collected until then and the circumstances imposed by development of the COVID-19 pandemics<sup>4</sup> made us quickly change the research strategy and omit the additional pilot procedure, though we decided to increase the number of analysed cities from six to twelve. Finally, the following cities were included in our group:

- one city (Tuchola) where participatory budget had been absent before the amendment of the act of 2018;
- six cities (Hrubieszów, Kraków, Krosno, Opatów, Nowa Ruda and Rypin) where participatory budget was initiated before amendment of the act, in years 2014–2017;
- five cities (Dąbrowa Górnicza, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Legnica, Puławy and Sopot) where participatory budget was initiated in years 2011–2013.

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<sup>4</sup> Though some editions of CB were halted, the pandemics has not caused significant damage to civic budgeting. See: J. Sroka, B. Pawlica, J. Podgórska-Rykała, *Bariery formuł deliberacyjnych w świetle badania praktyk budżetowania obywatelskiego w Polsce prowadzonych w okresie pandemii COVID-19* [Limitations of Deliberative Formulas in Research of the Civic Budgeting Practices in Poland, Performed during the COVID-19 Pandemics], “Studia z Polityki Publicznej” 2021, vol. 8, no. 4.

## Chapter 2. Research methodology

After selecting the indicated group of local self-governments, we initiated the fourth stage of research, when we performed interviews with persons directly involved in civic budgeting processes. The discussed issues were procedures, practices and opinions related to CB. Five interviews were conducted in each city (60 in total). Our interviewees were:

- representative of legislative authorities;
- representative of executive authorities;
- official directly responsible for the civic budget process;
- author of one of winning projects;
- author of one of projects rejected because of formal issues.

The conversations, taking the form of individual in-depth interviews, were transcribed and archived in the project database. They supplemented the research material and enabled to get to assessments, emotions and motivations of our interlocutors in terms of their involvement in CB.

The essence of the fifth research stage was the survey conducted among inhabitants of the twelve cities. They supplemented the data collected during the previous stages of research, mostly the material of unique quality, gathered in the interviews. We planned the survey as an auxiliary research activity even before the pandemics, assuming to perform field works using the random and quota sampling scheme in selection of respondents. However, during the pandemics, after many attempts to maintain the quota sampling and facing significant limitations of field works, we realised we were surely unable to stick to the original assumption. Pandemics-related limitations and different level of skills in using modern communication technologies among generations resulted in the majority of respondents being young people. In some cities, in spite of diversified samples, we were unable to reach assumed threshold of 150 completed and returned surveys, i.e. containing answers to all 28 questions (filling in of ca. 10% of surveys was not completed).

The survey was conducted using the CAPI method. It could be attended by respondents after clicking the respective link. Thanks to efforts of our team members, it was posted on the majority of city hall websites, including CB-dedicated ones, and at the websites of NGOs and specifically tagged

social media profiles. In spite of our activity, including on-line meetings of the team members with representatives of local schools, we were not able to reach the level of 150 filled-in surveys in all twelve cities, that would constitute 1,800 surveys. 1,853 persons participated in the survey, but in some cities we did not get 150 responses, while in other ones there were more of them that we needed (see Table 1).

Table 1. Number of persons participating in the survey in the twelve cities

		N	%
1	Dąbrowa Górnicza	210	11
2	Gorzów Wielkopolski	223	12
3	Hrubieszów	111	6
4	Kraków	154	8
5	Krosno	104	6
6	Legnica	260	14
7	Nowa Ruda	51	3
8	Opatów	165	9
9	Puławy	147	8
10	Rypin	314	17
11	Sopot	64	3
12	Tuchola	50	3
		<b>1853</b>	<b>100</b>

60% of 1,853 survey participants were women. As already mentioned, the pandemics made us conduct the survey online, resulting in overrepresentation of young people among our respondents. Half of them were less than 18 years old, while 20% of them were 18-25. Age of respondents is correlated with their marital status. As much as 71% were single, while 20% were married. Almost one-third of the respondents declared primary education, resulting from their young age, while secondary education and higher education was declared by 26% for each group. The analysis of social and demographic data of the respondents showed that the survey

## Chapter 2. Research methodology

was mostly attended by young, single persons (mostly women) with access to the Internet.

After the analysis of the 12 case studies and using our research experience, in the sixth stage we worked out the proposal to look at strong and weak links and chances and hazards related to participatory budgeting in the cities being analysed. It should not be seen as any kind of ranking or consistent evaluation, because such documentation would require another project. On the basis of the empirical material, we tried to underline strong and weak links and potential or existing opportunities for participatory budget and probable or existing hazards, also in context of valid legal regulations.

## Chapter 3

# Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

### Case studies of participatory budgeting in Polish cities from the model perspective

*Despite their originally ritual character, the participatory governance modes have started to appear within organisational spaces, whenever there are actors who would find their use correct and beneficial, because the institutionalisation process includes interactions among various governance process stakeholders who actively negotiate its significance and practices<sup>1</sup>.* –

It seems impossible to contradict the above statement included in one of interesting research papers on the issues similar to the ones analysed by our team, though it is also the details that matters. Besides the leading general matters differentiating the certain cases, we have also managed to collect multiple crucial details during research and the most characteristic ones are presented in the texts dedicated to case studies being analysed.

In the public policy and administration a habit can often be seen as an evidence-based policy run by ‘experts’, while practical interpretation of participation in the form of referendum may also become just a custom, limiting participation itself only to this form.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Rządca, M. Strumińska-Kutra, *Local Governance and Learning: In Search of a Conceptual Framework*, “Local Government Studies” 2016, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2016.1223632>, p. 19.

Consequently, “the rule of personal genius” is so dangerous for democracy in administration and public policy<sup>2</sup>. Such defined bad patterns and habits may lead to the development trap in the form of the vicious circle in which lack of change and systemic insufficiencies are reinforced as a result of cumulating feedbacks<sup>3</sup>. In such a loophole, characterised by repeated mistakes, it becomes crucial whether, and possibly to what extent, it is possible to ‘escape’ from the past that relentlessly marks out non-dialogue development trajectories for both contemporaneity and the foreseeable future. This already well known and researched aspect of a ‘shade’ cast by the past on the development of the present times and on the foreseeable future is called path dependency.

It is also worth wondering whether it will be possible to escape from the previous Polish ‘path’ of public decision-making, the path trodden not for decades, but for centuries<sup>4</sup>, in the form of habits connected to serfdom and nowadays neo-serfdom relation asymmetry, siege mentality, unstable and often exaggerated emotionality, forcibly imposed knowledge and hidden or clandestine influence, defined for a long time by paternalism, clientelism, kin egoism and conflict-based elitism of groups with common interests and reinforced with consequent and *de facto* common and ‘agreed’ deeply culturally rooted exclusion of the possibility for genuine civic engagement to exist<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> M. Weber, *Gospodarka i społeczeństwo. Zarys socjologii rozumiejącej* [Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology], PWN, Warszawa 2002, p. 697.

<sup>3</sup> Cf.: W. Morawski, *Zmiana instytucjonalna. Społeczeństwo, gospodarka, polityka* [Institutional Change. Society, Economy, Politics], PWN, Warszawa 1998, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. e.g.: *ibidem*; J.T. Hryniewicz, *Stosunki pracy w polskich organizacjach* [Labour Relations in Polish Organisations], Scholar, Warszawa 2007; A. Zybala, *Zarządzanie i partycypacja pracownicza w Polsce – realia i uwarunkowania. Od modelu folwarcznego do podmiotowości?* [Governance and Workers’ Participation in Poland – Reality and Condition. From Serfdom to Agency?], Oficyna Wydawnicza Szkoły Głównej Handlowej, Warszawa 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Cf.: J. Tarkowski, *Socjologia świata polityki* [Sociology of the World of Politics], vol. 2: *Patroni i klienci* [Patrons and Clients], ISP PAN, Warszawa 1994; J. Sroka, *Konfliktowy elitizm grup interesów zamiast społeczeństwa obywatelskiego? Przyczynek do analizy systemowej* [Conflictual Elitism of Groups of Interests Instead

Among numerous clearly felt effects of this path dependency the lack of cultural institutionalisation becomes gradually increasing – not only lack of modern public policy, but lack of institutionalisation of the public sphere itself into its adequate and current civilisation and dialogue-oriented contexts. Moreover, we witness the threat that formal pro-deliberative, dialogue-oriented systemic solutions will be taken over by non-dialogue interpretations and practices. This refers to both already known institutions of social<sup>6</sup> and civic<sup>7</sup> dialogue, as well as the new solutions, including the participatory budgeting in the statutory form of civic budgeting. The scenarios of civic budgeting development are presented in the Scheme 1

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of the Civic Society? A Contribution to the Systemic Analysis], [in:] Z. Machelski (ed.), *Demokracja polska na początku drugiej dekady XXI wieku* [Polish Democracy in the Early 2010s], Opole, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2013; *idem*, *Współdecydowanie w wielopasmowej polityce publicznej* [Co-decision Making in Multifaceted Public Policy], Dom Wydawniczy ELIPSA, Warszawa 2018. References to serfdom-oriented base of the social and political relations can also be found in historical or anthropological publications: A. Leszczyński, *Ludowa historia Polski* [A People's History of Poland], W.A.B., Warszawa 2020; K. Pobłocki, *Chamstwo* [Chamstwo. A Story of Polish Serfdom], Wydawnictwo Czarne, Wołowiec 2021. However, some of these critical papers should be subject to thorough falsifiability before we find them justified.

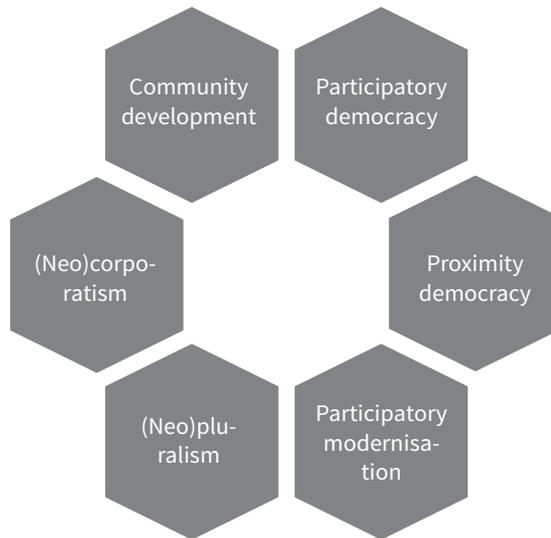
<sup>6</sup> The functioning of the social dialogue is defined e.g. in the Act of July 24, 2015 on the Social Dialogue Council and other social dialogue institutions, Journal of Laws of 2015 pos. 1240. See also: J. Gardawski, B. Surdykowska (eds.), *Ku kulturze dialogu. Geneza i dzień dzisiejszy dialogu społecznego w Polsce* [Towards the Culture of Dialogue. Origins and the Current Condition of Social Dialogue in Poland], Rada Dialogu Społecznego, Warszawa 2019; J. Sroka, *Europejskie stosunki przemysłowe w perspektywie porównawczej* [European Industrial Relations in the Comparative Perspective], Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 2000.

<sup>7</sup> In Poland the formal capabilities of civic dialogue are mostly described in the Act of April 23, 2003 on public benefit activities and volunteering, Journal of Laws of 2003 no. 93 pos. 873. See also: M. Twardowska, *Instytucjonalne formy partycypacji na przykładzie współpracy administracji lokalnej z organizacjami pozarządowymi* [Institutional Forms of Participation by the Example of Cooperation between Local Administration and NGOs, [in:] J. Sroka (ed.), *Wybrane instytucje demokracji partycypacyjnej w polskim systemie politycznym* [Selected Institutions of Participatory Democracy in the Polish Political System], Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych, Warszawa 2008.

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which is an attempt to supplement the civic participation typology proposed by the team consisting of Yves Sintomer, Carsten Herzberg and Anja Röcke<sup>8</sup>.

Scheme 1. Participation models shaping participatory budgeting practices



Source: own work on the basis of Y. Sintomer, C. Herzberg, A. Röcke, *Transnational Models of Citizen Participation: The Case of Participatory Budgeting*, [in:] N. Dias (ed.), *Hope for Democracy – 25 Years of Participatory Budgeting Worldwide*, In Loco Association, São Brás de Aportel 2014, p. 40.

The dominant features of the aforesaid model participatory types in civic budgeting are presented in the Table 2 considering the contemporary division of previous classical participation forms of corporatism

<sup>8</sup> Y. Sintomer, C. Herzberg, A. Röcke, *Transnational Models of Citizen Participation: The Case of Participatory Budgeting*, [in:] N. Dias (ed.), *Hope for Democracy – 25 Years of Participatory Budgeting Worldwide*, In Loco Association, São Brás de Aportel 2014.

and pluralism. Considering the extent of the issue, they are not going to be discussed here, however they are well known in the Polish and international literature. For us the key fact is that the said division defines the two contemporary tendencies. (1) In the first, proactive and civic democracy-embedded tendency (*democracy by the people*), historical elements previously worked out within genuinely 'collaborating' corporatism are currently explored and developed within the innovative solutions of participatory democracy and community development. They are dominated by proactive (future-oriented) co-deciding, interest agreement and communitarised evaluation of benefits. (2) In the second, reactive tendency closer to the idea of *democracy for the people*, groups of common interests are still be seen, including lobbying. There is more space in it for reactive *ad hoc* decision-making, playing out interests and particularised benefit trade (Table 2).

Table 2. Participatory models in budgeting involving citizens

Features	Participation models				Traditional	
	Innovative		(2) Second tendency - reactive		(Neo)corporatism	(Neo)pluralism
	(1) First tendency - proactive	Proximity democracy	Participatory modernisation	Participatory modernisation	Representative, deliberative and non-deliberative, consensual	Non-representative, deliberative and non-deliberative, consensual and non-consensual
Forms of consultation (see Scheme 2)	<p><i>Participatory democracy</i></p> <p>Representative and non-representative, deliberative and consensual</p>	<p><i>Community development</i></p> <p>Representative and non-representative, deliberative and consensual</p>	<p><i>Proximity democracy</i></p> <p>Non-representative, deliberative and non-deliberative, consensual and non-consensual</p>	<p><i>Participatory modernisation</i></p> <p>Non-representative, deliberative and non-deliberative, consensual and non-consensual</p>	<p>Representative, deliberative and non-deliberative, consensual</p>	<p>Non-representative, deliberative and non-deliberative, consensual and non-consensual</p>
Character of decision-making processes (see Table 4)	<p><i>Democracy “by the people”</i>, systemic deliberation, networking multilevel governance</p>	<p>System communitarianisation – evolution toward public governance with network participation and within a network, social pact policy</p>	<p><i>Democracy “for the people”</i>, reforms of classic liberal solutions in order to ‘bring governments closer to people’, civic dialogue, popularisation of public and private partnerships</p>	<p>Trade of interests, system marketisation – evolution toward contractual forms of public governance (<i>New Public Management</i>)</p>	<p>Agreeing on interests of large social groups, social dialogue, support coalitions</p>	<p>Competition among interests of strong actors, lobbying, distributive coalitions</p>
Dominant strategies in activities (see point 5)	<p>Advantage of deliberation-oriented egalitarian ones</p>	<p>Advantage of community development-oriented egalitarian ones</p>	<p>Legitimation-oriented egalitarian and elitist ones</p>	<p>Reform-oriented egalitarian and elitist ones</p>	<p>Class-oriented egalitarian and elitist ones</p>	<p>Market-oriented elitist and egalitarian ones</p>

Examples of local practices	Porto Alegre	Dublin Toronto	Lisbon Dąbrowa Górnicza, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Hrubieszów, Kraków, Krosno, Legnica, Nowa Ruda, Opatów, Putawy, Rypin, Sopot, Tuchola	Cologne	Currently, no specific ones, however development of industrial relations in the local labour markets in Northern Europe (e.g. Norway) may potentially constitute the base for future neocorporatist civic budgeting projects*	Ploock, the interesting supplement of this variant is the pilot program realised by labour unions, employers and local self-government in partnership with the Norwegian party (see the box to the left), however it has nothing in common with CB
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Source: own work on the basis of: Y. Sintomer, C. Herzberg, A. Röcke, *Transnational Models of Citizen Participation: The Case of Participatory Budgeting*, [in:] N. Dias (ed.), *Hope for Democracy – 25 Years of Participatory Budgeting Worldwide*, In Loco Association, São Brás de Aportel 2014, pp. 40–44; J. Sroka, *Europejskie stosunki przemysłowe w perspektywie porównawczej* [European Industrial Relations in the Comparative Perspective], Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 2000, pp. 35–72; cf. also: J. Fishkin, *Making Deliberative Democracy Practical: Public Consultation and Dispute Resolution*, “Ohio State Journal on Dispute Resolution” 2011, vol. 4, no. 26; J. Gastil, E.P. Deess, Ph. Weiser, *Civic Awakening in the Jury Room: A Test of the Connection between Jury Deliberation and Political Participation*, “The Journal of Politics” 2002, vol. 2, no. 64.

\* Currently, there are no clearly (neo)corporatist solutions, as corporatism itself, naturally based on classic industrial relations of the Fordism age, is currently decomposing. The clear example of common application of corporatist practices, both on the centralised and industry and local level, had been Austria until the late 1990s. Also, the Irish social pacts from the 21<sup>st</sup> century can be seen as practices containing (neo)corporatist elements. On the local level the characteristic examples were working-class phalansteries, e.g. in Vienna before the WWII and post-WWII British micro-corporatist practices, the so called closed shop. See J. Sroka, *Europejskie stosunki przemysłowe w perspektywie porównawczej*, *op. cit.*, pp. 72–96.

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Let us mention here, before we move on to the analysis of twelve case studies of civic budgeting in Polish cities, that in general all analysed cases can be included in the category of innovative solutions, though still more reactive practices related to so called proximity democracy, as you can see in the Table 2. Specificity of practices and differences in local levels of participation and deliberation are presented in subsequent parts of this paper, dedicated to budgeting with participation of inhabitants in selected Polish cities. This part is concluded with the compact analysis of twelve CB cases presented in the table and based on the SWOT formula, however it is still managed on the basis of its classic rules, to the extent allowed by possible adjustment of materials collected during research (see Table 15. Pros and cons and opportunities and hazards regarding participatory budgeting in the twelve Polish cities). Under no circumstances does the content of the Table 15 constitute any sort of ranking and it must not be treated as a judge's verdict. These are not our assumptions and the material we have collected revealed the complex diversity of the sphere of local participation and encasing this diversity in the form of a table ranking would be senseless. However, it does make sense to sum up the content of the case studies of the twelve cities, indicating pros and cons, as well as opportunities and hazards that in our opinion may stimulate or hamper further development of civic involvement of inhabitants in the process of planning, coordination and evaluation of participatory budgeting.

Finally, let us say a word about varied volumes of different texts dedicated to specific cases. These discrepancies result from different lengths of periods participatory budgeting has been present in certain cities, methods of preparation and implementation, level of activism and other factors present locally and taken into consideration in the analyses.

## Civic budgeting in Dąbrowa Górnicza – desk research and survey results

### 1. Profile of civic budgeting in Dąbrowa Górnicza in view of the desk research

Civic budgeting was introduced in Dąbrowa Górnicza as early as in 2013 and the original solution has been worked out during this period, activating the civic dialogue and replacing voting after first four years. The deliberative form of agreeing on decision regarding civic budgeting was successful during the years 2017–18, accompanied by development of local mini-publics dedicated to CB, taking the form of forums of participating practitioners (forums of inhabitants). The meetings were organised as diagnostic and design-oriented workshops. Also, CB evaluation and monitoring have been introduced. Initially, the amendment of the respective act seemed to be against further development of dialogue participation in the city, however the tendency was not stopped and the city authorities decided to conduct budgeting in two simultaneous variants: (I) the pre-amendment pro-deliberative working on a consensus and (II) referendum organised as a result of a voting, adjusted to the statutory requirements.

#### Assets assigned to CB

The only pieces of information we were able to obtain in the City Hall were links to the websites at which information on subsequent amounts was unavailable. At the desk research stage our efforts to establish good relations with the City Hall were unsuccessful, but later we managed to slightly overcome this problem that we seemed to encounter as external observers to some extent. If it really happens to be correct feeling and were an indication how local practices would evolve, it might turn out

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to be a weak point of both the office itself and the budget co-created by inhabitants in both local forms.

When it comes to the amounts for budgeting we were interested in, it was surely 10 mln PLN after enforcement of the statutory regulations, while on the basis of collected data it can be estimated that in the editions until 2018 the average respective budgetary amounts were 5 mln PLN.

#### Officials attending to CB

In Dąbrowa Górnicza the attention should be paid to the solution of institutional attending to the relations between the local government and inhabitants. It is a consolidated task of the Department of Non-Governmental Organizations and Civic Involvement consisting of the three teams, including the Participatory Budget and Public Consultations Team. Local Consultation Offices were organised at residential areas and the participation process is currently supported by five animators assigned to certain areas, who are officially named residential area counselors. Estimating on the basis of analysis of the available material, 10 people are permanently involved in civic budgeting in the city. The number of public officials and activists varies and it sometimes even increases, depending on a given stage.

#### Local formal regulations

The works on the Participatory Budget in Dąbrowa Górnicza were initiated in 2012 within the working group comprising of the representatives of the city mayor, the City Council and non-governmental organizations. In January 2013 the City Council passed the resolution no. XXIII/457/13 on the rules and the procedure of conducting public consultations with the inhabitants of Dąbrowa Górnicza on the Budget of the City of Dąbrowa Górnicza for the year 2014. The referred act constituted one of the first

such procedures in Poland and established voting as a main tool to select projects. The developed relations and good practices enabled the evolution of the process toward participatory solutions. In the subsequent editions popularity of CB and assets were increasing, as until 2018 946 motions had been submitted, while the total value of the 244 projects ordered for implementation had exceeded 29 mln PLN. All editions have varied regarding the number of districts, project submitting rules and voting regulations. Dialogue-oriented inhabitant forums were introduced in 2016, while in 2017 voting was replaced by the consensus-based solution.

The current variant, present since 2018, was introduced during the 5<sup>th</sup> edition upon the resolution no. XXIV/533/2017 of the City Council of Dąbrowa Górnicza of January 8, 2017 on the rules and the procedure of conducting public consultations with the inhabitants of Dąbrowa Górnicza on the Budget of the City of Dąbrowa Górnicza for the year 2018. It was developed at workshops thanks to the team which purpose was to develop the new model called “DDBP 2.0”. The team consisted of 15 representatives of inhabitants selected by the Public Benefit Activity Council. It was an innovative, involving, integrating and dialogue-friendly idea and its only possible defect seemed to be the too “educational” tone of the City Hall. It could be possible to imagine the conditions in which this tone would mute all voices not aligned with the format being preferred. However, positive effects prevailed. Voting was limited to maximum possible extent, which increased the level of rivalry and resulted in conflicts, according to officials. In 2017 animators conducted 171 meetings in residential areas and 129 in 2018. They were attended by more than 600 persons.

The amendments in the Municipal Self-Government Act, obligating cities with the poviat rights to introduce project voting, made the authorities decide to keep two parallel budgets in the city, i.e.: (1) the Participatory Budget in Dąbrowa Górnicza, realized upon the decision of the City Mayor, seen (not only locally) as a successful example of participation, and (2) the Civic Budget implemented upon the resolution of the City Council, adopted in compliance with the statutory requirements. In 2020 the city assigned 10 mln PLN for civic budgeting, including 3.6 mln PLN for

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the “statutory” and the city-wide Civic Budget and 6.4 mln PLN for the locally traditional and “residential area” Participatory Budget in Dąbrowa Górnicza. The distribution of the assets into two forms of budgeting indicates the latter one, worked out as first, is preferred. Projects submitted within the city-wide Civic Budgeting are subject to verification by the City Hall and then selected in the city-wide voting, while projects submitted within the “residential area” Participatory Budget (realized in 35 separate areas) are worked out at Forums of Inhabitants at workshops organised for inhabitants of certain residential areas where consultation offices are established with purpose to provide information, ask questions and share opinions. The already mentioned local animators are also active, supporting the process of identification of needs and development of solutions.

#### Good practices

The good practices worked out in Dąbrowa Górnicza turned out to be distinctive, recognised and awarded solutions<sup>9</sup>. Their most significant element is the product of gradually developing community thoughtfulness enabling to conduct dialogue on visions and details of a ‘well-arranged city’. Also, development of community thoughtfulness in Dąbrowa Górnicza is worth supporting, as such arranged evolution may lead, as one of currently scarce examples in Poland, to occurrence of the proactive variant of community development (see Table 2. Participatory models

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<sup>9</sup> M. Popławski, *Between Legitimization and Deliberation. Participatory Budget in Dąbrowa Górnicza*, “Przegląd Prawa Konstytucyjnego” 2018, no. 6 (46); P. Pistelok, B. Martela, *Partycypacja publiczna. Raport o stanie polskich miast* [Public participation. The report on Polish cities], Instytut Rozwoju Miast i Regionów, Warszawa–Kraków 2019, <http://obserwatorium.miasta.pl/partycypacja-publiczna-raport-o-stanie-polskich-miast-konsultacje/>; Związek Powiatów Polskich, Wyniki konkursu „Innowacyjny Samorząd 2021” – kreatywność w czasach pandemii [Contest Results “Innovative Local Government 2021” – Creativity in Times of Pandemic], <https://www.zpp.pl/artukul/2114-wyniki-konkursu-innowacyjny-samorzad-2021-kreatywnosc-w-czasach-pandemii>, access on: May 9, 2022.

in budgeting involving citizens). Community thoughtfulness also proves firm existence of genuine and innovative reactions to the statutory regulations that, having been rigidly implemented, would undo development of real participatory budgeting as a result of extensive limiting of dialogue practices. At the same time, the practical effect of the two budget solution clearly shows the discord in terms of how the statutory regulations refer to participatory practices that were not abandoned after implementation of the act. The following statements, collected in interviews, concordantly prove the above:

- it says in the act that the amount will be divided into some parts, that this amount of 0.5 percent can be divided only with purpose of ancillary units and there are none in *Dąbrowa Górnicza*. *As a result, we have to do it as a whole city, we cannot divide this money in any other way. And we have 36 residential areas and we have been giving much more than 0.5 percent for these areas (...) We concluded we could take back the residential Participatory Budget from our inhabitants. And though the act forces us to implement the city-wide Civic Budget (...) we invented the solution in which inhabitants consult and determine the so called priority tasks to be implemented in a residential area and we pass it in the form of a decree. So this is how it is working for us now. This Participatory Budget is operated on the basis of a decree as a revitalisation package, while we are also doing the city-wide budget, because everyone has to do it (...) compulsory voting was also in contrary to our philosophy of popularisation of the participatory budget* (representative of the local executive authorities);
- *we have two Budgets and they are based on two different concepts. In the statutory budget the final effect is voting, while in our Participatory Budget it is possible to select what a project will be, using such tools like discussion, dialogue, consensus (...) and as a result, we are thoroughly implementing this budget, while we are also doing our Participatory Budget, as we planned it* (representative of the local legislative authorities);

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- *We have to implement the Civic Budget, but we want to implement the Participatory Budget. PB is our own idea, perfectly working for all these years in terms of holding meetings and dialogue with inhabitants. It is also a perfect tool allowing to provide extra funds for all our residential areas. If we only applied CB, the majority of the inhabitants would not have had well equipped day rooms, libraries or playgrounds in their surroundings (official directly involved in CB implementation);*
- *We concluded we simply need PB, because it has impact on certain residential areas. Who knows best what should be done at their area or district? Obviously, their inhabitants and they should be the ones who specify their priorities for a given year (...), if the authorities decided for the Participatory Budget, they would have been unable to hear out the inhabitants at certain residential areas. (...) It was only the Participatory Budget that reached all residential areas and gave the opportunity for discussion on how our local communities should be arranged and be effectively operating (author of one of the implemented projects);*
- *Civic Budget must be implemented... this is imposed on us by the act. And when it comes to the Participatory Budget, it would be the great loss to waste almost 10 years of work on such strenuous development of this model, because I think it is optimal for such a city like Dąbrowa Górnicza. And this model is based on the belief this Budget should be as close to inhabitants as possible, it should be related to the nearest surroundings and space, because it may be the most convincing factor for inhabitants to participate. In my opinion, as well as in opinion of many inhabitants of our city who said this during evaluation meetings on our PB, the statutory Civic Budget does not meet our expectations. These two budgets significantly differ, for example in terms of the rules of project implementation. PB has more local character, while CB is the city-wide budget customised for large projects (author of one of the projects rejected because of formal issues);*

On the basis of the analysis of statements from the interviews held in Dąbrowa Górnicza we can conclude the 'double' participatory and civic

budget is a good local practice and also a negative assessment of the act. As a result, instead of recommending similar solutions to others, it is worth underlining special importance of the CB case in Dąbrowa Górnicza within clear falsifiability of the rules provided in the regulations and practical justification their correction is needed. In turn, it does not mean there are no problems at all with participation in the city, as it is a leader only in the Polish context. The best practices should be supported, hoping the national participation average level will start to increase and still remembering that development of participation is not a linear and irreversible process. It can include downtimes, regresses and breakdowns strongly entwined in cultural, social and economic conditions and the institutional dynamics of policies. Long story short, distinction of a local case should not lead to speak eulogies but encourage to honest falsifiability, analysis, tests and good solutions, so practice will start to consolidate their leading elements, process them and adjust to other local contexts, as well as to parallel processes occurring within the institutionalised or social civic dialogue. This is a bold recommendation, though suitable for the most ambitious entities, proven by some revival in the area of dialogue and consultation seen in Dąbrowa Górnicza, when compared to other cities. It is also important that deliberative activity is not hampered by political differences always present in the public sphere to some extent. When it comes to possible weaknesses in the participation process in the city, routine may be a hazard. We did not see its presence, though we felt some administrative stiffness that should be monitored, evaluated and corrected to keep it at bay, if it were to be something more than incidental.

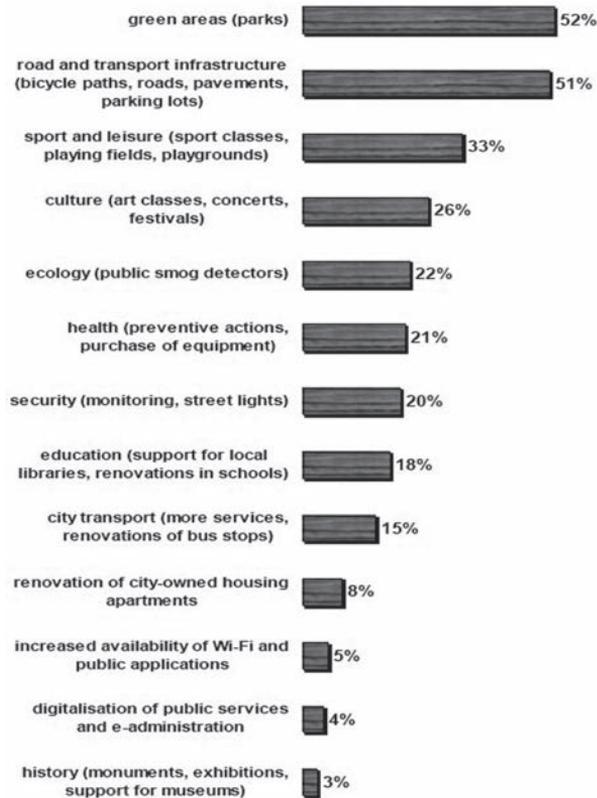
## **2. Civic budgeting in Dąbrowa Górnicza – certain results of the survey organised for inhabitants**

In the survey the inhabitants of Dąbrowa Górnicza were asked about structural and functional areas of local governance, that were the most suitable in terms of project implementation. The most popular answers

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were: green areas (52%), road and transport infrastructure (51%), sport and leisure (33%), culture (26%) and ecology (22%). Small numbers of respondents thought financial CB assets should be spent on projects in the fields of history, e.g. monuments, exhibitions, support for museums (3%), digitalisation of public services and e-administration (4%) and development of Wi-Fi networks and public mobile applications (5%).

**Chart 1. Select three most important types of activities you think CB projects in your city should be implemented among**

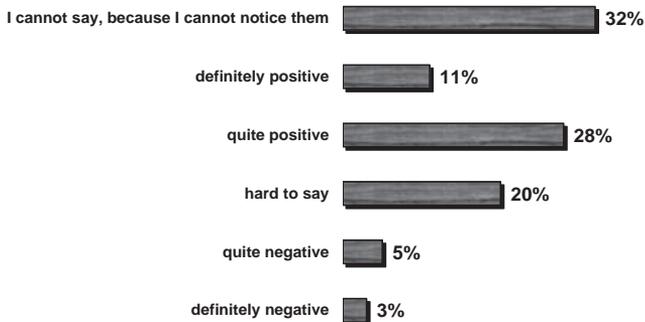


Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

## Civic budgeting in Dąbrowa Górnicza – desk research and survey results

Success of the civic budget strongly depends on informative activities conducted on its behalf by the city authorities and it could be expected that the result of these actions would be seen in the survey to some greater extent, whereas the majority of the respondents neither noticed any informative actions conducted by the city (32%) nor could they assess them (20%). Good grades were given for these actions by 38% of respondents (among them 28% found them relatively positive and 11% definitely positive). Negative grades were given by 8% of respondents (among them 3% of definitely negative and 5% of relatively negative). Dąbrowa Górnicza was not the only city where many people complained about lack of information. This can be partially explained by lack of representativeness of our survey and, as there is now way to explain it in full, it can probably be one of the effects of social anomy. Fortunately, it does not usually overpower the majority of inhabitants and also we could hear the voices saying one needs to receive communications and wants to be informed sufficiently: *informative actions are well conducted by the city. There is plenty of this information on CB and PB around the city... it is visible (...) informative and marketing activities on the budgets are conducted very smoothly... and these budgets are popularized by the city very much* (author of one of the rejected projects).

Chart 2. What is your opinion about the information actions regarding CB, conducted by the city authorities?

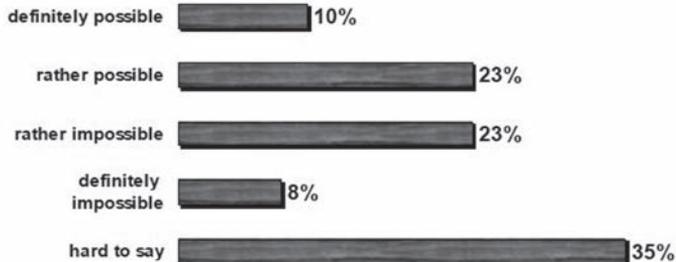


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What can be said on the possible impact of the authorities on the results in the form of the projects selected for implementation, in view of the opinions collected within the survey? One third of the respondents could not or did not want to answer that question (35%), while 33% thought it would be possible, admitting the city authorities could manipulate the CB results (23% rather possible, 10% definitely possible) and 31% rejected such a possibility (23% quite rather impossible, 8% definitely impossible). Also in this case it should be assumed that the more aloof inhabitants would be somehow resistant to see any positive aspects and prone to focus on negative issues. One representative of the city legislative authorities underlined that *if such an attempt would be made, great fuss would start in the city... the inhabitants would simply not let it slide silently. Currently, each such an attempt would be instantly publicised.*

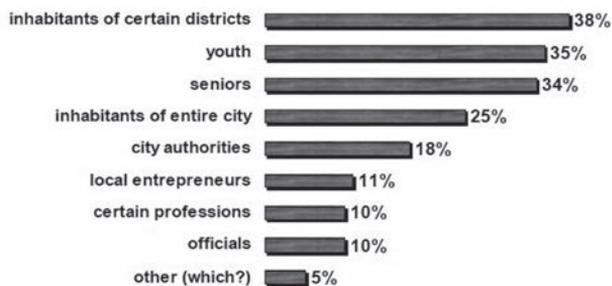
So, plenty depends on active attitude and civic sensitivity among inhabitants themselves, but there is something more and one of the city officials responsible for CB was aware of this: *influencing the situation by officials is potentially possible... especially, when it comes to projects within the statutory CB, because this new act says about projects passed in City Council resolutions... and an appeal from such a decision on non-voting of some project is not an administrative decision and there are no institutions you could appeal to, for example a self-government appeal court. I think that in case of this CB procedure, if there is no good attitude of local authorities to make it a genuine civic budget, there is a risk that the project selected will be the one preferred by officials, if ill will prevails (...)* Also, *the current act on CB allows officials to effectively influence the process of selection projects.*

**Chart 3. Do you think it is possible the city authorities could interfere with the CB results?**



According to the respondents, the greatest profits resulting from the CB are gained by inhabitants of certain districts (38%), young people (35%) and seniors (34%). One fourth of the respondents thought the projects realised within the CB had positive results for inhabitants of the entire city, while 20% claimed the profits from the civic budget are gained by the city authorities.

**Chart 4. Which social groups gain the largest profit from CB in your opinion?**



Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

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Among factors encouraging to participation in the last completed CB edition, the respondents listed “convenient form of voting” (59%), “interesting and important projects (57%), “skills and involvement of projects authors” (53%), “availability of information on projects” (52%) and “skills of officials/councillors” (38%), while the most discouraging were “level of own knowledge” (14%) and “skills and involvement of officials/councilors” (11%).

Table 3. Specify to what extent certain factors impacted general participation of the city inhabitants in the last edition of CB

		encouraged	quite encouraged	hard to say	quite discouraged	discouraged
1)	Information availability	20%	32%	40%	3%	3%
2)	Convenient form of voting	30%	29%	34%	4%	4%
3)	Interesting and important projects	31%	26%	35%	3%	4%
4)	Skills and involvement of officials/councillors	13%	25%	51%	6%	5%
5)	Skills and involvement of project authors	22%	31%	42%	1%	3%
6)	Level of own knowledge	20%	21%	46%	6%	8%

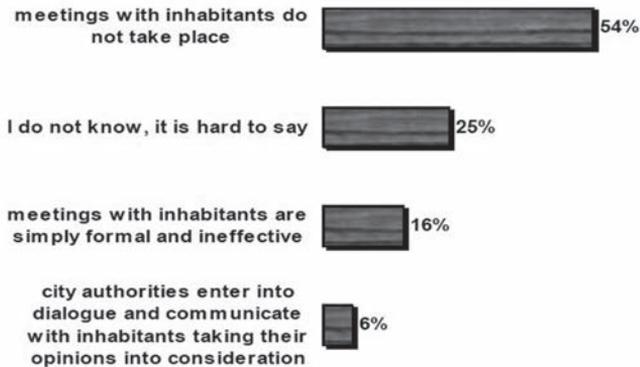
Note: the percentages could not add up to 100 due to the possibility of multiple choice.

Let us pay attention to the distribution of opinions on CB public consultations conducted in the city. According to 54% of respondents, there were no meetings held with inhabitants. One fourth of the surveyed people could not answer that question, while 16% of the respondents admitted in their opinion the CB meetings focused only on formal matters and resulted in no substantive effects. Only 6% of the respondents stated the

city authorities performed dialogue and discussions with the inhabitants and took their opinion into consideration. The obtained result is too meaningful to ignore the search for its reasons, starting with imperfection of the electronic survey that was performed during the COVID-19 pandemic and social isolation. The surveyed sample was not representative, so the obtained results should be related to overrepresentation of some parameters over other ones. From our observations it can be concluded that the results in Dąbrowa Górnicza and other cities being analysed were significantly influenced by votes of younger inhabitants who were assumingly more skilled and eager to use new technologies, while less skilled in participation. Though the age limit is not an obstacle, being active in participation is easier, when local contexts are characterized by behaviour patterns favourable for stimulation, participation and dialogue. In turn, within another potential, though less falsifiable interpretation, it can be assumed this result may mean that the local form of deliberation is participated by smaller population that it could seem, only by social activists and representatives of non-governmental organizations who can capitalize on this local *politics* participation, for example by running for elections. In such situation it could hamper further evolution toward the model of the so called community development in participatory budgeting in Dąbrowa Górnicza (see Table 2. Participatory models in budgeting involving citizens).

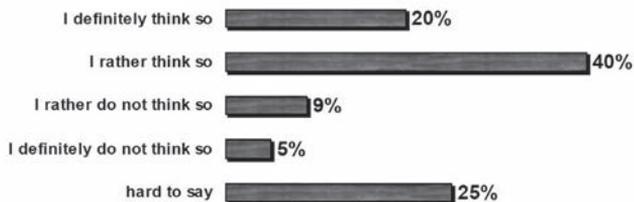
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**Chart 5. How do you evaluate the process of public consultations regarding CB in your city (open discussion, working meetings and dialogue between authorities and inhabitants)?**



The concerns regarding possibly misleading results, partially conditioned by the adopted method and unavailability of a larger sample, as mentioned above, seem to be proven by the fact that 60% of the respondents stated the city authorities considered the opinions of inhabitants, when making decisions on the CB (20% I definitely think so and 40% I rather think so). Only 11% of the respondents declared their opinions were not binding for the city authorities. Also, one fourth of the surveyed people could not answer the question and selected the “hard to say” answer.

**Chart 6. In general, do you think the opinions of the inhabitants of your city are taken into consideration by the city authorities during the decision-making process regarding CB?**



## Civic budgeting in Gorzów Wielkopolski – desk research and survey results

### 1. Profile of civic budgeting in Gorzów Wielkopolski in view of desk research

In Gorzów Wielkopolski profiling and ‘calibration’ of civic budgeting is a continuous process and more dynamic when compared to other cities, mostly because of presence of proactive and innovative activities besides reactions to changing surroundings (including legal framework). The civic budget was implemented in the city in 2012 (the first edition was introduced in 2013) and in 2020 the eighth edition was held.

When compared to other local governments, the Gorzów budget was characterized by the will to initiate diversified form of participations, that may constitute a prove of gradually achieved maturity by the local community, leaders and public officials for more advanced forms of communications and development of solutions In Gorzów public consultations and informative, discussion and evaluation meetings were organised, as well meeting with secondary school students. The voting results were announced in the city park and at the events attended by authors of winning projects, media, local authorities and inhabitants. Workshops and the application writing marathon were also organised.

This case is also distinguished by the fact that implementation of the amendments to the act (related to the voting obligation and exclusion of deliberative opinion making which elements were present in Gorzów) resulted in the interesting, pro-deliberative solution. Considering the amended act on the local self-government and the introduced obligation of formal voting, it was not possible anymore to unanimously decide which tasks were to implemented during regional meetings with inhabitants. As a result, the so called “project networking” was introduced. Its certain elements were merged within task packages, allowing to agree on

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a single merged project and put it to voting. Facing lack of ancillary units in the city and in order to maintain the existing proven (according to officials) division of the city into the districts and assigned assets, they were transformed in task categories with specified maximum task values in each category, as specified in the act. The task staging level at the discussion meetings was also abolished.

#### Assets assigned to CB

During desk research we were provided by the City Hall with detailed information, including on CB amounts. In 2013 it was 1 mln PLN, i.e. ca. 0.23% of the city budget expenditures for that year; CB 2014 – 2 mln (0.42%); CB 2015 – 2 mln (0.39%); CB 2016 – 2 mln (0.37%); CB 2017 – 4.08 mln (0.6%); CB 2018 – 5.73 mln (0.66%); CB 2019 – 6.18 mln (0.64%); CB 2020 – 6,388,139 PLN (0.57%).

#### Officials attending to CB

Various organisational units were established and transformed, including teams and committees with averagely 20 person directly involved in civic budget issues in the City Hall. This number is approximate, because many officials, though not directly involved, still conduct indirect, but significant or even crucial tasks regarding CB, as they play evaluation and recommendation roles, as in budgetary, finance, local development or economy committees. Representatives of most City Hall organisational units were incorporated into civic budgeting supporting activities. Among the leading organisational entities at the City Hall there was the Development Team led by the Deputy Mayor. Within scope of its duties there were planning and coordination of processes related to CB and in cooperation with other entities, including the Public Consultation and Revitalisation Office subject to the Deputy Mayor responsible for development.

## Local formal regulations

During the first edition of the civic budget 2013 persons listed in the local electoral register could vote (in December 2012) in the traditional or electronic way. The survey used for the voting was not anonymous and included detailed personal data and three marked options of certain projects. Also, it is not sure on the basis of what, formal or informal, decision the voting was held. We did not manage to verify it because of lack of information. We can only conclude that both variants are defective, though the margin of error is different. In case of such *de iure* decisions their significant formal defect is distortion in the form of lack of anonymity during voting. This defect is also attributable to informal decisions for which the error would be even greater and it would be an example of discretionary voting on public matters. It should be assumed that in this case we witnessed some decision-related false start that could have resulted from advantage of enthusiasm over the organisational units that should be treated as a virtue regarding that period, though under some control resulting from lack of said anonymity, that would have been seen as a specific accident at work performed in good will and, possibly in hurry, associated with the dominant binding patterns of behaviour.

Procedures during subsequent decisions were specified in City Hall resolutions on rules and modes of consulting issues related to submitted projects. Informative materials were designed, including the CB glossary and reports on concurrent public consultations and civic budgeting evaluations. Official supporting units were established, for example the consultation team verifying formal accuracy of applications. In next annual resolutions voting among verified submitted applications was kept, while the number of needed signatures for a motion was modified (20). The amounts of assets available for CB and other matters were specified, referring to coordination of motions and own tasks of the city, as well as conditions related to localisation and functionality of projects being implemented.

Until 2015 the CB voting had been conducted in compliance with division into constituencies, when extensive changes were passed in the

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local resolution. We describe them below, wishing to provide details on the proactive process of formal regulation customisation in this city. It does not differ from other cities, but its course deserves some distinction.

The adoption of the aforesaid resolution of the City Council in 2015 was preceded by the discussion on new solutions, with purpose to develop the civic budget regulations. It was attended by non-governmental organisation activists, representatives of councillor clubs and self-government public officials. From the interviews it can be concluded ca. 40 persons participated in the works to develop the CB regulations. As a result, the city was divided into regions that replaced previously used constituencies. The new more functional division was developed on the basis of urban units (regions) preserved in consciousness of inhabitants constituting territorial points of reference for local identities. The city did not introduce the formal division into ancillary units, however in the editions from 2016 to 2020 projects could be implemented within a regional, city-wide or educational category with respective assignment of assets. This solution is worth attention also in context of results of other analyses indicating the issue of arrangement of motions prepared in various institutional perspectives signed by different authors and supported by specific stakeholders<sup>10</sup>.

The premises and the mode of development of the three CB categories (city-wide, regional and educational) can be briefed in statements taken from the interview conducted in Gorzów Wielkopolski:

- *At the beginnings of CB in Gorzów our city was divided into 5 regions and this division aligned with general constituencies. It was the easiest... a bit intuitive division. During this first period there were no distinct categories. However, it did not take long to realise it did not work well..., because some projects were regional and some were general, city-wide initiatives and it was difficult to assign them to any specific region. Secondly, virtually more than 90% of CB assets were*

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<sup>10</sup> Cf.: B. Martela, *Czy instytucje przejęły budżet obywatelski? Wpływ grup interesu na wyniki głosowania w 2020 r.* [Have Institutions Seized the Civic Budget? Influence of Groups of Interests on the Voting Results in 2020], "Urban Development Issues" 2021, no. 71, <https://doi.org/10.51733/udi.2021.71.04>

*seized by schools... it should be hereby underlined their needs were great, though it looked like they kind of intercepted this CB process and you could see discouragement among the inhabitants to the CB idea itself, because schools were winning these projects without any effort. Also, the previous division into 5 regions was not aligned with the map of our local communities... with some historical conditions and local traditions. And something needed to be done, currently we have 10 regional categories, we have the city-wide category and we have the educational category (the representative of the executive authorities);*

- *Such a division into these 3 categories is just an effect of consultations... an effect of meetings with the inhabitants. It was simply requested by them..., (...) in the city-wide budget category we have the division into hard and soft projects, because inhabitants decided so. It was not like this division of the budget was enforced by local authorities, definitely not! It was the decision of the participants of consultations. I think this division into these 3 budget categories works well for us and I encourage other local self-governments to use our solution... to present such an idea to their inhabitants for discussion (the representative of the legislative authorities);*
- *In 2016 regional meetings with the inhabitants started, because we concluded we could abolish the referendum form... the voting; when we talk about public funds, you should first think about priorities... When it comes to voting, we mostly have the issue of mobilisation and here schools provided great possibilities for such mobilisation. Also then it did not mean at all that the winning project would result from greater needs. And we noticed that this practice started to discourage the inhabitants to file motions and later during voting... because they could not see agency here... they did not see any sense in submitting their most urgent needs anymore, as it is always the schoolyard that will win (the official responsible for CB);*
- *Usually, the school investment projects used the all CB assets – there were no money for anything else. (...) some said it would be good to*

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

*do something about that... to change something. It was the reason to distinguish these 3 categories... so some money were assigned for residential areas, it is a regional category and there, in some regions, inhabitants discuss and agree on these projects; some money is spent on city-wide projects and the rest on education (the author of one of the implemented projects);*

- *Activity among inhabitants is definitely greater in regions... because people mostly want to change their nearest surroundings. So, most of the projects are submitted in this category... quite many people participate in CB meetings (the author of one of the rejected projects).*

During consultations it was decided that “hard” task in an investment task requiring renovation, modernisation or adaptation works, erection of new facilities or purchase of equipment. “Soft” task was specified as a non-investment project – pro-social, cultural, educational or sport event or activity (excluding those resulting from current administrative operations of entities). It was decided that effects of soft task implementation was supposed to be generally available for inhabitants and in case of hard task, performed at an area governed by city institutions/offices, effects of its implementation should be made available beyond the hours of realisation of tasks formally assigned to an institution/office at which area a certain hard task was realised within CB. In the resolution adopted in 2015 (and having been implemented and modified from 2016) it was decided that tasks funded from the civic budget could have the city-wide, regional or educational character.

A city-wide task was defined as referring to inhabitants of more than one regions or with location not assigned to one region. A regional task was defined as referring mostly to needs of inhabitants of a single region (among eight). An educational task was indicated as referring to needs of individuals acting in the city area. The decision issued by the Mayor specified borders and names of the regions. The total amount of the assets assigned for realisation of tasks was divided as follows: 20% for city-wide tasks, 60% for tasks in regions and 20% for educational tasks. The city-wide and educational task categories were not subject to regionalisation. Within the

amount for the city-wide tasks 10% were assigned for soft projects. In case of no submitted motions in the city-wide category the assets assigned for this purpose were transferred to the regional category. The amount assigned for the tasks in regions was divided into 8 equal parts. The maximum unit value for a submitted task was 10% of the amount assigned for the city-wide category in case of soft city-wide tasks and 90% of the said amount in case of hard city-wide tasks, while in case of regional tasks the same aforesaid percentage ratios referred to the amount assigned for a single region.

It was decided that tasks are submitted in two modes: during discussion meetings or in an individually submitted form, including the support list. Discussion meetings of inhabitants regarding regional or city development priorities were supposed to draw attention to needs related to their sustainable development and to explain how CB was to be implemented. The public debate on public needs and how to meet them gave a chance to share opinions, identify particular and common interests and search for middle ground, resulting in the list of the tasks preferred for realisation. The purpose of that stage was also to inform on methods of implementation of tasks significant for inhabitants, other than CB. There were meetings held in the regions, separately dedicated to the city-wide and educational categories at which lists of priority tasks were formed.

In Gorzów Wielkopolski the civic budgeting procedures were regularly supplemented by diversified communication actions (including open meetings, discussions, printed texts, Internet publications and cooperation with media and non-governmental organisations). The process of civic budget implementation is subject to monitoring and annual evaluation using the survey co-prepared by the community representation.

The idea to proactively create this process, implemented for the first time in the civic budget in 2016, turned out to be relatively durable, so it lasted until the 2018 edition. The subsequent editions were adjusted to the frameworks specified in the aforesaid mentioned amendments of the acts on local governments.

The city procedure, adjusted to the amended act on the municipal self-government, was passed in the resolution no. III/33/2018 of the City

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Council of December 19, 2018 on the civic budget project requirements and rules and mode of conducting public consultations regarding the City civic budget. It was decided that the financial assets for the own city budget depend actual revenues (as per the last submitted report on the City budget implementation). As already specified in the act, it was underlined that these assets could not be less than 0.5 % of the budget report expenses. 0.196% of the assets were assigned as a reserve for CB, with purpose to cover differences between the assets specified in the budget resolution and the amount of the assets offered in public procurement procedures, while 0.004% were assigned for informative activities. It was decided that from the civic budget assets only the projects within city's own hard and soft tasks could be funded. A hard task is defined as investment, renovation, modernisation, adaptation, construction of new facility or purchase of equipment, while a soft task as non-investment task or pro-social, cultural, educational or sport event, excluding current administrative activities of entities, performed in Gorzów Wielkopolski. According to the new regulations, within each category at least one moderated discussion meeting is to be held, being the opportunity to present positively assessed task projects, debate on city development priorities in certain categories and for networking, i.e. to merge tasks from certain projects. Networking-related decisions are worked out during open discussion meetings. It is allowed to merge two or task projects into a single one:

- in the regional category (10 regions): hard or soft projects, if the value of all merged task projects does not exceed the maximum unit value for a hard task within a given category;
- in the educational category: hard or soft projects as specified above;
- in the city-wide category: soft task projects under the aforesaid condition and hard projects, if the value of all merged hard task projects does not exceed the maximum unit value for a hard task within category.

After discussion meetings the City Mayor organises voting among the inhabitants, using the paper or electronic form by: (1) casting one vote selecting from the common ballot paper for the regional category; (2) casting one vote selecting from the educational category ballot paper;

(3) casting two votes selecting from the city-wide ballot paper, i.e. one vote for a hard task project and one vote for a soft task project or a selected hard or soft task project.

The City Mayor determines the voting results and draws up the protocol. The task projects to be implemented are ranked on the list on the basis of a sum of votes cast in certain categories. If there are still unassigned assets, they are assigned to the task projects with the highest numbers of votes among all voted task projects, regardless of category and their character, excluding the educational category. If two or more voted task projects receive the same number of votes, they are ranked on the basis of public drawing of lots.

### Good practices

The discussion meetings of inhabitants on regional and city development priorities were supposed to draw attention to the needs related to sustainable development and explanation of the civic budget implementation rules on the ongoing basis. They created convenient conditions for public dialogue about social needs and how to meet them and gave the opportunity to know arguments of various groups, develop individual attitudes and common conclusions and perceive conditions for particular and common interests.

The authorities assumed that the meetings were supposed to be the platform for discussion, presentation of arguments, persuasion and search for middle ground with purpose to work out the list of the priority and preferred tasks. During the meetings the participants were also informed on different methods of implementation of task crucial for inhabitants, other than civic budget. In order to perform the discussion, at least one moderated meeting was held in each region, as well as at least one moderated meeting focusing on the city-wide and educational categories.

During open regional and city-wide open meetings the lists of priority tasks were prepared. In case of the educational category the tasks to be implemented were submitted only during the discussion meetings

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followed by preparation of the priority list from which the participants recommended tasks to be implemented by the City Mayor. For the regional and city-wide categories during the discussion meeting the special list of priority projects was prepared and tasks were selected among the previously submitted tasks. Within one region 5 tasks could be recommended which were subsequently verified. In the city-wide category no more than three positively verified tasks could be recommended.

Considering the amendments to the act on municipal self-government and the introduced obligation of formal voting, it was not possible anymore to unanimously select tasks to be implemented during the regional meetings with inhabitants. As a result, already aforesaid project networking was introduced, i.e. merging of projects that facilitates agreeing and voting on a common project. As there were no ancillary units in the city and in order to maintain division of the city into the regions and the asset amounts assigned to them, original regional assets were transformed into the task categories with specified maximum values, as defined in the act. In other words, the regional assets were *de facto* maintained, while they were simply renamed. Locally developed practices of proximity democracy convince us that Gorzów Wielkopolski is on the good path to develop its own local version of implementation of community development within participatory processes (see Table 2. Participatory models in budgeting involving citizens).

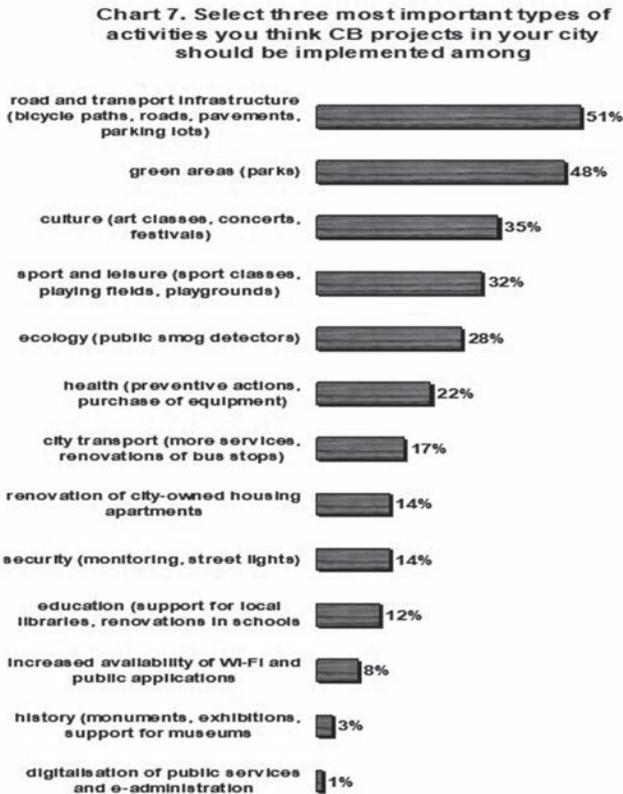
#### **2. Civic budgeting in Gorzów Wielkopolski – selected results of the survey conducted among the inhabitants**

Just as in case of other cities we describe in this book, in this part we focused on the questions we found the most important.

When asked what types of projects are most often realised within CB (question 4), 51% of the respondents answered the CB funds should be spent for hard/investment-type projects related to road and transport infrastructure (bicycle paths, roads, pavements, parking lots), 48% mentioned green areas (parks) and 35% selected realisation of soft, non-investment cultural

## Civic budgeting in Gorzów Wielkopolski – desk research and survey results

projects (art classes, concerts, festivals). 32% of respondents chose sport and leisure, while only slightly less people (28%) selected environmental protection projects (e.g. public smog detectors). Other types of answers were presented below.



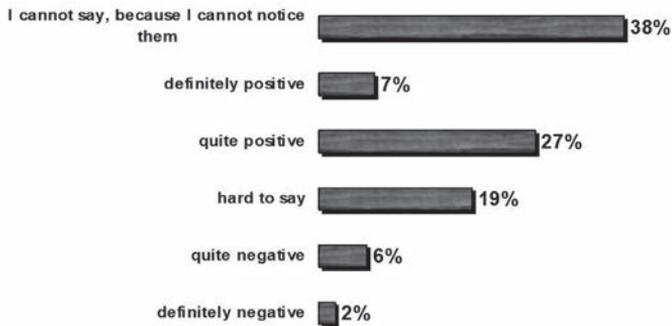
Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

The information actions regarding CB, conducted by the city authorities, were positively assessed by 34% of respondents (27% quite positively and 7% definitely positively). The negative score was given by 8% of people (2% definitely negatively and 6% quite negatively). 38% of subjects could not

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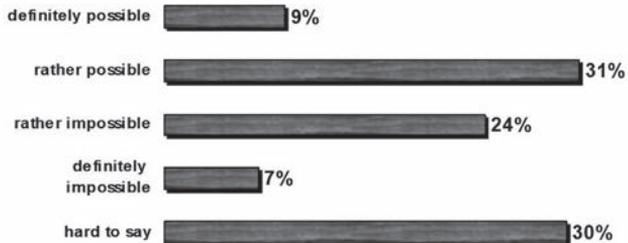
assess the information actions performed by the city, as they could hardly notice them. 19% of respondents selected the answer “hard to say”.

**Chart 8. What is your opinion about the information actions regarding CB, conducted by the city authorities?**



When it comes to the question about possible influence of public officials on project selection, 30% of respondents selected the answer “hard to say”, while 39% stated it was possible the city authorities interfered in the CB results (31% rather possible, 9 % definitely possible) and 31% of subjects selected the negative opinion on this matter (24% rather impossible and 7% definitely impossible).

**Chart 9. Do you think it is possible the city authorities could interfere with the CB results?**



## Civic budgeting in Gorzów Wielkopolski – desk research and survey results

The projects realised with CB meet the needs of various social groups, though obviously in different ways. Half of the respondents thought the group gaining the largest profit from CB projects was youth, while 47% decided it was inhabitants of districts (regions). 32% of respondents declared all city inhabitants gained profit from CB projects, while 30% thought it was seniors. The significantly numerous group of respondents stated the city authorities were gaining profits from civic budgets they organised (19%).

**Chart 10. Which social groups gain the largest profit from CB in your opinion?**



Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

Participation in a 'well arranged' civic budget requires public involvement. Activity of inhabitants varies depending on the level of impact of several general local factors. Then, what were the factors influencing the level of active involvement of the respondents during the latest CB edition in Gorzów Wielkopolski? On the basis of the data we gathered we can say these were interest raised by certain projects and their significance (64% of respondents) and the relatively convenient form of voting (62%). Slightly less subjects stated they were skills and involvement of project authors (48%), availability of information on the projects (45% which may be curious when compared to declared interesting content of projects and assessment of their importance) and the level of own knowledge of the respondents (41%).

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It is worth considering the fact the significant number of the respondents selected the “hard to say” answer for the question about their participation in the latest CB edition. It is impossible to conclude whether these persons were unable to indicate the factors determining their activity regarding CB or whether they simply did not vote. Some little number of subjects indicated the factors that could have discouraged to vote the CB projects; the most popular answer among them was limitation of own knowledge of respondents (7%).

Table 4. Specify to what extent certain factors had influence on general participation of the city inhabitants in the latest CB edition?

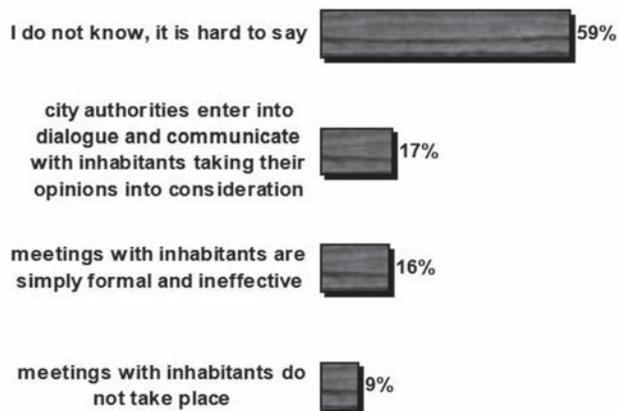
		Encouraging	Quite encouraging	Hard to say	Quite discouraging	Discouraging
1)	Availability of information	15%	34%	44%	4%	2%
2)	Convenient form of voting	27%	35%	34%	2%	2%
3)	Interesting and important projects	32%	32%	31%	3%	2%
4)	Skills and involvement of officials/ councillors	15%	22%	56%	6%	1%
5)	Skills and involvement of project authors	14%	34%	48%	3%	1%
6)	Level of own knowledge	17%	24%	45%	7%	7%

Note: *the percentages could not add up to 100 due to the possibility of multiple choice.*

When it comes to the question about the assessment of the process of public consultations (open discussions, working meetings and dialogue between authorities and inhabitants) conducted within CB by the city authorities, as much as 59% of respondents selected the “hard to say” answer,

while 9% of them stated the meetings with inhabitants would not take place. 16% of respondents found the meetings simply formal and completely ineffective. It means that 84% of respondents did not assess the public consultation process at all or gave it the negative score. Only 17% of respondents thought the city authorities entered into dialogue and communicated with the inhabitants taking their opinions into consideration. This is quite a contradiction to the content of the official documentation, publicly announced information and statements given in the survey. This discrepancy is relatively easy to explain, as in Gorzów, like in other cities being analysed, the CB development process is actively attended by just few dozens of people, mostly leaders and officials representing non-governmental organisations and, rarely, individual “non-professional” activists and common inhabitants involving only in certain cases. Inhabitants become involved in a more passive way, usually during events/meetings organised by the city authorities. They sometimes become really interested in certain matters, but also with significant skepticism and lacking deep reflection about them.

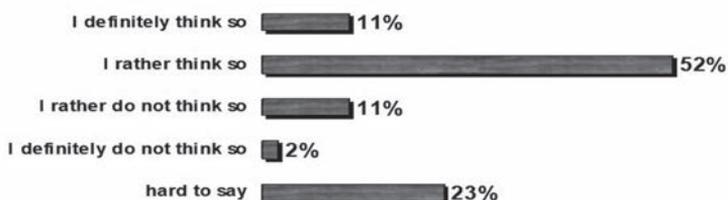
**Chart 11. How do you evaluate the process of public consultations regarding CB in your city (open discussion, working meetings and dialogue between authorities and inhabitants)?**



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Most of the respondents (63%) claimed the opinions of inhabitants were important and considered during the decision-making process (52% I rather think so, 11% I definitely think so). 13% of the subjects thought these opinions are not important for the city authorities (11% I rather do not think so, 2 % I definitely do not think so). Also, 23% of them selected the “hard to say” answer.

**Chart 12. In general, do you think the opinions of the inhabitants of your city are taken into consideration by the city authorities during the decision-making process regarding CB?**



Gorzów Wielkopolski is not the only city where comparison of desk research information with this collected during the survey gives a curious effect. Though the conducted survey is not representative and should be treated only as a auxiliary (sampling) tool, the discrepancies between its survey results and content of public documents and the statements of public officials and project authors rise some awareness. These discrepancies are typical not only because of its general occurrence in all analysed cities, they do also occur in many other types of research. As a result, when searching for its reasons, we can relatively safely refer to the sociological vacuum thesis in its classic Polish version, variants and levels of “social inertness”<sup>11</sup>, somehow connected to the

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<sup>11</sup> See: S. Nowak, *System wartości społeczeństwa polskiego* [The System of Values in the Polish Society], “Studia Socjologiczne” 1979, no. 4(75); M. Nowak, M. Nowosielski, *Od „próżni socjologicznej” do „społecznego bezruchu.” Uwarunkowania ewolucji społeczeństwa obywatelskiego w Polsce lat 80. i 90. XX wieku* [From “Sociological Vacuum” to “Social Inertness”. The Conditions of Evolution of the Civic Society in Poland in the 1980s and 1990s], [in:] K. Bondyra, M.S. Szczepański, P. Śliwa (eds.),

term of *top heavy society*<sup>12</sup>, i.e. a society in which dissonance between elite and common members is large. This inertness has different intensity and is not permanent. Sometimes, local communities ‘come back to life’, even for quite permanently, and we can see it in examples rooted in consensually established political and administrative cultures. However, they sometimes return to hibernation, sometimes even stronger and more permanent, as it is deepened by experience of unsuccessful participation. In this context Gorzów Wielkopolski seems to be waking from hibernation and we need to wait to find out whether this process will be permanent.

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*Państwo, samorząd i społeczności lokalne: Piotr Buczkowski in memoriam* [State, Self-government and Local Communities: Piotr Buczkowski in memoriam], WSB, Poznań 2005.

<sup>12</sup> See: M. Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations. Economic Growth, Stagflation and Social Rigidities*, Yale University Press, New Heaven 1982.

## Civic budgeting in Hrubieszów – desk research and survey results

### 1. Profile of civic budgeting in Hrubieszów in view of desk research

The civic budget was introduced in Hrubieszów in 2017 upon the decision of its mayor from 2016. In 2021 the fourth edition was held. For the years the CB procedure has been changed only slightly and it has smoothly evolved and adjusted the budgeting process to emerging problems and challenges. In 2019 the project was cancelled because of formal reasons, as after amendments of the act the new resolution of the city authorities was needed. As one of our interviewees said, *in the same year we organized the entire CB procedure and then we were implementing projects from September to the end of December, selected during voting, so the entire budget was proceeded within one year. However, as a result of consultations and other factors, we concluded it needed to be changed... that it was not a good solution... and then in a single year we went through only one procedure, while projects were implemented in the next year* (the representative of the executive authorities).

The amendments made the changes necessary and they were introduced, adjusting CB in Hrubieszów to statutory requirements, while the procedure was also slightly corrected. They did not significantly impact the character of civic budgeting in Hrubieszów, however establishment of the Civic Budgeting Team, consisting of representatives of the City Hall and the local community representation and replacing the Coordinating Team, should be assessed as potentially negative for the deliberative aspect of CB, not in context of project selection itself, but in terms of its co-development and co-evaluation by inhabitants. However, our interviewees did not identify this process as problematic and cooperation with the City Hall was praised. In terms of public participation, Hrubieszów is the distinctive city when compared to other similar cities and genuine

consultations and discussions with inhabitants are organised very often by means of various channels and on different levels.

Since its very beginning the civic budget has been implemented without division into ancillary units within the single city-wide variant, also projects are not divided in terms of their topics.

### Assets assigned to CB

Since the beginning of CB in Hrubieszów, the amount assigned to projects is 100,000 PLN constituting ca. 0.1% - 0.15% of the entire municipal budget, depending on a year.

### Officials attending to CB

Until 2019 planning and organization of CB was a duty of the Department of Organizational and Social Matters at the City Hall, cooperating with the City Council and heads of certain City Hall departments. In August 2019 the City Hall structure was re-organised and resulting responsibility for CB was transferred to the person hired as an independent junior inspector for social matters. Also, the Coordinating Team and, since 2020, the Civic Budget Team have been involved in the CB works. Initially, the latter consisted of both representatives of the City Hall and the community representation, however since 2020 it has been only City Hall's representatives.

### Local legal basis

The first edition of civic budget (2017) in Hrubieszów was conducted on the basis of *decision no. 332/2016 of the Mayor of Hrubieszów of November 18, 2016 on conducting of public consultations regarding the draft of the Civic Budget for the City of Hrubieszów for the year 2017*. It was decided that

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

consultations would cover the area of the entire city of Hrubieszów who turn 13 on the day of the voting at the latest. The subject of the consultations was supposed to be the proposals of tasks submitted by the inhabitants, formally and substantially verified by organizational units of the City Hall in Hrubieszów and the Coordinating Team established on the basis of the Mayor's decision. Participants of these consultations filled in the task submitting form (first stage) or the ballot paper (second stage). According to the decision, the organizational and technical issues regarding such defined consultations were handled by the Department of Organizational and Social Issues at the City Hall in Hrubieszów. Also, it was determined that the persons responsible for implementation of the civic budget procedure would be the Deputy Mayor of the City of Hrubieszów, City Treasurer, Head of the Department of Promotion and Economic Development and Head of the Department of Organizational and Social Issues. The heads and experts working at self-contained positions at the City Hall were obliged to strictly cooperate with the employees implementing the civic budget regarding implementation of a given decision.

Initially, tasks could be submitted by groups of at least 50 city inhabitants, who turned 13 on the day of the voting at the latest, by sending the completed form prepared by the city authorities. Tasks submitted via properly completed forms were then legally or substantially verified. Since the second edition their cost was not supposed to exceed 23% of the amount assigned to CB for a given year. The tasks were analysed in terms of conformity with the valid City Development Strategy, objective possibility of implementation, including considering financial capabilities for a given budgetary year, estimated costs and possibility to include costs related to task implementation in subsequent city budgets. Respective organisational units of the city hall evaluated tasks submitted by inhabitants and gave opinions to the Team that drafted the final list selected for voting and the list of rejected proposals. Only those tasks were voted, which had been positively evaluated by a respective City Hall organizational unit. The Coordinating Team was supposed to consist of the representative of the City Mayor, 4 members of the Economical Council of the City of Hrubieszów

and 2 members of the Council for Public Benefit and Senior Issues and to give advice and opinions. Apart from coordination of the CB process on both stages, its task was to draft the report on civic budget implementation, that described the performed tasks, informed on the most important decision made by the Team and contained conclusions and comments of the Team members, that could be used during subsequent civic budget editions.

As a result of formal reasons, the third edition was held only in 2019. Its legal basis was *resolution no. VII/57/2019 of the City Council in Hrubieszów of April 26, 2019 on the requirements to be met by the project of the civic budget in the Municipality of Hrubieszów*. The resolution adjusted CB in Hrubieszów to the statutory requirements, as previously the civic budget had been implemented on the basis of Mayor's decision. Also, before the amendment the age limit allowing to submit tasks and vote was 13 years old, while in the new resolution the limit was abolished at all. In the next edition the limit age was restored (16 years old), as a result of the significant majority of projects submitted by schools: *age of voters raised some controversies, because primary school pupils could vote, too. So if a school project was submitted, you could be sure it would win..., other projects did not stand any real chance. So through this decision we wanted to make opportunities a bit more equal* (the official responsible for CB).

Also, the number of people signed for a task to be submitted changed from 50 (task was submitted by a representative of such a group) to just one who had to prove at least 15 persons supported a task. Another change referred to possible verification of persons submitting and supporting tasks. Before the amendment it was necessary to verify that type on the basis of provided domicile and PESEL number, while after the amendment verification is made solely on the basis of a statement provided by the supporting person. In one of the conducted interviews we heard the suggestion that *it [providing the PESEL number – author's note] is such a sensitive matter, because people fear it could be used against them* (the author of the winning project), which is another example proving that the changes introduced in CB in Hrubieszów are based on interaction and listening to the inhabitants involved in the process.

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The resolution was supposed to be executed by City's Mayor. The submitted task projects were evaluated in the following order: in terms of meeting formal requirements, concordance with law, technical feasibility, proper estimation of implementation costs and calculation of annual maintenance costs. The evaluation was supposed to be performed by the Civic Budget Team established by the Mayor for this sole purpose. The team consisted of at least 7 persons, mostly officials from *each City Hall Departments, so all of them could have their say on substantive and formal issues regarding each motion* (the representative of the executive authorities). When compared to the previous solution, the resolution does not impose an obligation to involve the community representation into the Team works.

In 2020 the civic budget procedure was not executed and it was reinstated in 2021 on the similar basis as previously. Changes introduced in subsequent CB editions have been slight, though consequent and well thought, proving CB is slowly evolving in order to eliminate basic problems and formal errors and *to make it more transparent and clear for ordinary inhabitants* (the official responsible for CB). It is supposed to result in increased involvement in the application submitting process and to encourage people to participate in the voting.

#### Good practices

There is the online Public Participation Platform available for the city inhabitants, funded within the pilot program with purpose to work out city revitalisation models (the representative of the executive authorities) and since then it has been used as a permanent consultation and communication tool facilitating contact with public institutions for inhabitants and enabling handling their issues in a quicker way thanks to digitalization of some processes, i.e. conducting public consultations with inhabitants. It also makes it easier to select projects from annually held civic budgets. The Public Participation Platform is surely the main, though not the only

element of the entire dialogue structure in Hrubieszów. Pro-social attitude of the authorities is mostly expressed in their will to listen to inhabitants and accede to their requests. This attitude is clearly seen in the interviews we made not only from the representatives of the authorities and the City Hall, but also from the citizens involved in the motion submitting process. We did not encounter the attitude that could be shortened to “I know better and this whole participation is some unnecessary figment”, so often present among Polish politicians. In this favourable conditions the civic budget in Hrubieszów turns out to be the efficient “forge” of local leaders, allowing them to acquire skills, increase the range of their activities and to involve persons who were passive actors within the local community before.

Apart from the platform, we should distinguish the well functioning other city electronic communication channels playing role in informing on certain CB stages and popularisation of this idea among the inhabitants, namely social media, some popular website appreciated by them (this factor was highlighted by the author of one of rejected projects), local self-government bulletin and local press. Thanks to effective informative campaigns supported by visual materials, plenty of inhabitants have become interested in the budget, especially in voting. The turnout during CB voting in Hrubieszów reaches 20% and is significantly higher than average levels in Poland.

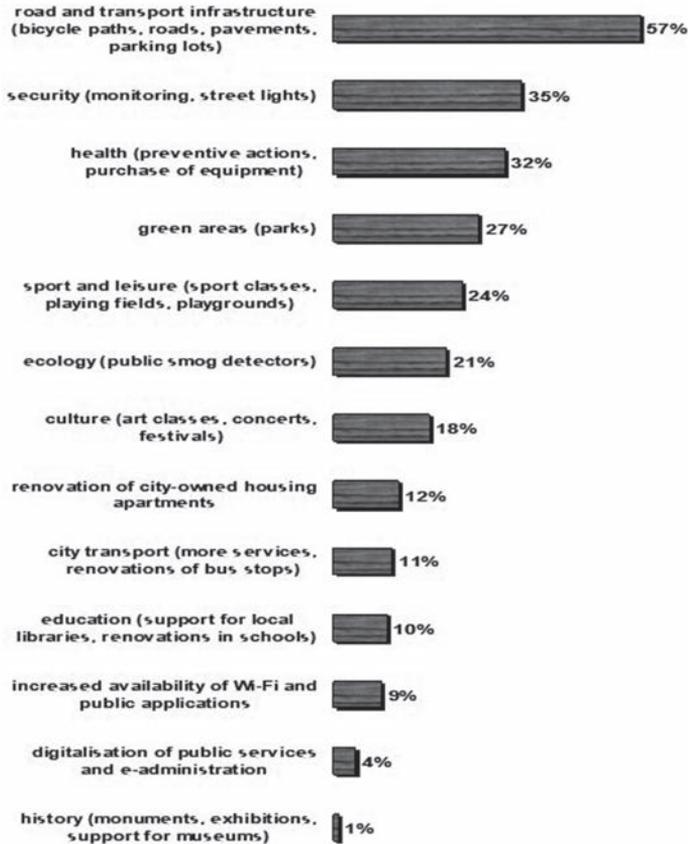
The good practice, unfortunately rejected, was the inclusion of community representation (Economic Council, Council for Public Profit and Senior Issues) into the team works, that not only did supervise the CB process, but it also drafted the report on CB and evaluated it. Also, the CB consultation process in Hrubieszów is of high quality, though no official CB meetings are being held. It rather takes the form on discussions, contacts with project authors and conducting local consultations at residential areas. These issues were identified by the representative of the executive authorities and the author of one of rejected projects we were talking to.

## 2. Civic budgeting in Hrubieszów – selected results of the survey conducted among the inhabitants

According to 57% of the inhabitants of Hrubieszów, the projects implemented within CB should refer to road and transport infrastructure (bicycle paths, roads, pavements, parking lots, etc.). 35% of respondents expect investments in security (e.g. monitoring, street lights), while 32% in health (preventive actions, purchase of medical equipment, etc). 27% of subjects think the CB projects should refer to green areas (e.g. parks), 24% indicated sport and leisure (sport classes, playing fields, playgrounds, etc.) and 21% mentioned ecology (e.g. public smog detectors). Only 18% of respondents selected cultural projects (art classes, concerts, festivals), 12% supported renovation of city-owned buildings, 11% of subjects mentioned city transport and only 10% selected educational initiatives. These results do not mirror the CB results in Hrubieszów, led by school infrastructure projects. It is the frequent feature of Polish civic budgets and the city authorities are aware of the problem and try to react via respective regulations.

## Civic budgeting in Hrubieszów – desk research and survey results

**Chart 13. Select three most important types of activities you think CB projects in your city should be implemented among**



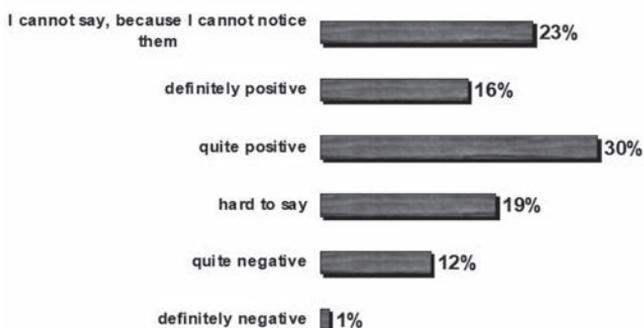
Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

30% of respondents evaluated CB information activities performed by city authorities definitely positively, while 16% selected the “quite positively” answer. It means that 46% of inhabitants participating in our survey are satisfied with the informative policy of the city authorities regarding CB.

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

13% of the inhabitants found it unsatisfactory, while 12% selected the “quite negative” answer, but only 1% found it definitely negative. In turn, 23% of respondents were unable to give specifics, choosing “I cannot say, because I cannot notice them” or “hard to say” (19%). It means that 42% of respondents did not evaluate city information activities regarding CB. The general assessment of these actions is positive, confirming our good opinion on how different communication channels are used by the Hrubieszów authorities.

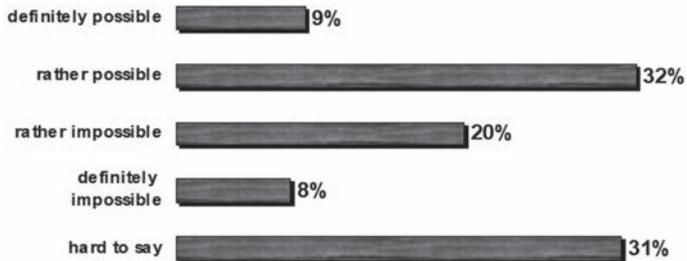
**Chart 14. What is your opinion about the information actions regarding CB, conducted by the city authorities?**



The analysis of respondent statements on whether the city authorities could manipulate the CB results was as follows: 41% of city inhabitants felt it would be possible (32% – rather possible and 9% definitely possible). 28% of subjects stated the authorities would not do that (20% – rather impossible and 8% – definitely impossible). In turn, 31% of respondents were unable to give a specific answer and selected “hard to say”. These results mirror the relatively frequent opinion in Poland that authorities and officials are unjust than the actual state. The only reference on politicisation of CB in Hrubieszów was the piece of information that *some councillor was intensely attempting to involve in the Civic Budget... and he was also the chairman of the local community administration... and he was promoting the certain project very much, to construct some public banks and tables*

*at his residential area* (the representative of the executive authorities). However, the CB regulations in Hrubieszów does not forbid councilors and officials to submit projects and especially in smaller towns councilors also acting as local community leaders should not surprise anyone. Finally, the activities of the city authorities could be trusted more, if the community representation is re-included into the CB works or if other transparency increasing mechanisms are introduced.

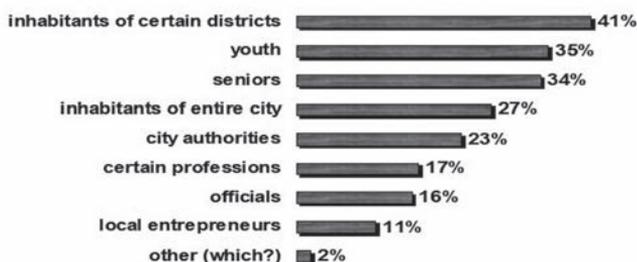
**Chart 15. Do you think it is possible the city authorities could interfere with the CB results?**



According to 41% of the respondents, CB projects bring the most benefits to inhabitants of certain city districts. Also, the survey participants identified the two following social groups gaining significant profit from CB projects, namely youth (35%) and seniors (34%). 27% of the respondents voted for all city inhabitants, while 23% thought these were the city authorities. The leader of one of the rejected projects said the following about the social influence of CB on local life in Hrubieszów: *I think we learned a lot about participation in public life thanks to the civic budget in Hrubieszów. I remember that when I came here I witnessed lack of faith among inhabitants they could make impact on anything... And it was quite a limitation* (the author of one of the rejected projects).

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**Chart 16. Which social groups gain the largest profit from CB in your opinion?**



Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

The above average turnout of the Hrubieszów inhabitants in the voting during the last CB edition resulted from various factors. From information we collected from our respondents it can be concluded the most encouraging factor (58%) was the convenient form of voting (30% quite encouraging, 28% encouraging). Also, information on projects, efficiently announced by the city authorities, was a crucial incentive. 53% of our respondents selected this option (30% quite encouraging, 23% encouraging). 47% of subjects though this factor was content of the projects and that it made them vote for the most interesting ones (24% quite encouraging, 23% encouraging). In turn, among the most discouraging factors the respondents listed skills and involvement of officials/councillors, however let us underline even in this category the positive opinions were more popular. Cooperation with the City Hall was also very well assessed in the interviews we conducted with the authors of one qualified and one rejected projects. Also, the analysis of answers provided by the respondents proved there was a quite numerous group of people who had problems with identification of factors activating them to participate in the last CB edition. They selected the “hard to say” answer.

## Civic budgeting in Hrubieszów – desk research and survey results

Table 5. Specify to what extent certain factors had influence on general participation of the city inhabitants in the latest CB edition?

		Encouraging	Quite encouraging	Hard to say	Quite discouraging	Discouraging
1)	Availability of information	23%	30%	36%	5%	5%
2)	Convenient form of voting	28%	30%	33%	5%	5%
3)	Interesting and important projects	23%	24%	41%	9%	4%
4)	Skills and involvement of officials/ councillors	16%	21%	41%	13%	9%
5)	Skills and involvement of project authors	19%	26%	43%	7%	5%
6)	Level of own knowledge	14%	30%	48%	5%	5%

Note: *the percentages could not add up to 100 due to the possibility of multiple choice.*

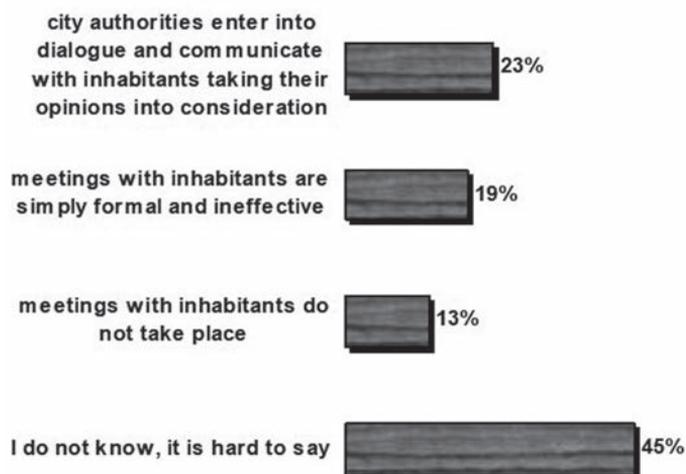
When it comes to CB, the public consultation process is an important element of this form of social dialogue. Only 23% of respondents admitted the city authorities entered into dialogue and communicated with the inhabitants, taking their opinions into consideration. Other respondents declared the meeting with inhabitants were only formal and nothing resulted from them (19%) or that did not take part at all (13%). These answers could be related to the fact that consultations dedicated to CB did not take place at all, however the issue was addressed during consultations held in residential areas twice a year, the fact paid attention to by the representative of the executive authorities, and all changes in regulations were consulted with the non-governmental organizations from Hrubieszów (the official responsible for CB).

Almost a half of respondents (45%) were not able to assess the city CB consultation process and selected the “hard to say” answer. Though we praise

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

Hrubieszów when compared to other Polish cities as a positive example of social involvement, let us not forget that in even most active cities significant numbers of inhabitants are simply passive, not interested in public life and they do not speak out. They do not vote, do not participate in the consultations and are not interested to improve their knowledge. Also in Hrubieszów the level of involvement is not unified and we witness significant differences in even adjacent residential areas: *there are residential areas where we have 70 people at the meetings, and there are these ones where only 8-10 people come in... and it is a very large area... in these areas where people encounter some problem, they want to build a pavement, road, parking or waterworks, they can stand together, come to the meetings, they try to self-organise, while at the residential areas where most needs are met, where there is well working infrastructure, there we witness apathy, passiveness and lack of interest and attention given to public matters* (the representative of the legislative authorities).

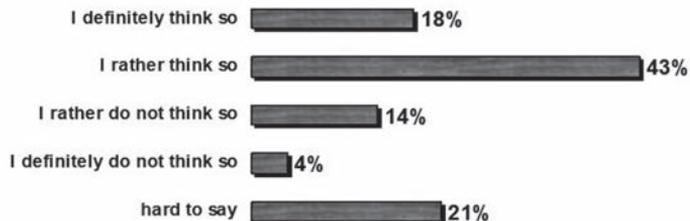
**Chart 17. How do you evaluate the process of public consultations regarding CB in your city (open discussion, working meetings and dialogue between authorities and inhabitants)?**



## Civic budgeting in Hrubieszów – desk research and survey results

The feeling the city authorities take opinions of the inhabitants into consideration could motivate them to participate in this type of public involvement. Do they think this is really the case when it comes to CB-related decisions? According to the chart below, 61% of respondents agreed with this statement (43% - I rather think so, 18% - I definitely think so), while 18% contradicted it and 21% of subjects were not able to assess the city authorities in this matter.

**Chart 18. In general, do you think the opinions of the inhabitants of your city are taken into consideration by the city authorities during the decision-making process regarding CB?**



## Civic budgeting in Kraków – desk research and survey results

### 1. Profile of civic budgeting in Kraków in view of desk research

Since the first edition of participatory budgeting held in 2014 (in 2020 the 8<sup>th</sup> edition was organised) the city has always been implementing this process diving projects into the city-wide and district categories, the latter ones overlapping the borders of ancillary units. In general, territorial divisions were used within which some certain topics occurred, for example urban green areas. We focused on Kraków a bit more than in case of other cities, as it is a metropolis with huge assets (including symbolic ones) and significant material, organisational and, most of all, social, economic and political capabilities. Cities with this level of potential determine development cycles, as well as opportunities and limitations regarding development of participatory solutions within public policies.

#### Assets assigned to CB

The value of assigned assets Kraków has been increasing moderately and before the amendment to the act they had been much smaller (before 2019). In the first edition in 2014 it was 4.5 mln PLN. Then these amounts were higher, though they still varied: 2015 – 14.045 mln PLN; 2016 – 10.855 mln PLN; 2017 – 12.145 mln PLN; 2018 – 12.455 mln PLN. In the following years, already on the basis of the parameter of CB minimal assets scale, specified in the act, it was 30 mln PLN in 2019 and 32 mln PLN in 2020.

## Officials attending to CB

According to information obtained in the City Hall, civic budgeting processes are the task to be performed by the Department of Social Policy and Health, precisely its Participation and Dialogue Team consisting of four persons. Depending on needs, also other content management units of the City Hall are involved in the motion verification process. As a result, it is difficult to give a specific number of employees involved in CB. Apart from institutional and organisational support, since the 2017 edition the idea of CB has been backed by the group of Civic Budget Ambassadors consisting of ca. 20 persons (city activists, district councillors and local animators often participating in the process since the first edition and their task was to support budget participation in the city. Currently, the process is supported by the Civic Budget Council consisting of 35 members (previously known as the Civic Budget Orientation Board). Though the CB Council does not consist solely from officials, it is still worth some explanation as the CB-related institution. The opinions on efficiency of this local institutions were different:

- *The Civic Budget Council evaluates projects that were initially given negative grades by the City Hall, however the Council evaluates all activities related to the entire CB process and is of great importance in this field. So, for example, these are the issues related to changes in the Regulations, preparation of certain documents, e.g. ballot papers (...) it monitors the course of certain CB stages. (...) Council members differ significantly... these are officials, city councillors, representatives of non-governmental organizations. So, this is a huge, sophisticated institution (the representative of the legislative authorities);*
- *Recently, the CB Council has changed its structure. Officials used to constitute approximately one third of members... then other Council members thought officials had too significant influence on Council operation. The result was quite ordinary, as officials were regularly attending the Council meetings, while other members were not so diligent, the discipline was not great among them. So, various*

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*decisions requiring the majority of votes to be passed, were not favourable for the community representation. As a result, officials were removed from the Civic Budget Council, nowadays there are district councilors or social activists and members of various associations (the representative of the executive authorities);*

- *The Civic Budget Council in Kraków has been conducting operations since the very beginning of CB, its roots can be traced back to establishment of the working team with purpose to develop the CB Regulations in 2013. The team, consisting of representatives of various institutions, communities, councillors, organisations, associations and activists, worked out the first CB regulations and it was naturally transformed in the Civic Budget Council, only the name was changed. Later its functions also did change slightly, because after preparation of the Regulations the Council has become a civic dialogue platform and an evaluation and advisory body for the Mayor of Kraków (the official responsible for CB);*
- *I find the activity of this Civic Budget Council quite negative. Frankly saying, its meetings are characterized by empty discussions and erroneous decisions that were not consulted before with inhabitants or are simply against their will. In my opinion, the Council should start to work diligently on real problems and to focus less on regulations, just to meet with people and listen to what they have to say. The Council consists of city activists and members of certain District Councils. The five-year term of the Council was divided into 2 parts: for two and half years it consisted of members from districts with even numbers, while currently these are representatives of the districts with odd numbers (the author of one of the projects to be implemented);*
- *It is hard for me to assess this Civic Budget Council, because I have never had contact with it. I spend a lot of time online, but I have never come across any effects of its works... I could not find any tiniest note in this Council. I know it does exist... that they do meet, because a friend of mine told me about this... but they seem to be less active.*

## Local formal regulations

The first activity within participatory budgeting in Kraków was the pilot program held in 2013, involving the Civic Laboratory association and the Foundation of Social Initiatives as a part of which participatory budgeting was initiated in three Kraków districts. The regulations of budgeting with participation of the inhabitants were passed in Kraków as City Hall resolutions from 2014 (1<sup>st</sup> edition) to 2020 which is the last year of the period we analysed. The local regulations were worked out on the ongoing basis and using available conceptual, formal or actual participatory capabilities. In February 2014 the Civic Budget Team finished the preliminary works on implementation of the participatory budget in Kraków, acting in the name of the City Council and consisting of city councillors, representatives of city organizational units, non-governmental organizations and City Hall employees. Upon the respective decision the CB Orientation Board was established, while subsequent activities were continued in the similar manner with purpose to reconstruct certain budgeting elements in the form of ordinances or administrative decisions with involvement of the community representation of various intensity.

In March 2014 the Mayor established the Civic Budget Team for the City of Kraków which main purpose was to coordinate cooperation between City Hall organisational units, city organisational units and ancillary units regarding implementation of the resolution of the City Council no. XCVII/1465/14 RM of February 20, 2014 *on the civic budget of the City of Kraków, implementation of the work schedule on the said budget and coordination of popularisation, education and information activities regarding the said budget*. The regulations of subsequent editions are available in the electronic form. In the Public Information Bulletin there are plenty of documents of various types, including formal regulations, minutes from Civic Budget Council meetings, evaluation reports and consultations conducted in relation with the CB regulations, results of formal motion verification, project lists, voting centres,

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

information on how to submit complaints/appeals and results of votes and appeals<sup>13</sup>.

Adjustments and corrections in the local law, introduced as a result of the statutory CB regulation (decision of the City Council no. XI/179/19 *on the regulations of the civic budget in the City of Kraków*), referred to the issues similar to those being adjusted in other analysed cities, including in terms of abolition of age limit for persons participating in the civic budget process, increasing amounts for implementation of district and city-wide projects and the need to consider universal designing rules to be considered by project authors, as well as the obligation to implement projects within a single budget year.

One of local features of civic budgeting in Kraków is the fact that collected information convinces formalities are given sufficient attention and the authorities are ready to correct it in context of institutional general characteristics of democracy and the condition of local practices. One of its examples is the adjustment (in 2018) of the already outdated CB regulations within which comprehensive and limited consultations were distinguished<sup>14</sup>. The City Hall in Kraków publishes the detailed catalogue of regulations in the Public Information Bulletin and on the CB-dedicated websites, including the resolutions of the City Council together with documentation drafted during works, implementation evaluations and documents introducing amendments, as well as Mayor's decisions, minutes from important meetings, implementation reports, evaluation results, etc. As mentioned above, these are numerous documents of various importance. They are generally significant and sometimes include extensive empirical information, though their volumes and forms are not encouraging for even more inquisitive inhabitants. Such situation is possible in Kraków, though its range is balanced with availability of more illegible Kraków for Citizens websites where CB and projects being

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<sup>13</sup> See: [https://www.bip.krakow.pl/?dok\\_id=73900](https://www.bip.krakow.pl/?dok_id=73900), access on: January 28, 2022.

<sup>14</sup> Cf.: P. Pistelok, B. Martela, *Partycypacja publiczna. Raport o stanie polskich miast* [Public Participation. The Report on Polish Cities], Instytut Rozwoju Miast i Regionów, Warszawa–Kraków 2019, p. 61.

implemented and already implemented are addressed to some significant extent. There it is also possible to find current legal frameworks, evaluation reports and actual news on CB, as well as information on projects, including maps indicating their locations. It is a distinctive and recommendable solution popularising effects in the form of implemented tasks and locating them by providing information useful for inhabitants profiled as recipients and users of implementations. In turn, in Poland above mentioned enormity of official information, including regulations and other types of documentations, is nothing unusual. A suggestion to introduce corrections in terms of actual availability of information could even raise objections and they would be understandable not only because of regulations on making public information available, but also as a result of efforts made. However, the most important factor seems to be qualitatively defined capabilities of ergonomic use of time spent by a sender, so a recipient is actually able to falsify content and to perform operationalisation of motions. Underlining of drawbacks is however not a purpose, especially that efforts are really visible and give good impression in terms of the most important, functional communication solutions. Indeed, enormity of information may be a bit overwhelming, especially on a bit outdated Public Information Bulletin websites, but, most of all, the significant number of regulations and documents is an effect of above average involvement in the lawmaking process of local authorities and the City Hall.

### Good practices

During the entire period of participatory budgeting in Kraków there have been several recommendable examples. There could be even more, if the procedures were not amended in the act, mentioned by one of the City Hall representatives: *surely, CB in Kraków needs to be changed (...) we should try to achieve the complete deliberative process allowing to talk to inhabitants, map their needs and problems, prioritise these needs, commonly address*

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

*these problems and, finally, select projects for implementation. I specifically underline this common selection, because I am fully aware not to mention the voting process, but to focus on continuation of the deliberative process, that would take the form of selection of these projects to be implemented with the inhabitants. This is the direction participatory budgets will be generally going towards, but the act completely changed the situation and halted our plans introducing some rigid regulations regarding the voting process.*

Within certain editions of CB various participatory solutions were used, including workshop city-wide and district meetings with inhabitants, project writing marathons and consultation centres organized around the open areas and certain malls. There is a well-operating civic budget helpline that was given good notes by the inhabitants:

- *It became a regular element of CB in 2018. And it is operating practically all year round... we have the dedicated e-mail address, phone number you can call at any time of the year, to find out or ask about things, to send some information on the Civic Budget, etc. So, at the CB implementation stages, during consultation meetings and submitting of applications and, finally, during voting we can use this well-organized helpline (the official responsible for CB);*
- *It is very helpful in these tiny issues... I prefer to call there than to search for things online by myself, to acquire proven information from very competent persons. I have always been provided with sufficient information (the author of the project to be implemented);*
- *Our applicants find the helpline very well, I spoke personally with some of them and they praised it very much. (...) Nowadays, when less and less people read anything, acquisition of proven information in an understandable manner from perfectly prepared City Hall employees is a very significant thing. You do not need to look for anything, go through information, you just call and find out everything in a straightforward way. The advantage of the helpline is its constant availability all year round. This initiative should be assessed very positively, it simply works out in Kraków (the representative of the executive authorities);*

- *I only know there is this helpline, but I do not know the details, you should ask in the Department of the Social Policy and Health. I do not watch it closely, but it seems this type of solutions, especially during the pandemics, are extremely important, because we are not holding direct meetings. And we must find some substitution so it seems to be one of the interesting implemented ideas. However, I do not know how it works out on the day-to-day basis (the representative of the legislative authorities);*
- *I do not know this tool; I am trying to think of any of my friends who called the Helpline, however I do not think so... But I know it does exist... it can be heard of in this information on the Budget (the author of one of the rejected projects).*

From official information it can be concluded that the CB process is supported by Centres for Involvement of Seniors. Also, let us mention the Youth City Council in Kraków, related to the pilot program of the School Civic Budget in 2020.

The interesting form that should be monitored are meetings organised by CB Ambassadors and Local Participation Ambassadors. The Academy of Active Inhabitants was initiated, among them the set of trainings and workshops related to participatory tools, including the Civic Budget. Its completion allows to join the group of Ambassadors.

Surely, these are numerous, distinctive and recommendable solutions. In Kraków we can witness the proactive form oriented on organizational self-learning. Though, community self-learning is a weaker link, as everywhere, however readiness to correct public policies is an attitude worth praising. Since the very beginning of participatory budgeting attention has been paid to examples of good practices, including Sopot and Sosnowiec. In 2016, on the basis of comparisons and generalisations, the Civic Laboratory Association published *Practical Guide – Let us arrange our city together*. From our interviews it can be also concluded that CB has become a crucial city public policy tool, also on the level of districts. As a result, city green areas or road infrastructure are definitely better maintained and developed in a manner closer to the determinants

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referring to locations and persons, while also considering the institutional aspect and the strategies for public policies. One of the pros of the civic budget in Kraków is its easily seen local efficiency. It allows to react quickly and efficiently to submitted needs and gives the opportunity to intervene in neglected areas. According to one of the City Hall representatives, *one of the Kraków CB advantages was the ability to gather the stable active group of inhabitants around the Civic Budget... of course, we can argue whether this group is large or not... ca. 5–7% of Kraków inhabitants have been voting in the recent years.* It is the potential invested in visible actions, so we can say it will start to bring profits also in the form of growing interest and, subsequently, more active participation of inhabitants. One of our interlocutors from the City Hall said: *I assume the group of 150–180 thousands of inhabitants have been involved in various stages and editions of the Civic Budget in Kraków. I am also glad that CB is well identified by inhabitants, as far as I remember, more than 80% of them recognise the idea. Obviously, not all these people take part in it, while the tool itself is recognisable and awaited before start of every edition.*

The interesting solution is the peculiar preliminary verification of projects with purpose to eliminate their defects, e.g. those related to valid spatial development plans or authorities of the City Conservation Officer. Within mutually performed activities (in cases of slightly defective projects with interesting prospects) officials indicate, before the start of the verification procedure, what elements can be improved in submitted motions. It is a type of close consultations that may lead to mutual reformulation of a motion and to modify a project. This is an interesting solution, though it still needs to be thoroughly monitored and become subject to general evaluation attended by the stakeholders, because level of its efficiency is still unknown:

- *This is the direction we want to follow in our CB in Kraków, we want to have more discussions, deliberation, consultation with inhabitants in order to have better projects, well developed, with smaller numbers of errors. This will decrease the ratio of rejected projects,*

*because they will be subject to preliminary evaluation (...). Last year we managed to perform preliminary verification for ca. 100 projects and we will develop this attitude in the editions to come (the official responsible for CB);*

- *So called preliminary verification... so, it is possible to obtain initial confirmation your project will be voted. And I have an example here, the project called Fountains in Nowa Huta was submitted by my neighbour for preliminary verification and was given a positive opinion, but when she submitted the project for the Budget within the standard procedure, it was rejected (the author of one of rejected projects).*

Preliminary verification is related to some other practice described by some official responsible for CB: *it was some innovations related to implementation of the tool called the Bank of Ideas. (...) we introduced it using our city bank of information where inhabitants can mark their ideas on some kind of a map. These are not even projects, but only ideas themselves, mapping of needs. We started from there. Then we introduced Common Projects, we focused a bit on model selection, our goals was to discuss these mapped ideas with inhabitants in order to transform them into certain projects that could be subsequently submitted within CB. Inhabitants described the projects in the form of so called Fisz Projects that were then sent to and evaluated by officials knowing certain subjects... it was kind of preliminary verification. Then inhabitants were given feedback, they knew what should be corrected, supplemented, what is missing or what is unnecessary and could subsequently submit corrected motions thanks to this preliminary verification.*

Practices applied in Kraków are various, innovative and proactive and also in this case we should be careful regarding conditions characteristic for cultural background of current behaviour patterns, as in other 'participation-oriented' Polish cities. However, we generally witnessed great potential in Kraków and plenty of advantages and chances taken opportunity of thanks to diversified and proactive methods of involvement, organization and evaluation.

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Identifiable weak points and hazards regarding participatory budgeting in Kraków do not differ from typical ones present in other cities being analysed. What is important that in Kraków defects are corrected and processes are monitored and discussed, though there have also been plenty of changes in regulations and local ordinances and related documents that may be unfavourable for transparency. Apart from the scale typical for a large city, features of the problems in the city have some original cultural background, however the general Polish cultural framework and local examples constantly create a relatively moderate space for development of larger forms of participation and in diversified political and public variants. The publicly significant meanings are culturally embedded, so as a result the terms of participation, dialogue, deliberation and co-deciding on the global, continent, national or even regional scale may be sometimes defined quite oddly. Thus, in less participation-oriented cultural contexts, what can be seen not only in Poland, even making information available may be seen as follows: (...) *in some cases informative tools were mistaken with the dialogue-oriented ones. Sometimes, even the fact of making information available on a matter being consulted (for example on the website or in the City Hall) was treated as one of allowable consultation forms. Such regulations occurred in five municipalities (Biała Podlaska, Boguszów-Gorce, Czerwionka-Leszczyny, Grudziądz and Kraków)*<sup>15</sup>. Since publication of the cited paper the results in Kraków have been significantly improved, though according to one of our interviewees whose project was implemented the problem may be more complicated: *when it comes to the Civic Budget, there is hardly any cooperation at all (...) it all happens rather as some administrative or informative operations than cooperation. When it comes to CB, there is no cooperation with this team (the City Hall – author’s note) but it is not a result of bad intentions, as there is simply no need and space for this cooperation.*

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 63.

The important thing was establishment of the Civic Budget Council in 2021 in its current structure. It is one of advantages of the process in Kraków, however it is executive authorities that are authorized to select its members. The recruitment process is initiated by the Mayor who issues the decision on its establishment. The definite advantages of this and many other solutions in Kraków is the tendency to look for new tools. As a result, in 2020 the new programme with two paths of the decision-making process was introduced, in the form of procedures performed within Common District Projects 2020 and Common City Projects 2020. The interested parties can start for the already mentioned Local Participation Ambassadors who, according to one of CB-dedicated websites, *are the extended version of Civic Budget Ambassadors. They are inhabitants who will be trained and provided with support from the local authorities regarding organisation of meetings with other inhabitants nearby their domicile address. Depending on the number of interested people, the discussion could refer to areas smaller than a district, for example residential areas or parts of districts*<sup>16</sup>.

It may be problematic to give a clear answer to the question crossing one's mind when giving a closer look to CB in Kraków, namely about the character of relations among different types of the local authorities. It could be assumed the participatory budget in Kraków is significantly derived from the initiative and support provided by the City legislative authorities, while it has gradually evolved into some kind of a network of support provided by the executive authorities, though not by the current City Council, but the executive institutions of the City Hall as a whole. However, as we do not have space and time here to conduct the extensive analysis, we do not define a thesis, but simply assume there may be some tension present between the two types of local authorities, suggested by some statements occurring in the interviews. Apart from these suggestions,

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<sup>16</sup> Civic Budget, Local Participation Ambassadors 2020, [https://budzet.krakow.pl/strona\\_glowna/237750,artykul,lista\\_ambasadorow.html](https://budzet.krakow.pl/strona_glowna/237750,artykul,lista_ambasadorow.html), access on January 28, 2022.

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we were not however able to obtain clearer information in this regard, as a result we cannot go any further, but to stop at this non-falsifiable form of “researcher feeling”. Nevertheless, the aforesaid tension is present, not only in Kraków and not only in context of CB, but the Kraków example draws more attention simply because of more than average impact of its urban policies.

It is not the only thought that may be intuitively crossing one’s mind in terms of participatory budgeting in Kraków, however another one is based on some clear statement and refers to the goals of city activists. According to one of our interlocutors from local authorities, activists supposedly use of one tools available within public *policy*, namely CB, to popularise themselves and increase chances in the local sphere of *politics*. *It is relatively easily to build a political career on the Civic Budget (...) people eagerly vote for such candidates in local elections. The Budget is kind of an introduction to make political career and it is then used to maintain the political position. Sometimes, where people are really fed up with stuff and do not want councillors to submit CB projects, the councillors do not do it directly, obviously still supporting them. When you participate in the public life of Kraków, you can easily tell which councillor support a given project.* Even local politicians said that *there are attempts to make use of the Civic Budget to build political support by the so called city activist movements that criticise the current Mayor very much and by the parties who want to seize power in the city. In the background of politicisation of the Budget there are projects submitted by these parties that are officially supposed to improve city management, while all that matters is the political fight with the local authorities.* Significantly, similar activities do not bring benefits in form of increased participation of inhabitants, both in local elections and in CB voting, that still does not exceed average values of entire Poland.

Considering the fact that large cities serve as kind of an example for other cities, we should hope that initiatives supporting participation will be gradually changing local relations making the more symmetrical, genuinely based on partnership and not limiting themselves to too

scanty groups of inhabitants or social leaders. The city is conducting involvement-improving activities based on the proactive perspective and this gives hope Kraków has a chance to ‘move up’ from the level of the popular model category of proximity democracy to the elite world-wide group cities representing the model of community development in participatory processes (see Table 2. Participatory models in budgeting involving citizens).

## **2. Civic budgeting in Kraków – selected results of the survey conducted among the inhabitants**

According to the surveyed Kraków inhabitants (where we managed to collect all surveys in practically all age groups), the three most important local management areas the CB projects should be implemented in were green areas (67%), road and transport infrastructure (48%) and sport and leisure (42%). 32% voted for broadly defined culture, while 28% for ecology. 14% of the respondents recommended health, 12% voted for security and 11% for education.

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**Chart 19. Select three most important types of activities you think CB projects in your city should be implemented among**

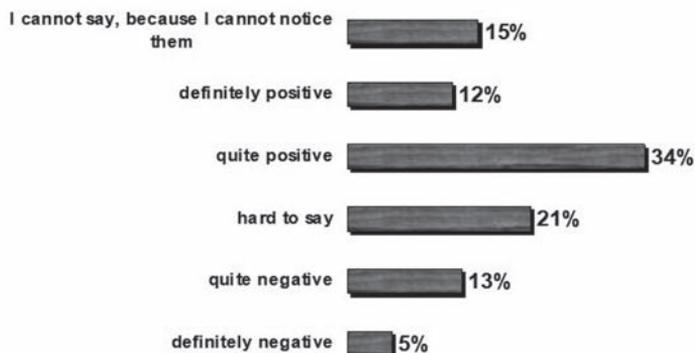


Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

In general, the CB-related information policy in Kraków was positively assessed by 46% of respondents (12% definitely positively, 34% quite positively). Negative grades were given by 18% of subjects (5% quite negatively, 13% definitely negatively). 21% of did not assess the city information policy,

selecting the “hard to say” answer, while 15% of them declared they were not able to evaluate it at all, because they could not notice it around. This result was commented in the Supreme Audit Office report and it is difficult to make any other significant conclusions, while agreeing with one included therein saying that expenditures made by the City Hall are difficult to assess, as they are spent within the funds being at disposal of municipal executive bodies (including Kraków) and the units subject and related to them in administrative context<sup>17</sup>. There is a significant information effect, because inhabitants feel informed, while they also find manipulation of results possible. As a result, we can assume at least some of them may relate the information campaign of the authorities with capabilities to manipulate the results.

**Chart 20. What is your opinion about the information actions regarding CB, conducted by the city authorities?**



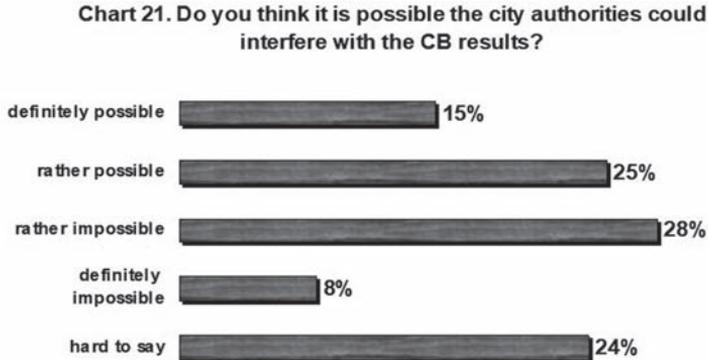
40% of the respondents admitted the Kraków authorities could manipulate the CB results (15% definitely possible, while 25% rather possible) and

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<sup>17</sup> Najwyższa Izba Kontroli, *Informacja o wynikach kontroli. Funkcjonowanie budżetów partycypacyjnych (obywatelskich)* [Information on Audit Results. Functioning of Participatory (Civic) Budgets], Delegatura w Gdańsku, Gdańsk 2019, pp. 47–53.

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36% of the subjects thought differently (8% definitely impossible, 28% rather impossible). 24% of the survey participants selected the “hard to say” answer.

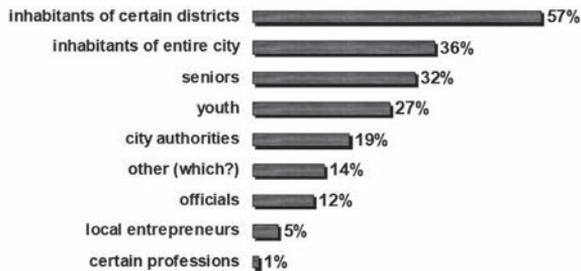


The majority of the respondents (57%) thought the most profits from CB are gained by inhabitants of certain districts, while 36% voted for inhabitants of the entire city. The following two groups were selected as gaining the most benefits within CB, namely seniors (32%) and youth (27%). 31% of the respondents selected the city authorities (19%) and officials (12%). Other groups were given the significant number of 14% of the votes, however they were generally not specified and even when they were, it was made in the manner impossible for the scientific methodology to process. From the materials collected during the interviews it can be concluded that in context of sharing profits there is especially significant potential for conflict between certain districts and districts vs. the entire city, while the institutional flaws are also present, giving us complete insight into how local participation in Kraków really looks like. Some author of one of the rejected projects gave a very clear opinion on this matter:

- *In general, District Councils and Executive Bodies are unsuccessful with the Civic Budget... in spite of presence of councillors in the Civic Budget Committee in each district. In turn, we want them to explain some issue to us, they send us away to a Local Participation Ambassador (...)* one of these Ambassadors told me that he initially

*understood his role as writing projects for persons who would ask him to do it. Later on, he verified his attitude to being this Ambassador, he stopped writing them, he wants the applicants to do it on their own, while could be an advisor, a mentor, an expert. However, I think few people think like him, because it is Ambassadors who usually write applications and submit them... as a result, we have several dozens of application from each Ambassador, but this is not the essence of the Civic Budget. (...) Let something finally start to happening in these districts, because until now literally nothing has been. Some councillors try to sneak their applications as officially registered with other persons. And these applications are not worked out in districts, no efforts are made with purpose to have applicants get to know each other. Councillors do nothing in order to integrate inhabitants... I think they act like in conspiracy, they do not think about involvement of local communities, but how to increase popularity thanks to this Budget thing (the author of one of the rejected projects);*

**Chart 22. Which social groups gain the largest profit from CB in your opinion?**



Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

Among the factors encouraging to participate in CB 70% voted for convenient form of voting (41% definitely encouraging, 29% quite encouraging) and (also 70%) for interesting and important projects (32% definitely

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encouraging and 38% quite encouraging). Skills and involvement of project authors received 62% of votes (27% definitely encouraging, 35% quite encouraging), while for level of own knowledge it was 60% (28% definitely encouraging, 32% quite encouraging) and 59% for availability of information (29% definitely encouraging, 30% quite encouraging). A quarter of the respondents was discouraged from participation in the last edition of CB in Kraków by poor level of skills and involvement among officials/councillors (9% definitely discouraging, 16% quite discouraging).

Table 5. Specify to what extent certain factors had influence on general participation of the city inhabitants in the latest CB edition?

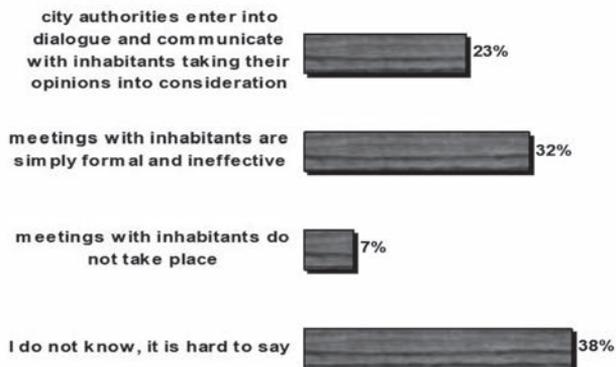
		Encouraging	Quite encouraging	Hard to say	Quite discouraging	Discouraging
1)	Availability of information	29%	30%	30%	6%	5%
2)	Convenient form of voting	41%	29%	19%	6%	5%
3)	Interesting and important projects	32%	38%	20%	4%	5%
4)	Skills and involvement of officials/councillors	12%	16%	47%	16%	9%
5)	Skills and involvement of project authors	27%	35%	31%	3%	5%
6)	Level of own knowledge	28%	32%	27%	8%	5%

Note: the percentages could not add up to 100 due to the possibility of multiple choice.

The public consultation process conducted by the Kraków city authorities, key for CB, was not evaluated by 38% of the respondents. 7% thought the city authorities did not organise meetings with the inhabitants. Only 23% of the survey participants agreed the authorities organised consultation meetings

with the inhabitants and took their opinions into consideration, while 32% decided the meetings are only simply formal and ineffective. The distribution of these opinions corresponds to the previously reported comments on possible interference into the course and results of CB by the city authorities and on the problem of the specific rivalry between local institutions, surely present also on the level of districts, all this constituting the mosaic of coalitions and network relations. Such statements were given in subjective comments in the interviews and one of our interlocutors referred the issue of consultations in the following way that *in general, these consultations are formally held, but it only happens, because it is obligatory (...) instead of consultations, we have these “professional” project application writers who simply replace few words with another to make these projects differ from each other at all and they simply perform mass production of CB projects.* We also heard the following from one of local self-government officials: *officials have influence on selection of certain projects... and it is nothing new... I think it has always been present. While I want to underline it is not very common and nothing big fuss should be made about. (...) it is a marginal situation, though it does exist.* We also do not exaggerate importance of these opinions and do transform them into theses, but we keep them in mind and record their contexts.

**Chart 23. How do you evaluate the process of public consultations regarding CB in your city (open discussion, working meetings and dialogue between authorities and inhabitants)?**

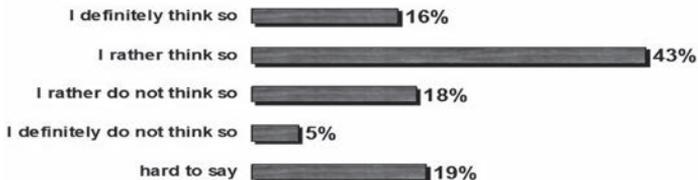


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The survey participants expressed their opinion that the city authorities considered public opinions during the CD-related decision making process (59% in total, 43% I rather think so, 16% I definitely think so). As in other cases, the distribution of answers to the question about consultation process evaluation and whether inhabitants' opinions were taken into consideration could be embarrassing, however it is not the case when we consider the fact highlighted in the already referred Supreme Audit Office report that the inhabitants are not very favourable regarding consultation processes, while they find the fact of selecting processes by voting as a premise sufficient to state their opinions are considered by the authorities. 23% of the respondents thought their voice was negligible and has no influence on the CB-related decision (5% I definitely do not think so, 18% I rather do not think so), while slightly less people selected the "hard to say answer". Summing up, 42% of the respondents negatively assessed the possibility for inhabitants to have some influence or did not give their opinions. As these results are ambiguous, it is justified to compare them with some statement collected by us in Kraków in the interviews: *for me the crucial matter is quality of this participation, while there is no will to activate inhabitants into genuine participation in public matters and sometimes people simply do not know what they are just voting. People are simply treated as voting machines. Let us say it loud, several groups of interests emerged around the Civic Budget in Kraków and they can activate people, mobilise communities to become involved on this small scale.* Counteracting possible distortion of the process was declared by the representative of the City Hall: *We have designed this voting with purpose to avoid situations that could lead to creation of lobbying groups passing selected projects. Our current voting system... also the point awarding system generally prevent such situations from happening, that some officials could have impact on selecting certain CB projects.* It is an open secret that the groups of interests play important roles in the interest intermediation process. This common knowledge, including popularised scientific knowledge, also include well characterised weaknesses of this interest intermediation link in the form of groups of interests. It is more efficient

for larger communities when sufficiently oriented on common welfare. And the cases we are interested in there be even more similar orientations, if inhabitants, numerous and more diversified, are genuinely interested in the participatory form of budgeting on the *pro bono* basis on behalf of the city, districts, neighbouring communities, etc., without envy, implicit activities or staged procedures. Meanwhile, as we heard in the interview with some of our interlocutors from local authorities, in Kraków *we witness relatively poor interest with the Civic Budget among all inhabitants. We see apathy towards CB and this is the attitude of the vast majority of them regarding public issues.* Other of our respondents clearly stated that *inhabitants simply do not want to get involved in any public activities (...) we must not be satisfied with the level of participation of Kraków inhabitants in the Civic Budget. In spite of our information and popularisation efforts, there is still some invisible barrier we cannot overcome. It is still not the desired level we could be satisfied with... because the numbers of involved inhabitants are small... not even mentioning the majority of inhabitants.* These statements are mitigated by another statement of the same person: *public consultations within the Civic Budget in Kraków do take place. We have two types of workshops, the first one at the project preparation level, when we teach how to do it, how to write applications, what elements should be paid attention, and the second kind of consultations takes place during the stage of the popularisation campaign for certain projects, raising relatively significant interest. (...) Even numbers of submitted projects are not bad. (...) We can surely be satisfied with them.*

**Chart 24. In general, do you think the opinions of the inhabitants of your city are taken into consideration by the city authorities during the decision-making process regarding CB?**



## Civic budgeting in Krosno – desk research and survey results

### 1. Profile of civic budgeting in Krosno in view of desk research

Krosno is a city with county rights, that introduced the standard civic budget procedure in 2019 as a result of the amendment of the self-government law in 2018. The CB procedure has been continuously implemented and in 2021 the third edition took place. Previously, the budgeting mechanism was performed as extensive, though still indirect participation. The so called local 50/50 Budget had become relatively recognisable in the city thanks to the activities of the executive authorities. Within that budget it was possible to collect votes supporting projects submitted by district and residential area councils, but also by inhabitants. This mechanism has generally survived after amendment of the self-government law, though it is not particularly exposed, possibly because of the fact it is the budgeting variant with the extended, though still indirect participation procedure in which important roles are played by district and residential area councillors.

#### Assets assigned to CB

We received the precise answer from the City Hall regarding assets having been previously assigned in Krosno to participatory budgeting, including the specific amount limited by the amended law: in the years 2019–20 it was 2.005 mln PLN (according to the City Council resolution: 1 mln PLN for city-wide projects and 1.005 for district projects), while, as we found at the City Hall when performing desk research, in 2019 *the tasks of the total value of 877,675 PLN were voted for implementation (no submitted tasks from some districts or insufficient number of votes)* and in 2020 *the total value of the tasks to be implemented was 1,804,967 PLN.*

It was more difficult to assess what amounts were assigned for the 50/50 Budget, while on the city website only the data for the versions organised after amendment of the law are published, though the website itself is relatively transparent. However, it could be estimated they used to be similar to those assigned to the twelve Krosno districts and residential areas after the said law amendment, namely between 41,000 and 128,000 PLN. On the basis of the data published by the city for the year 2018 we can calculate the average amount for each unit was 83,750 PLN and we can treat this value as a standard average amount of CB assets for sub-local units in Krosno. Accuracy of this estimation is confirmed by the author of one implemented projects, praising the fact of the statutorily defined CB asset amount in the current form: *in my district it was approximately 100,000 PLN each year... so, these were similar amounts as nowadays... at some moment the city introduced the conversion factor for this amount, depending on the area of certain district and the number of inhabitants..., so there was some permanent common amount for all districts, while the second part was the amount resulting from this conversion factor. This amount needed to be subtracted by some assets to be spent on the People's Local Community Centre, so the budget was deducted by some 13,000–14,000 PLN... so it was ca. 86,000 PLN and another 86,000 PLN were given by the Mayor, as these were the rules of the 50/50 Budget. And now we were able to acquire 1 mln PLN twice from the Civic Budget, in my opinion the current solutions is much better. Last year the 50/50 Budget assets were decreased by 50% and then suspended because of the pandemics. This year no 50/50 budget assets are not planned at all.*

### Officials attending to CB

During desk research at the Krosno City Hall we found out that *the Promotion and Tourism Department and the City Treasurer are responsible for CB process implementation. The Civic Budget Team consists of representatives of each City Hall departments (one from each department). The City Hall*

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*organisational structure was specified in the art. 6 and 7.1 of the annex to the decision no. 143/19 of the Mayor of Krosno of February 28, 2019 on the organisational scheme of the City Hall in Krosno, amended with the following decisions: (...) etc. Citing the rest of this information would result in growing discomfort in readers, resulting from the form of such messages. It should be avoided, while in case of participatory processes it would be better to prohibit it.*

On the basis of information included in the Public Information Bulletin of the City Hall we can assume the Civic Budget Team consists of more than sixteen members, as this is the number of departments in the City Hall. The Team serves as a supporting unit, while the CB procedure is directly handled with the Promotion and Tourism Department comprising of five persons, among which one is responsible for CB; it is not the department head, but one of his subordinates. Another person involved in the CB process in the City Hall is the Treasurer. From the formal point of view, it should be concluded that only one employee is officially responsible for CB and is supported, depending on the schedule and needs, by other 21 persons (i.e. 16 members of the Team, other 4 persons assigned to the Team and the Treasurer. Also, considering the functions held and diversification of the local hierarchy, it can be assumed that only one employee practically handles CB on the day-to-day basis. However, the results of budgeting operations are evaluated highly, convincing this solutions is coordinated and effective, as it creates stable, substantive and organisational support for smooth CB handling, while the crucial element is involvement of the Treasurer.

#### Local formal regulations

The CB procedure, adjusted to the statutory amendment, was passed in the resolution IX/248/19 of the City Council of Krosno of May 30, 2019 *on public consultations regarding the civic budget of the City of Krosno*, replacing the resolution LX/1383/19 of the City Council of Krosno of June 28, 2018 *on public consultations regarding the civic budget of the City*

*of Krosno.* The current provisions were slightly modified in the resolution XXII/642/20 of the City Council of Krosno of 29.05.2020.

Prior to enforcement of the statutory amendment there was the tool called 50/50 Budget operating in Krosno. During our research we were unable to obtain complete documentation giving us a closer look into development of this solution, however it is known that the initiative and coordinating role was played by the Mayor and it comprised of participatory budgeting elements, but in the specific and limited form, as distribution of assets on grassroots projects were assigned to district and residential area councils, however without the voting procedure involving inhabitants: *we used to have the tool similar to CB in Krosno. It was the initiative of the current Mayor. Some amount of money was assigned to ancillary units, namely to districts and residential areas, to be used in this 50/50* (the excerpt from the interview with the legislative authority representative). The simple idea of this solution is reflected by the statement of the representative of the executive authorities: *the modus operandi of this previous budget was based on the 2 elements (...) districts were given some amounts for investments and the Mayor gave the second amount of the same value. And then districts selected investments or renovation plans on their own (...), so it was inhabitants who submitted projects... but then these projects, including comments (of inhabitants – author's note) were presented to certain ancillary units, namely District and Residential Area Councils which made final decision on implementation of given projects, so this was the second element of the process.*

These solutions raised some interest and was accompanied by works testing capabilities to support the process with the customised application that enabled the inhabitants to speak out in form of comments regarding projects, while in case of emergency the inhabitants were encouraged to contact councillors via e-mail or directly. As a result, the budgeting procedure in the local 50/50 form made it possible to collect votes for projects designed by district and residential area councils, but also gave the opportunity to the inhabitants to submit their ideas, while councils decided which projects would be assigned funds.

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Introduction of the new regulations undermined the idea of making such decisions by councils. From our desk research it can be concluded that in officials' opinion it decreased influence of the inhabitants on decisions, while the authors of most projects submitted within the new CB procedure are still persons related to district and residential area councils, that also convinces the local authorities to maintain the elements of the previous solution: *the civic budgets are kind of duplicated right now... in the 50/50 Budget decisions on assignment of assets to certain projects are in fact made by District and Residential Area Councils, while in the Civic Budget, named so on the basis of the Local Self-Government Act, these decisions are made directly by the inhabitants. (...) In turn, the District and Residential Area budgets have become kind of funds as Village Funds that are used at the rural areas... they can independently spend assets at their disposal. Within the current Civic Budget the District and Residential Area Budgets formally play no role... and, frankly saying, we do not like this solution quite much as local authorities (...), because authors of these projects within new CB are mostly persons related to these Councils or District and Residential Area Executive Boards... they often write these projects and then conduct popularisation activities in order to gain votes in elections* (the representative of the legislative authorities).

The 50/50 budgeting version in Kraków surely constitutes an example of interesting and innovative approach to budgeting, it is also a careful solution extending, in some scale, the classical form of elected representation by sub-local councilors and which is supposed to supplement and specify the component of participative decision-making. It does to some extent, as in this case participation takes the form of grass-root submitting and commenting on projects. It is also worth noticing that this solution is in this shape *de lege* less participative than the Village Fund within which inhabitants are entitled to vote. As a result, the local variant of budgetary asset distribution system, including the element of 'local will' constitutes a limited participatory form, nevertheless it turned out to be locally developed and visibly functioning even before introduction of the statutory CB procedure. The scope of possible involvement and merger of sub-local communities as a result of this

form will depend on strength and quality of relations between inhabitants and sub-local communities. If it is going to be increased and accompanied by preservation of the centripetal rivalry pattern at the local political arena, then it will prove the solutions are successful and they should result in the more innovative idea of grassroots participation and corresponding bolder activities of authorities with purpose to transfer from the previously implemented proximity democracy to some more advanced form of participatory budget that will be more similar to community development (see Table 2. Participatory models in budgeting involving citizens).

However, possible evolution in this direction is not sure, when we listen to some of our interviewees:

- *when it comes to participation, CB is a much better solution, because every city inhabitant can submit a project within this Budget, while in case of the 50/50 Budget investments were decided by certain district or residential area executive boards, so in this case projects were reported by institutions (the City Hall employee responsible for CB);*
- *when it comes to the Civic Budget introduced on the basis of the statutory regulations, inhabitants can already decide directly on selected investments. And the city-wide budget investments are decided by all Krosno inhabitants, previously there was no such category (...) frankly saying, it is very difficult for me to assess which of these budgets is better for urban development (...) Regarding this 50/50 Budget, there were more typically infrastructural projects implemented, such as improved quality of roads or construction of pavements (the representative of the legislative authorities);*
- *in my opinion, this new form destroys this participation a bit instead of strengthening it... because both models of the Civic Budget slightly block individuals from acting... people not associated anywhere... What else is this participation besides participation of all inhabitants acting on behalf of public welfare! We have 12 districts and residential areas... 15 councillors in each of them... so we have 180 active people in Krosno... involved in public matters. What about the rest? I can see these successful CB projects are designed, submitted by*

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*persons less or more connected with the Councils of certain district and residential areas and very rarely by individual persons, these average inhabitants* (representative of the executive authorities).

#### Good practices

The previously analysed local procedure of the 50/50 Budget is surely an example of good practice, simply because it is local implementation of extended participation practices. The future and shape of this solution should be determined in dialogue with inhabitants and its specificity can inspire others, though it is good to keep in mind the previously mentioned limitations.

There is the Civic Budget Council in Krosno *consisting of 6 people, among them 2 from non-governmental organizations and 4 officials from our City Hall. The chairperson of the council is the representative of an NGO. (...) The Council handles appeals from the Team decisions... also, it produces opinions projects qualified for voting... Additionally, the Council handles some possible complaints submitted by applicants* (the City Hall employee responsible for CB). This solution is also worth being developed, as it is necessary to monitor it and periodically discuss its form and content.

The civic budget website is esthetic and intuitive containing complete information on the current procedure and its effects, though there is no compact information on the 50/50 Budget. There is the well prepared “map” of funded projects and the “city project pricelist”. Similar maps and pricelists have the purpose to facilitate cost estimation for project authors and are used in various, usually large, cities. The examples from Krosno are one of the best prepared and presented ones.

An example of well understood efficiency of the administration is the above mentioned Team whose purpose is to handle and coordinate the city activities in terms of CB proceeding and implementation: *I coordinate the works of this Team... I organised meetings, assigned these projects for evaluation to certain departments, depending on topics of the projects. There were the Team meetings... they were not very formal... but we were*

*still in touch, kept an eye on the issues... we contacted on the day-to-day basis by phone or e-mail, just to have some evidence of all these decisions we made. Heads of certain Departments were responsible for substantive evaluation of projects, it does not obviously mean they were always preparing these evaluations and were present at the Team meetings... but they were responsible for cost estimation for a given project. And these departments usually implemented those projects which had been voted. Projects were checked in context of the local spatial development plan and plot ownership titles. The regulations of our CB say that if an investment is construction of some real estate, it can be erected only on a plot owned by the city... other type of ownership cannot be taken into consideration in this situation at all (the representative of the executive authorities).*

The practices from Krosno can convince that similar coordination solutions are the best, when conducted directly by the city executive board member responsible for funds. The solution is worth being monitored and discussed in terms of possible adding the community representation to the team. Besides other profits that could be assessed only after experiencing them, allowing the inhabitants (not only councillors!) to join the team would constitute the mechanism preventing against excessive technocratisation of this group, that always has negative impact on participation. It is a crucial task for future evaluations. In turn, one of our interlocutors seems to think there is no hazard visible: *the Team works seem to go well, because from my talks with applicants I know the contact is very good and the Team helps applicants... At the later stages, during implementation, this cooperation also goes well... because projects are generally implemented by the departments represented by the Team.*

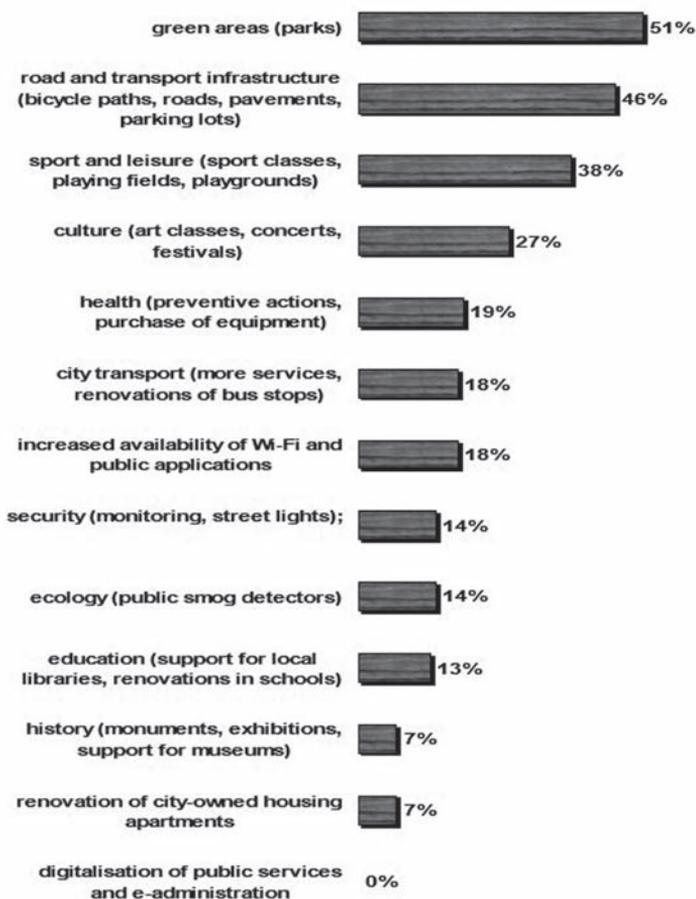
## **2. Civic budgeting in Krosno – selected results of the survey conducted among the inhabitants**

The surveyed inhabitants selected the three areas the CB projects should be implemented in as follows: green areas (51%), road and transport

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infrastructure (46%), sport and leisure (38%), culture (27%), health (19%), city transport (18%), increased availability of Wi-Fi and public mobile applications (18%), security (14%), ecology (14%) and education (13%).

**Chart 25. Select three most important types of activities you think CB projects in your city should be implemented among**



Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

24% of the respondents could not notice any CB-related activities promoted by the city authorities, while 18% could not give a specific answer on this matter. 38% gave positive grades (13% definitely positive, 25% quite positive), while negative scores were given by 21% of the surveyed persons (8% definitely negative, 13% quite negative).

The distribution of the given answers corresponds to the things said on the local information policy by the representative of the executive authorities, directly involved in CB process implementation, and the author of one the rejected projects.

The representative of the local executive board spoke favourably: *in my opinion, currently, the most efficient channel, when it comes to getting to inhabitants with information on the Civic Budget, is the Internet, so it is posting information on the City Hall websites, on city web portals. We also tried to inform on CB using posters... but I do not think I saw any of them in the last year. So, I think the most efficient are these online methods..., because nowadays we search for information online. And we try to inform inhabitants on CB-related activities in this way..., especially at the stage of submitting of projects and voting. Obviously, we also provide details on the voting results. So I think that information on CB is provided in a good manner and it gets to the gradually increasing number of recipients. As a result, more people vote.*

The author of one the rejected projects gave the critical opinion: *I think these actions are a bit random and chaotic. Nobody explains what this Budget is about, there are no examples of successful investments, we just have these slogans, like “do not be indifferent, vote”. Well, vote for?! For what specific projects? Currently, the inhabitants are simply not informed they can have real influence on what is going on in the city. This influence may be just tiny, but it still can bring some effects. Sometimes it seems to me this CB information is given for such people like me who know what CB is, how its procedures and what the CB work schedule look like... while this information are not provided for average Joes in Krosno who simply expect information, what profits they could gain from this, how they should prepare their projects, etc. This information should be prepared especially for*

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*seniors and middle-aged people..., because the youth find and understand this information to some extent.*

**Chart 26. What is your opinion about the information actions regarding CB, conducted by the city authorities?**



When answering the question whether the Krosno authorities could manipulate the CB results, 38% of the respondents were unable to give one. 31% admitted it would be possible (13% definitely possible, 18% rather possible), while the same number of the subjects thought differently (7% definitely impossible, 24% rather impossible). This case of Krosno is characteristic in some specific way: (1) in all five interviews the interlocutors rejected the possibility of CB politicisation; (2) in four of them possible impact made by officials was also contradicted; (3) while in one of them we found the indication there could be some indirect influence within the network connections.

We do not construct a thesis on the basis of this indication, but only some kind of a “researcher feeling” that must not go any further, while some premises can be found in the statements made by representatives of the Krosno executive board, directly involved in CB implementation:

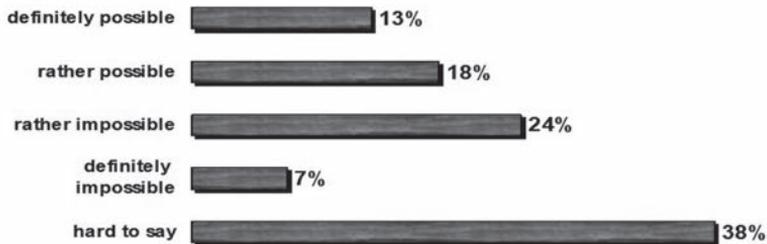
- *no, I do not think officials could influence selection of CB projects, but I know some of officials are involved in them, maybe not directly in the project submitting process, but for example in collecting signatures or encouraging to vote. This is mostly a case with persons that also involve in public activities, namely district and residential area*

## Civic budgeting in Krosno – desk research and survey results

*councillors. Our regulations say the city officials must not submit CB projects... it must be done by individuals, so a project must not be signed by a District Council, school or institution, while there are situations district councillors are authors of some projects... or a chairperson of some District Area Board is very much involved in implementation of a project.*

- Krosno is not a large city... here such institutions like housing cooperatives or voluntary fire brigades, established in the former system, still have significant influence on city operations... they can make use of their network of connections, influence and they are generally awarded these largest sums from the Civic Budget. And, frankly saying, their projects are often less creative, less innovative... they are not inspiring for development of the urban space... these are very mediocre projects.*

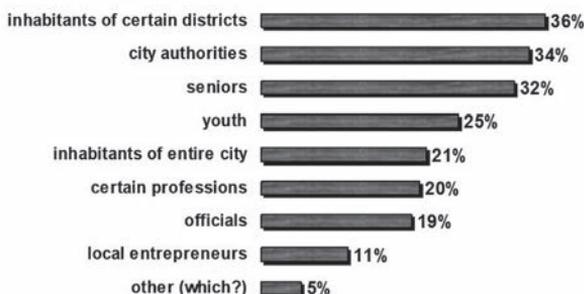
**Chart 27. Do you think it is possible the city authorities could interfere with the CB results?**



When deciding which groups of Krosno inhabitants gain the largest profits from CB projects, the most popular ones among the interviewees were district inhabitants (36%), city authorities (34%) and seniors (32%). Krosno is another example of relatively large PR potential of CB, that in Polish cities is often operationalised and capitalized on by local political leaders. 25% of the respondents selected youth, while other indicated groups were inhabitants of the entire city (21%), certain professions (20%), officials (19%) and local entrepreneurs (11%).

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**Chart 28. Which social groups gain the largest profit from CB in your opinion?**



Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

Among factors encouraging to participate in the last CB edition in Krosno the most popular were convenient form of voting (75%–33% encouraging, 37% rather encouraging), availability of information (62%–26% encouraging, 36% rather encouraging) and interesting and important projects (62%–29% encouraging, 33% rather encouraging), while among the discouraging factors were skills and involvement of officials/ councillors (50%–43% quite discouraging, 7% discouraging), level of own knowledge (45%–41% rather discouraging, 4% discouraging) and skills and involvement of project authors (42%–40% rather discouraging, 2% discouraging). The details are presented below and are concordant with the general tendencies we described above. Negative trends can be stopped only by constant strengthening and empowerment of inhabitant participation. If continued, they will result in politicisation and technocratisation of CB and related public processes.

## Civic budgeting in Krosno – desk research and survey results

Table 7. Specify to what extent certain factors had influence on general participation of the city inhabitants in the latest CB edition?

		Encouraging	Quite encouraging	Hard to say	Quite discouraging	Discouraging
1)	Availability of information	26%	36%	30%	30%	5%
2)	Convenient form of voting	33%	37%	26%	26%	3%
3)	Interesting and important projects	29%	33%	27%	27%	4%
4)	Skills and involvement of officials/councillors	10%	27%	43%	43%	7%
5)	Skills and involvement of project authors	23%	28%	40%	40%	2%
6)	Level of own knowledge	17%	34%	41%	41%	4%

Note: the percentages could not add up to 100 due to the possibility of multiple choice.

In the opinion of 15% of the respondents, the important CB process of public consultations does not take place in Krosno. It is worth mentioning 43% of the surveyed people selected the “hard to say” answer. 24% of the respondents declared the meetings were simply formal and ineffective, while 17% thought the city authorities entered into dialogue and discussion with inhabitants taking their opinion into consideration.

This opinion poll is supported by the statement of the city executive board member directly involved in CB: *not really.... there are no such public consultations within the Budget..., unless you name the voting process consultations... The authors of the statutory regulations could tell these are the best consultations, because here inhabitants can express their opinions on their current needs during the voting. Personally, I have some doubts,*

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

*because I saw it was mostly the promotional and marketing aspect that was the most important during voting, instead of usefulness and reliability of a given project.*

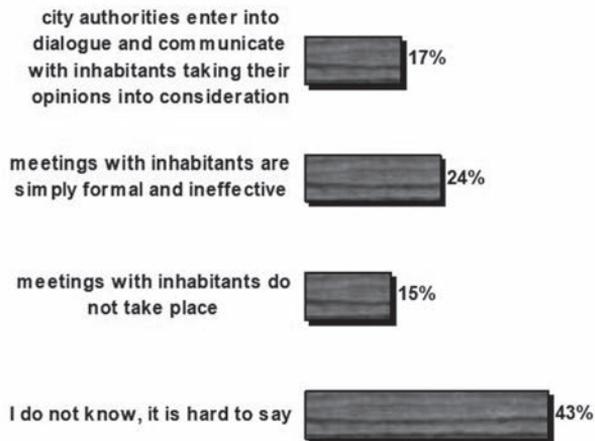
The cited statement can be supported by the respective fragments of the other four interviews conducted in Krosno:

- *when it comes to consultation meetings or workshops in districts, I cannot think of any taking place (the representative of the legislative authorities);*
- *I do not want to mislead you, but I have never come across any meetings organised within CB-related public consultations (the author of one of the rejected projects);*
- *there were some workshops organised within the public consultations, but they were conducted before and during the first Civic Budget edition, three years ago. Then we invited representatives of district and residential area councils to the City Hall and conducted consultations and workshops within CB (...) these consultations were conducted for the last time in 2018 (the official responsible for CB);*
- *such consultations took place 2 years ago at the City Hall conference room and were attended by representatives of certain City Hall units substantially responsible for implementation of the Civic Budget. The Treasurer was also present. As far as I remember, they lasted 2-3 hours and every inhabitant could discuss their individual project, whether it would really be possible to implement it. They could also get some advice and talk about the projects. So, everyone could attend these consultations... also officials were always available during the application submitting period, so you could talk to them to have a piece of advice... you could also send to them a cost estimate... consult it with them... and it was very valuable and necessary... because they drew our attention to missing elements, you could then modify your project on the spot. We have this Public Consultation Platform, but it is mostly used for these city consultations... and not for the Civic Budget (the author of one of the implemented projects).*

## Civic budgeting in Krosno – desk research and survey results

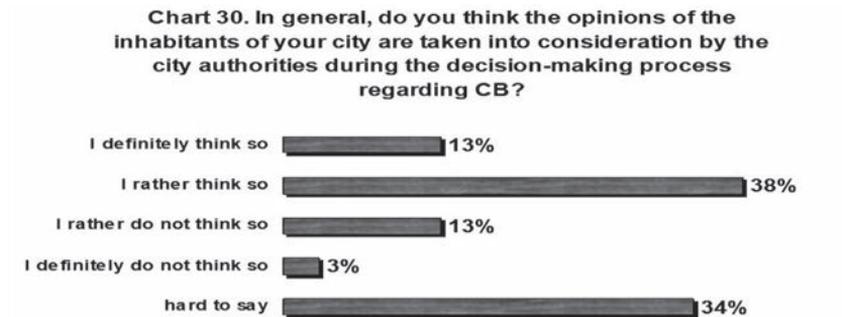
The aforesaid statements are even more in favour to empower inhabitant participation in Krosno, while genuinely limiting such possible hazards as politicisation and technocratism. So, it is worth mentioning that in this case introduction of the amendment regulations has led to withdrawal from attempts to conduct more genuine consultations and to reduction of direct dialogue and some extension of councillor representation (e.g. their role in the 50/50 Budget), all as a result of poorly embedded participatory budgeting. If the things still go in an unfavourable direction, it could lead to reduction and limitation of ideas and actual capabilities of the local public policy. The consultation idea is always worth being referred to and tested within various applications, not only in Krosno, though it should have its position restored there, as the process was halted as a result of the amendment of the local self-government law and by the reality of the pandemics. We should hope the issue will be retaken into consideration by both local elites and the inhabitants.

**Chart 29. How do you evaluate the process of public consultations regarding CB in your city (open discussion, working meetings and dialogue between authorities and inhabitants)?**



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51% of the respondents in Krosno thought opinions of inhabitants were considered by the city authorities, when making CB decisions (38% I rather think so, 13% I definitely think so), while 16% selected differently (3% I definitely do not think so, 13% I rather do not think so). As much as 34% of the respondents selected the “hard to say” answer. In our opinion, these answers also seem to confirm existence of the previously described hazards and are compliant with our pro-participatory conclusions.



## Civic budgeting in Legnica – desk research and survey results

### 1. Profile of civic budgeting in Legnica in view of desk research

The Civic Budget in Legnica (LBO) was introduced for the first time in 2013 and has been organized since then almost constantly. The Civic Budget replaced regular consultations between the Mayor and the inhabitants of certain residential areas, when they could present their comments and needs and assess the authorities in terms of implementation of previous decisions (the representative of the executive authorities, the author of one of the implemented projects). So, not only do we have evaluation of the CB procedure itself in subsequent editions, but it has developed the previous practices. Because of the pandemics, in 2020 the CB procedure for the year 2021 was halted, however this happened after projects had been submitted. Finally, the city authorities decided to conduct CB within the changed schedule. After a year the standard procedure was reinstated and the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of LBO was organized.

The procedure worked out during first the LBO has evolved only slightly, being adjusted to expectations of the inhabitants or practical problems and difficulties encountered during works. The basic rules on voting of project submitting have not been modified, the only changes occurred in the regulations for next editions and were formal. The amendment of the local-self government law in 2018 has not significantly influenced functioning of the LBO, as it only became the opportunity for minor corrections of its operation, namely the formal change in the application evaluation procedure, the extension of the voting law to all inhabitants, decreasing the number of signatures required to submit a project or withdrawal from organization of the Helpdesk. However, the application evaluation procedure is still multi-staged (from the perspective, substantive and social perspectives) and attended not only by the representatives of the City Hall, but also from the City Council and the local community.

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Also, the asset value for CB was increased in order to meet the legal requirements.

The amendment obligated the City Council to pass the resolution specifying formal requirements to be met by a civic budget draft. Previously, the civic budget had been functioning on annual Mayor decisions who could initiate a civic budget in the city. Mayor's significant role is still noticeable in establishment and organisation of the LBO, making crucial decisions. One of our interlocutors criticised this amendment indicating various formal difficulties related to statutory transfer of competences to initiate CB to City Councils: *Mayor's decision is prepared quite quickly, while the procedure of passing the resolution by the City Council is relatively slow... first it needs to be approved by the Board, then by all Committees and then passed during the Council session and published in the Official Journal of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship, so the Voivode must approve it. In some voivodeship it worked out, while in another one it did not. So we were preparing for this for a long time, to write this resolution and if we wanted to introduce something new now, we would have to convince the Council to amend the content of the resolution and then the Voivode would have to approve it* (the representative of the executive authorities).

Assets assigned to CB:

The city assigned the following amounts for implementation of the LBO: LBO 2014 – 1,696 680 PLN.; LBO 2015 – 1.832 mln PLN; LBO 2016 – 2.090 mln PLN; LBO 2017 – 2.2 mln PLN; LBO 2018 – 2.2 mln PLN; LBO 2019 – 2.875 mln PLN; LBO 2020 – 3.065 mln PLN; LBO 2021 – 2.97 mln PLN; LBO 2022 – 2.97 mln PLN.

### Officials attending to CB

The organisational unit responsible for planning of processes and implementation of the LBO is the Civic Dialogue Centre, one of the departments of the City Hall within which there is also the single position related to the civic budget, however during implementation of the LBO the Project Technical Evaluation Team is also established which is responsible for evaluation of projects at different three stages. The first stage of the technical evaluation of cost estimates and project feasibility is performed by representatives of substantive City Hall departments and offices. The second stage, i.e. the substantive evaluation, is also made by representatives of certain departments and members of the City Council, housing cooperatives and non-governmental organizations, evaluating conformity of the submitted projects with expectations of the community representation. The third stage, i.e. appeals, are conducted by the similar group, though limited to councillors, representatives of housing cooperatives and 4 City Hall officials.

### Local formal regulations

LBO 2014 was introduced with the decision of the Mayor of Legnica on the rules and the procedure of establishment and implementation of the Civic and Participatory Budget<sup>18</sup> of the city of Legnica. According to this decisions, projects for implementation were selected on the basis of public consultations. It was decided that the assets provided within the Civic Budget would be sent solely on implementation of investment projects. All analysed LBO editions were limited to infrastructural investments.

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<sup>18</sup> In the text we use the simplified term of the Civic Budget in Legnica and its abbreviation (LBO) that were used in official promotional materials and messages related to it. Since the fourth edition the name of LBO has also been used in all formal documents, including decisions constituting the rules and procedure of CB implementation.

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Officially, the city of Legnica is not divided into ancillary units, but for the LBO purposes the so called areas were established often corresponding to borders of merged geodetic precincts used for registering tasks. During the first two editions the civic budget voting took place in the 10 areas, while since the third edition the inhabitants have been voting in the 11 areas. There have been no city-wide projects in any edition. This division was maintained after enforcement of the act allowing division of a budget on the basis of ancillary units. However, in Legnica *the inhabitants of a certain area do not vote for an investment from this area* (the representative of the executive authorities) and it is treated as a presume to maintain division of a budget into certain areas and also to keep the relatively city-wide character of CB. This problem is constantly discussed by the local authorities and maintaining of this division is an informed and purposeful decision in order to take care of sustainable and fair development of the city: *We wanted to avoid creating the City-Wide Budget, because this procedure would drive a wedge between the inhabitants of certain areas even more..., we did not want this verbal arguments that we were better, because something was being done in our area, while nothing was happening in yours...* (the representative of the executive authorities).

Projects were implemented on the basis of the aforesaid division into areas. Each inhabitant of Legnica could submit a proposal for a certain area, using the prepared form, but it also had to be supported in writing by at least 20 inhabitants of this area. After being submitted the proposals were subject to formal verification by the City Development Department and sent to the Project Technical Evaluation Team (PTET) whose opinion contained the project estimated costs and description of implementation capabilities in a given budget year, also considering formal and legal issues related to land title ownership and local and national regulations. The City Development Team sent PTET's opinion to the Project Qualification Team creating the list of projects to be voted by inhabitants of certain areas.

In 2019 the LBO organisation was changed: the Project Qualification Team was not established and its functions were transferred to the PTET with purpose to decrease bureaucracy and improve the Team works, also supported by development of the single digital platform: *now it is easier*

*when it is officially one Team... you simply do not have to write the report after completing works at the first stage... you smoothly go on to the second stage. In turn, there are no changes in substantive matters (the representative of the executive authorities). The second stage was also attended by the community representation previously represented in the Project Qualification Team: At this stage the Team was limited, there were less officials, because just few representatives of the substantive departments took place in its works; in turn, we invited 5 councillors, representatives of all housing cooperatives, seniors, Youth City Council, disabled persons and the Public Benefits Council (the representative of the executive authorities).*

The team works are multi-staged, integrate multiple stakeholders and use transparent communication systems in order to prevent inaccuracies and increase trust to the entire CB process. After the technical assessment stage participated mostly by officials, substantive evaluation is also performed by leaders of the projects that raise doubts or require improvement. Their approval is required to allow a changed project for further proceedings. Leaders are also involved in the entire investment planning and designing process and each deviation is consulted with them (the representative of the executive authorities). As a result, not only do they become responsible for preparation of a project and activation of a local community, but are also the ambassadors of the CB in Legnica.

Changes in the PTET works are noticed in appreciated by inhabitants and project leaders: *since the first LBO in which I won until the last one in which I won, too, a lot of things had changed. At the very beginning my project was changed very much... only some part of the original idea was kept (...) And this implemented investment had almost nothing common with my project, but no one asked me about my opinion (...) However, in the last editions this cooperation looks completely different, when it comes to the stage of analysing of projects by the City Hall and later during the implementation stage. Contact in constantly maintained and I can have a final opinion on how implementation should look like. Previously, this contact had not been present at all. During the last project in which I won a year ago the designer kept calling me, we were meeting, the cooperation was alright, nowadays, the*

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

*approach is completely different* (the author of one of the rejected projects). The cited statement proves the LBO evolves into professionalisation of city hall tasks and increased participation of the leaders of reported and implemented projects. This activity should be assessed positively as a pro-social approach with purpose to share responsibility for investments implemented within CB, however from the aforesaid statement it can be also included this evolution has positive influence on emerging of local social leaders. Our interlocutor is one of many persons regularly submitting CB projects and one of them was implemented in stages, still being popular among the voters: *In one of our areas a professional sport and leisure facility was being built during 5 editions, its value distinctly exceeded 1 million PLN, because it won 5 editions. And currently this facility is operated* (the representative of the executive authorities). However, this situation can be seen ambivalently and a so strong leader of a local CB community may be an entry barrier for other persons submitting projects: *projects of this man were regularly winning for 4 years, year after year. He was very successful, it was difficult to win for other people (...) there was some very nice playground, but it was impossible to win with this man in this area* (the author of one of the rejected projects).

Voting, which was anonymous during first editions, took place in designated city locations and online, by awarding the total amount of 5 points to one or more projects. Each adult inhabitant of Legnica have these 5 points at their disposal. Inhabitants were provided with multiple voting locations that enabled the digitally excluded persons to participate in LBO. Voting was completely electronic with purpose to improve works and prevent fraud attempts and in these locations willing inhabitants could receive needed help (the author of one of the rejected projects). The number of stationary voting was significantly limited in the 2021 edition when only one location was established in the Civic Dialogue Centre, however this phenomenon should not be assessed definitely negatively, because sanitary requirements should be considered in context of impact of the Covid-19 pandemics and significant progress of society digitalisation. Still, there are inhabitants for whom the traditional form of voting is preferred, while limitation of voting locations in the entire city to one may exclude them from this process.

In 2013 voters provided details on names, surnames and domicile, while in subsequent years these data were supplemented by PESEL and identity card numbers. Currently, the amount of obligatory personal data is limited, but the process is still not anonymous, requiring voters to provide data on names, surnames and addresses. In 2019 the voting rights were extended for all inhabitants of Legnica, including underage persons.

During the second year of LBO the application submitting process was changed, because cost estimates needed to be prepared by project applicants instead of PTET. Preparation of applicants was assisted by the Information Desk established upon Mayor's decision. The Desk was supposed to provide information on cost estimates reported in projects, scope of works, conformity with local spatial development plans, land ownership titles, conformity with local self-government law and ecophysiological conditions or lands for sale. The representatives of City Hall departments were working at the Information Desk. Additional help can be found at the project website where useful information for applicants are posted, including "the pricelist" containing real costs of certain infrastructural elements, namely the "city map" with information on certain plots of land (plot number and information on possible implementation of an LBO investment).

As a result of the amendment of the local self-government law, the 2020 version of LBO was not established upon a decision of the executive authorities, but in the Resolution no. VI/95/19 of the City Council in Legnica of March 25, 2019 on the rules of the Civic Budget in Legnica as a specific form of public consultations. The content of the resolution differs from the previous decisions, though the LBO rules are very similar. Also, it should be noted that despite the Resolution being passed by the City Council, the rest of the procedure, including establishment of PTET, was still a competence of the Mayor. As a result, transfer of regulations to the legislative body was only symbolic and forced by the statutory act and not related to transfer of actual organizational matters. The 2021 LBO was passed upon the same resolution of the Council as the previous edition, while the executive body issued the updated decisions.

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The projects are submitted to LBO by their leaders, while the number of signatures required as an annex to the project was limited from 20 to 2 (including the leader's). Though it surely facilitates the entire procedure, the necessity to guarantee relatively large support for a project kind of forced its socialisation and embedding in the interest of a community and not only some small group of people<sup>19</sup>. Also, a leader can withdraw the project or co-decide, in cooperation with other project's leader, to merge any number of projects into a single one until the day of project list publication. As in the previous years, projects were subject to evaluation in compliance with the LBO schedule. It was decided that if project costs were underestimated by its leader, the Mayor could present his own cost estimate, not being forced to reject it on formal grounds. Also, it was determined an evaluation element can be asking certain entities and institutions to assess a project, including when project implementation would require respective administrative and legal approvals or permits. Such a procedure, if performed before voting, allows to avoid the frequent situation when winning projects encounter administrative difficulties making their implementation impossible, witnessed in many cities. Another evaluation element was the synthetic summary of analyses and findings made during the procedure, that may include necessary project modifications (especially in context of costs) and respective recommendations. The basic mechanisms known from the previous editions were not changed, however a project could be selected by the number of at least of 100 votes.

#### Good practices

Socialisation of the evaluation and qualification process of projects submitted to LBO via PTET (previously the Qualification Project Team) is

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<sup>19</sup> R. Skrzypiec, *Realizacja Legnickiego Budżetu Obywatelskiego Edycja 2016* [Implementation of the Legnica Civic Budget Edition 2016], Ośrodek Badania Aktywności Lokalnej, Warszawa 2016, p. 9.

a definitely good practice and one of the biggest advantages of CB in Legnica. Besides representatives of the City Hall departments and councillors, it includes housing cooperatives, non-governmental organizations and senior and youth councils into the decision-making process, constituting an opinion-providing body responsible for evaluation of submitted projects. This allows to consider the opinion of the community representation, is favourable for transparency of the process of project qualification and selection to CB and strengthens civic dialogue in the city. The number of team members is constantly extended year after year and its works are improved thanks to the developed communication system via the transparent platform that turned out to be useful during the pandemics.

The smooth PTET works involving officials from various departments and the community representation in the detailed and discussion and inviting project leaders to close cooperation have positively influence on functioning of the entire surroundings. This cooperation enhances skills of community leaders, gets them acquainted to specificity of investing and allows to prepare better and more interesting CB projects. Also, it is a way to guarantee good information flow that would not occur otherwise. Firstly, it is a horizontal flow between certain units of the City Hall, forced by the deliberative character of the team works (*interesting things happen, for example people from various departments start to talk to each other and understand working conditions at their departments, when performing projects. Obviously, people sometimes argue, however opinion sharing and development of common attitude prevail, though all participants saw interests of all parties* (the representative of the executive authorities). The equally important effect is vertical flow, because many projects that were not selected for CB implementation or were disqualified, e.g. as a result of too high costs, are realised by the city within other investment activities, constituting the reaction to needs of the inhabitants (*Even projects that lose during voting somehow lead to the city success, because they show the city authorities the needs of a given community* (the author of the rejected projects).

Another good practice is voting in the form of assignment of the total number of 5 points into certain projects by each inhabitant. This system

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slightly varied depending on an edition and the current version seems to be the very good solution allowing inhabitants to express their priorities. According to the resolution, voters have 5 points to assign to projects. If two or more projects have the same number of votes and the asset value makes it impossible to implement them all, the projects requiring more assets are selected for realisation. When values are equal, the project with more “all 5 points awarded” assignments wins. If this criterion does not break the tie, “4 points awarded” assignments are compared, etc.

The effort of the City Hall spent on the information campaign facilitating to submit application for the inhabitants also should be appreciated. During first editions of LBO, starting from the second edition, the Information Desk was established where inhabitants could find expert assistance of specialists from certain City Hall departments. In recent years this role has mostly been played by the “Pricelist – estimated investment costs” tool available at the LBO website where project designers (leaders) can reliably assess costs of their ideas. Also, attention should be paid to the well prepared and intuitive “City map” where borders of areas established for CB purposes and plots for implementation of projects and belonging to the municipality were marked. This map, compatible with the application registration form, enables to plan a project only on respective plots of land, so it is possible to avoid situations when a project cannot be implemented, because the city has not authority to manage certain areas. In this regard in the FAQ tab you can find information on the Local Spatial Development Plan and where it can be found and how ownership titles of certain plots of land can be checked. The valuable practice related to frequency is connecting of CB promotional activities with the popular city event called The Kite Day (the official responsible for CB) where it was possible to know the projects and cast votes.

Another good practice in Legnica is evaluation that was performed as public consultations after the 2020 LBO edition. They were conducted in the following forms: 1) online evaluation survey available at the City Hall website and 2) deliberative meeting in the so called “World Cafe” form that took place in the Civic Dialogue Centre. The report on the consultations is available at the website, including the submitted proposals of the inhabitants

and feedback they received regarding possible implementation. These were first consultations conducted in this form, though, as previously declared by the City Hall, LBO evaluations were performed on the basis of the survey among the inhabitants in previous years, but there is no information available on what rules were used for this purpose<sup>20</sup>.

### 2. Civic budgeting in Legnica – selected results of the survey conducted among the inhabitants

The first question we asked in the survey referred to the projects that should be realised within LBO. Let us remind only infrastructural projects are allowed now and this mostly responds to the expectations of the inhabitants. 57% of the respondents think projects should refer to road and transport infrastructure (bicycle paths, roads, pavements, parking lots), while 41% selected green areas (e.g. parks) and 33% decided it should be sport and leisure (sport classes, playing fields, playgrounds). All interviewed respondents concordantly stated playgrounds dominated first LBO editions, resulting from the genuine need to have them, as such infrastructure in Legnica was insufficient. With time the number of new playgrounds started to diminish, but some interviewed persons even proposed to *impose a ban on construction of playgrounds (...) because there are plenty of them now* (the author of one of the rejected projects).

25% of the respondents declared the CB assets should be spent on health (preventive actions, purchase of medical equipment), while 23% and 21% wanted these funds to be spent respectively on ecology and culture. As in some answers people could consider both soft and hard projects (e.g. sport or health) and it was possible to select more than one answer, it is impossible to indicate precisely the number of answers supporting the need to include soft projects into LBO, but it is at least 25%. One of our respondents indicated these needs should emerge as natural transformation of LBO:

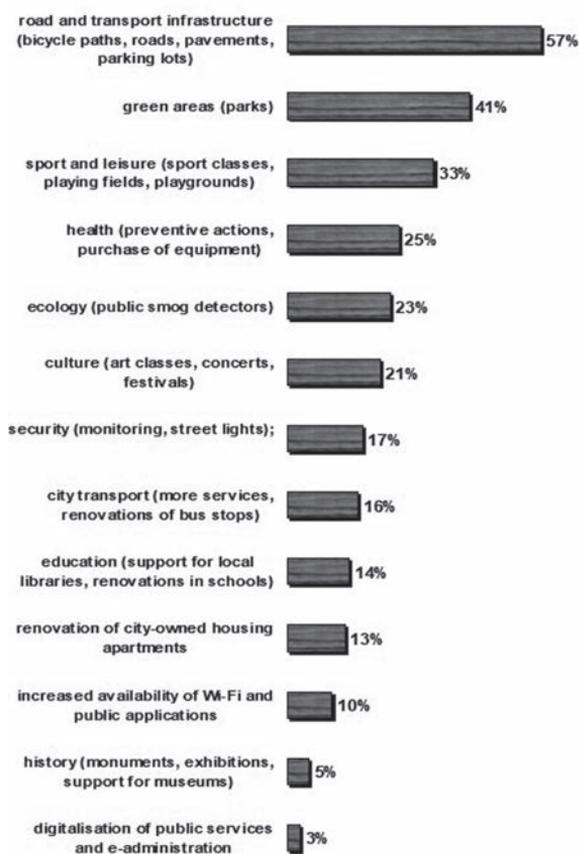
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<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 10.

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

*when these basic needs are met, I think at the next stage the more ambitious needs emerge..., for example related to culture, sport, some events. I think the time is coming to slowly allow so called soft projects to be submitted within the Civic Budget. In other cities this practice is already available, while in Legnica we are still allowed to submit only investment projects (the author of the implemented project).*

**Chart 31. Select three most important types of activities you think CB projects in your city should be implemented among**

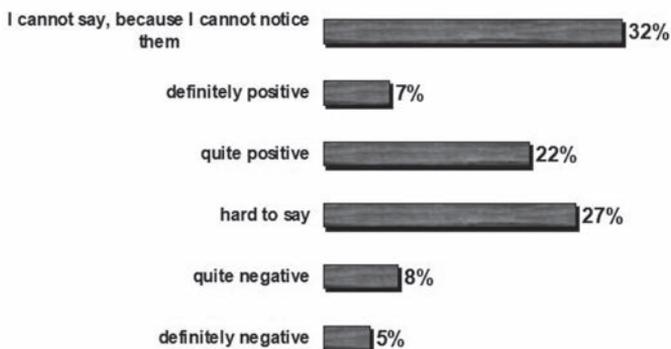


Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

## Civic budgeting in Legnica – desk research and survey results

The information activities of the city authorities are assessed positively by 29% of respondents (22% quite positively, 7% definitely positively) and only 13% described them negatively (5% definitely negatively, 8% quite negatively). It is worth mentioning that 32% admitted they could not assess the CB promotional activities, because they could not notice them in their nearest surroundings, while 27% selected the “hard to say” answer. The last two groups constituted 59% of the respondents who were unable to give specific opinion on city promotional activities. Though we assess them positively in our analysis, it needs to be said they are mostly directed to project leaders and they mostly refer to the guidelines how to submit forms or generally available information on LBO proceedings. Also, the difficulties in providing information to all social activities in the city, including CB, seems to be characteristic for the entire country or even region. In Legnica it is especially seen in case of elderly people: *plenty of seniors do not know what this Civic Budget is really about, because the term itself is not clear to them, as such a tool was unthinkable when they were young or even in later years* (the author of the implemented project).

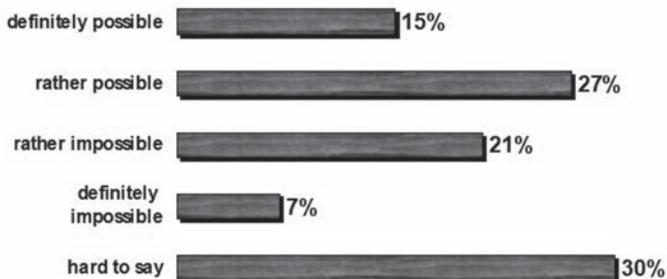
**Chart 32. What is your opinion about the information actions regarding CB, conducted by the city authorities?**



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When answering the question on possible interference of the city authorities in the CB results, 42% of the respondents thought it possible (27% rather possible, 15% definitely possible), while 28% declared differently (7% definitely impossible, 21% rather impossible). 30% of the interviewees were unable to give a clear answer and selected the “hard to say” answer. These answers are not confirmed in statements made by the local politicians, officials or project applicants interviewed by us. They indicate quite clearly that influence of officials or participation of politicians on selection of projects for LBO is minor, though they mentioned some problematic situations, namely submitting projects by some city councillor or division of one winning project into two stages without letting the inhabitants know about it. Even if rare, such situations can create and maintain the feeling of politicisation of CB-related activities for a long time. During the discussion held regarding the aforesaid situation it was decided *councillors are citizens, too* (the representative of the executive authorities), so he was not excluded from the group of persons authorized to submit projects, however some of our interlocutors concluded that *such situations were kind of ambiguous and unfavourable for project's author instead of helping them* (the author of the implemented projects).

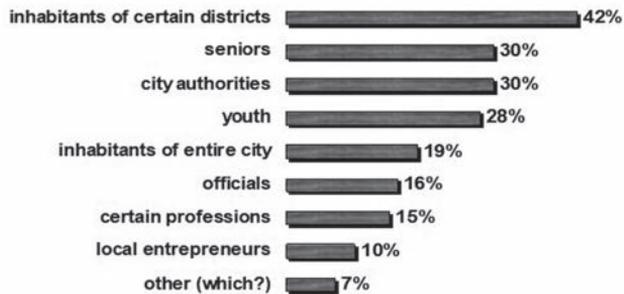
**Chart 33. Do you think it is possible the city authorities could interfere with the CB results?**



## Civic budgeting in Legnica – desk research and survey results

42% of the respondents in Legnica selected inhabitants of certain districts as the group gaining the most profit from CB projects. 30% selected seniors, also 30% said it would be city authorities, while 28% voted for the young people. Detailed information was presented at the chart below.

**Chart 34. Which social groups gain the largest profit from CB in your opinion?**



Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

When it comes to factors encouraging inhabitants to participate in the last CB edition, 55% of the respondents selected convenient form of voting (28% encouraging, 27% quite encouraging), 45% voted for availability of information, 44% for interesting and important projects and 41% for skills and involvement of project authors. Level of own knowledge (27%) and skills and involvement of officials/ councillors (22%) turned out to be less important for the survey participants. As much as 60% gave the “hard to say” answer. Also, the most discouraging factor was skills and involvement of officials/councillors (19%), followed by level of own knowledge (16%). Detailed information was presented in the table below.

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Table 8. Specify to what extent certain factors had influence on general participation of the city inhabitants in the latest CB edition?

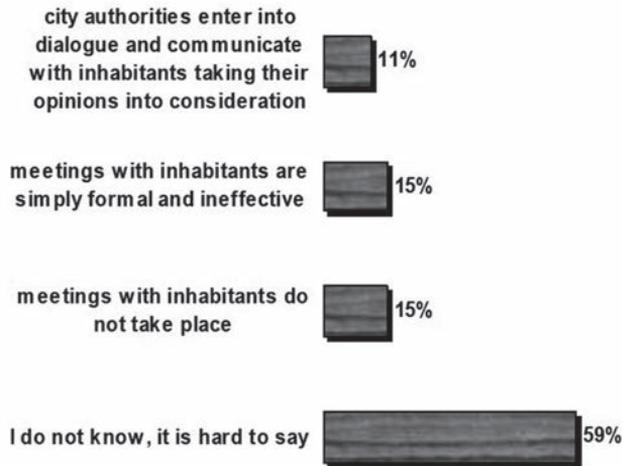
		Encouraging	Quite encouraging	Hard to say	Quite discouraging	Discouraging
1)	Availability of information	21%	24%	45%	5%	6%
2)	Convenient form of voting	28%	27%	36%	5%	4%
3)	Interesting and important projects	23%	21%	44%	7%	5%
4)	Skills and involvement of officials/councillors	10%	12%	60%	11%	8%
5)	Skills and involvement of project authors	16%	25%	47%	6%	5%
6)	Level of own knowledge	17%	20%	47%	8%	8%

Note: *the percentages could not add up to 100 due to the possibility of multiple choice.*

11% of the respondents admitted the city authorities entered into dialogue and discussions with inhabitants, taking their opinions into consideration. Other respondents did not assess CB-related public consultations conducted by the city authorities positively. 15% of the surveyed inhabitants said meetings with inhabitants were only formal and ineffective. The same number of the respondents thought meetings with inhabitants did not take place. It is worth noticing as much as 59% were unable to give a clear answer to the questions and selected the “hard to say” answer. This indicates the previous social LBO evaluation was only symbolic. As a result, the CB-related dialogue initiated in Legnica after the 2020 edition is a positive symptom, however the city authorities underline these consultations are hampered by the CB schedule concluding with the autumn voting, when real evaluation starts: *inhabitants are not much involved in this evaluation,*

*because this happens after voting, when emotions go down... this takes place in November which is usually a gloomy and pessimistic month. And there are very few inhabitants during these evaluation meetings. When it comes to the online survey, only several dozens of inhabitants filled it in (the representative of the executive authorities). Some substitute for this type of consultations were Consultations Desks or subsequent close cooperation with PTET during verification and preparation of projects, but we must remember these are the mechanisms limited to projects leaders, i.e. to the most active individuals and this only partially reflects needs and expectations of all inhabitants.*

**Chart 35. How do you evaluate the process of public consultations regarding CB in your city (open discussion, working meetings and dialogue between authorities and inhabitants)?**

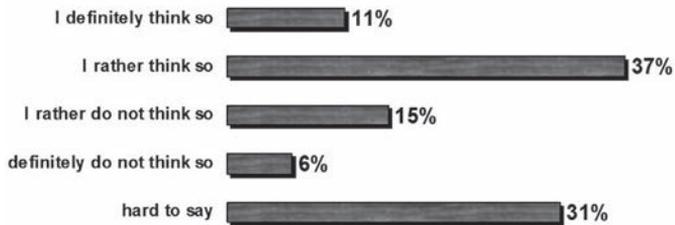


48% of the respondents thought the city authorities took the opinions of inhabitants into consideration (11% I definitely think so, 37% I rather think so), while 21% selected differently (6% I definitely do not think so, 15% I rather do not think so). 31% of the respondents could not express

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

their opinions and selected the “hard to say” answer and this proves the direction and pace of LBO evolution are correct, being able to balance between the most important challenges and problems and maintaining continuity and transparency of this process for inhabitants.

**Chart 36. In general, do you think the opinions of the inhabitants of your city are taken into consideration by the city authorities during the decision-making process regarding CB?**



## Civic budgeting in Nowa Ruda – desk research and survey results

### 1. Profile of civic budgeting in Nowa Ruda in view of desk research

The city introduced the civic budget in 2018 and the second edition was conducted in 2020. The process was initiated by councillors supported from the very beginning by the Mayor and key city officials. The local executive authorities are responsible for monitoring and implementation of CB. The first edition was conducted with the city divided into certain areas, while the second one without this division, because it did not correspond to the borders of the ancillary units, which is a requirement introduced by the new statutory act. In 2020 it was decided to change the method of submitting projects and voting and only the remote (on-line) form became available, however personal voting – as one of options – was reinstated in the next CB edition. According to one of the inhabitants we talked to, lack of possibility to vote personally could have negative influence on availability of the civic budget for some inhabitants (the author of one the rejected projects). In this case, mostly because of the pandemics, application of such measures should be treated as an understandable and justified exception, while the comeback of the tradition form of voting is seen as city hall's initiative with purpose to develop social inclusion.

#### Assets assigned to CB

The planned total amount of assets assigned to the civic budget in 2019 was 247,000 PLN, including 107,000 PLN for the city-wide task and 140,000 PLN for the tasks in certain parts of the city. In the next edition the projects for 290,000 PLN and then 300,000 PLN were selected. It is the upper limit of expenses set in the Regulations, while it depends of the

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

voting results whether it would be reached. In order to avoid the problem of unassigned assets, the civic budget task team can decrease the amount for a selected project in cooperation with its author by limiting the task scope. It happened that project budgets were increased, because during implementation it turned out their costs were underestimated: *We had this outdoor gym implemented and its estimate cost reached 50,000 PLN and then it turned out it cost 87,000 PLN. We decided to finish the investment to have any benefits and to prevent this spent money from wasting* (the official responsible for CB).

#### Officials attending to CB

In Nowa Ruda the Municipal Fund Department is responsible for CB, while the main person conducting the process is the Treasurer of the City of Nowa Ruda. Verification of the tasks submitted for CB is also verified by the Civic Budget Task Team in the City of Nowa Ruda, established by the Mayor. During *desk research* we were unable to determine its members (neither persons nor functions), but from the interview made with the official responsible for CB it can be concluded that they are heads of certain substantive departments, however it was not the Citizens' Affairs Department. They perform mostly supporting technical functions, providing information on the city property, etc.

#### Local formal regulations

The first edition of the civic budget in Nowa Ruda was organized on the basis of the resolution no. 386/XLI/17 of the City Council in Nowa Ruda of December 28, 2017 on conducting public consultations with the inhabitants of the City of Nowa Ruda, regarding implementation of the project called "The civic budget in the City of Nowa Ruda in 2019". For purposes of 2019 civic budget implementation the city was divided into the three

following areas: Drogosław, Centrum and Słupiec, however their borders did not correspond to the borders of the self-government ancillary units.

Tasks to be implemented within the civic budget can be submitted by all city inhabitants of the city of Nowa Ruda who during the year of voting turned 15 and had permanent domicile address in the city. Each inhabitant could submit only one city-wide task proposal and one task referring a certain part of the city and a comprehensive task (two since the second edition). Each application needed to be supported by at least 20 signatures of persons with domicile address in the city. The limit of 15 years of age and the rule of domicile address in Nowa Ruda are the conditions to be met in order to be entitled to vote. Projects must meet formal requirements, but, interestingly, they can be implemented outside the municipality area, if an owner of a given land agrees to give it over to the city free of charge. The category of tasks funded from the civic budget assets is also vast – they can be investment and renovation projects, but also social, cultural or sport-related, however within the previously selected projects the vast majority are hard projects.

The 2020 edition was organized on the basis of the resolution no. 21/III/18 of the City Council in Nowa Ruda of December 28, 2018 on conducting public consultations with the inhabitants of the City of Nowa Ruda, regarding implementation of the project called “The civic budget in the City of Nowa Ruda in 2020. The main change, when compared to the previous edition, was withdrawal from the division into city-wide projects and projects assigned to certain city areas, that was also related to re-organization of the process of project submitting and voting. However, the city authorities underline inadequacy of these stipulations to the actual situation, noting that precise observation of the statutory act may lead to unequal development of the city divided into three strongly differing parts, as a result of historical issues. In order to mitigate these effects and lead to fairer distribution of the projects, the two of our interlocutors mention their attempts to ensure equal division of assets for all three parts of the city: *Obviously, in spite of lack of the Civic Budget, these projects are generally equally distributed in these 3 parts..., in the informal way. If we officially*

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

*divided this Budget into 3 parts with this statute, such a resolution would have been revoked by the voivode (the official responsible for CB). It is not the only example in the cities we investigated, that brings some doubts regarding adequacy of the statutory solution based on the idea to define the civic budget within the formally established ancillary. As a result, the solution seems to be imperfect and not adjusted to all local conditions.*

#### Good practices

The interesting solutions is used, if there is will to implement tasks at the lands not owned by the city. Then the city needs to have the free-of-charge and time-unlimited right to manage a real estate (confirmed by submitting an application and a land lending contract by the applicant before implementation of the task, followed by the obligation to transfer the ownership title to this land to the city of Nowa Ruda). As a result, there are more locations where investments can be conducted, including the lands of housing cooperatives or private owners, however it raised some chaos among the interviewed applicants: the author of the winning projects praised officials for staying in touch and fast response supporting the activities in this very field, while the author of the disqualified project indicated it was lack of said response that resulted in disqualification of his project (the author of one of the rejected projects).

It is worth mentioning that the civic budget in Nowa Ruda has the very innovative and transparent dedicated website. It goes beyond the most common template used in cities of this level of population, that only presents general rules, schedule, submitted tasks, registry of old information, etc. At the website you can find the so called maps of the implemented projects on which they were marked, including descriptions and estimate costs and divided into projects selected in certain editions. The city also publishes the specially prepared poster templates for inhabitants, that can be used to popularize their projects. Also, considering the pandemics, support signature lists can also be made via the Nowa Ruda Civic Budget platform.

Another good practice implemented in Nowa Ruda is also the possibility to limit the task scope, when the amount that was left for assignment within CB is not sufficient to cover all costs of the next project. This allows for more efficient use of assets, because the entire amount can be spent. Let us also mention that this limitation is initiated by the team consisting of officials, but it is not their high-handed decision, as it must be made together with the project author.

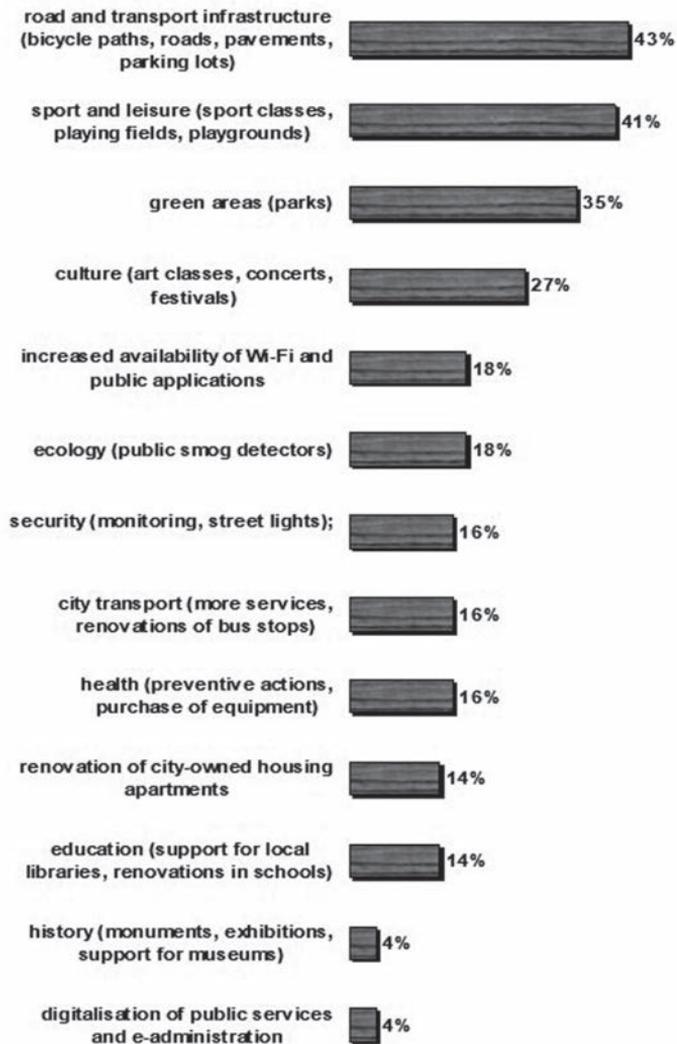
Also, in Nowa Ruda the number of people that needs to support a certain project is greater than the limit specified in the act. As a result, a project needs to be supported by the community even before being submitted. As one of our interlocutors said, *when someone cannot collect 20 signatures, how will they be able to popularise their project before voting? You need to go through this application, so you surely need to be open and be able to communicate with other people, you need to be able to encourage other persons to vote... otherwise, it will be very difficult to realise even the best idea possible* (the official responsible for CB).

## **2. Civic budgeting in Nowa Ruda – selected results of the survey conducted among the inhabitants**

Among the most important areas the CB projects should implemented in, the surveyed inhabitants of Nowa Ruda selected road and communication infrastructure (bicycle paths, roads, pavements, parking lots, 43%), sport and leisure (sport classes, playing field, playgrounds, 41%) and green areas (e.g. parks, 35%), followed by culture, increased availability of Wi-Fi and public mobile applications, ecology, security and health, reflected in the CB voting results, in which infrastructural projects (construction of playgrounds, modernisation of cultural institution facilities, purchase equipment for school and Voluntary Fire Brigades) usually win. Well organised groups of inhabitants are also involved on behalf of organisation of the outdoor concert that has been regularly funded from the CB assets.

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

**Chart 37. Select three most important types of activities you think CB projects in your city should be implemented among**

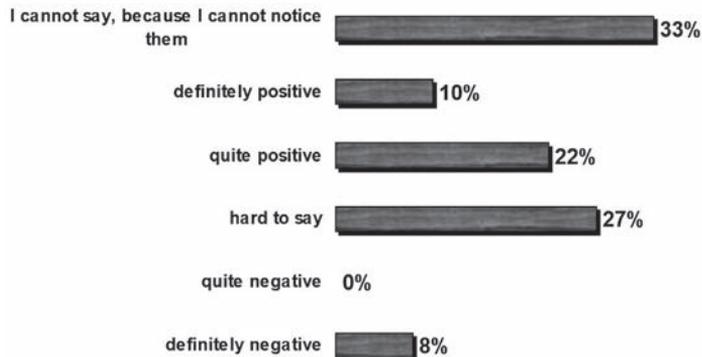


Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

## Civic budgeting in Nowa Ruda – desk research and survey results

When assessing information activities of the city authorities, votes of inhabitants were divided into more less equally numerous groups. 33% of the respondents were unable to assess them, because they could not notice such activities, 27% selected the “hard to say” answer, while 32% assessed the CB-related information activities positively (10% definitely positively, 22% quite positively). The negative opinion was given by 8% of the respondents. The poor reception of these activities probably results from lack of interest in public involvement in some inhabitants, the problem indicated by our interlocutors in Nowa Ruda: *As I say, there is no excuse you did not know..., obviously, there are plenty of people who did not know about this Budget, because they do not want to..., but surely not as a result of lack of any information* (the author of the implemented project). It also vastly depends on certain regions, because the City Hall limits its promotional activities to online channels (City Hall website, CB platform and intensive popularization of CB in social media) and local media. Posters, leaflets and other printed materials are made available at the website for downloading and it is up to project authors to decide whether to use them or not.

**Chart 38. What is your opinion about the information actions regarding CB, conducted by the city authorities?**



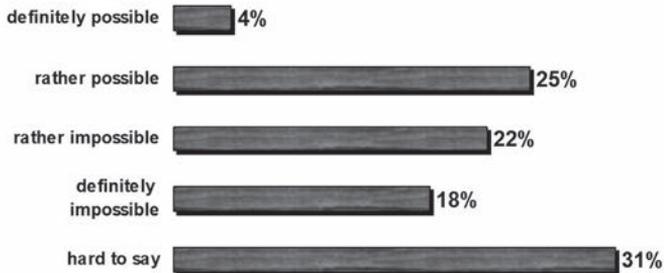
Is it possible the authorities of Nowa Ruda may manipulate the CB results? 31% of the respondents were unable to answer this question and

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

selected the “hard to say” answer, 40% of them were convinced it was impossible (22% rather impossible, 18% definitely impossible). The slightly less number of people thought such interference was possible (29%, including 25% for rather possible and 4% for definitely possible). However, all persons we interviewed, namely politicians, city hall employees and CB project authors, definitely exclude such influence, seeing no purpose or even a possibility for officials to interfere with the process of submitting tasks and with their results.

On the other hand, let us mention that the authorities still try to informally, as it is impossible in the current conditions imposed by the regulations in 2018, and equally divide the assets for three city parts that are not ancillary units from the formal point of view. This shows that, though the aforesaid question is seen negatively as the CB process being manipulated by the city authorities, they still and always have influence on its shape and this does not need to result in decreased quality. In this case it is just the opposite, as the goal is to achieve sustainable development of certain city parts.

**Chart 39. Do you think it is possible the city authorities could interfere with the CB results?**

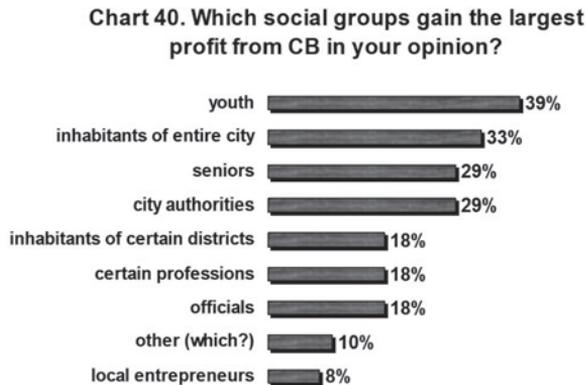


The respondents decided that the social groups gaining the largest benefits from the CB projects are youth (39%) and inhabitants of the entire city (33%). In four of five interviews we made in Nowa Ruda the interviewees

## Civic budgeting in Nowa Ruda – desk research and survey results

directly indicated the Voluntary Fire Brigade as the main beneficiary of these projects as result of good organisation, preparation and popularisation of projects. These activities, though addressed to one institution, can be seen as those serving all inhabitants of Nowa Ruda. Other groups selected in the survey were seniors (29%) and city authorities (29% and additional 18% of votes for officials). In the latter case the problem may be that *for the city authorities the Civic Budget is a very crucial matter..., especially in the promotional context... kind of PR* (the author of one of the rejected projects). Also, our interlocutors remembered well the example of some councillor who belonged to the group that had initiated CB in Nowa Ruda and then tried to take an opportunity to promote himself in the next election.

Other social groups were less indicated by the respondents.



Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

Similarly to other investigated cities, the respondents in Nowa Ruda selected interesting and important projects (64%) and convenient form of voting (62%) as the most important factors encouraging to participate in CB. Also, highly appreciated were skills and involvement of project authors (60%) and officials and councillors (53%). In the latter case it was

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

also the factor selected as the most discouraging to participate in the process (18%), though it is a relatively low number. As it can be concluded from our research, it is the situation typical for the entire country, while skills and assistance provided by officials are highly evaluated by persons who had direct contact with them. However, it does not mean there are no things to improve, as indicated by the author of one of the rejected projects who underlined lack of additional assistance from officials as a reason he was unable to fill in missing information in his project that was finally not qualified for voting.

Table 9. Specify to what extent certain factors had influence on general participation of the city inhabitants in the latest CB edition?

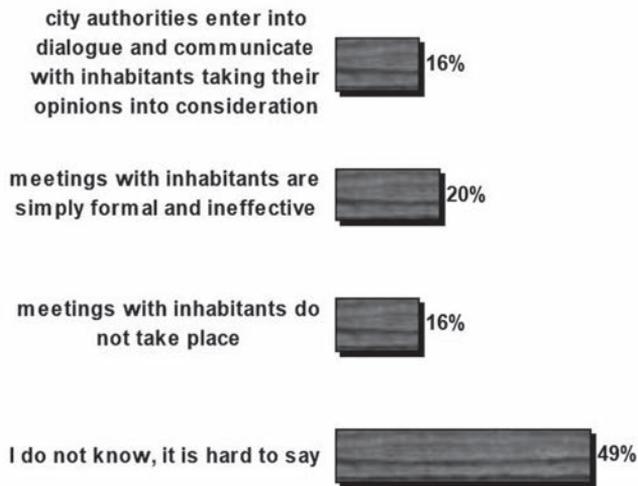
		Encouraging	Quite encouraging	Hard to say	Quite discouraging	Discouraging
1)	Availability of information	27%	29%	27%	8%	8%
2)	Convenient form of voting	25%	37%	31%	–	6%
3)	Interesting and important projects	27%	37%	25%	2%	8%
4)	Skills and involvement of officials/ councillors	20%	33%	29%	6%	12%
5)	Skills and involvement of project authors	25%	35%	29%	4%	6%
6)	Level of own knowledge	29%	18%	37%	6%	10%

Note: *the percentages could not add up to 100 due to the possibility of multiple choice.*

As in other cities, the majority of the respondents in Nowa Ruda selected the “hard to say” answer, when asked about the CB consultations, while only 16% said the city authorities entered into dialogue with inhabitants.

This confirms our observations from the interviews that evaluation and changes in civic budgeting in Nowa Ruda are made on the internal level, i.e. they are conducted by the City Hall and the city authorities.

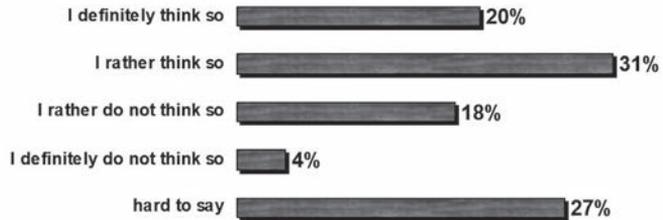
**Chart 41. How do you evaluate the process of public consultations regarding CB in your city (open discussion, working meetings and dialogue between authorities and inhabitants)?**



51% of the surveyed inhabitants answered their opinions were taken into consideration, when CB decisions were made. However, on the basis of the conducted interviews we can conclude that, firstly, *public Civic Budget consultations did not take place. Simply, there was no need for that...* (the representative of the executive authorities). On the other hand, some interviewees could not understand question about CB participatory tools, so we conclude that such disproportion in answers results from understanding the second question as whether the voting results are related to the declarations that the selected projects will really be implemented.

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**Chart 42. In general, do you think the opinions of the inhabitants of your city are taken into consideration by the city authorities during the decision-making process regarding CB?**



## Civic budgeting in Opatów – desk research and survey results

### 1. Profile of civic budgeting in Opatów in view of desk research

The civic budget in the Opatów Municipality was started in 2018, when projects to be implemented in 2019 were selected. The second edition was held in 2020, while there is no information on subsequent editions. All materials referring to the City Budget, including legal acts (resolutions, decisions), project application form and ballot paper templates, regulations and other documents, were posted in the Public Information Bulletin in the “civic budget” tab. The civic budget was realized in Opatów in the city-wide version without division into ancillary units and topic categories. Since the beginning it had been implemented within the currently valid act, so its amendment changed nothing. There were some minor formal corrections in the second edition, but in the next years the procedure was halted. Opatów is a rural-urban municipality, so civic budget implementation is not obligatory in it. As underlined by the official we talked to, *It is very important that this budget is not obligatory... such municipality like Opatów can choose whether to implement it or not* (the official responsible for CB). It turned out to be crucially important during the pandemics that had negative influence on budgets is small rural and rural-urban municipalities, so flexibility to decide on introduction of civic budgets in the form and range specified in the act for urban municipalities is seen as a good solution.

Let us also mention that Opatów is a rural-urban municipality that has also some impact on civic budgeting: *As far as I remember, there was a motion submitted before the Complaint, Motion and Petition Committee to divide the Civic Budget into the City Civic Budget and the Rural Areas Civic Budget. And we had a big issue with that ... because there is also this Village Fund that is obligatory. And we had to consider this when thinking whether to divide the Civic Budget or not... It was difficult*

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*to find a good solution. Finally, we did not divide this CB, but we may be forced to do this in the future* (the representative of the legislative authorities). Though such municipalities do not have to implement CB, they are entitled to do so. Then in some villages there are coexisting civic budgets and village funds, the latter being the form of participatory budgeting, as specified in the act.

#### Assets assigned to the civic budget

100,000 PLN were assigned to implementation of the civic budget in 2019 (0.21% of the municipal budget), while in 2020 it was 105,000 PLN (0.22% of the civic budget). In the interviews we conducted the assets are often described as insufficient for implementation of ambitious projects properly encouraging to vote for them (the representative of the legislative authorities, the official responsible for CB), though it is still a significant burden for budget of a small municipality.

#### Officials attending to CB

Planning and conducting of the civic budget project selection process is the duty of the Organizational Team in which two people perform most of operations. The City Hall Secretary is responsible for the civic budget and since 2019 the Complaint, Motion and Petition Committee of the Opatów City Council has also been involved. In 2018 the Civic Budget Team was established; it comprised of 10 persons representing City Hall (3 persons), Residential Area Council, City Council (4 persons) and villages in the municipality (2 village leaders).

During the stages of detailed cost estimation and then project implementation the Investment Department is also involved in the budget works. Let us mention that in Opatów *project authors pre-evaluate their projects, then we have to prepare cost estimates... we have to conduct tender*

*proceedings for project implementation and these tasks have to be executed by the municipality (the official responsible for CB). This lowers the approval threshold for project authors who can rely on City Hall's experience regarding project final cost estimates. This experience can also be seen in flexibility of Department works during project implementation: *Implementation of the investment was generally executed by the municipality; while we, the initiators, wanted better tools to be installed at this playground than those offered by the company indicated by the municipality. And they give us a free hand when it came to find a suitable contractor* (the author of the winning project).*

### Local formal regulations

In August 2018 the City Council in Opatów enforced the resolution on conducting public consultations among the inhabitants of the municipality of Opatów, regarding the “Civic Budget in the Municipality of Opatów for the year 2019” (Resolution no. XLVII/392/2018 of the City Council of July 31, 2018). This initiative *was presented by one of the councillors. He might have been inspired by functioning of this Budget in larger cities* (the representative of the executive authorities). The first Civic Budget Team for the year 2019 was established by Mayor's decision. The team consisted of 10 persons, including officials, councillors and village leaders. One of their duties was conducting public consultations with the inhabitants of the Opatów Municipality on the Civic Budget, popularisation of the budget, monitoring of correct process implementation, providing assistance for project authors, conducting formal and substantive verification of submitted projects, preparation and publication of the list of the projects to be voted, monitoring of the voting and preparation of the final report. It was also decided that the tool would be evaluated by the Team member and persons assigned by the Mayor.

Projects of the tasks submitted to the civic budget could refer to investment, renovation or other tasks within municipal competences, from

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such fields like construction, modernisation or renovations of streets, pavements, parking lots, street lights, sport and leisure facilities; arrangement and modernization of green areas, banks and tools for exercise and play. This effectively limits CB in Opatów to small investment projects in infrastructure.

Proposals for projects to be implemented within the civic budget could be submitted by all inhabitants of the municipality, electronically or personally via the filled in form. The form must have been supplemented with the list of at least 15 signatures of inhabitants of the municipality. After project verification the project list was drafted and the projects were ranked in compliance with dates of submitting. Then the projects were voted by the inhabitants, personally or electronically, while online voting took the form of sending a scanned ballot paper. The representatives of the authorities we talked to mentioned the possibility to limit voting only to the online form in the future (the representative of the executive authorities), what could make it impossible for the same person to vote several times (the official responsible for CB).

Other rules were adopted in the next edition of the Civic Budget in Opatów. 105,000 PLN were assigned to tasks with reservation that the costs of each of proposed projects must not exceed 50% of the total civic budget value. Also, project proposals for the 2020 edition could be submitted by all inhabitants who turned 18. Information required in the project application form was also changed. It was decided that it was the Mayor in cooperation with the Complaint, Motion and Petition Committee of the City Council in Opatów who are responsible for providing estimated costs of projects. One of the officials we talked to indicated that in this process the Committee was supported by the officials from the Investment Department (the official responsible for CB).

Then the aforesaid Committee, in cooperation with the Mayor, verifies the submitted projects formally and substantively. The formal evaluation is checking whether all documentation elements were submitted, while the substantive assessment is checking the projects in context of maintaining availability, purposefulness and frugality, compliance with

principles of social coexistence, possibility to implement a task within a single budget year, possibility to implement a task within the amount of assets assigned for the civic budget and conformity with valid plans and programmes within the municipality. It was indicated in the resolution that verification of the submitted projects is made on the basis of the so called project analysis chart. Positively or negatively verified projects are supposed to be promptly published with justification at the city hall website. An applicant is entitled to appeal the verification decision within specified time.

Interestingly, on the 2020 CB ballot paper it was possible to give a negative opinion to one project qualified for voting. The annotation on the chart informed that in case a number of negative votes would exceed the half of votes cast on an investment, the Committee would be able to reject a given project, however no project was given more than 5% of such opinions.

### Good practices

Within good practices in Opatów there is involvement of the respective Committee in preparation of exact project cost estimates. It facilitates their submitting by inhabitants who do not have required skills and experience regarding public tenders. On the other hand, it can have negative influence on involvement of inhabitants in CB projects, especially when the process of final project development is not based only on inclusion of project authors in to the Committee Works. It is also the additional burden for the municipality and its officials: *when it comes to city officials, they, frankly saying, would not like this Budget to exist at all, because it is extra work for them* (the representative of the executive authorities). Thus, this shows that sometimes even slightly pro-social actions can negatively influence local relations in terms of implementation of the civic budget, because even minor burden added to standard duties in small and not rich municipalities can be seen as a significant factor. One of our interlocutors

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whose project was rejected said he had not been given justification of that decision to that day: *The truth is no one has spoken to me about this project... no one has asked me about anything. Also, nobody from the City Hall told me I made some mistake or asked me to fill in or improve missing elements* (the author of one of the rejected projects).

The interesting practice is also the possibility to express opinions by inhabitants during voting, including negative views. This allows to avoid controversial projects raising potential objections among some community members. On the other hand, such voting may result in a negative campaign with purpose to eliminate other, competitive and potentially popular projects. Besides, importance of rivalry as a motivating factor was mentioned by our interlocutors: *It seems to me that such a crucial factor having influence on our inhabitants becoming interested in participation in the Civic Budget is kind of will to compete* (the representative of the executive authorities). However, there were also opinions drawing attention to other aspects: *it is nice that in context of this rivalry and will to win people still cooperated... for example in various villages. Previously, these villages were living without contact and, suddenly, the Civic Budget made several villages support this one that was trying to get the funds for a playground* (the representative of the executive authorities). Depending on character of local civic budget and relations within a local community, this idea may lead to some conflicts, but also to the deliberative way of solving problems.

The authorities in Opatów turned out to be flexible and included inhabitants to the CB investment implementation stage. This was seen in the aforesaid situation when the inhabitants did not agree for the projects proposed by the contractor selected by the city, so were given a free hand to do things on their own. Also, positive involvement of the inhabitants could be seen in the same project: *we performed plenty of works with this playground for free... quite many young people also got involved* (the author of the winning project); *it needs to be said that, apart from the Civic Budget funds, the inhabitants were coming to this playground and performed plenty of works for free. I personally witnessed this once, when driving in*

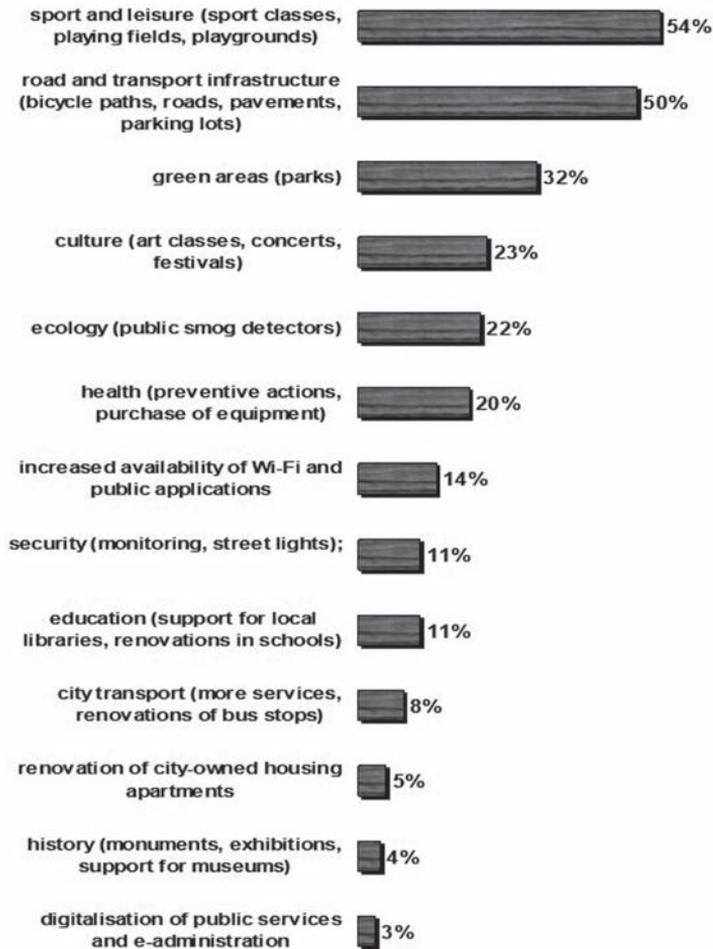
*my car nearby and I could not believe my eyes... I was really impressed* (the representative of the legislative authorities). This proves significant capabilities of civic budget, especially at areas with potentially higher level of public participation (the said project was realized on a rural area, but inhabited by numerous young families, however there is no fuel to activate it properly. It is, however, difficult to conclude to what extent it is a long-lasting effect.

## **2. Civic budgeting in Nowa Ruda – selected results of the survey conducted among the inhabitants**

The survey was conducted in 2021 and the majority of respondents were the pupils from secondary schools in Opatów. Considering the fact that two years had passed since the last civic budget edition until the time this research was performed, we should be aware of impact it could have on provided answers.

As it can be concluded from collected materials, in Opatów the respondents would like CB projects to be realised mostly in the field of sport and leisure (54%) and road infrastructure (50%), as well as green areas (32%). 23% of respondents voted for culture, 22% for ecology and 20% for health. The will to introduce these types of projects to CB in Opatów was also mentioned by the City Council representative we talked to, but in view of so small amounts, it may be a difficult task. These preferences show what projects were selected in local CB, because they mostly referred to sport and leisure infrastructure (5 projects) and pavement renovation (1 project). The detailed data on the discussed issues are presented on the chart below.

**Chart 43. Select three most important types of activities you think CB projects in your city should be implemented among**



Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

The inhabitants of Opatów gave relatively negative opinions to the process of being informed in CB. 36% of the respondents did not notice the process at all and could not assess it, while 28% selected the “hard to say” answer, giving in total 64% of the respondents who did not give specific answer to the question on information activities of the city authorities regarding CB, which is a weak point of the process. Such a result could be influenced by the fact that our research was conducted two years after the last CB voting in Opatów, while there had been only two such attempts before. Our interlocutors indicate the process of growing popularity is a long-lasting task: *in our city this Budget has not been firmly established..., simply, our inhabitants have not got used to it yet* (the representative of the executive authorities).

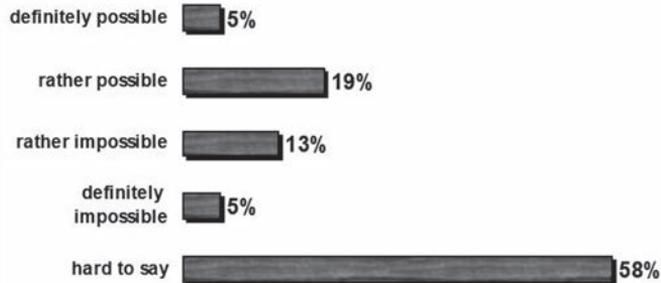
26% of the respondents positively assessed the CB information policy of the authorities (8% definitely positively, 18% quite positively), while 11% gave negative opinions in this regard (4% definitely negatively, 7% quite negatively). The information campaign in Opatów was conducted within three channels, via the website, social media and the local radio station. Unofficial communication channels were also important: *before the first edition news on the Civic Budget was spreading quite quickly, also informally... the first ones to know it was possible to conduct public projects were social activists in certain villages* (the official responsible for CB). In such situation it could be expected the group of people interested in CB would be small, though relatively active, so a minor active group of persons would be able to involve and convince the sufficient number of inhabitants in order to get funds for its project. One of our interlocutors said that *it is difficult for small villages to compete with city projects. Of course, it is possible, because we proved it with our example, but it was not easy* (the author of the winning project).

Chart 44. What is your opinion about the information actions regarding CB, conducted by the city authorities?



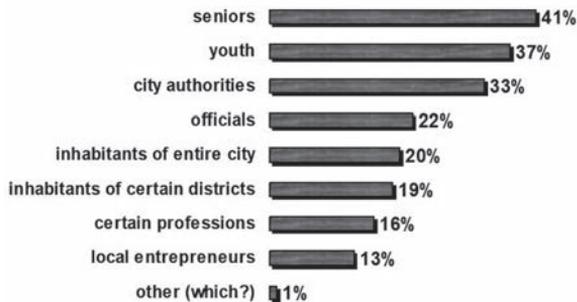
Answering the question in possible interference with the voting results by the city authorities, 24% of the respondents said it was possible, while 18% thought differently. Let us mention as much as 58% of the survey participants did not give a specific opinion on this matter and selected the “hard to say” answer, which means the project evaluation and qualification process itself is not well communicated to inhabitants. In the conducted interviews we could see various problems that may result in negative opinions on fairness of the process. We heard about situations when local politicians used their party-related influence to support their projects: *this councillor lived in that village and all institutions subject to local poviats structures* [of the political party – author’s note] *lobbied for that project* (the representative of the executive authorities). Some problem is also voting for certain projects under pressure of employers or even inmates or *nursing homes who also votes in great numbers for some project after being asked to do so by directors of these institutions* (the representative of the executive authorities). Mentioning these situations by the decision-makers we talked to is good sign as much as they are aware of the problem and there is some chance they will try to counteract such situations in future CB editions. Inclusion of the city inhabitants in this process could increase the number of inhabitants interested in the CB functioning process and enhance its transparency.

**Chart 45. Do you think it is possible the city authorities could interfere with the CB results?**



41% of the respondents thought it was seniors who gained the most profits for CB projects implemented in Opatów, while 37% selected youth. When we give them a closer look, they were indeed customised for children and their parents (playgrounds), as well as youth and young adults (renovation of the dressing room in the local sport club). The respondents also voted for city authorities (33%), officials (22%), inhabitants of the entire city (20%), inhabitants of certain districts (19%), certain professions (16%) and local entrepreneurs (13%).

**Chart 46. Which social groups gain the largest profit from CB in your opinion?**



Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

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Among the most encouraging factors to participate in the last CB edition in Opatów the respondents selected interesting important projects (44%, including 15% encouraging and 29% quite encouraging), skills and involvement of project authors (42%, including 14% encouraging and 28% quite encouraging) availability of information on projects (39%, including 14% encouraging and 25% quite encouraging) level of own knowledge (35%), convenient form of voting (33%) and skills and involvement of officials/councillors (29%). The most discouraging factor were important and interesting projects and skill and involvement of officials/councillors (15%).

Table 10. Specify to what extent certain factors had influence on general participation of the city inhabitants in the latest CB edition?

		Encouraging	Quite encouraging	Hard to say	Quite discouraging	Discouraging
1)	Availability of information	14%	25%	49%	5%	7%
2)	Convenient form of voting	16%	17%	58%	6%	4%
3)	Interesting and important projects	15%	29%	41%	10%	5%
4)	Skills and involvement of officials/councillors	7%	22%	55%	8%	7%
5)	Skills and involvement of project authors	14%	28%	48%	6%	3%
6)	Level of own knowledge	14%	21%	52%	8%	5%

Note: the percentages could not add up to 100 due to the possibility of multiple choice.

54% of the respondents could not assess the process of CB public consultations conducted in Opatów, while 15% thought the meetings were not taking place. 12% of the respondents thought meetings with Opatów

inhabitants are only formal and ineffective. 19% of the surveyed persons thought the city authorities conducted consultations with inhabitants, entered into dialogue with them and took their opinions into consideration. The qualitative data obtained during analysis do not clearly allow to determine whether such consultations did really take place, as the said data provided contradicting information. On one hand, we were assured *such consultations on the Civic Budget do not take place neither in the city, not in the villages. We simply decided with the councillors that they will be contacting inhabitants on their own, determine needs of inhabitants and talk to them about CB* (the representative of the executive authorities). Another of our interlocutors told us that *within the Civic Budget public consultations do not take place formally, they are organised as these informal meetings... people organise them on their own, often simply in the open air* (the representative of the legislative authorities). On the other hand, we heard the following statement on the civic budget consultations at the countryside: *our village leader organised one meeting with the inhabitants of our village in this regard, attended by one councillor* (the author of the winning project).

Nevertheless, there were no organised and comprehensive consultations. Let us also mention other tendency seen in the interviews, namely saying about knowing inhabitants by the politicians, so such consultations would not be necessary or – as mentioned above – could be conducted by councillors: *In turn, I can contact inhabitants constantly, so I perfectly know what is needed in certain villages and I try to meet these expectations of the inhabitants using these external or own assets. I am aware that the Civic Budget can sometimes successful in integrating a given local community, but, frankly saying, nothing bad would happen, if this act of law had not existed* (the representative of the executive authorities); *Maybe I see it wrong, but I think such tools like CB consultations or meetings are not absolutely necessary. Simply, when the budget is announced, people submit their ideas, projects are verified, then voting is held and I cannot see a point to have consultations or meetings organised by the city authorities* (the official responsible for CB). It is the characteristic, somehow

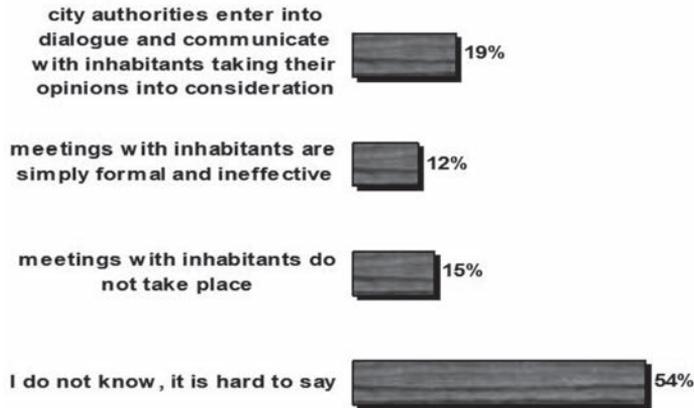
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understandable attitude of many politicians and officials. Politicians are elected in common elections, while officials have skills and knowledge on how the city is operated, resulting in the privileged position to talk about local matters.

Sometimes, this attitude is kind of erroneous, because nobody is able to have complete knowledge on opinions, needs and feelings of all citizens. Surely, it is easier in smaller towns such as Opatów where each councillor represents less than 1,000 persons, but even there it rarely is the case: *I partially agree with these opinions that we sometimes hear that the success of the Civic Budget results mostly from poor work of councillors, residential area councils or village leaders, as councillors are required to talk to people, know their needs and problems and be able to solve them... they should perfectly know what inhabitants in their districts need and where exactly. But it does not look like that* (the representative of the legislative authorities). However, the worse thing is the attitude assuming omnipotence of the authorities and the city hall that is not a good factor for implementation and development of participatory tools. If assuming that “authorities know better”, civic budgets or other forms of consultations can be treated as wasted funds in the most positive approach and as a threat for sustainable development of the city in the worst scenario (*this is what we elect the Council for... and the Mayor, to manage this municipal budget and they are responsible for it, while in case of the Civic Budget neither the Mayor nor the Council are responsible... we take some money from the city budget, close our eyes and wait to see which project is selected. And we have to realise any ideas that come into people's minds within these separated assets* (the representative of the legislative authorities). Interestingly, this attitude is present even at the politician who previously noted that the relations between councillors and citizens were far from ideal.

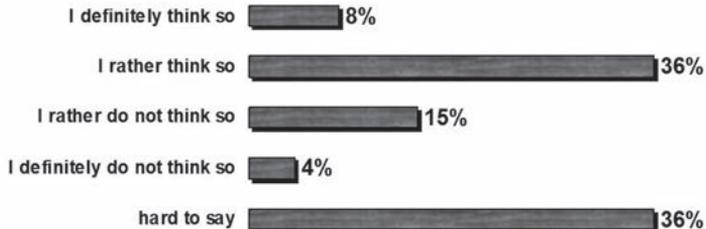
## Civic budgeting in Opatów – desk research and survey results

**Chart 47. How do you evaluate the process of public consultations regarding CB in your city (open discussion, working meetings and dialogue between authorities and inhabitants)?**



44% of the respondents thought their opinions were important for the Opatów authorities and considered during the decision-making process related to submitted CB projects, while 19% thought differently. The significant number of the respondents (36%) could not give a specific answer to this question.

**Chart 48. In general, do you think the opinions of the inhabitants of your city are taken into consideration by the city authorities during the decision-making process regarding CB?**



## Civic budgeting in Puławy – desk research and survey results

### 1. Profile of civic budgeting in Puławy in view of desk research

In Puławy participatory budgeting has been present since 2013, so within the group of 12 cities we analysed it is one of four (beside Sopot, Dąbrowa Górnicza and Legnica) where this form of inhabitants participation was introduced at the earliest. The year 2020 was the only one the procedure was not held because of the pandemics. The city authorities decided to perform local additional activities with purpose to support companies and educational entities. Considering the above, implementation of four winning projects was postponed for 2021, resulting in the amount of almost 1,3 mln PLN.

Locally, civic budgeting has the tendency to slowly sink in people's awareness and the process varies depending on a city. When it comes to turnout in Puławy, it could be better. We can see that even the justified intermission may result in decreased interest and involvement of inhabitants. This can be seen in the statement by the representative of the legislative authorities: *in 2020 (author's note) there was voting of CB projects in Puławy... I voted for them, too... currently, I think it was not a good decision. I know some cities decided differently and voting went as planned. The Civic Budget is a relatively new tool in our country... and then we had this break. If it lasts longer, it may simply die out, someone may say there was something before the pandemics, but it is no point to come back. In my opinion, we should come back to organisation of these editions as soon as possible in order to preserve what we achieved... to make inhabitants aware they have influence on what is going on around them.*

This is why we mostly mean possible disappearance of will among inhabitant to participate in CB in its actual form and current local practices. The data collected in Puławy convince such a threat is also present in cities where the history of civic budgeting is the longest and participation and

dialogue are defined by involved parties very differently. It is another factor convincing to consider contexts related to power of culturally inherited and introduced actual patterns of behaviour. Long story short, there are plenty of rivalry-oriented schemes within these patterns, while cooperating ones are lacking. This can be remedied by genuine popularisation of dialogue, however implementation of this seemingly simple solution, good for Puławy and any other city, is significantly hampered in day-to-day conditions of cooperation shortages. The pro-deliberative change is possible, but it means barriers created by actual behaviour pattern need to be patiently overcome. As a result, continuation of the civic budget is so important, as it constitutes the grounds for popularisation of the process, as correctly referred to by the representative of the legislative authorities we talked to.

#### Assets assigned to CB

In the first two years assets for participatory budgeting reached 1 mln PLN (2013, 2014), then the amount was increased to 2 mln PLN (2015-2017) and it was only slightly increased once more to 2.1 mln PLN, the amount resulting from the amendment of the statutory act (2018-20). In Puławy additional 1% of the city budget is spent on CB, it is quite much when compared to amounts assigned to CB in other cities: *when we started with this idea of 1% for CB, we thought it needed to be a significant amount to make people involve in these CB initiatives. We thought that people would feel that we, self-government local authorities, genuinely want them to join the decision-making process... , that we want them to be partners* (the excerpt from the interview with the representative of the executive authorities). Meanwhile, inhabitants have already got used to this. The author of one of the rejected projects said that *there was too little money in this budget (...) some people have very nice ideas that cannot be realised just because of this financial deficiencies.*

#### Officials attending to CB

The CB procedure is implemented by the Department of Culture, Promotion and Social Communication. Four persons coordinate the CB process, including one that is officially responsible. The organisation of the process goes smoothly and is supported by City Hall employees: *these are very dedicated persons who believe in the ideas of the City Budget. I watch them during the works of the Committees and the City Council sessions where they try to fight for this budget... for example, when the councillors start to say unfavourable things about CB. So, I highly assess cooperation of this unit with project authors, because I can see these relations are friendly* (the excerpt from the interview of the representative of the legislative authorities). The author of one of the rejected projects stated that *cooperation is really very good..., for example, before submitting by project, I came to this CB office several times and the ladies explained everything to me very patiently, I could find out everything from them*. Even more convincing statement was given by the author of one of the realized projects: *cooperation with this office is very good... I do not know what they think about cooperation with me, because they are probably fed up with me from time to time, I drop by there or call them too often, I think... or go there with some documents. (...) I do not have a computer at home, I am no good with it, so they help me, for example with these voting issues*.

In Puławy the Mayor establishes annual project evaluation teams that are supposed to estimate financial costs of the projects and consist of up to twenty persons, mostly officials and legal counselors, that surely makes the team more professional, though the idea of participation suffers a bit. However, in the existing conditions it cannot be a disqualifying factor, but only a suggestion to think over possible modification, because there is this commonly known dilemma between the fast and professional verification and generally slower participatory and consultation-oriented variant. We will address this issue again below in the text.

## Local formal regulations

Participation was introduced in the budgeting process in the resolution no. XXXIII/355/13 of the City Council of April 25, 2013 *on conducting public consultations with the inhabitants of Puławy, regarding the budget of the City of Puławy*. The consultations were organised within four city regions that were not ancillary units, but only areas designated within constituencies. The age limit entitling to submit projects and vote was 16 years. Each region was given 25% of the CB assets specified by the Mayor for a given calendar year, together with the schedule. This division was maintained in next years and in 2015 it was supplemented by the city-wide assets. Projects could be realised not only within own tasks of the municipality, but also within undertakings *resulting* from own tasks of the municipality and tasks of the county (*poviat*), regarding healthcare and public security. In 2017, the fifth sub-local regions was established, maintaining the city-wide assets, while in 2020, in accordance of the amendment of the act from 2020, the division into regions was abolished. The authorities proceeded as told by the law, but unwillingly, because they found the situation deteriorating, which was clearly seen in the statement made by the representative of the local legislative authorities: *this may be difficult, but I think we need to come back to regional budgets..., because then we will come back to residential area budgets*. His conclusions on CB limitations went further, because he also drew attention to the ownership-related context of the legal situation in certain city areas, beside territorial issues: *I would enter some agreements with housing cooperatives, etc. to enable implementation of CB projects on plots of land designated by them, of course not on all of them (...) we have to extend this area for CB project investment quickly. If we fail to do so, CB in Puławy dies out*.

The division into regions has been abolished since the (suspended) 2020 edition, as a result of the amendment of the act of 2018, and in compliance with the resolution no. VIII/70/19 of the City Council in Puławy of May 30, 2019 *on conducting public consultations with the inhabitants of Puławy, regarding the budget of the City of Puławy*. Projects were divided

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on the basis of weighted cost intensity, i.e. small (in 2020 no more than 157,500 PLN) and large (no more than 735,000 PLN). Small projects were assigned 30% of CB assets, while 70% were given to large ones. The detailed procedures were established. Among plenty of less or more detailed regulations there were application support lists with at least 20 signatures, the age limit (16 years) and the appeal procedure. Projects are approved or rejected by the project evaluation team established by the Mayor and its duty is to estimate costs, so project authors do not have to submit cost estimates. Evaluated projects are sent by the Mayor to the Civic Budget Committee at the City Council, whose decisions can be appealed, however the appeal procedure valid during the time of our research raised serious doubts. They were expressed by the representative of legislative authorities: *the appeal procedure regarding Committee's decisions allowing projects for implementation surely needs to be changed, as you appeal to the same Committee... I cannot understand it completely and this must be changed as soon as possible. There are doubts and ambiguity (...) there must be an option to appeal to some other institution.*

#### Good practices

The chances for development of participatory budgeting in Puławy are supported by good and various information practices. Our interlocutors agreed on what one of the authors of the rejected projects said: *I think that if someone says they do not know anything about the Civic Budget, they simply did not wanted to. If someone is completely not interested in things going on in the city they live in, they would not see this CB information even right under their nose. I think information on CB in Puławy was publicly and widely available (...) provided and popularised by each possible channel.* Each CB edition in the city was evaluated and surveys were performed among inhabitants. Results of the surveys were published, though they were not easily available for everyone that should result in rethinking the information methods for example in case of elderly people: *I do not*

*know anything, because I no longer participate in the process, because it is conducted online and, like I said, I do not own a computer... I do not have access to the Internet... so I am excluded from this* (the excerpt from the interview with the author of one of implemented projects).

The interesting practice that should be definitely still observed and thought over is transfer of responsibility for financial cost estimation from project authors to project evaluation teams annually established on the basis of Mayor's decisions. This solution is supposed to increase the level of professionalism of the application cost estimate preparation process. However, let us not forget obvious elements of the theory of organisation and management, namely that releasing from responsibility, also in terms of more onerous financial issues, also results in limited subjectivity. The team consists of twenty people, mostly officials and legal counselors. Undoubtedly, majority of experts in the team brings some professional advantages, though an adverse effect is lack of local participation. This deficiency can only partially be justified with the professional character of the team, because it is, indeed, an expert body, but established on the basis of the act of law with purpose to increase participation of inhabitants. In turn, experts should be helpful to inhabitants regarding the issue of aware participation that is impossible without education, while participatory education is a factor favourable for better understanding of public processes, including financial matters. Within the deliberative process there should be as many possibilities for open sharing of information and mutual, symmetric and partnership-oriented learning as possible. Closed expert groups justify asymmetry that is often justified in certain procedures (for example in terms of security), however similar practices are less understandable in other fields of public activity where we have directly embedded elements of participation and co-deciding and this is the case of the CB formula. Even within the CB idea participation is somehow limited, so it should not be decreased anymore. This comment also refers to actual appeal possibilities. As a result, there is a need for greater socialisation of the application qualification process that should also be connected with reduction of expert and instructive approach on

### **Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities**

behalf of popularisation of partnership-oriented methods based on mutual learning. These methods do not exclude professionalism, though they boldly increase opportunities for participation and mutual education for all willing CB stakeholders. Let us also mention that such conflicts can initiate learning processes. They are inevitable, but they destroy chances for consensual public decisions, when too often and serious. Even then, though, it is possible and advised to try to solve conflicts with purpose to lean to more cooperative strategies. This cooperative tendency does not mean establishment of 'the great coalition of councillor clubs', but sufficiently sustained communication and activities with purpose to enable cooperation in terms of ongoing matters and relatively smooth planning. In turn, non-cooperative rivalry increases affective polarisation and makes chances for consensus very limited, if possible at all. In general, the sphere of local crucial and critical events (known in psychology as peak experiences) should be re-modeled. If they are mostly negative experiences, in which there is definitely more rivalry than cooperation, they are also full of many emotions, both positive, related to individual victories, and negative ones associated with defeats in rivalry, but also with lack of successes, when attempting to undertake more genuine participation and co-deciding. Preservation of these conditions will enhance rivalry tendencies and weaken consensual trends and this comment does not refer only to Puławy, as it is a general and universal conclusion, as the CB process in Puławy is internally diversified, as well as level of involvement of various participation actors. Nevertheless, the participation process in Puławy is above average and constitutes an example of increased involvement rather than increased apathy.

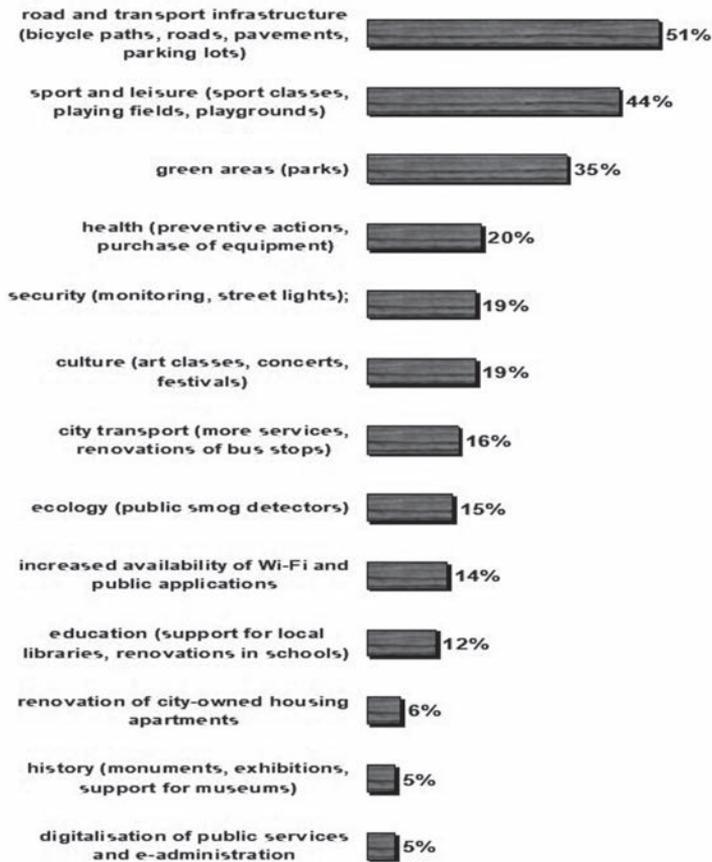
#### **2. Civic budgeting in Nowa Ruda – selected results of the survey conducted among the inhabitants**

The surveyed inhabitants of Puławy indicated that the following projects should be implemented in their city within CB: road and transport

## Civic budgeting in Puławy – desk research and survey results

infrastructure (51%), sport and leisure (44%), green areas (35%), health (20%), security (19%), culture (19%) and city transport (16%).

**Chart 49. Select three most important types of activities you think CB projects in your city should be implemented among**

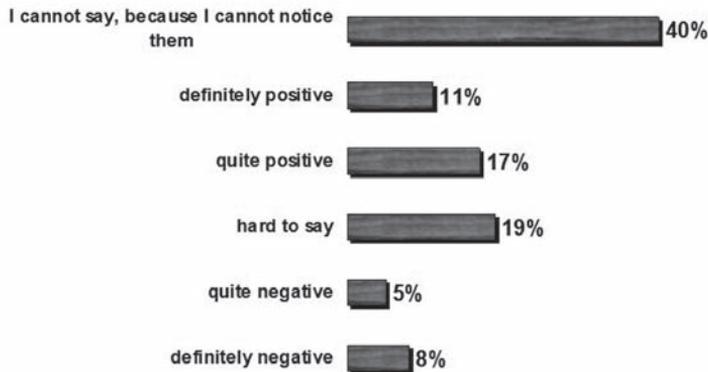


Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

59% of the respondents could not give a specific opinion on information activities conducted by the city authorities (19% – hard to say, 40% I cannot say, I cannot notice them), which is a bit curious in relation with the previously cited statements. However, when we consider that in one of them we witnessed the problem related to using communication tools and lack of access to the Internet, then we can conclude that activities oriented on assistance for digitally excluded persons seem to be the most adequate. Orientation on new forms of information was positively assessed by the representative of the City Council: *we extensively use social media to popularise the idea of CB (...)*, but our interlocutor also indicated *various posters, billboards, leaflets (...)* and information passed (author's note) *also in churches after masses*. Meanwhile, for the majority of the respondents within our non-representative survey the information policy of the city was unnoticed. 28% of them did notice it and evaluated it positively (17% quite positively, 11% definitely positively), while 13% of the respondents thought differently (8% definitely negatively, 5% quite negatively). These results can be commented with the statement of the representative of the legislative authorities, showing the burden of our present times and partially understanding some inability of human perception lost in contemporaneity: *providing information to the inhabitants is not so easy as it seems. I think we (people – author's note) have general problems with communication..., including learning skills (...), there is some objective barrier resulting in our inability to absorb these messages; maybe it is an effect of all this various information we are surrounded with, so we select only these pieces we are interested in.*

**Chart 50. What is your opinion about the information actions regarding CB, conducted by the city authorities?**



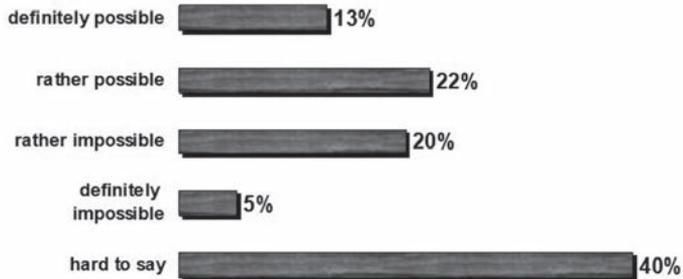
35% of the respondents thought the authorities could interfere with the CB results (22% rather possible, 13% definitely possible).

25% of the surveyed persons thought differently (5% definitely impossible, 20% rather impossible). Let us mention as much as 40% of the respondents selected the “hard to say” answer. The representative of the executive authorities declared no influence from the officials: *no, I did not notice any interference with purpose to select certain projects by the officials (...) I did not see any officials convincing people to vote for selection of specific CB projects, No, hopefully, this is not the direction we are heading into.* Our interlocutor noticed the problem with attempts to increase the influence capital: *Unfortunately, CB is used for political purposes, namely to reach some short-term profits. Sometimes a councillor strongly encourages to vote for some project... they are trying to make an impression it is them who can provide implementation of some investment in their constituency... And it is not a good situation, Hopefully, these situations are not often.* In turn, some management-level official remembered the following case: *unfortunately, we have an attempt to make our CB politics-related (...) the interest of a councillor club turned out to be more important than inhabitants' projects. For years we had had this procedure,*

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*that beside the Project Verification Team there was also evaluation made by the City Council Civic Budget Committee and there these projects were finally approved or rejected. In case of a negative opinion the Committee had to present some convincing justification. And it was working well for many years, there were no controversies and no political contexts. But then some project was rejected because of unjustified reasons... the justification was prepared completely without merit. And only after some time it turned out the land the investment was to be implemented in was used as a location for the monument this political club was supporting very much. It was the only event; earlier or later such situations were not taking place.* This example seems to confirm the previously formed recommendation to promptly monitor the solutions used for qualification of project costs and the appeal procedure.

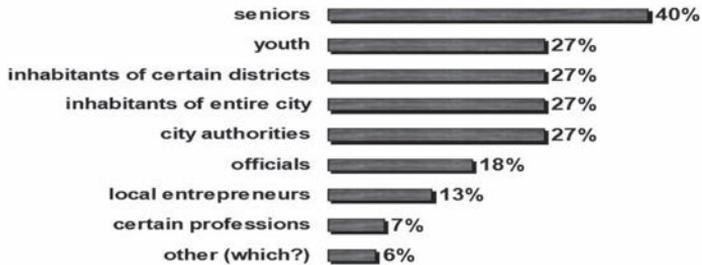
**Chart 51. Do you think it is possible the city authorities could interfere with the CB results?**



Among social groups that are supposed to gain the most profits from CB projects the respondents selected seniors (40%), youth, inhabitants of certain districts, inhabitants of the entire city and city authorities (27% each). This symmetrical distribution, when compared to the leading group, seems to be a bit over-representative. To some extent it was corrected by the statement of the representative of the executive authorities who talked about some detail they may convince to think over actual spheres of corporate

social responsibility: *it will be very difficult to enumerate any groups that gained the most profits in terms of CB. Currently, the so called large and small projects are realised in Puławy. I will give an example, within these large projects we constructed street lights along the road from Puławy to the local nitrogen plant, the biggest local employer... this road is 2 km long and there is the bicycle path alongside. So it would be difficult to point out a single group, because these large projects are quite universal... so the inhabitants can see that this road and the path are profitable for their children or siblings even if not for themselves.*

**Chart 52. Which social groups gain the largest profit from CB in your opinion?**



Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

From our survey it can be concluded that the most encouraging factors to participate in CB were convenient form of voting (41%), interesting and important projects (40%), level of own knowledge (38%) and skills and involvement of project authors (36), while the most discouraging one were skills and involvement of officials/councillors (18%). More less a half of the respondents did not give a specific answer and selected the “hard to say” option for all factors.

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Table 11. Specify to what extent certain factors had influence on general participation of the city inhabitants in the latest CB edition?

		Encouraging	Quite encouraging	Hard to say	Quite discouraging	Discouraging
1)	Availability of information 33/16	19%	14%	51%	5%	11%
2)	Convenient form of voting 41/14	23%	18%	45%	4%	10%
3)	Interesting and important projects 40/15	24%	16%	44%	5%	10%
4)	Skills and involvement of officials/ councillors 25/18	17%	8%	57%	6%	12%
5)	Skills and involvement of project authors 36/15	20%	16%	49%	3%	12%
6)	Level of own knowledge 38/14	20%	18%	50%	3%	11%

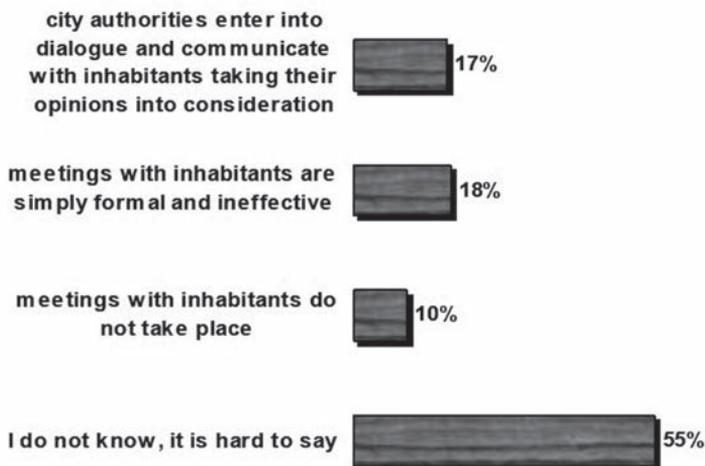
Note: the percentages could not add up to 100 due to the possibility of multiple choice.

When evaluating the public consultation process, 55% of the respondents selected the “I do not know, it is hard to say” answer, 10% claimed the meetings with the inhabitants were not held, while 18% of the surveyed persons thought the meetings with the inhabitants were simply formal and ineffective. Only 17% of the respondents positively assessed the process of public consultation conducted by the city authorities and thought they took their opinions into consideration and entered into dialogue and discussion. The reasons of this opinion distribution were partially explained in the statement of the representative of the executive authorities on involvement deficiencies which seem to be embedded in attitude of the inhabitants of Puławy and which can be observed in the majority of other cities: *we have these CB public consultations in Puławy. The turnout during*

## Civic budgeting in Puławy – desk research and survey results

*meetings was not very spectacular... but there were some people... there are also these CB evaluation consultations, we have these consultations desks. So once again I would like to thank the ladies from this City Hall Civic Budget unit, they prepare these consultations so nicely. So, I think things go not so bad with these consultations. Involvement of officials into consultation-related activities focusing on assistance for project authors was also cited by the author of one of the rejected projects: I was once present during these budget consultations once, they were held in a school, as far as I remember... but I do not remember whether it was 2018 or in 2019. The ladies from the City Hall Civic Budget unit had their tent at the town square and answered the questions on CB, I remember most of them referred to the CB project application procedure. I think there was also the meeting with the officials from the various City Hall departments and probably some councillors (...) I think these meetings are very necessary.*

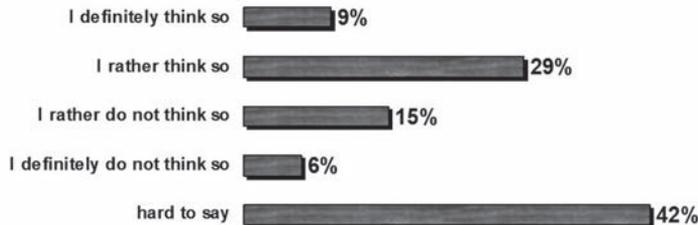
**Chart 53. How do you evaluate the process of public consultations regarding CB in your city (open discussion, working meetings and dialogue between authorities and inhabitants)?**



### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

The Civic Budget is based on participation of city inhabitants in the decision-making process. Do the inhabitants of Puławy think so? The 38% of the respondents thought the city authorities took their opinions into consideration, when making CB-related decisions (29% I rather think so, 9% I definitely do not think so), while 21% thought differently (6% I definitely do not think so, 15% I rather do not think so). As much as 42% of the surveyed persons selected the “hard to say” answer. The statement of the representative of the executive authorities, in which he said that active attitude and practices of efficient involvement of the project authors assisted by eager and efficient officials dedicated to handle the CB matters, is in large contrast with the level of involvement among the majority of the inhabitants: *currently, we do not have serious problems with number of submitted projects... I think this number is quite satisfactory, most of them are of good quality, I hope this will continue like this. However, there is the problem with the number of people voting for the CB projects. (...) some projects are implemented, but only 20-30 persons voted for them... these are not representative numbers. And the voting process is so simple... it takes 2 minutes* (the official responsible for CB).

**Chart 54. In general, do you think the opinions of the inhabitants of your city are taken into consideration by the city authorities during the decision-making process regarding CB?**



## Civic budgeting in Rypin – desk research and survey results

### 1. Profile of civic budgeting in Rypin in view of desk research

CB was introduced in 2016 upon the resolution from 2015. In 2021 the seventh CB edition was held during which the projects for 2022 were selected. The budget is implemented without division into ancillary units. As a result of the amendment of the act, CB is currently conducted upon the council resolution, while it used to be realised upon Mayor's decision. Since the first edition CB in Rypin has been performed on the basis of similar methodology and the only significant correction took place in 2016, when the second CB edition was announced.

Considering the budgetary difficulties and having in mind safety of the inhabitants in view of the pandemics, in May 2020 the City of Rypin resigned from implementation of the 2021 Civic Budget procedure. After a year the procedure was reinstated and the projects for 2022 were selected.

Rypin does not impose amount limits for projects. The only reservation says an amount must not exceed the value of assets assigned to a certain CB edition. As a result, 1 or 2 projects are selected each year. Surprisingly, it is not a bad result, considering the size of the city and assets assigned to CB. The number of submitted and positively verified projects varies from 2 to 7, so it is still a relatively good score. In spite of this, small number of applications, among implemented projects are infrastructural, social, educational and cultural initiatives.

#### Assets assigned to CB

The analysis of the money amounts assigned to CB shows the decreasing tendency. It was 250,000 PLN in 2015, 2016 and 2017, while it has been only

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

150,000 PLN since 2019. One of our interlocutors has a negative opinion on this matter: *Without doubt a weak point of the Civic Budget is decreasing of the money amount assigned to CB from 250,000 to 150,000 PLN* (the author of one of the rejected projects). This is, however, a result of the pandemics and the city authorities hope *it is always temporary, because we are going to come back to these original 250,000 PLN or even more for the Civic Budget* (the representative of the executive authorities). The CB regulations in Rypin does not determine any specific amount, but it only refers to the Multi-Year Financial Forecast of the municipality, which limits availability of this piece of information for inhabitants.

#### Officials attending to CB

During the first editions the Civic Budget was handled by the Head of the Promotion and Public Communication Department, while since 2021 the application registry had been handled by the Department of EU Projects, Development and Sport at the City Hall of Rypin. In compliance with the CB regulations, the Mayor of the City of Rypin also established the Verification Committee comprising of at least 5 members, including employees of the city hall and at least 1 councillor, responsible for formal verification of the submitted projects. Substantive verification was still the duty of respective city hall departments and organisational assigned units, depending on character of applications: *Other Committee members are representatives of certain City Hall departments. If there are some sport-related applications, a representative of the EU Projects Department joins the Committee, while these are cultural projects, this is a representative of the Promotion and Public Communication Department. This Committee is established each year, depending on what submitted projects are about* (the official responsible for CB).

## Local formal regulations

The CB edition was implemented on the basis of the decision no. 155/2015 of the Mayor of the City of Rypin on implementation of the budget for the year 2016. The tasks related to coordination of the CB process were assigned to the Head of the Promotion and Public Communication Department. The process was designed for inhabitants living (as specified in the act) in the city and being of at least 16 years of age. Projects submitted for CB had to be signed by at least 10 authorised inhabitants and since 2016 at least 30. In 2016 it was no more possible to submit applications for Mayor, Councillors and City Hall employees, while inhabitants of Rypin with permanent residence address elsewhere, though willing to submit and select projects, could produce a statement on learning, working or conducting a business activity at the city area.

Projects meeting formal requirements are sent to respective city hall departments or city organisational units in order to conduct a substantive analysis. Among the evaluation criteria it was decided that the following projects cannot be realised within CB: projects generating too high costs after implementation, when compared to values of proposed tasks; that require formal cooperation of external entities, if they did not clearly declare readiness to cooperate in the form of a written formal declaration; that assume implementation of only some part of a task or which do not meet the conditions of general accessibility. Such a form also imposes relatively high requirements on project authors, not only connected with previous public consultations, but also with correct service and task implementation cost estimation and starting possible earlier cooperation with external entities.

During the first CB edition in Rypin the tasks to be implemented were selected by authorised inhabitants in direct, general and open voting. In 2015 each voting inhabitant could support one or two task projects from the ones listed on their ballot paper, while in later editions it was only one project. Also, in 2016 the regulations on possible public presentation of submitted projects were added.

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Considering the amendment of the statutory act in 2019, the regulations and CB implementation rules were defined in the Resolution of the City Council in Rypin no. VIII/55/2019 of April 26, 2019, adjusting CB to the new requirements, though not introducing significant amendments in it. However, it should be underlined that it does not mean total lack of evolution in CB in Rypin, as the officials and institutions responsible for its implementation try to identify main problems and react to them. According to our interlocutors, the biggest problems were raised by the issue of correct cost estimate: *We have just implemented the option to consult projects in context of technical issues and implementation cost estimates. Also, we introduced the option to vote and submit applications and support lists online* (the representative of the legislative authorities). The issue of a correct cost estimate is also related to the biggest problem the authorities of Rypin have had to face until now, namely significant underestimation of one of projects: *Here I must say about some positively verified project that won during voting, but has not been implemented until now. We were forced to change the location... we had to buy the additional plot of land for this investment. It also turned out this investment cost 3 times more than assessed in the cost estimate* (the representative of the executive authorities). However, determination of the authorities to complete this project is worth praising, as it was selected by the inhabitants and can improve reputation and trust to CB among inhabitants: *We are still looking for additional sources of funds, because we are simply very determined to complete this project... because it won the voting... many people are interested in the project* (the official responsible for CB).

#### Good practices

Among good practices supporting inhabitants in the process of preparation of projects there is the inspiration catalogue to be found at the website of the Rypin civic budget. It consists of various ideas grouped

into 7 infrastructural and social categories. Unfortunately, only few of them have prepared cost estimates. It is crucial, because the issue of cost estimates raised problems in Rypin, as the project of one of our interlocutors was rejected because of that: *I think I correctly estimated these costs, while the City Hall claimed they were much too low* (the author of one of the rejected projects). However, this specific application was submitted online and was not seen by the official responsible for CB. The situation was different in case of other project who was finally selected. Its author admits *this cooperation was very nice..., when I brought the project, they checked it out... we have to correct the cost estimate slightly, so this help was very significant, because we submitted a CB project for the first time, we did not have experience, so this assistance from the City Hall was so necessary and very helpful. And there was no barrier at all, nobody told me they did not have time for me or to come later or call them...* (the author of one of the approved projects).

The resolution also introduced the option to present project publicly. Though it is not obligatory, such presentation backs public reflection on selection of certain projects by inhabitants. These meetings were suspended because of the pandemics (the official responsible for CB), but they were appreciated and used by project authors: *our project was also discussed during such an open meeting with inhabitants, so everyone could ask a question and find out more about it* (the author of the winning project). Also, the following tools are used in participatory and information activities: popularisation in media (TV Rypin, social media), interviews with project authors (TV Rypin, social media), press (Kronika Rypińska (Rypin Chronicle)), popularisation at the City Hall websites. The interesting solution is preparation of dedicated video materials: *We try to record videos with project authors and broadcast them on TV and Facebook (...)* *In one of them the Mayor encourages to submit projects and vote* (the official responsible for CB). The important element of CB popularisation is its compatibility with other city events, which gives an opportunity to inform on projects and to increase turnout during voting in a reliable way: *we have these access points, voting centres and there is also this big city event.*

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

*It is held in September and is called Targi Rypińskie Agra (Rypin Agra Fair) and we have the voting centre there, too. The event is 3 days long... you can easily know all projects, read about them, improve knowledge, talk about them with representatives of the City Hall and vote in a traditional way (the official responsible for CB).*

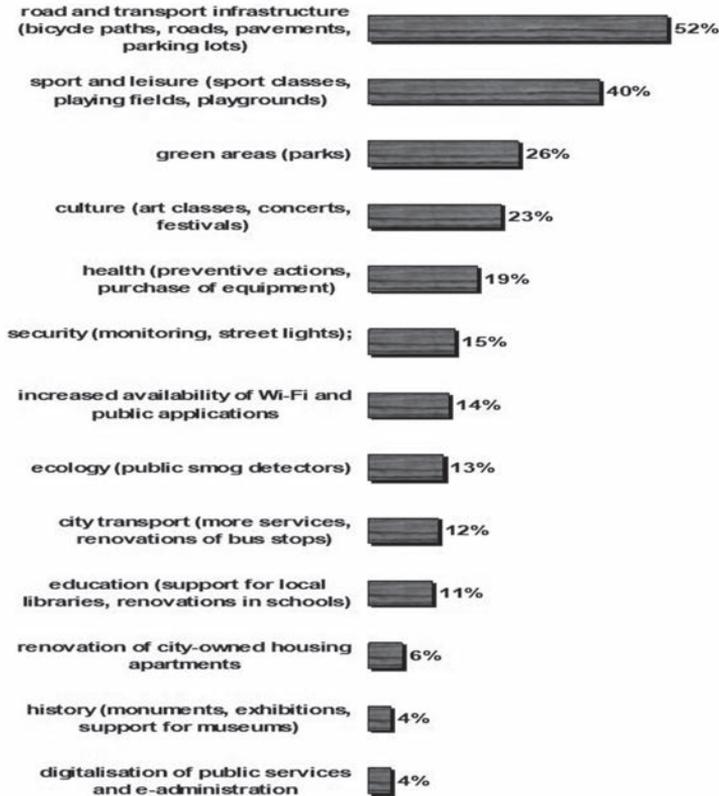
The projects should be submitted together with support lists with signatures of at least 30 persons living in Rypin. This number is higher than the average value for all our cases, but this makes projects to be at least partially consulted and supported at the level of application. The additional facilitation for the inhabitants submitting projects is the relatively new option to support projects online. The signature collection and online voting system in Rypin is specifically dedicated to CB and purchased for this purpose (the representative of the executive authorities).

#### **2. Civic budgeting in Rypin – selected results of the survey conducted among the inhabitants**

52% of the respondents thought the project realised within the Civic Budget should refer to road and transport infrastructure. It could be thought people notice the need to develop bicycle paths, roads, pavements and parking lots in their city and are convinced that the financial assets assigned to CB should be spent on these things at the first place, though such projects are not the most popular within CB in Rypin at all. Instead, they are very diversified, including infrastructure financing ideas and “soft” projects (the representative of the executive authorities, the official responsible for CB).

As it can be concluded from the analysis of the collected data, sport and leisure are the second most popular branch of economy that should be assigned funds within CB (40% of the respondents), followed by green areas (26%) and culture (23%).

**Chart 55. Select three most important types of activities you think CB projects in your city should be implemented among**



Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

The City of Rypin decided to include in the resolution the provision on conducting popularisation and information activities at all CB stages. Though 67% of the respondents declare they find out about CB from the Internet, while some or even majority of content were found at the City Hall website and social media profiles, we could also see influence of local press (40%), information leaflets (27%), information available in public

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

spaces (21%) or local radio stations (8%). Beside the City Hall activities, 40% of the surveyed persons found out about the Civic Budget from other city inhabitants (mostly from project authors). It can be said the City Hall activities are diversified and effective, increasing CB visibility in many media and among various age groups: *I think the most effective is direct communication, namely working meetings... individual discussions. I am aware we have the pandemics now and social media, but I still think these direct discussions are the best in order to convince people to become interested in the Civic Budget or public activism in general. In order to get to elderly people, you need to use our local newspapers, posters, announcement... these traditional information channels* (the representative of the legislative authorities). Also, these actions are enhanced by CB popularisation during city events, including these Agra Fairs the CB voting is compatible with (the official responsible for CB).

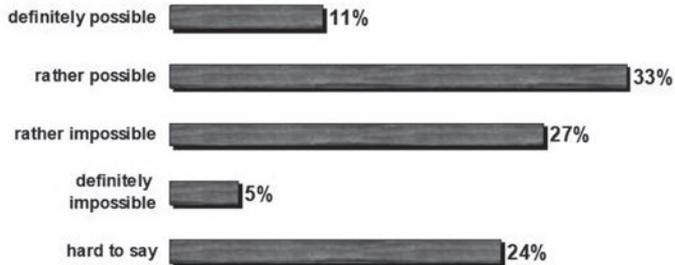
What do the Rypin inhabitants think about the CB popularisation activities? The answers make us see the City Hall operations in more pessimistic context. 28% of the respondents were not able to assess the CB popularisation activities, because they could not notice them around. 26% selected the “hard to say” answer, meaning 52% did not make an attempt to evaluate these activities at all. Maybe they are not interested in CB and they cannot see them in the public space, constituting the “silent minority” so often in the entire Polish political sphere. Let us mention 37% of the respondents assessed them positively and definitely positively, while less than 10% thought differently.

**Chart 56. What is your opinion about the information actions regarding CB, conducted by the city authorities?**



44% of the respondents think the city authorities could interfere with the CB results (33% definitely possible and 11% rather possible), while 32% thought differently (27% rather impossible, 5% definitely impossible). One fourth of the surveyed persons were not able to give a specific answer and selected the “hard to say” answer. Exclusion of local politicians and City Hall employees from the group of potential project authors in 2016 did not help to decrease the number of people suspecting the city authorities of possible interference. The reason may derive from the fact that operations of the Verification Committee and subsequent verification made by officials from certain Departments are still discretionary, not specified and they do not consider participation of the community representation.

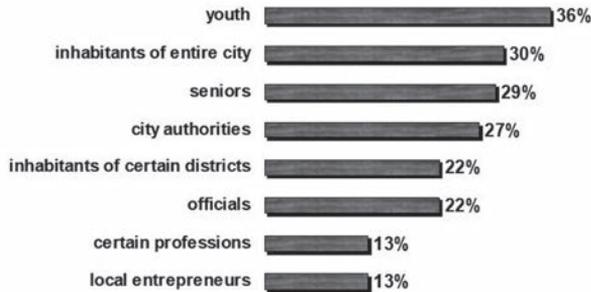
**Chart 57. Do you think it is possible the city authorities could interfere with the CB results?**



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36% of the respondents thought the greatest profits from the CB projects are gained by youth (36%), inhabitants of the entire city (30%), seniors (29%) and city authorities (27%). Almost one fourth of the surveyed persons admitted the profits are gained by inhabitants of certain districts. It seems the diversified character of projects and accuracy of these proposal are favourable for gaining profits from CB by numerous groups of inhabitants, the thing underlined by our interlocutors: *it was very difficult to distinct some groups, because almost all community of our city gain profits from these projects* (the official responsible for CB); *these projects are performed for everyone, at least they are assumed to be like that. For example, everybody use our playground near the kindergarten... children, youth, adults, seniors...* (the author of the winning project).

**Chart 58. Which social groups gain the largest profit from CB in your opinion?**



Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

Among factors who were supposed to make the respondents participate in the last CB edition they selected convenient form of voting (54%), interesting and important projects (52%), availability of information (45%), level of own knowledge of respondents on CB and its projects (42%) and skills and involvement of officials/councillors (36%). The last one was also the most discouraging factor (18% of the respondents). The results prove

## Civic budgeting in Rypin – desk research and survey results

that a simple and stable form of voting (both in person and online), small number of projects, good information campaign and regularity popularise CB in Rypin, also by increasing skills of project authors and officials involved in the process.

Table 12. Specify to what extent certain factors had influence on general participation of the city inhabitants in the latest CB edition?

		Encouraging	Quite encouraging	Hard to say	Quite discouraging	Discouraging
1)	Availability of information	17%	28%	40%	9%	6%
2)	Convenient form of voting	25%	29%	34%	5%	6%
3)	Interesting and important projects	23%	29%	36%	6%	6%
4)	Skills and involvement of officials/ councillors	11%	25%	46%	12%	6%
5)	Skills and involvement of project authors	12%	30%	46%	6%	6%
6)	Level of own knowledge	11%	31%	41%	8%	8%

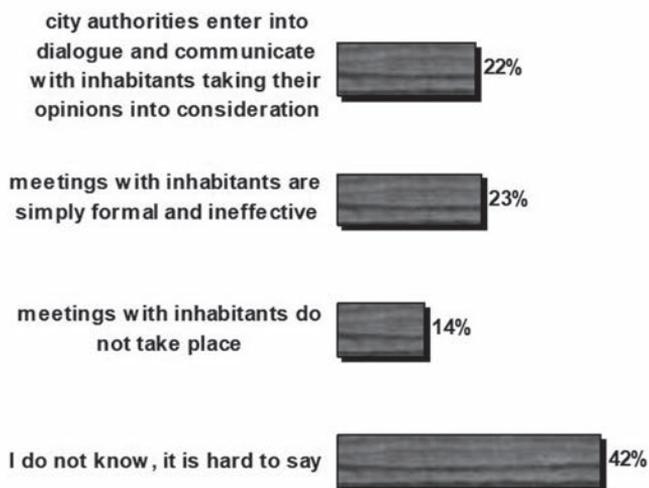
Note: *the percentages could not add up to 100 due to the possibility of multiple choice.*

The crucial element of CB functioning in each city are public consultations. It is them success of CB relies on. They take various forms and in Rypin the inhabitants do not have the best opinions on this matter. The majority of respondents were unable to evaluate the public consultations conducted by officials (42%), 23% thought they were simply formal and ineffective, while 14% thought they are not held at all. Only 22% assessed them positively, thinking the authorities entered into dialogue and discussion with inhabitants in terms of CB projects and took their opinions into consideration. In turn, we were not able to get to any official information

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

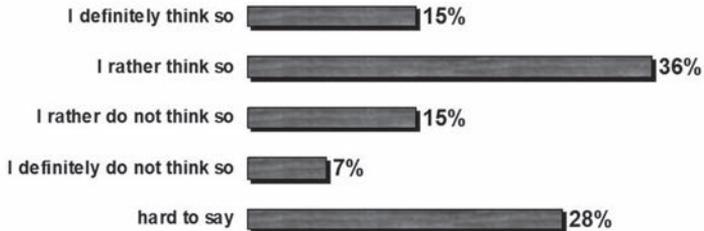
on these consultations, also the city did not establish any regulations in this matter. The city authorities only indicate such consultations took place after first editions: *Yes, in these first editions we made attempts to organise CB public consultations in order to involve inhabitants. Now the pandemics make them impossible. These were more of information meetings on the Civic Budget, held for different communities... on the idea itself, how to submit applications, create ideas, collect support lists with signatures, present projects* (the representative of the executive authorities). However, this statement proves these consultations were only informative and one-sided and our interlocutor does not mention any possibility for inhabitants to present their general complaints, needs and expectations.

**Chart 59. How do you evaluate the process of public consultations regarding CB in your city (open discussion, working meetings and dialogue between authorities and inhabitants)?**



As the result of the diagnostic survey we conducted among the inhabitants of Rypin, we found out 51% of the respondents thought their opinions were taken into consideration during the decision-making process regarding CB issues, while 22% thought differently. As much as 28% of the respondents were unable to give a specific answer and selected “hard to say”.

**Chart 60. In general, do you think the opinions of the inhabitants of your city are taken into consideration by the city authorities during the decision-making process regarding CB?**



## Civic budgeting in Sopot – desk research and survey results

### 1. Profile of civic budgeting in Sopot in view of desk research

In Sopot participatory budgeting was mostly introduced into public discussion as a result of the Sopot Development Initiative (SDI) created at grassroots in 2008, oriented on looking for tools with purpose to implement sustainable development ideas and acting on behalf of greater participation of inhabitants in decisions related to the city issues. The persons associated with this first period, who were also referred to in the interviews, are expert activists Maja Grabkowska and Marcin Gerwin who supported the idea of participatory budgeting in 2010 in Poland (within the SDI campaign called “Democracy is not only elections”), when it was a novelty, saying that: *introduction of the civic budget can result in occurrence of genuine local community in Sopot, of strong human bonds, so life quality would be increased (...) The essence of the civic budget is making decision on the budget by Sopot inhabitants themselves. We must not be replaced by councillors in it, because the goal is to make Sopot inhabitants feel they are hosts in their own city, co-creators of things happening here and not only consumers, when decisions are made behind their backs*<sup>21</sup>.

In the city, which was the first one in Poland to initiate the participatory form of budgeting in 2011, the name of “civic budget” has been used since the very beginning, as seen in the cited statement, which was then officially included in the amendment of the act in 2018. It is possible (though there is no evidence for that) the parliament borrowed the name from pioneer Sopot activists associated in the civic budget in Sopot and not with the

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<sup>21</sup> E. Stokłuska, *Opis przykładu partycypacji. Budżet Obywatelski w Sopocie* [A Description of Participation. The Case Study of Civic Budget in Sopot], Pracownia Badań i Innowacji Społecznych „Stocznia”, Gdańsk 2012, s. 3, [https://partycypacja-obywatelska.pl/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/praktyka\\_budzet\\_obywatelski\\_sopot.pdf](https://partycypacja-obywatelska.pl/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/praktyka_budzet_obywatelski_sopot.pdf), available on February 8, 2022.

name of ‘participatory budget’, which is generally used, both in theoretical and practical aspects all over the world. Regardless of the above, the Sopot budgeting procedure attended by inhabitants did inspire and is still inspiring, that is why it is worth giving a closer look to specificity of participatory budgeting in Sopot, as in cases of Dąbrowa Górnicza, Gorzów Wielkopolski and Kraków, especially that it is richer simply because of the longer period of application.

### Assets assigned to CB

Each year the Sopot civic budget reached the amount of 4 mln PLN (ca. 1.5% of the city budget). It is the lower CB threshold established at such a high level, when compared to other cities, in the annex no. 1 to the resolution no. XIX/225/2012 of the City Council in Sopot of May 11, 2012, containing the rules of the CB first edition in Sopot. In subsequent editions some rules were naturally adjusted, however until 2020 (later, too) there was the stipulation in force saying that the total CB amount must be at least 4 mln and this has been the case until the end of our research.

### Officials attending to CB

According to the City Hall information we obtained during research, preparation and conducting of the process is the duty of the Promotion and Public Communication Office consisting of 9 employees, while 1 person is assigned to substantive CB matters. This local examples proves such a number of people is sufficient to handle CB professionally, however in urban context, even if you are lucky to work with great experts, success is not possible without functional cooperation of various City Hall organisational units. Beside activism, it also plays its part in success of CB in Sopot. Availability and openness of the City Hall for cooperation are also worth noting. At the City Hall CB-dedicated websites there is

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

the list of contact details of the persons who can be approached in order to gain support regarding the application preparation process. Working quality of all employees of the Office is highly praised in the interviews: *I evaluate cooperation very highly, most of all because of smooth communication. I think there is plenty of work in this unit, because handling with so many projects is not simple... subsequent coordination of all these analyses prepared by various departments, it is surely a great challenge. And this uncommon variety of these projects, constructional, sport, environmental ones. It also requires plenty of work and officials have to make calls, answer extra questions, give some advice, all in the same time.* This statement deserves being cited here, because it is even more reliable as its author's project was rejected on procedural grounds.

#### Local formal regulations

The first edition of the civic budget in Sopot (2011) was conducted in the makeshift testing form on the basis of two following local ordinances: (1) the already binding resolution no. XI/143/2007 of the City Council in Sopot of November 30, 2007 *on the rules and the method of conducting public consultations in Sopot* and (2) the newly passed resolution no. V/27/2011 of March 4, 2011 *on conducting consultations with inhabitants of Sopot on "the investment and social plans of the city of the years 2014–2020"*. Referring in the title of the second resolution (and in its justification) to the then future investment plans funded from the EU structural funds is one of many examples of pro-active initiatives and local pragmatism. In the first edition consultations and projects were city-wide, while in the subsequent ones the rules for local CB projects were gradually developed, though they were not rigidly assigned to certain districts, because officially there were no ancillary units in Sopot. In turn, the city was divided into four regions on the basis of constituency borders and specific conditions in the city. With time subregions were added on the basis of the rules specified in the city and defined in the legal acts. The second edition (2012)

was already organised on the separate resolution of the City Council (first such act of law in Poland), dedicated to participation of inhabitants in the budgeting process, no. XIX/225/2012 of May 11, 2012 *on conducting public consultations with inhabitants of Sopot on the Budget of the City of Sopot for the year 2013*. In the next edition (2014) the budget consultations with inhabitants were already called as referring to “Civic Budget”.

The essentials of the CB rules and the consultation mode have not been changed. Until the amendment of the statutory act in 2018 the City Council resolutions on certain editions had been modified, but still similar. The minor changers referred to determination of the assets amount for city-wide projects and for city regions (not being ancillary units); age limit entitling to participate in CB consultations; rules and mode of submitting projects and voting; assistance for project authors in terms of project cost estimation (2015); rules on assignment of assets within subregions and consultation regions (also not being ancillary units); and rules on appealing from decisions.

In the 2019 and 2020 editions, conducted after the amendment of the act in 2018, the previously developed solutions were still used, though not all of them, like division into city-wide and local projects, that should be gone in Sopot CB as a result of formal lack of ancillary units. Meanwhile, it was not the case and the proven division was maintained in Sopot. During our desk research we were given the following answer from the City Hall: *the regulations (of the amended act from 2018 – author’s note) are in opposition to the rules we worked out with inhabitants: considering lack of ancillary units, we should abolish voting for local projects (however, we still include this in the resolution, not observing the act stipulations), we have never required support lists to submit projects and currently we also do not require support lists, interpreting the act in such a way that it specifies the maximum number of project supporters, while not defining the minimum number.*

#### Good practices

Without risking to be accused of anti-legalism, the Sopot practice to ignore the obligations imposed in 2018 with full awareness, while not resigning from the previously developed solutions and the portfolio of positive experiences and practices, can be understandable. As already mentioned, in Sopot only during the first edition (2011) projects were not divided into local and city-wide. In the next decisions, on the basis of subsequent local City Council resolutions, inhabitants were already entitled to vote for city-wide and local projects and consultation regions were established on the basis of the constituency borders. Currently, inhabitants can submit projects in four consultation regions and the division into subregions is used in Sopot as an auxiliary tool. From the (too excessively) legalist point of view such a situation would be found unwanted, however, when analysing participatory budgeting in the first Polish city to involve in the process, it is good to admit that division of CB projects into city-wide and local is valuable and effective in Sopot. It is incompliant with literal interpretation of the amended statutory act, but it also does not preserve wrong practices, but the commonly developed practice that turned out to be locally valuable, while the trailblazing character of solutions in Sopot can be recommended for other local self-government entities in most cases. We think this case clearly shows that in view of similar collisions between legal acts and preceding local good practices the general legal frameworks should be worked out in a more careful way in order to protect locally developed good solutions. In turn, if the legal act standards do not align with good practices, the legislative authorities are expected to correct the situation, remove legal defects and respect rights of the sovereign, related to development of participation opportunities for inhabitants in a way more customized to local conditions, level of public involvement and previous cooperation effects, especially when they are seen as original which is the case of Sopot. Also, it is not the first such opinion, while it was preceded by various positive assessments given to the direction CB in Sopot is heading towards, having been expressed so often since more than

a decade and in relation with various activities undertaken in Sopot with definitely above average enthusiasm that can be found a shining example, though of course not ideal. Fortunately, it so happens Sopot was not subject to any legal actions during the period of our research and could handle CB issues on the previously proven basis.

Awareness of the untypical character of this situation was heard in the interviews we collected. The representative of the city executive authorities was aware the Sopot *budget is divided into local and city-wide projects, and it is a bit legal, because we have no ancillary units... according to the legal act, such a division can be implemented, if these units are present. But we have it implemented, a bit unofficially, and the voivode did not revoke our resolution... because this division into regions works perfectly well in terms of the civic budget. And this act is developed in such a way like somebody would like to forcibly improve things that work perfectly well.*

The person responsible in the City Hall for CB coordination spoke similar things: *in Sopot the civic budget was divided into 2 amounts: 2 mln PLN for city-wide projects and other 2 mln PLN for local ones. Formally, there are no districts in Sopot. In order to introduce these local projects, we had to invent some kind of division. The first one we thought about resulted from constituencies, because they probably reflect territorial assignment of inhabitants in the best available way. This division is somehow embedded in inhabitants awareness, as the people say they are from Upper Sopot, Lower Sopot, Brodwino or Kamienny Potok. We simply described this division considering local projects in the resolution, we named them consultations regions. Later on, we divided them into smaller consultation units with purpose to get even more intense distribution of the projects for implementation. So now we have 4 consultation regions, each of them divided into the two following subregions, A and B. When we have the ranking list of these applications that won in the voting, then the first application is implemented in the subregion A, while another one must be implemented in the subregion B. So they are assigned alternately. It sometimes happens that projects from the subregion B, where inhabitants are more dispersed, would have no chance to be implemented at all, that is why this alternate*

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*assignment rule is introduced. We know well the people at these 2 residential areas compete with each other very much, but at one of them the number of inhabitants is significantly smaller and they would not stand a chance, had not this rule been in force. We made this little trick in terms of consultations and, hopefully, nobody has contested it yet.*

Among good practices we surely should refer to the administrative support responsible for preparation and coordination of the budgeting process. The Office work quality was noticed by all interlocutors, including the representative of the local authorities: *I assess these cooperation very well, maybe it is a result of the fact that these persons handling CB in the City Hall are not these typical officials... they are very involved in what they are doing... they often work beyond standard working hours. And this online voting, it was perfect. This dedicated website is very friendly and I sometimes hear praise from inhabitants... though people are generally not eager to praise others for anything. But it is sometimes hard work surely, because you have to face all these questions like: why did my project lose, if it was so good?*

Beside strategic focus on participation and professional and involved employees, among various recommendable detailed solutions let us draw attention to multiple instructive attempts to adjust several technical solutions, including evolution of voting methods, e.g. initially, each project could be assigned from 0 to 5 points where 0 meant “unnecessary” and 5 meant “very necessary”. In turn, currently, voting is conducted by indicating projects on a ballot paper, considering local regions. Voters select no more than five projects from the city-wide task list and no more than five projects on one local task list (one among four). The interesting solution is the option to express a negative opinion on a given project on a ballot paper, introduced in 2020. Negative and positive opinions have influence on the final range of support for a given project. The weak point of this solution is the fact the impact of an opinion is in its quality that it is not simply interpreted as vote for ‘yes’ or ‘no’. As a result, it may be a space for misunderstandings or even some manipulation, when it comes to weighing of qualitative opinions, additionally expressed on ballot papers, so they could poorly mirror the essence of what inhabitants would be trying to

express in writing and what be surely better explained by them in dialogue. This solution is surely worth being observed in the future.

Proactive initiatives are also visible in attempts to inspire project authors, for example the city CB-dedicated websites have the tabs with the “inspiration catalogue” with arranged project ideas, sometimes illustrated with photographs. They were arranged in the following categories: roads, pavements, bicycle paths; street furniture, playgrounds, leisure areas; green areas, plantings; sport, leisure, sport facilities; street lights, security; education, culture; healthcare and social assistance. The success of this solution will depend not only on data updating, but mostly on refreshment and verification of ideas, that may potentially be easier in dialogue with balanced co-participation of stakeholders, because it cannot be excluded that creation of vast local, dialogue-focused political sphere may establish the unstable and potentially counterproductive structure (with lack of stable obligatory behaviour patterns). Such an unstable platform may collapse under its own weight, but before this happens it may constitute a convenient stance for initiation of political activities possibly non-compliant with the deliberative form of rivalry, which is impossible in terms of various issues related to rivalry-oriented *politics*, though it is indeed possible in case of community-oriented *policies*, namely the key to separation of “undisputable” issues from problems worth rethinking and solving in the common interest. In unstable conditions the extended dialogue creating leaders in the understandable way (including popularity leaders that happens first) may be used by populists; it is only one of potential hazards. However, they can be avoided, as it also can be concluded on the basis of the collected data that Sopot is one of the Polish cities where there is a chance to overcome not only minor hazards, but also to cope with the more serious challenges related to deeply rooted cultural institutionalisation of dialogue, that helps to cooperate, does not exclude anyone and does not weaken system operability and development opportunities. This is possible in case of community development, the level Sopot can aspire to reach in the future (see Table 2. Participatory models in budgeting involving citizens).

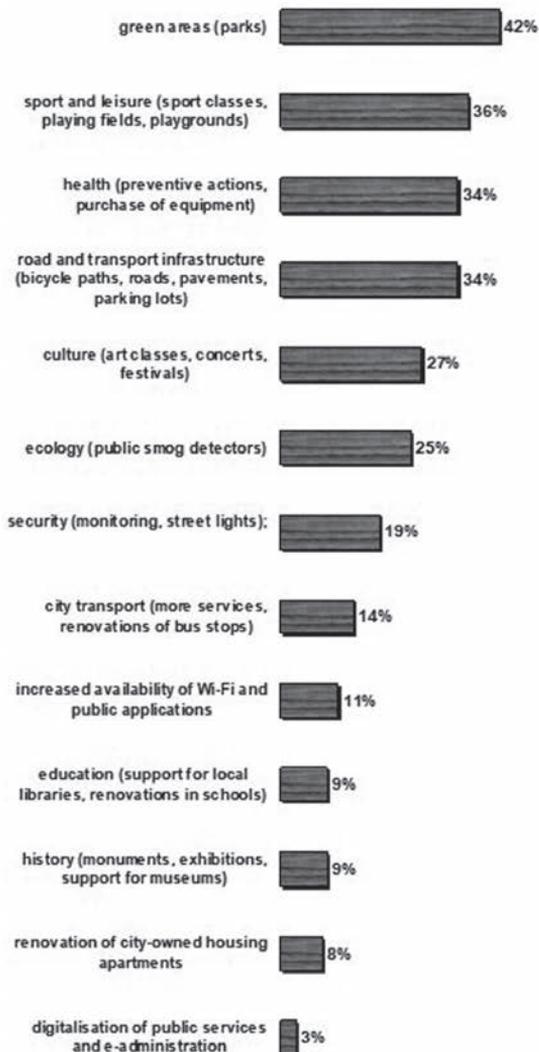
## 2. Civic budgeting in Sopot – selected results of the survey conducted among the inhabitants

Completing of filled in survey questionnaires was hampered in the majority of the cities being investigated because of the pandemics that escalated during the project implementation, however the number of questionnaires we managed to collect in Sopot requires some additional commentary. It would be longer and closer to the actual reasons, if we could consider our experiences related to informal and emotional aspect of collecting questionnaires in Sopot, however this could not be seen as an element subject to scientific argumentation and we leave it in our memory as a subjective, individual and team experience. So, we managed to collect the assumed number of 150 questionnaires in the majority of the investigated cities. In Kraków, Opatów and Puławy we reached the result closed to the assumed numbers, in Dąbrowa Górnicza, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Legnica and Rypin we distinctly exceeded it and in Sopot, Tuchola and Nowa Ruda we managed to collect only one third of planned questionnaires, in spite of many efforts. In Sopot we collected 64 questionnaires. Our subsequent attempts to get to the respondents resulted in returning of the questionnaires on the much lower level than in most of the investigated cities, including the ones that are, apart from Sopot, perceived as leaders of participatory budgeting.

Among three most important fields of economy the CB projects should be implemented in the respondents selected green areas (parks, 42%), sport and leisure (sport classes, playing fields, playgrounds, 36%), health (preventive actions, purchase of medical equipment, 34%), road and transport infrastructure (bicycle paths, roads, pavements, parking lots, 34%), culture (27%), ecology (25%), security (19%), city transport (14%) and other categories (see the chart).

## Civic budgeting in Sopot – desk research and survey results

Chart 61. Select three most important types of activities you think CB projects in your city should be implemented among

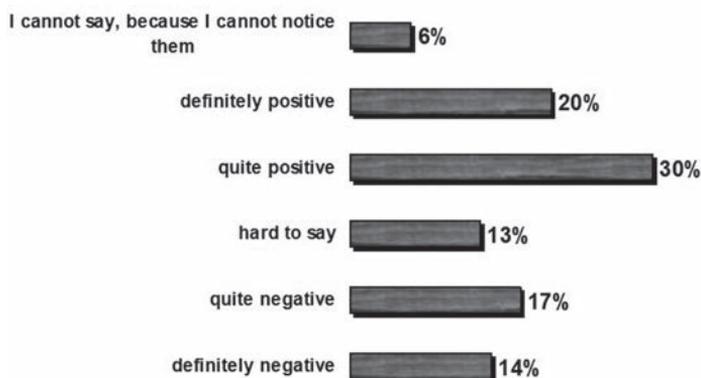


Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

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The respondents in Sopot seem to be satisfied with the information activities performed by the city authorities regarding CB. 50% of them assessed these actions positively (30% quite positively, 20% definitely positively), while 31% gave negative opinions (14% definitely negatively, 17% quite negatively). 6% of the respondents could not give a specific answer, because they could not notice these actions and 13% selected the “hard to say” answer.

**Chart 62. What is your opinion about the information actions regarding CB, conducted by the city authorities?**



Are the Sopot authorities able to interfere with the CB results? 53% of the respondents decided it was possible (30% definitely possible, 23% rather possible), while 25% thought differently (8% definitely impossible, 17% rather impossible). 22% of the surveyed persons selected the “hard to say” answer. The comments to this voice distribution partially result from the interviews, though they not fully justify the scale of conviction about the possibility to interfere with the CB results. In three of five interviews we made in Sopot we heard the statements on politicisation of the CB process in Sopot, however they are not very critical except for the first one. They even have some elements of justifying persuasion that may be found convincing by recipients, as without rivalry-oriented *politics* mobilisation in the scale

needed for efficient implementation of public *policies* is impossible. In turn, mobilisation in larger scale increases the level of charisma in the mobilising individual, strengthening their political power.

Politicisation was confirmed by the two project authors and the representative of the legislative authorities:

- the author of one of the rejected project – *it is obvious CB in Sopot has been used for political purposes... since the very beginning and very clearly. I remember well the atmosphere, when the Budget was introduced in Sopot. Its initiators made no bones about the fact they were in the fierce conflict with the Mayor;*
- the representative of the legislative authorities – *there were some rivalry regarding CB between certain local groups or councillors, but it was kind of mobilising... because it worked like that: “look, they, our political adversaries, are quite active in terms of this CB and we are trailing a bit... so let us do something about it.” I do not assess this rivalry negatively in terms of the Civic Budget, I even think it is a good thing;*
- the author of the winning project: *I hear the voices that mostly the city councillor projects are implemented, but I do not have direct evidence to prove it. However, these opinions circulate among Sopot inhabitants. Maybe it is really easier for councillors to introduce these projects, because they have better access to officials and implementation of their projects is more efficient, but I cannot point out anyone who has built their political career thanks to these CB projects.*

Excessive politicisation of CB was not noted by the representative of the executive authorities and the official involved in CB gave the answer in which the leading motif was efficiency of the CB process, supported by political mobilisation:

- the representative of the executive authorities – *I cannot give examples of using CB for political games... No... the budget in Sopot is not excessively connected with politics. In turn, we strongly encourage the councillors to involve in CB... well, some may say councillors*

### Chapter 3. Civic budgeting in the twelve cities

*can use CB in political context... but they have political and social legitimisation allowing them to perform their functions. As a result, I do not think it is a big deal, because politics is not excessively exposed in this situation... in general, CB is excluded from ongoing political issues;*

- *representative of the Ciy Hall – for me all persons, including councillors trying to realise their CB projects, are valuable, because they popularise the idea of CB, voting or submitting of applications. I am glad that councillors with various clubs submit their ideas and then encourage to vote for certain projects, because I think there is no better way to get to inhabitants... and CB is the perfect opportunity for councillors to do something real instead of making empty promises. So, I perceive involvement of councillors in CB as an advantage (...)  
In turn, I am doing my best to keep CB away from political divisions.*

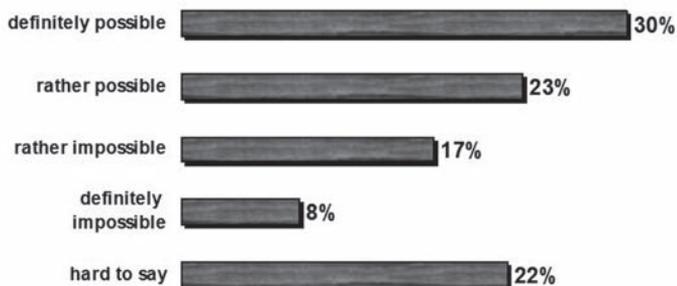
In these words, it is possible to trace the elements of more symbiotic thinking about CB than the rivalry-oriented character of relations. This paragraph can be read as containing the crucial relation between two local types of authorities and deeply rooted activism that is initiated spontaneously or as a result of less or more intense political inspiration, e.g. by a councillor. In this approach profits of stakeholders seem to be distributed more equally that may create the possibility for evolution towards strengthening of symbiotic rivalry and community development (see Table 2. Participatory models in budgeting involving citizens).

Considering the above, politicisation of the process does not seem to be more intense in Sopot than in other cities, however (not only local) popularity of the budget in Sopot, but also the fact that it is a significant political asset itself, and in the relatively small community, all this make it one of the leading motifs of the Sopot political sphere and local public policies. It is a demanded and definitely positive political asset, as a result various stakeholders try to get it, attempting to operationalise and capitalise on it in different contexts. The representative of the executive authorities briefed CB popularity as follows, drawing attention to its local value: *maybe some CB assets are wasted in large cities, when facing*

*all these challenges and investments, while in such cities like Sopot it is an extremely crucial issue... It is our apple of the eye, cared and protected... Start of the another CB edition in Sopot is an important and impatiently awaited event in the city, at least I am always very curious what inhabitants are going to invent, to surprise us with.*

The possible hazard for popularity of the Sopot budgeting process is long-term repeatability that has many advantages, but is also associated with potential routine supported by repeatability of conflict schemes. The symptoms proving this hazard could occur were visible during our research, when we were trying to acquire local data by directly contacting local politicians, officials and activists. Our initial opinion on locally advance institutionalisation of the budgeting process attended by inhabitants was supplemented with some reservations regarding some pretentious behaviour that was too often encountered. As a result, in our final positive image of the Sopot budgeting process there were some cracks. If this pretentious behaviour is intensified, it may transform into indifference constituting one of crucial local hazards.

**Chart 63. Do you think it is possible the city authorities could interfere with the CB results?**

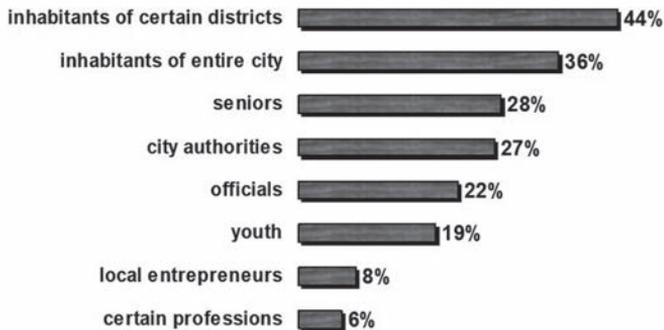


44% of the respondents thought the most profits from CB projects were gained by inhabitants of certain districts (in Sopot these are the previously mentioned regions). These results confirm our previous opinion

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that the idea to maintain this division in CB in Sopot was a good solution, in spite of statutory limitations. 36% of the respondents selected all inhabitants, followed by seniors (28%), city authorities (27), officials (22%) and youth (19%).

**Chart 64. Which social groups gain the largest profit from CB in your opinion?**



Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

The factors encouraging to participate in CB and confirmed in the interviews were convenient form of voting (74%, including 47% encouraging, 27% quite encouraging), availability of information on CB projects (62%, including 28% encouraging, 34% quite encouraging), interesting and important projects (60%, including 30% encouraging, 30% quite encouraging), level of own knowledge (56%, including 28% encouraging, 28% quite encouraging) and skills and involvement of project authors (51%, including 23% encouraging, 28% quite encouraging). The most discouraging factor were skills and involvement of officials/councillors (44%, including 17% discouraging, 27% quite discouraging) that was clearly contradicted in the interviews).

## Civic budgeting in Sopot – desk research and survey results

Table 13. Specify to what extent certain factors had influence on general participation of the city inhabitants in the latest CB edition?

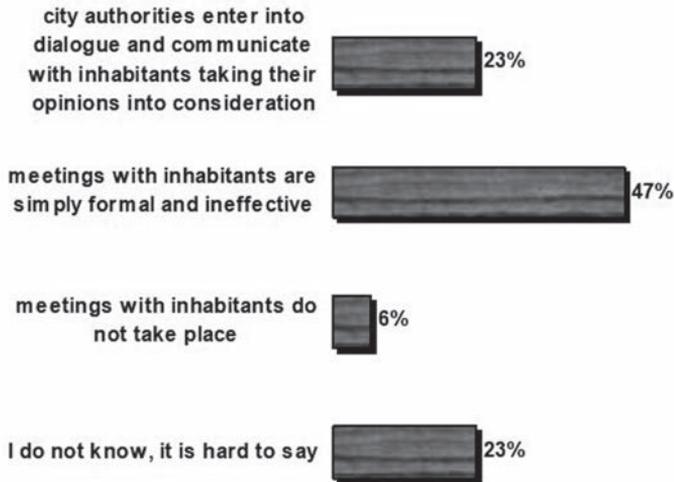
		Encouraging	Quite encouraging	Hard to say	Quite discouraging	Discouraging
1)	Availability of information	28%	34%	17%	13%	8%
2)	Convenient form of voting	47%	27%	17%	3%	6%
3)	Interesting and important projects	30%	30%	20%	9%	11%
4)	Skills and involvement of officials/ councillors	14%	16%	27%	27%	17%
5)	Skills and involvement of project authors	23%	28%	33%	6%	9%
6)	Level of own knowledge	28%	28%	25%	9%	9%

Note: *the percentages could not add up to 100 due to the possibility of multiple choice.*

The analysis of respondent statements on the CB public consultation process showed that 47% of the respondents thought the consultations were simply formal and ineffective, while 23% thought the city authorities entered into dialogue and discussions with the inhabitants and took their opinions into consideration. Also 23% selected the “hard to say” answer, while only 6% stated the meetings were not held. This may confirm existence of some conflict potential in the CB sphere in Sopot. We have tried to provide details on some of these conditions in this part of the paper, while referring to other problems in other parts thereof, while some of them will still be too less perceptible to consider and prove them.

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**Chart 65. How do you evaluate the process of public consultations regarding CB in your city (open discussion, working meetings and dialogue between authorities and inhabitants)?**



33% of the respondents thought their opinions were not considered by the city authorities when making CB-related decisions (17% I definitely do think so, 16% I rather do not think so), while 45% declared differently (28% I definitely think so, 17% I rather think so). It is worth mentioning that 22% selected the “hard to say” answer.

Also in this case the best way to analyse these results is to investigate local *politics*, including CB as its important element, confirmed by the following statements (in various contexts and sense) made by:

- the representative of the Sopot legislative authorities – *in Sopot CB plays the very important role within the city policy. I can see plenty of councillors are involved in CB, as well as the city authorities. For example, we have established the Civic Budget City Council Committee... of course, it handles also with other things than the Civic Budget, but it is a very important thing. CB surely gives councillors*

*an opportunity to promote themselves, so neither them nor the city authorities are indifferent to it.*

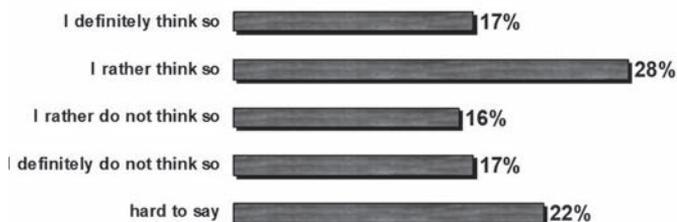
- *the author of one of the rejected projects – there is this great pressure imposed by the authorities to popularise CB, to encourage inhabitants to submit as many projects as possible, so it is surely a significant political tool. The city authorities are always very proud that the inhabitants are very active in terms of CB;*
- *the author of the project voted for implementation – I would like so much for CB to be an important city policy tool in Sopot... I wish the Sopot inhabitants felt they could decide about investments, directions of city development. (...) However, I think they do not feel they can participate in the decision-making process... though not only because of the certain amount of not implemented projects, but also because the inhabitants do not know which CB projects have been implemented until now... I do not know these things, though I am quite interested in the city issues. Also, frankly saying, the assets assigned to the Civic Budget in Sopot were not very significant.*
- *the representative of the executive authorities – CB is a very important tool for the Sopot authorities, the mayor and his deputies. We would like to implement these projects so much, that all of them would be realised. (...) it is a very significant issue for the city authorities... The CB project are of the highest priority;*
- *the representative of the City Hall management – CB is one of the most important tools of the city policy in Sopot... I can see the city authorities are really involved in this Budget. When we talk about it, projects submitted by the inhabitants are always of the highest priority. Of course, we had to withdraw from certain things last year because of the pandemics, including some CB projects, but they were reinstated first. On the basis of informal discussions or inside meetings I can say the city authorities are very serious about implementation of the Civic Budget projects.*

When comparing these statements with the previously cited ones and the non-representative, though still poor result obtained in the survey, we

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can carefully conclude that in the previously mentioned 'symbiotic' system profits might not be equally distributed among the three types of stakeholders. It is possible that the majority of profits (including those related to image and mobilisation) in the sphere of politics are currently gained by representatives of the legislative and executive self-government authorities, while local activists are subject to rapid politicisation (if they are able and willing to reach for these profits), that brings more measurable and commonly known benefits, known in the political science literature as political rent-seeking. Making use of it, within the valid law, is not an accusation, as it is not even a hypothesis in this case, but a connotation that would seem to be crucial in terms of the goal of the project and significance of the CB process in Sopot. Also, it does not say everything about this case, as other information can be found in different parts of the paper.

**Chart 66. In general, do you think the opinions of the inhabitants of your city are taken into consideration by the city authorities during the decision-making process regarding CB?**



## Civic budgeting in Tuchola – desk research and survey results

### 1. Profile of civic budgeting in Tuchola in view of desk research

Tuchola introduced the civic budget in the resolution passed in January 2019 for the 2020 budgetary year. The previous experiences of the Tuchola self-government with the similar forms of budget were limited to the participatory Village Fund that was however used only on municipal rural areas. In 2020, because of the pandemics, implementation of the already initiated civic budget process was suspended and it was finally abandoned, however the civic budget was reinstated in the next year. Since the very beginning CB has been under strong influence of its initiator, the former chair of the City Council who during our research was the local “ambassador” and organiser of the budget and the head of the Civic Budget Team.

The civic budget is realised within division into the urban area and the rural area (10 villages). During the procedure implementation information meetings are held, as well as the special lessons in schools and the lecture at the University of the Third Age, there is also the option to ask questions online. Also, the Civic Budget Team members are on duty in specific periods, when they can be approached and asked questions on the procedure or support in terms of project preparation.

Considering the fact that the municipality of Tuchola was not obligated to introduce the civic budget, the introduced regulations are not contradicted by the act, though they were used to determine the number of persons obligated to support submitted applications (12 in the city and 6 in the villages; always 0.1% of the inhabitants).

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#### Assets assigned to CB

In Tuchola 300,000 PLN is annually assigned to CB, while 250,000 are assigned to the urban area, while the rest to the rural area.

#### Officials attending to CB

In the City Hall in Tuchola there is neither specific unit nor the position dedicated to the Civic Budget, but the CB-related tasks are to be executed by the Civic Budget Team managed by the City Council representative, i.e. someone not representing the executive authorities, and comprised of the deputy head (city secretary), team secretary (the official responsible for promotion) and other members assigned from various City Hall Departments (6 persons).

#### Local formal regulations

The first civic budget edition in Tuchola was defined in the Regulations in which it was indicated that the budget can be attended by persons who turned 16 and live in the municipality of Tuchola, the rule referring to submitting of projects, support signatures and subsequent participation in voting. Inhabitants of the city and the villages could participate in certain regions. In the next edition this obligation was mitigated and the voting became available for persons with temporary domicile and all authorised persons were allowed to vote for any CB project. Task implementation proposals must be supported by at least 12 authorised inhabitants in the city and 6 in the villages. Voting is conducted traditionally and initially it took place in only one location in Tuchola. In the last edition additional locations were established in certain villages. Lack of online voting is explained by budgetary issues, but we can expect the situation to change in the future: *the costs of implementation of this*

*online CB procedure are surely not very high... let us remember we have 300,000 PLN for CB and not 3 mln. We have already started to negotiate with some companies... the contractor will be obviously selected in a public tender, but I think it will be really possible to implement this online CB process in Tuchola in the next year* (the representative of the legislative authorities).

The submitted applications are evaluated in the two stages by the Civic Budget Team. The first stage is formal verification in terms of regulations requirements, then substantive assessment is prepared in cooperation with respective Departments, including feasibility study, cost estimate workability or concordance with legal documents, e.g. local spatial development plans. If possible, in some cases the Team asks project leaders to make formal or substantive corrections: *If there were some formal deficiencies, something needed to be supplemented or more details were required, I simply contacted the project authors and they were very happy to come to me and give this information* (the official responsible for CB). The statements of officials and politicians are confirmed by the citizens submitting projects: *in the previous edition we were informed some things in our application would have to be supplemented, we did it quick and there were no problems with it at all* (the author of one the rejected projects). Though at the end the project author did not manage to meet imposed formal requirements, she still had positive feelings about cooperation with the Team.

Task projects to be implemented within the Civic Budget can be submitted by authorised inhabitants, excluding employees of the City Hall in Tuchola and members of the Civic Budget Team. Applications must include information on projects leaders who were also supposed to be the ones submitting them. Project leaders must not be councillors of the Tuchola City Council. It was also decided that estimated costs of implementation of a certain project must not exceed 30% of the total Civic Budget asset value.

Task projects that were given the most votes were put on the basis list, until all budget assets were assigned, and submitted to a budget resolution

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draft for the next budget year by the Mayor of Tuchola. Other task projects were put on the substitution list. Unused assets in a given year were kept in the municipal budget. In case of equal number of votes public draw was to be used.

The modification of the regulations in the next edition provided the possibility to merge assets in villages, as it was decided to allow merging of assets from the civic budget and the village fund. Declaration on project co-financing, signed by a village leader, was supposed to be submitted by a project leader together with an application. In order for a task to be realised, gathered village residents had to agree to give financial support for a given project

#### Good practices

Some practices we described in certain cases may be assessed ambivalently. In some cities the same activity was treated as limitation, while in others it could be appreciated as a solution supporting a local community. This is the case of the approach to leadership within CB in Tuchola. Firstly, persons submitting applications are clearly called “leaders”, while councillors and City Hall employees are excluded from the process. Its purpose in this small rural and urban municipality is to develop the civil society, development of skills and pro-social attitude and creating new leaders of the local community, that is pointed out as CB’s advantage by the organisers: *Presence of the Civic Budget increases trust to the self-government authorities among the inhabitants (...) and to the City Hall as an institution, too. They know they can come to us any time, share an idea and be sure it would be considered or that we will help them is one way to realise this undertaking. Secondly, as I have just said, during the CB process local leaders emerge naturally (the representative of executive authorities); Another strong link is to make these leaders show themselves (...) so, we invented these official project leaders within the Civic Budget. We did not want them to be councillors, because in this way we can have*

*some new people involved in local issues* (the representative of the legislative authorities).

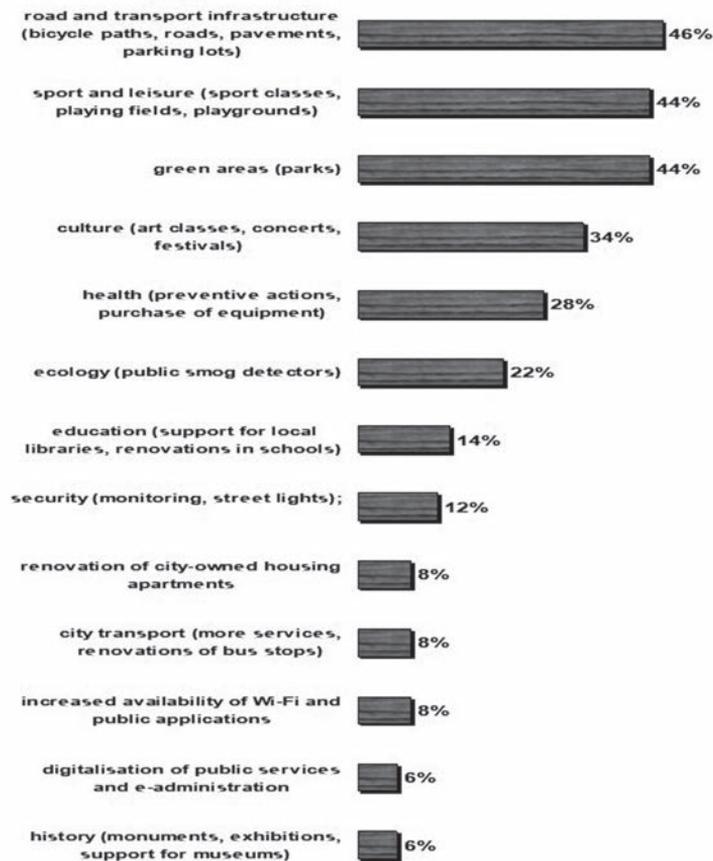
The minor, though still worth noticing innovation is the possibility to include the Village Fund to the Civic Budget. In context of our research, not only are the Village Funds a participatory budget officially defined in the act, but they are also more deliberative, because the legislator did not impose the obligation to elect it in general voting, but in the form of a resolution passed by gathering of inhabitants. This gives the chance to discuss problems and proposal and to modify them in a quicker way, though a practical analysis of this tool would probably uncover numerous disadvantages of this procedure.

## **2. Civic budgeting in Tuchola – selected results of the survey conducted among the inhabitants**

Among three fields of economy CB projects should implemented in the respondents in Tuchola mostly selected road and transport infrastructure (bicycle paths, roads, pavements, parking lots, 46%), sport and leisure (sport classes, playing fields, playgrounds, 44%), green areas (parks, 44%) and culture (art classes, concerts, festivals 34%). Health, ecology, education or security were not so important. Interestingly, soft cultural projects are allowed within CB in Tuchola, however no such projects have been submitted yet. Detailed information was presented at the chart below.

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**Chart 67. Select three most important types of activities you think CB projects in your city should be implemented among**

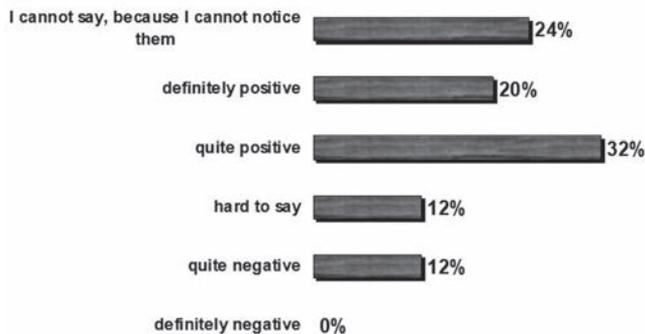


Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

Information policy of city authorities is an important factor to raise interest in participation in CB, both in terms of project leaders and voters. In Tuchola the process was limited to *our local information channels... the City Hall website, Facebook that works perfectly in case of CB, because*

people choose it as a source of information on this issue. Of course, we put some effort and placed some posters in the city and the villages (the official responsible for CB). What did the respondents think about this policy? 52% had positive opinions (32% quite positively, 20% definitely positively), while 12% thought differently. Also 12% selected the “hard to say” answer. 24% of the respondents were not able to assess the CB information campaign of the city authorities, because they could not notice it. Some additional activities were performed by some applicants [who] organised their own meetings with inhabitants to show their ideas and to encourage to vote for their projects (the official responsible for CB). The best example of such activities can be the promotional short video on our investment (the author of the winning project), that was displayed in the school where it was supposed to be implemented and in other locations.

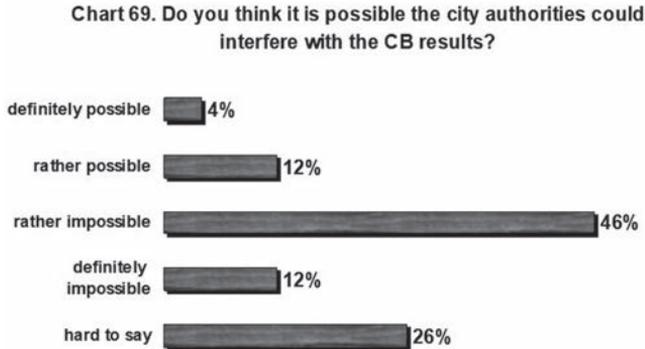
**Chart 68. What is your opinion about the information actions regarding CB, conducted by the city authorities?**



Most of the respondents thought the city authorities could not interfere with the CB results (58%, including 12% definitely impossible, 46% rather impossible), while 16% thought differently (12% rather possible, 4% definitely impossible). Such fears were not felt by our interlocutors who all admitted they did not think it was possible. Let us once again mention that local politicians and officials must not submit projects, that surely has positive impact on reception of this question by the respondents, though

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reasonableness of this solution is discussed in many cities and prevailing arguments are not always so unambiguous. In turn, 26% of the respondents selected the “hard to say” answer.

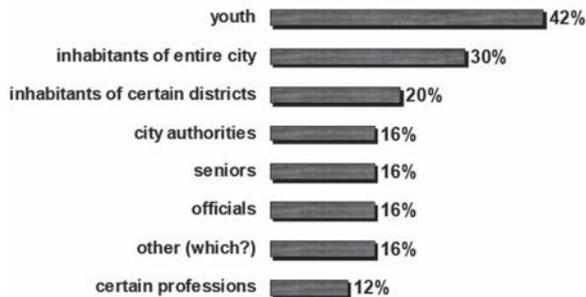


CB projects can serve the inhabitants of the entire city and certain social groups. What do the inhabitants of Tuchola think about that? 42% of the respondents thought the most profits are gained by youth, 30% selected inhabitants of the entire city and 20% indicated inhabitants of certain districts. Youth is also indicated by our interlocutors, which is a result of overrepresentation of facilities built in schools. It is a typical situation for many CBs in Poland, but the Tuchola authorities not going to change it now: *I think schools will still be the largest CB beneficiaries, because they can relatively easily mobilise parents to vote for their projects, that is for sure* (the representative of the legislative authorities). The solution solving problems with access to CB infrastructure is availability for the public, addressed in the discussion with our interlocutors. On one hand, the author of the winning project being a school playground underlines that *this project is available for the public... especially after the school working hours* (the author of the winning project), which was related to the necessity to consider additional protections against destruction, for example in the form of monitoring or correct project element structure. Also, there were the opposite opinions indicating existence of this problem: *though*

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*I work in a school, I am a teacher, I do not like the practices in some school that was trying very much to make the entire educational community vote for the project submitted by that school... parents were told it would be very appreciated to have their votes on this project. It turned out it won and only the community of that school can make use of it... I am talking about some certain school, I do not want to name it here, but I do not like the situation... it is so egoistic and has nothing in common with acting on behalf of the entire community (the author of one of the rejected projects).* Considering practices applied in other Polish cities, the problem is common and we can expect attempts to address it more thoroughly in the following CB editions.

**Chart 70. Which social groups gain the largest profit from CB in your opinion?**



Note: Respondents could select no more than 3 answers.

Among factors that made the respondents participate in the last CB edition the most crucial were skills and involvement of project authors (56%, including 14% encouraging, 42% quite encouraging), availability of CB information (52%, including 18% encouraging, 34% quite encouraging) and interesting and important projects (52%, including 24% encouraging, 28% quite encouraging). The most discouraging factor was form of voting (24%, including 12% quite discouraging, 12% discouraging), that is

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probably related to the fact that voting is limited only to the traditional form, while the whole survey was conducted online.

Table 14. Specify to what extent certain factors had influence on general participation of the city inhabitants in the latest CB edition?

		Encouraging	Quite encouraging	Hard to say	Quite discouraging	Discouraging
1)	Availability of information	18%	34%	38%	8%	2%
2)	Convenient form of voting	14%	20%	42%	12%	12%
3)	Interesting and important projects	24%	28%	36%	4%	8%
4)	Skills and involvement of officials/ councillors	16%	24%	48%	6%	6%
5)	Skills and involvement of project authors	14%	42%	32%	0%	12%
6)	Level of own knowledge	24%	20%	40%	14%	2%

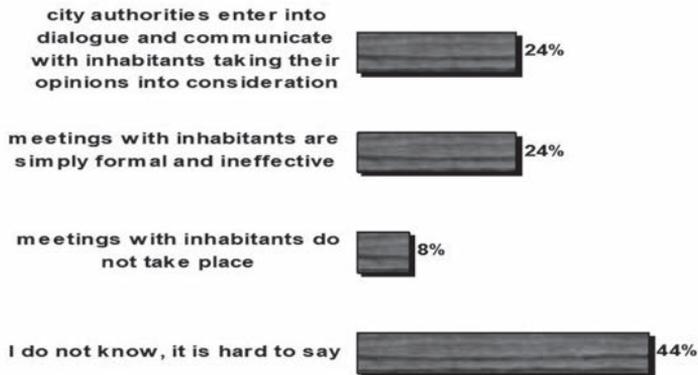
Note: *the percentages could not add up to 100 due to the possibility of multiple choice.*

The projects submitted within CB require the so called public consultations within which the city authorities organise open meetings where the information campaign on CB projects is presented. These activities take various forms and depend on invention of officials. They can be lessons, lectures and typical tours of duty of the Civic Budget Team. It seems that in Tuchola this process needs to be corrected, because from the data we collected it can be concluded these meetings are characterised by the one-way communication of information and CB promotion (the representative of the legislative authorities, the official responsible for CB) than listening to comments of the inhabitants. According to our survey, as much as 44% of them could not assess the public consultation process and selected the “hard to say” answer, 8% declared the meetings

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with inhabitants were not held, 24% thought the meetings were simply formal and ineffective, while also 24% thought the city authorities entered into dialogue and discussions and took their opinions on CB into consideration.

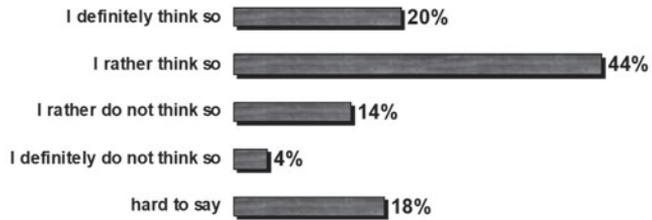
**Chart 71. How do you evaluate the process of public consultations regarding CB in your city (open discussion, working meetings and dialogue between authorities and inhabitants)?**



Do the Tuchola city authorities consider opinions of the inhabitants during the decision-making process in terms of CB issues? 64% agreed (20% I definitely think so, 44% I rather think so), while 18% thought differently (4% I definitely do not think so, 14% I rather do not think so). 18% selected the “hard to say” answer. As in other cases we analysed, so large numbers of positive opinions in context of lack of actual CB consultations tells us that, in fact, the respondents answered the question on whether the city authorities respect the results of voting by inhabitants.

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**Chart 72. In general, do you think the opinions of the inhabitants of your city are taken into consideration by the city authorities during the decision-making process regarding CB?**



## Summary

Table 15. Strong and weak points and opportunities and hazards to participatory budgeting in the twelve Polish cities

City	Strong points	Weak points	Opportunities	Hazards
<i>Dąbrowa Górnicza</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DG belongs to the group where history of participatory budgeting has been the longest (since 2013)</li> <li>• After introduction of the legal regulations CB was implemented in the obligatory form, the previous deliberative Civic Budget was also maintained</li> <li>• Interesting solution in the form of advanced institutionalised handling of relations between the self-government authorities and inhabitants, including the role of residential area animators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently none, however it seems that the growing professionalism of the budgeting process attended by inhabitants, including employees and administrative staff, requires monitoring and evaluation in the broader context, with participation of stakeholders, but possibly also with independent outside experts with necessary knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong local identity</li> <li>• Long experience in implementation of participatory budgeting</li> <li>• Administrative professionalisation of the budgeting process attended by inhabitants, followed by maintaining and further development of deliberative consultations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible symptoms of routine based on high self-esteem</li> <li>• Possible excessive advantage of bonding networks over bridging networks</li> </ul>

City	Strong points	Weak points	Opportunities	Hazards
Gorzów Wielkopolski	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gorzów Wielkopolski belongs to the group where history of participatory budgeting has been the longest (since 2013). Consultation-oriented and proactive adjustment of formal regulations</li> <li>Worked out and discussed solutions are strongly legitimised, efficient and popular</li> <li>Positive effect are strengthened by diversified communication activities and CB monitoring and evaluation attended by participants, including the survey prepared by the community representation. Also, evaluation meetings are held with inhabitants and school pupils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No significant local weak points, when compared to other analysed cities. Higher level of participation, which is obviously a strong point, however, it depends on mobilisation capabilities and they should be given special care, by looking after preservation of local formal and informal communication and cooperative relations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities for preservation and intensive elements in local CB are embedded in “project networking”, in the form of deliberative merger of projects. This practice is favourable for creation the support network in terms of the public policy involving various stakeholders (policy networks).</li> <li>Project networking is supported by the solution responding to the needs of the sublocal regions. As a result of lack of ancillary units, certain asset amounts are available within task categories defined in the act</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are some hazards, however, they are relatively minor, when compared to other analysed cities. As a result, in this case the city and the stakeholders can be advised to conduct reliable CB monitoring and evaluation and be alert regarding symptoms of possible hazards</li> </ul>

<p><i>Hrubieszów</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CB as continuation of previously participation-oriented projects, including technological infrastructure (Public Participation Platform)</li> <li>• Efficient and understandable communication about CB for inhabitants, both project authors and voters</li> <li>• Citizen-oriented approach of local politicians and officials</li> <li>• CB evolution process considering needs and expectations of the inhabitants, with purpose to involve them in the CB process</li> <li>• Above average turnout during voting (ca. 20%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small assets assigned to CB</li> <li>• Large share of schools in terms of projects selected for CB</li> <li>• Withdrawal from participation of the community representation in CB coordination works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pro-social approach of the authorities is favourable for growing trust and involvement in CB</li> <li>• Supporting the idea to create new local leaders and learning civic skills by local communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CB dominated by firmly embedded institutions with great mobilisation potential (schools)</li> </ul>
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City	Strong points	Weak points	Opportunities	Hazards
Kraków	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long history (since 2014) when various participatory forms have been used, like city-wide, district, or problem-related, involving large groups of stakeholders and inhabitants in the process</li> <li>• Well-thought and functional CB helpline available in various forms and offering information and diversified and customised assistance</li> <li>• Animating and supporting activities of CB and Local Participation Ambassadors</li> <li>• Trainings and workshops dedicated to participatory tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversified, when compared to other cities, but they do not result in the proportionally higher level of participation of inhabitants in CB</li> <li>• There is a need for stricter monitoring and evaluation of the operations of Civic Budget Council</li> <li>• Required monitoring and discussion on possible symptoms of too strong relations in the form of factional support networks that, if intensified, could increase conflict-oriented rivalry within CB processes and weaken cooperative tendencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant chances to increase participation and strengthen symmetrical and more intense relations lay in improved monitoring and evaluated CB, including evaluation of the project initial verification mechanism</li> <li>• Improved monitoring of weak points of the initial verification process facilitates more accurate redefining of form and functions of the CB Council, in compliance with the local tradition of public disputes, which, in turn, would strengthen the results of local CB institutionalisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CB Council is a local institution that can effectively support the CB process. Its operations should be thoroughly monitored, as its effectiveness is assessed very differently</li> <li>• With time, there may be some centrifugal rivalry tendencies within the budgeting process attended by inhabitants, that would intensify the process of CB politicisation, e.g. in relation with rivalry in which district and city stakeholders take part in changing configurations</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Krosno</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beside CB defined in the act (in Krosno since 2018), there is the locally developed 50/50 Budget constituting an example of intensified participation realized in close cooperation with councillors, though without typical consultations with inhabitants (see the adjacent column)</li> <li>Smoothly operating CB Council cooperating with the CB Team comprising also of representatives of the City Hall departments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The solutions introduced in the 50/50 Budget strengthen the position of councillors, while they do not provide typical consultations with inhabitants regarding participatory budgeting issues. This may result in too intense politicisation, that would not be favourable for development of participation and deliberation, as it can even stop the process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further improvement of the 50/50 Budget with purpose to strengthen the role of consultations with the inhabitants and to weaken the exposure position of councillors, may be an opportunity, as it can result in more genuine deliberation and should decrease the probability of political or administrative impact imposed on the budgeting process attended by the inhabitants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuously poor development of consultations may be a hazard, also as a result of mediocre interest and low turnout among inhabitants. It is kind of a tautology that, if agreed with, gives no chance to find a good solution to move forward: meetings are avoided, because of poor turnout on these few gatherings that have already been organised</li> </ul>
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City	Strong points	Weak points	Opportunities	Hazards
Legnica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CB as an element of the rich tradition of investment consultations</li> <li>• Multi-year evolution of CB and its continuous adjustment to institutional conditions and needs of the inhabitants</li> <li>• Smoothly operating Project Technical Evaluation Team involving representatives of the third sector</li> <li>• Transparent website, information useful for project authors</li> <li>• Popularisation of projects and the possibility to vote at large city events</li> <li>• Additional implementation of the ideas submitted within applications that were not selected for CB, apart from the CB process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small diversity of CB projects, too much presence of infrastructural projects</li> <li>• Relatively low level of participation of inhabitants in the CB evaluation process (lack of interest in spite of attempts to involve them by the City Hall)</li> <li>• Poor recognisability of CB by elderly inhabitants of Legnica</li> <li>• Lack of division into CB regions within ancillary unit borders, lack of CB for city-wide projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further evolution in compliance with expectations of the local third sector and involving inhabitants</li> <li>• Establishment of the city-wide budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occurrence of the closed group of “CB project experts”, that may finally result in decreasing participation of inhabitants, instead of making them more active</li> <li>• Smaller chances for funds for investments in certain fields, if projects popular in the entire city are submitted (e.g. funds for the animal shelter)</li> </ul>

<p><i>Nowa Ruda</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible implementation or projects which costs (after being selected) turned out to be higher than assumed</li> <li>• Support for inhabitants regarding promotional activities, coherent information campaign</li> <li>• Attempts to divide assets for various city parts in a fairer way (no ancillary units)</li> <li>• Possible implementation of tasks at plots of land not owned by self-government and lent by owners</li> <li>• Transparent website with the map of implemented projects</li> <li>• Limiting (in cooperation with leaders) of project scope, if it turns out after the voting the assets for an entire project are insufficient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low level of participation</li> <li>• Lack of CB consultations</li> <li>• No formal grounds for CB implementation in three sub-local areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The authorities are proactive in terms of how CB should look like, introducing original solutions regarding problems encountered in subsequent editions, on a day-to-day basis</li> <li>• Increasing asset amounts for CB projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need to adjust CB to the legal regulations (division into 3 parts) may have negative influence on fair distribution of assets</li> <li>• The aging community facing structural problems (unemployment, poverty, insufficient access to healthcare) is not interested in CB</li> </ul>
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<i>City</i>	<b>Strong points</b>	<b>Weak points</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Hazards</b>
<i>Optow</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officials prepare cost estimates, instead of project authors</li> <li>• Flexibility and cooperation with project authors and inhabitants during implementation of selected tasks</li> <li>• Elicitation of local cooperation between villages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small assets assigned to CB</li> <li>• Lack of an efficient method to introduce online voting</li> <li>• Possible influence on voting by local stakeholders (e.g. in nursing homes)</li> <li>• No consultations and dialogue with inhabitants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating leaders in local communities and civic involvement, including in villages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The aging community</li> <li>• Significant decrease of city incomes</li> <li>• Strong belief of local politicians and officials their opinions are always right, resulting in skepticism regarding participatory tools and spending money on CB</li> </ul>

<p><i>Putawy</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the city with long history of participatory budgeting (since 2013) ca. 1% of the city budget is assigned to CB budgeting processes attended by inhabitants, which is much higher percentage when compared to other cities</li> <li>• Consultation and information meetings with inhabitants and project authors are held before the voting</li> <li>• Professionalisation of the Project Evaluation Team and the cost estimate preparation process. It is a strong point, also requiring reliable monitoring, including the appeal procedure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subsequent CB editions are evaluated, though participation of inhabitants occurs mostly in passive forms and with the excessive role of a survey as an information acquisition tool</li> <li>• The Project Evaluation Team comprises mostly of officials and legal counsellors. Besides many advantages, the weak point is lack of significant role of common inhabitants, as presence of experts is so dominant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants can check project implementation stage, which is an example of increasing participation of project authors within current monitoring and evaluation of CB task implementation</li> <li>• As there were no formally established districts between the amendment of the act, the division into city-wide regional (constituencies) projects was used, that were abolished after the said amendment, constituting the division into large and small projects. The solution is an example of innovative merger of the previous practices with legal conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interesting solution, though requiring to be monitored, is estimation of financial costs by the Project Evaluation Team for project authors, however this facilitation may result in reduction of actual participatory skills in project authors</li> </ul>
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City	Strong points	Weak points	Opportunities	Hazards
<p><i>Rypln</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant topic diversification in CB in spite of small number of submitted projects</li> <li>• Public presentation of projects and preparation of materials with project authors were provided in an officially passed resolution</li> <li>• CB synchronised with the large city event where projects are presented and it is possible to vote for them</li> <li>• At least 30 signatures required to submit a project means it must be consulted and somehow supported already at this stage</li> <li>• Diversification of promotional tasks received by people in various age categories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatively low level of involvement of inhabitants in submitting of projects and voting – low number of applications and low turnout during voting</li> <li>• No money limit for a specific project, resulting in only 1-2 projects implemented annually</li> <li>• Small amount of money assigned to CB (decreased even more during the pandemics)</li> <li>• Inhabitants do not participate in the project verification process</li> <li>• No CB consultations</li> <li>• Occurring problems with correct preparation of applications and cost estimates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The authorities are really intent to implement the projects selected within CB, even in the face of increased costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining the low amount of money may block the process of CB popularisation and constitute another barrier for its local development</li> <li>• Decreasing number of projects</li> </ul>	

<p><i>Sopot</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first Polish city to introduce participatory budgeting (2011)</li> <li>• After enforcement of the amendment to the act the solutions not included therein were maintained</li> <li>• Good organisational facilities, know-how and smooth CB coordination, but the administrative aspect of the process needs to be thoroughly monitored and audited</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Periodically unstable relations between NGOs and local authorities</li> <li>• Advantage of Putnam-like limiting bonding support coalitions over bridging problem-related coalitions</li> <li>• Risk of routinisation of activities; occurring symptoms of risk related to repeatability of activity workflow and code of conduct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong local identity</li> <li>• The longest experience in implementation of participatory budgeting,</li> <li>• Potential to go beyond political clubs/parties (i.e. support coalitions) on behalf of strengthening of consensual elements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enthusiasm of certain stakeholders is slightly decreasing</li> <li>• Existing animosities related to division of assets into local projects,</li> <li>• Since the beginning of the budgeting process involving inhabitants, Sopot has experienced various clashes resulting from political rivalry. If continued, it may disturb further development of deliberation in the budgeting process</li> </ul>
<p><i>Tuchola</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility to merge CB projects and Village Fund projects</li> <li>• Good opinions on cooperation between officials and project authors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No possibility to vote online</li> <li>• Domination of schools; as a result, some projects are not available to the public</li> <li>• Existing consultations only provide information and inhabitants are not included in the CB planning process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention paid to creating new leaders in the local community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domination of CB via strongly rooted institutions with large mobilisation potential (schools), that may discourage other inhabitants to participate in a project</li> </ul>



## Conclusions

In our research we tried to answer the crucial question whether and to what extent Polish practices of budgeting attended by inhabitants contain and preserve plebiscitary (including project evaluation and the main role of voting) and deliberative threads (including detailed discussion on projects and the consensus reaching process).

The analysis of the collected material uncovered multiple differences in implementation and practicing of the act-defined CB pattern, however, they usually did not deviate much from it and we can conclude this pattern has taken root. It is, though, crucial that when the said differences did occur, they were related to the previously developed local practices of participatory budgeting. The aforementioned pattern was intertwined with local regulations and pragmatism of administrative activities, as well as local forms and scale of involvement among inhabitants. This leads to the general conclusion saying that CB-related regulations should not be exceedingly detailed, so there would always be space for innovative local practices.

Referring to the questions mentioned at the beginning of the third chapter, that helped us to operationalise research activities and analyse the data, we can draw the following conclusions.

- Introduction of act-imposed civic budget regulations is criticised and it is a justified reaction especially in cities where original solutions in the field of participatory budget were developed. The act itself should not, however, be seen as senseless or even unsuccessful. Some of its crucial elements are, indeed worth being discussed, but we can say that the legal framework generally fulfils its main goal which is popularisation of practices related to participation of

## Conclusions

inhabitants in decisions regarding local public expenses. Basically, the CB regulations helps to popularise the idea of co-deciding and generally defined civic education. It can also be lead to enhancement of cooperation and responsibility of local communities for management of public matters, especially in locations where local circumstances are present in the cooperation patterns that were previously existing or developed within CB processes.

- The collected material enabled classification of Polish solutions and their interpretation in the comparative context and allowed to underline main differences in certain types of local practices. The most important differentiating criterion was diversified behaviour patterns defining details of local variants of culture in context of local civic, political and administrative practices.
- The scope of procedural changes and practical consequences constituting results of implementation of the CB regulations was standardised in the act, but also diversified in terms of content and amount of local regulations. In locations where local participatory budget practices were initiated before the act and with better results, there were more solutions introduced around implementation of the act, with purpose to preserve crucial fragments or even entire previous practices.
- The scope in which Polish local self-governments can practically 'interfere' with results of budgeting attended by inhabitants was mostly evaluable, though it was still some approximation. As a result, we can draw a general conclusion that potential of possible interference is immanent and its limitation can mostly be achieved by application of more developed standards in civic, political and administrative areas of the local culture.
- The collected material enabled indication of differences in practices and in results of application of deliberative and plebiscitary solutions, as the variety of local customising and innovative solutions introducing the act was identified. Also, problems related to capabilities and impotence of local practices and to rigid structural and

situational conditions were uncovered. Definitely negative impact of the plebiscitary character of the act-defined solutions was not observed. Implementation of this national regulation did not have significant impact on increasing the level of superficiality of participation, which is supposed to sink easier in locations where there were no CB-related activities before, and where the CB itself can be seen as an achievement. However, it can also hampers transition to more advanced forms of activism, associated with development of the civic society.

- The scope of impact of the act-defined CB regulations on enhancement or weakening of the co-deciding process in the twelve cities subject to more detailed analysis can be assessed in a similar way. Considering diversified practices, it is impossible, and not justified, to draw one common conclusion for all cities being analysed. For the cities where civic budgeting had been present before the act, co-deciding took various forms and referred to various issues, the act did specify the main rules, but it did not destroy the element of co-governance that is developed in compliance with local tendencies of rivalry and cooperation. In turn, in the locations where there were no such attempts at all, introduction of the act-defined regulations forced some reactions that, hopefully, will be continued in good directions and filled with practices involving both inhabitants and local authorities, NGOs and other stakeholders.
- From the collected material we can conclude that local CB beneficiaries are usually similar groups in local communities, diversified in terms of territory (e.g. living around entire city or districts), age (children, youth, elderly people) and functions (usually schools). Possible asymmetry in local benefits was investigated and diversified remedial actions were performed in the analysed cities, including both reactive and pro-active, innovative solutions.
- Research enabled identification and estimation of effectiveness of the previous and current participatory budgeting solutions and practices in the twelve cities subject to more detailed analysis.

## Conclusions

Many of the previous solutions have been preserved after enforcement of the act, other ones were modified and embedded in the CB context and some disappeared and are missed, while their advocates hope for them to return.

- In the analysed cases amount of financial assets available in local budgets had impact on development or limitation of pro-deliberative activities in a distinct, though ambiguous way. Occurring CB-related activism tended to be intense in less prosperous cities with shorter history of this form of participation. In turn, in cities with more experience in this field this form of activism was sometimes surprisingly poor.

As we already mentioned in the book, the underlined issues enabled us to customise analyses to certain cases and to operationalise the hypotheses assuming that the act-defined institution of civic budget does not create an efficient procedure leading to the increased level of local co-governance by intensification of the collective thinking process and that it may even limit the civic budget to the role of a standard plebiscitary tool.

The analysis of the collected material gives only a partial answer, because in locations where participatory budgeting had been practiced before, even defending of the previously developed methods was an innovative activity, rather increasing than decreasing local civic participation. In turn, in locations where budgeting attended by inhabitants was introduced shortly before or after enforcement of the act, the CB procedures preserved 'the participation issue' in the local agenda of public events and in city administrative processes. This was achieved at least within city halls alone, institutionally responsible for CB implementation. It would be an absolute minimum, but when compared to previous lack of practices we investigated, even this minimum should be seen as progress shifting local point of reference closer to the participatory perspective. Referring here to the idea of auxiliary shifting baseline<sup>1</sup>, we can say that among the cities

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g.: M. Soga, K.J. Gaston, *Shifting Baseline Syndrome: Causes, Consequences and Implications*, "Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment" 2018, vol. 16, no. 4.

subject to analysis there were some in which parameters of a reference point for local public policies were improved thanks to the act, in form of possibly more moderate, though participatory practices. As a result, the general conclusion is positive, though Polish local self-governments still need quicker, bolder and more effective and practical attempts to increase participation and develop causative forms of deliberation.

During our research we locally encountered various configurations of elements of the deliberation definition we presented in the six paragraphs in the introduction to this paper. We tried to show the most important part of these local less or more expressive forms of deliberation in the book, especially in the third chapter containing the twelve case studies of CB in Polish cities. These elements are, however, not easily detectable, as they depend mostly on quality of relations and disappear easily. As a result, we will not be trying to generalise them, concluding that shades of grey can be classified with no knowledge on colours, but the future of local participation will be improved, if we appreciate their diversification by focusing on quality of processes in periodical research and reliable evaluation they deserve.



## Annex: Summary tables in the survey

Table 16. Sex of respondents (%)

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Putawy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
1	women	69	70	68	60	63	62	33	65	41	55	67	52
2	men	31	30	32	40	38	38	67	35	59	45	33	48
	total (after rounding)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 17. Age of respondents (%)

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Putawy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
1	less than 18 years old	60	75	53	6	47	59	63	64	65	51	8	12
2	18–25 years old	3	7	14	19	19	16	24	28	10	31	3	20
3	26–35 years old	1	2	7	22	5	9	2	2	5	3	9	14
4	36–45 years old	17	8	10	20	16	8	2	2	5	6	16	30
5	46–55 years old	12	4	8	16	6	3	4	2	1	5	8	10
6	56–65 years old	4	3	5	10	5	3	6	1	5	1	25	4
7	more than 66 years old	3	2	4	5	2	3	-	1	8	3	31	10
	total (after rounding)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

## Annex: Summary tables in the survey

Table 18. Marital status of respondents (%)

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Puławy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
1	single	64	81	69	44	69	76	80	85	76	81	22	42
2	married	30	15	25	45	28	16	12	8	16	14	47	48
3	widowed	1	2	3	4	1	5	2	2	6	3	11	6
4	divorced	4	2	3	7	2	3	6	4	3	3	20	4
total (after rounding)		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 19. Level of education of respondents (%)

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Puławy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
1	primary school	33	49	29	3	22	30	37	29	44	25	11	8
2	junior high school	10	11	16	3	14	25	20	16	8	23	-	18
3	vocational school	1	-	2	1	7	-	-	4	6	15	2	2
4	high school	27	24	32	22	27	26	27	39	20	23	16	20
5	university	29	16	21	71	30	18	16	11	21	14	72	52
total (after rounding)		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

## Annex: Summary tables in the survey

Table 20. Employment status of respondents (%)

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Puławy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
1	pupil/student	62	82	63	25	62	73	82	85	71	78	8	34
2	pensioner	4	3	6	10	3	4		5	12	2	41	10
3	unemployed / inactive	3	1	3	3	4	3	2	2	2	3	3	4
4	active	31	14	28	63	32	19	16	8	15	18	48	52
	total (after rounding)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 21. Have you ever participated in any of CB stages in your city? (%)

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Puławy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
1	yes, at project application stage, as a project author	39	25	27	37	30	15	47	20	39	10	40	10
2	yes, at project supporting stage, as an inhabitant giving my support to a project submitted by somebody else	29	41	37	56	42	37	27	27	39	22	34	38
3	yes, at workshops / working meetings in districts/ other forms of brainstorm-oriented cooperation	27	25	3	31	24	3	7	33	18	5	3	5

Annex: Summary tables in the survey

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Puławy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
4	yes, in promotional and information campaign on behalf of certain project (mine or somebody else's)	22	32	27	41	21	15	33	7	7	9	23	19
5	yes, when voting on projects (on-line or traditionally)	64	68	63	80	64	70	60	47	50	69	80	67
6	yes, during implementation of projects	8	6	7	16	18	-	13	7	7	5	6	-
7	other way (how?)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	no, I have not participated in any of them	3	2	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	10
Note: respondents could select more than one answer													

Table 22. If you have participated in voting on CB projects in the city, please select one (main) reason of your decision (%)

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Puławy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
1	I think my voice matters and has influence on actual development of city/district	59	55	37	51	61	57	40	38	50	60	31	48

### Annex: Summary tables in the survey

2	these undertakings are efficient and help city authorities to make decisions that are good for inhabitants	17	34	27	22	18	25	33	19	39	26	29	19
3	voting on CB projects enables me to involve in local matters of inhabitants	31	34	43	52	33	33	27	50	36	21	40	33
4	other (please name)	3	8	3	8	6	5	7	-	-	-	11	19
total (after rounding)		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 23. If you have never participated in voting on CB projects, please select one (main) reason of your decision (%)

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Putawy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
1	I did not know that this process existed	46	51	47	38	49	47	25	48	55	45	19	46
2	I am not interested in city budget issues	17	19	11	10	23	14	28	15	24	25	11	11
3	I did not find any interesting project	10	10	10	15	13	13	25	10	7	8	15	21
4	rules of involvement / voting was described unclearly	1	3	7	-	6	3	6	5	6	3	7	7
5	I do not vote for CB projects, because it seems to me the city interferes with the results	5	3	4	8	6	3	-	4	12	4	19	4
6	I did not have time	22	20	27	31	17	21	19	30	24	19	33	25

## Annex: Summary tables in the survey

7	other (please name)	6	7	7	4	6	10	8	1	6	3	19	11
total (after rounding)		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 24. Please specify what you think the Civic Budget is (%)

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Puławy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
1	annual list of planned incomes and expenses	23	19	27	6	32	23	37	30	27	24	8	20
2	decision-making process within which inhabitants co-create some part of city budget	55	59	58	88	58	55	35	45	33	50	80	58
3	free-of-charge and non-repayable financial aid provided by the state for implementation of certain tasks of local self-government	7	12	12	1	6	10	18	8	14	12	6	16
4	I do not know, I cannot specify	15	10	4	6	5	12	10	16	26	14	6	6
total (after rounding)		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

## Annex: Summary tables in the survey

Table 25. In which areas should CB projects be implemented? (%)

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Putawy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
1	district and city-wide projects	62	70	65	75	61	55	49	50	53	51	70	56
2	only district projects	11	4	8	16	9	12	12	5	8	7	14	6
3	only city-wide projects	8	7	9	1	7	8	16	12	6	13	3	10
4	hard to say, I cannot name them	20	19	18	9	24	24	24	33	33	28	13	28
total (after rounding)		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 26. What should be changed in CB in your city? (%)

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Putawy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
1	project application period should be prolonged	14	13	16	10	17	12	18	20	16	21	8	12
2	project application process should be simplified	26	28	21	29	21	24	25	35	19	22	8	20
3	project voting period should be prolonged	8	10	14	11	9	13	10	8	9	12	9	14
4	voting should be facilitated	20	32	17	21	13	28	22	28	27	22	11	60

Annex: Summary tables in the survey

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Putawy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
5	CB-related information and promotional activities in entire city should be improved	37	40	25	47	25	34	22	25	28	20	20	28
6	project authors should have support in terms of information and promotional activities regarding certain projects	22	26	15	35	27	28	27	18	18	14	28	18
7	cooperation with inhabitants should be improved in terms of development process regarding CB rules (e.g. by public consultations, workshops)	30	39	30	44	35	37	31	28	31	29	58	24
8	other (what?)	8	5	4	22	13	7	8	1	7	2	25	8
Note: respondents could select no more than 3 answers													

## Annex: Summary tables in the survey

Table 27. Have you noticed any significant changes (including in procedures) in CB in your city after 2018? (%)

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Putawy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
1	yes, for better	13	19	13	23	9	10	14	13	12	19	14	14
2	yes, for worse	3	3	5	12	7	3	8	2	9	4	9	-
3	I have not noticed any changes	28	40	31	31	39	39	37	36	29	39	44	34
4	hard to say	57	38	51	34	45	47	41	50	51	38	33	52
total (after rounding)		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 28. Select three most important types of activities you think CB projects in your city should be implemented among (%)

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Putawy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
1	road and transport infrastructure (bicycle paths, roads, pavements, parking lots)	51	51	57	48	46	57	43	50	51	52	34	46
2	sport and leisure (sport classes, playing fields, playgrounds)	33	32	24	42	38	33	41	54	44	40	36	44
3	green areas (parks)	52	48	27	67	51	41	35	32	35	26	42	44

Annex: Summary tables in the survey

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Puławy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
4	renovation of city-owned housing apartments	8	14	12	1	7	13	14	5	6	6	8	8
5	security (monitoring, street lights)	20	14	35	12	14	17	16	11	19	15	19	12
6	culture (art classes, concerts, festivals)	26	35	18	32	27	21	27	23	19	23	27	34
7	education (support for local libraries, renovation in schools)	18	12	10	11	13	14	14	11	12	11	9	14
8	health (preventive actions, purchase of medical equipment)	21	22	32	14	19	25	16	20	20	19	34	28
9	history (monuments, exhibitions, support for museums)	3	3	1	5	7	5	4	4	5	4	9	6
10	city transport (more services, renovations of bus stops)	15	17	11	8	18	16	16	8	16	12	14	8
11	digitalisation of public services and e-administration	4	1	4	3	-	3	4	3	5	4	3	6
12	increased availability of Wi-Fi and public mobile applications	5	8	9	7	18	10	18	14	14	14	11	8
13	ecology (public smog detectors)	22	28	21	28	14	23	18	22	15	13	25	22

Note: respondents could select no more than 3 answers

Annex: Summary tables in the survey

Table 29. Where do you mostly get information on CB in your city from? (%)

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Puławy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
1	from the Internet	84	88	88	91	87	88	77	87	84	67	76	93
2	from local press	34	17	12	15	7	13	32	28	24	40	33	37
3	from local radio stations	5	15	6	3	-	8	5	23	24	8	8	-
4	from sources available in public places (banners, posters, billboards)	34	27	19	29	26	39	9	25	22	21	12	17
5	from information leaflets	18	16	16	16	4	12	18	9	11	27	27	10
6	from other city inhabitants/ project authors	26	44	28	41	41	35	36	29	22	40	27	47
7	other (please name)	7	5	6	10	9	1	9	7	-	1	6	-
Note: respondents could select no more than 3 answers													

## Annex: Summary tables in the survey

Table 30. What is your opinion about information actions regarding CB, conducted by city authorities? (%)

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Putawy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
1	I cannot say, because I cannot notice them	32	38	23	15	24	32	33	36	40	28	6	24
2	definitely positive	11	7	16	12	13	7	10	8	11	10	20	20
3	quite positive	28	27	30	34	25	22	22	18	17	27	30	32
4	hard to say	20	19	19	21	18	27	27	28	19	26	13	12
5	definitely negative	5	6	12	13	13	8	0	7	5	5	17	12
6	quite negative	3	2	1	5	8	5	8	4	8	4	14	-
total (after rounding)		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 31. Do you think it is possible the city authorities could interfere with CB results? (%)

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Putawy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
1	definitely possible	10	9	9	15	13	15	4	5	13	11	30	4
2	rather possible	23	31	32	25	18	27	25	19	22	33	23	12
3	rather impossible	23	24	20	28	24	21	22	13	20	27	17	46
4	definitely impossible	8	7	8	8	7	7	18	5	5	5	8	12
5	hard to say	35	30	31	24	38	30	31	58	40	24	22	26
total (after rounding)		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Annex: Summary tables in the survey

Table 32. Which social groups gain the largest profit from CB in your opinion? (%)

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Puławy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
1	seniors	34	30	34	32	32	30	29	41	40	29	28	16
2	youth	35	50	35	27	25	28	39	37	27	36	19	42
3	inhabitants of certain districts	38	47	41	57	36	42	18	19	27	22	44	20
4	certain professions	10	9	17	1	20	15	18	16	7	13	6	12
5	local entrepreneurs	11	10	11	5	11	10	8	13	13	13	8	10
6	inhabitants of entire city	25	32	27	36	21	19	33	20	27	30	36	30
7	city authorities	18	19	23	19	34	30	29	33	27	27	27	16
8	officials	10	9	16	12	19	16	18	22	18	22	22	16
9	other (which?)	5	4	2	14	5	7	10	1	6	2	6	16
Note: respondents could select no more than 3 answers													

## Annex: Summary tables in the survey

Table 33. How do you evaluate the process of public consultations regarding CB in your city (open discussions, working meetings and dialogue between authorities and inhabitants)? (%)

		Dąbrowa Górnicza	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Hrubieszów	Kraków	Krosno	Legnica	Nowa Ruda	Opatów	Puławy	Rypin	Sopot	Tuchola
1	city authorities enter into dialogue and communicate with inhabitants taking their opinions into consideration	25	17	23	23	17	11	16	19	17	22	23	24
2	meetings with inhabitants are simply formal and ineffective	16	16	19	32	24	15	20	12	18	23	47	24
3	meetings with inhabitants do not take place	6	9	13	7	15	15	16	15	10	14	6	8
4	I do not know, it is hard to say	54	59	45	38	43	59	49	54	55	42	23	44
total (after rounding)		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100





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Table 2. Participatory models in budgeting involving citizens

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Table 23. If you have never participated in voting on CB projects, please select one (main) reason of your decision (%)

Table 24. Please specify what you think the Civic Budget is (%)

Table 25. In which areas should CB projects be implemented? (%)

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## Charts

Chart: 1 (Dąbrowa Górnicza), 7 (Gorzów Wielkopolski), 13 (Hrubieszów), 19 (Kraków), 25 (Krosno), 31 (Legnica), 37 (Nowa Ruda), 43 (Opatów), 49 (Puławy), 55 (Rypin), 61 (Sopot), 67 (Tuchola). Select three most important types of activities you think CB projects in your city should be implemented among

Chart: 2 (Dąbrowa Górnicza), 8 (Gorzów Wielkopolski), 14 (Hrubieszów), 20 (Kraków), 26 (Krosno), 32 (Legnica), 38 (Nowa Ruda), 44 (Opatów), 50 (Puławy), 56 (Rypin), 62 (Sopot), 68 (Tuchola). What is your opinion about information actions regarding CB, conducted by city authorities?

Chart: 3 (Dąbrowa Górnicza), 9 (Gorzów Wielkopolski), 15 (Hrubieszów), 21 (Kraków), 27 (Krosno), 33 (Legnica), 39 (Nowa Ruda), 45 (Opatów), 51 (Puławy), 57 (Rypin), 63 (Sopot), 69 (Tuchola). Do you think it is possible the city authorities could interfere with CB results?

Chart: 4 (Dąbrowa Górnicza), 10 (Gorzów Wielkopolski), 16 (Hrubieszów), 22 (Kraków), 28 (Krosno), 34 (Legnica), 40 (Nowa Ruda), 46 (Opatów), 52 (Puławy), 58 (Rypin), 64 (Sopot), 70 (Tuchola). Which social groups gain the largest profit from CB in your opinion?

Chart: 5 (Dąbrowa Górnicza), 11 (Gorzów Wielkopolski), 17 (Hrubieszów), 23 (Kraków), 29 (Krosno), 35 (Legnica), 41 (Nowa Ruda), 47 (Opatów), 53 (Puławy), 59 (Rypin), 65 (Sopot), 71 (Tuchola). How do you evaluate the process of public consultations regarding CB in your city (open discussions, working meetings and dialogue between authorities and inhabitants)?

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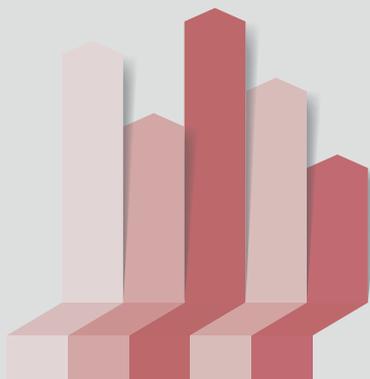
66 (Sopot), 72 (Sopot). In general, do you think the opinions of inhabitants of your city are taken into consideration by city authorities during the decision-making process regarding CB?

### Schemes

Scheme 1. Participation models shaping participatory budgeting practices



The book is based on the first research results on this scale in Poland obtained thanks to the implementation of a project financed by the National Science Center (2019/33 / B / HS5 / 00353, NCN OPUS 17). The research used methods and tools in the form of desk research, CAWI, a survey and script interviews. One of the main reasons for undertaking the research was the fact that in the last decade the popularity of solutions involving citizens in shaping public expenditure under the civic budget has grown significantly in Poland, reaching a level comparable to world leaders in this category. The purpose of this research project focusing on analysis of public policies is to characterise and describe the tendencies in evolution of the participatory budget, an important tool in contemporary democracies, described and standardised in the Polish law as “civic budget”.



ISBN 978-83-67209-15-1



9 788367 209151

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