



## The human resources management of a democratic action: intentionality, elements and functioning

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### Abstract

In reaction to the issue of citizens' distrust, apathy and disengagement from representative democracy, we investigate democratic actions in which participation, deliberation, and political engagement take place: the participatory budgeting (PB) of municipalities. By integrating two epistemologies, historical-hermeneutic and empirical-analytical, we interpret the intentions to commit, and analyze the enabling conditions of its implementation, viz., PB's human resources management. Content analysis methodology converts pieces of narratives into units of meaning, we provide evidences of the reasons why this reality is socially created, and capture its functioning. Findings from five cities show that the PB starts with the local government's intention to respond to historical demands of civil society regarding direct participation in government. As a mean to this goal, we explain the human resources practices of attracting, developing, and retaining participants. We provide a practical benchmark for local authorities' policy development, and for the literature of participatory management in municipalities.

**Keywords:** Citizenship Development and Engagement. Content Analysis. Participatory. Budgeting.

### Introduction

What is a democratic action? To the ordinary citizen, democracy is presented as the opportunity to vote occasionally for someone with similar ideas about how to run the society. If this is the case, this citizen is referring to the representative approach to democracy. Today nonetheless, low election participation rate is the most evident symptom of citizens' disbelief in the representative kind. Although a seesaw pattern can be found, since 1945 industrialized countries are experiencing a steadily

decrease in voter turnout (Census\_Bureau, 2009; Elections\_Canada, 2008; International\_IDEA, 2009).

In our view, the problem resides on the thesis in favor of the representative, or non-participatory, model of democracy, which we prefer to consider a 'social experiment' instead of a 'solid reality'. We are following this lead for at least three reasons. At first, symptoms resulting from the representative democracy are being appointed by researchers for quite a while (Warren, 2011). In the same manner of the low voter turnout, this declining tendency affects the broader scope of traditional political organizations such as parties and civil associations (Menezes, 2003). Instead of blaming the increasing individualism in our societies (Koliba, 2000), one could argue the other way around, that is to say, the lack of opportunity to impact our civil life fosters individualism. In accordance, the representative democracy produces the perception that the individual becomes inevitably a political consumer rather than an actor (Boyte, 1996; Koliba, 2000) whose opinions are perceived as unwanted (Frisby & Bowman, 1996). The second reason belongs to the ontology of the democracy concept. The classical theorists of democracy, like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, Mary Parker Follett and G. D. H. Cole, considered participation as a *sine qua non* of the democratic process. Democracy, for them, means participatory democracy, direct democratic system, cooperation, and 'power with' instead of 'power over' which contrast the typical consultation process (e.g. citizens hearings; participatory poverty assessments; establishment of performance indicators for the public sector; open consultation processes; open book management for public accountability; open city congresses; budget simulation software; public ombudsman; state-civic partnerships and so on).

The re-conceptualization of the term democratic action, which would mean democratic participation and deliberation, is gaining momentum. Several works have argued in favor of direct civil participation for political and civil re-engagement (Fung, 2006; Hickey & Mohan, 2005; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Roberts, 2004). Participatory processes seem to improve accountability and effectiveness because government would be facing greater pressure to demonstrate performance, justify decisions and seek continuous and additional support from stakeholders (Van de Walle & Bovaird, 2007). More recently, despite of the fact that politicians have legal authority to take decisions and make policy, they are being advised to consult citizens before taking these decisions. The courts are starting to create jurisprudence against non-consultative decision-making by deeming them as an exercise of bad faith whenever politicians act arbitrarily and without the openness, impartiality and fairness. The argument of the courts is that decision-making oriented by such values is a requirement of members of the government. However, and this is our third reason, such incremental innovation to representation still presents contradictory results.

Although, it can be argued that proper citizens' input is able to reduce distrust in government (Berman, 1997; Van de Walle & Bouckaert, 2003), the caveat is that the use of sole consultation seems to be counterproductive (Falbe & Yukl, 1992) because the 'promise' of participation and the 'delivery' of consultation can be understood as betrayal (Singer, 1996). Only citizens' perceptions of real involvement and participation in administrative decision-making are positively related with perceived quality in public management (Vigoda-Gadot & Mizrahi, 2008). Adding to this puzzle

though, we consider that the components education about the government activities (Ebdon & Franklin, 2004) and education for citizenship development and emancipation against oppression (Herbert, 2008), which are intrinsically present in participatory situations, constitute- additional pre-conditions for political engagement. In the United Kingdom, despite governments' progress in widening the structures of communication with citizens, there remains considerable scope to improve citizenship learning with implications to citizenship engagement and development (Andrews, Cowell, Downe, Martin, & Turner, 2008).

In that sense, the relationship between participation, learning, and engagement has been established, what the literature lacks is description of mechanisms that enables such engagement. We assume that in order to exist, and perpetuate, intentions materialize into some kind of managerial practice with organized and goal-oriented processes. Such development is a previous stage of formal institutionalization. From this initial rationale, the paper observes in the situations studied, a variety of integrated managerial processes. Their existences seem to be instrumental for democratic reengagement because they not only identify but also are able to address public concerns. We choose the one in which citizenship participation is pervasive through many sub-processes: the Human Resources Management (henceforth HRM). In this respect, there are three sub-objectives: 1. to describe human resources management practices; 2. to understand the intentions, establishment, and development; and, 3. to discuss the role of HRM in mediating this participatory best practice. The HRM literature exposes a conflict between the congruence approach of Nadler and Tushman(1980) and derivate attempts to prove its accuracy (e.g. Sender, 1997) and the universal approach to HRM proposed by Ferris, Hochwarter, Buckley, Harrel-Cook and Frink (1999) and its advocates (e.g. Hamlin, 2004). We, additionally, argue that this distinctions in the cases studied are artificial.

This paper represents our efforts to interpret reasons and describe processes of participation in government activities, in particular the human resources management, in which citizens reengage democracy. We interpret 'why' this reality is socially created, 'which' elements are involved, and *how* it functions. Our findings suggest that in order to transform intentions into practical reality, all the considered universal practices in human resources management (e.g. attracting, developing, and retaining participants) are inexorable sub-process of the participatory budgeting in municipalities. Nevertheless, they could not exist functionally without to supportive elements we encountered (e.g. communication skills, leadership, trust, perseverance, open-mindedness, empathy). We conclude that the socially-created participatory democracy impacts political engagement as citizenship, public service and politics are reshaped by the participatory budgeting. The focus on the relationship between participatory endeavors, human resources management and political engagement can benefit practitioners as well, as the study of these interrelationships is, to the best of our knowledge, absent in the literature.

In the remainder of the paper, we present the epistemological framework, democratic action studied, research question and methodology, findings, research limitations, and conclusions.

## Theoretical Background

The way the social sciences analyze phenomena is controversial and involves different ontological assumptions and resultant epistemological conjectures which fallout into competing views of what a social or human science should be. Any analysis made without proper care can end up into miscellaneous like the unclear distinction between *explaining* and *interpreting* phenomena. The attempt to 'explain' a social phenomenon consists fundamentally in assuming the face value of the social reality under study and then applying the logical Popperian schema of causality. However, causal explanations fall short when applied, for instance, to History, Sociology or even Economics, which means that in historical and social sciences, distinctly from natural sciences, there should be no ultimate reference to general laws or axioms (Kuhn, 1996 (1962)) as the social reality is in construction and transformation.

Conversely, the attempt to 'interpret' assumes that such social phenomenon is not a solid reality. Searle (1995:1) tries to make a distinction by recognizing: '... there are portions of the real world, objective facts in the world, which are only facts by human agreement. In a sense there are things that exist only because we believe them to exist.' In that sense, to Dray (1964), explaining a social action means showing that this action was the appropriate to, or the rational proceeding of, the situation observed. Elizabeth Anscombe focuses on the notion of the intentionality of social and human actions. This new impulse to the idea of *interpreting* (i.e. instead of explaining) shows that intentional conduct exists in a context endowed with determined characteristics, but it disappears when such characteristics change (Anscombe, 1963). Accordingly, Alfred Schutz (1972) redefines the social and human action as an intended human behavior that is devised by the actor in advance. In order to achieve the act or outcome, the individual has to anticipate the future result of the action and then step backwards and plan the moves that are necessary to achieve the desired result. Thus, differently from explaining causal relations, the interpretation of intentions in relation to the situation is what may better describe socially constructed realities. Therefore, to interpret a social action would be to deconstruct the sequence: intention, plan and act.

As there are inevitably at least three categories of people involved in a participatory democracy (i.e. citizens, public servants, and politicians), we introduce the discussion about synergy of intentions among these stakeholders. Synergy of intentions legitimizes the process and creates an inclusive decision-making process similar to what Freeman (1994) advocates. Legitimate plans use instruments to implement those synergic intentions.

The historic-hermeneutical epistemology provides interpretation about the *conditions*, in special the intentions and context, which create the democratic reality. Such interpretation is possible because the objective of historic-hermeneutical sciences is to understand the meanings of actions by interpreting narratives in discourses (Habermas, 1966). The rules of hermeneutics determine the possible meanings of statements because the levels of language and objective experience have not yet been separated. Thus, an intention transformed into a statement expressed in the discourse is the initial phase of the reality creation.

The historical aspect refers to a snapshot of the process' context and development, and the hermeneutical rules applied refer to the deconstruction of discourses into their 'intentional units', a similar procedure proposed by Churchill and Wertz (2001:255) who make reference to 'meaning units'. An interview extract from a case is reduced to its least meaningful unit of intention.

Correspondingly, the empirical-analytical epistemology explains the functioning of the reality created. We extract 'action units' from narratives. Action units provide evidences of these supportive elements and their functioning. Such assessment is possible because in the empirical-analytical sciences, the outer reality is assumed to be detached from the narratives and thus the scientist assumes to be capturing 'objectively' what is happening 'out there' (Habermas, 1966). In this paper, thus, we identify what seems to be lawful in terms of human resources management practices in the presence of synergic intentions. Once intentions disappear, or become non-synergic or disruptive, the functioning that was supposed to be lawful simply fades away.

### **The Democratic Action Studied**

We have previously mentioned examples of instruments of consultation used in the representative democracy. We have argued that although they might be doing things right (i.e. being efficient) they are not doing the right things (i.e. being effective). To be effective, and at the same time efficient, mean that governments are truly willing to engage citizens in meaningful participation. Governments can take advantage of best participatory practices and instruments. However, what would an efficient instrument for participation look like?

As a rule, we believe, all those instruments that decentralize the decision-making as a way to empower citizens with the duty and right to decide about the prioritization of their own demands may be considered instruments of participation and deliberation. As Baiocchi argues, citizenship participation can be viewed through the deliberative democratic theory which refers to a 'body of political theory that seeks to develop a substantive version of democracy based on public justification through deliberation...' in which citizens as reasonable equals and in the legitimate exercise of authority deliberate about their own preferences and intentions (2001:44).

Having this criteria in mind, and focusing on extreme situations for research sampling (Pettigrew, 1990), we found a situation: the participatory budgeting of Brazilian municipalities.

These cases of participatory budgeting (henceforth PB) in Brazil are some of the most publicized examples of democratic actions which foster citizenship participation and development (Abers, 2000). In Brazil, they have been analyzed from different perspectives such as: applied theory of social and local democracy (Dias, 2002; Dutra & de Mesquita Benevides, 2001; Sánchez, 2002), educational approach (Herbert, 2008), case study description and analysis (Azevedo, 2005; Bocatto & Perez-de-Toledo, 2012; Genro & de Souza, 1997) and, descriptive comparison of cases (Ribeiro & Grazia, 2003). The common interpretation found in the literature about reasons for its implementation is a combination of beliefs (e.g. 'Citizens have

the right to be empowered’) or instrumental intentions (e.g. ‘If we empower citizens they will vote for us’)(Izquierdo & Gomà, 2001).

The seminal successful experiment has arisen in the end of the 1990s from the process first implemented in needy *barrios* (i.e. neighborhoods), often slums, in the city of Porto Alegre in the south of Brazil. In fact, it was the starting point of several experiments led initially by a ‘democratic socialist political party’, as it defines itself, called *Partido dos Trabalhadores*, or Workers’ Party (henceforth PT). One may assume with a good level of certainty that this local revolution was instrumental to the party’s success in the last three presidential elections. Trust in President Lula da Silva allowed him to stay in power for two consecutive mandates, from 2002 to 2010, and helped to elect his Minister of Development, Dilma Rousseff, in 2010 and 2014, the first woman ever president in this country. In fact, this new approach puts in power a left-wing part, a situation not seen since the military coup in the beginning of the 60s. In other words, the participatory process is the kind of project with a wider radical purpose that aims to secure social change and citizenship development (Hickey & Mohan, 2005). Today, virtually all political parties have had their own experience in Brazil. Yet, the example has crossed borders when, for instance, in 2009 the Brazilian experience became the role model for the implementation at the 49<sup>th</sup> ward in Chicago, U.S. In Chicago, the experiment is broadening as wards 5<sup>th</sup>, 45<sup>th</sup> and 46<sup>th</sup> have joined the movement (Chicago\_City\_Hall, 2012).

The instructional manuals of the cities investigated define the PB as one channel within the present political trend of citizen participation, decentralization and public power reform.

In the Brazilian PB, citizens express the needs of their neighborhoods, and, by receiving the remaining part of the municipal budget that is free from legal obligations (e.g. salaries of public servants; maintenance of schools and hospitals), they deliberate about the prioritization of these needs. The amounts usually range from 2 to 25% of the municipal budget. Citizens are no longer ‘only’ consulted about the need of sewage systems, houses, schools or healthcare facilities but are actually managing tremendous amounts of monetary resources, prioritizing demands, elaborating the technical criterion for the public bid (e.g. cost, quality, dimension, and design), paying and auditing the constructions.

The ‘participation cycle’ generally consists of: Meetings by region; Meetings of the PB’s Municipal Council; Thematic meetings; Visits to the needs under assessment (named the: ‘Priorities’ Caravan’); Barrios’ meetings; Meetings with organized civil society; Delegates’ meetings for final prioritizations; and, in lesser extent: PB’s Congresses; and, Meetings by micro-region (Ribeiro & Grazia, 2003).

As Baiocchi(2001:46) explains: ‘What distinguishes this intervention... is its concern with institutional arrangements... [I]t places affirmative responsibility on institutional design to bring real-world institutions closer to normative ‘utopian’ ideals. The empowered participatory governance proposal is an ideal-typical design proposal for deliberative decision-making...’ Bocatto and Perez-de-Toledo (2008)suggest that the process has been perceived as fair to all citizens (i.e. participants and non-participants), besides it enhances citizenship engagement and development, improves quality and diminishes costs of the works carried out, and reduces, or eliminates, corruption in the use of public funds.

## Research Question

It is evident that different managerial processes, for example, project management, government accounting, political marketing, information systems, or operations management mediate the participatory budgeting. This initial approach to research in which 'from the reality' we try to infer patterns comes from grounded theory proposed by Glaser and Strauss (2009) and Strauss and Corbin (1997). The evidence that supports our initial impression is the process of successive and meaningful meetings that take place during the 'participation cycle'.

We identify, however, that the description of the subsequent stages of the cycle explains only partially the process functioning. Therefore, we argue that, in parallel with the cycle, the human resources practices of attracting (e.g. recruitment and selection), developing (e.g. socialization, training and performance appraisal) and retaining participants (e.g. compensation and promotion) predictably occur.

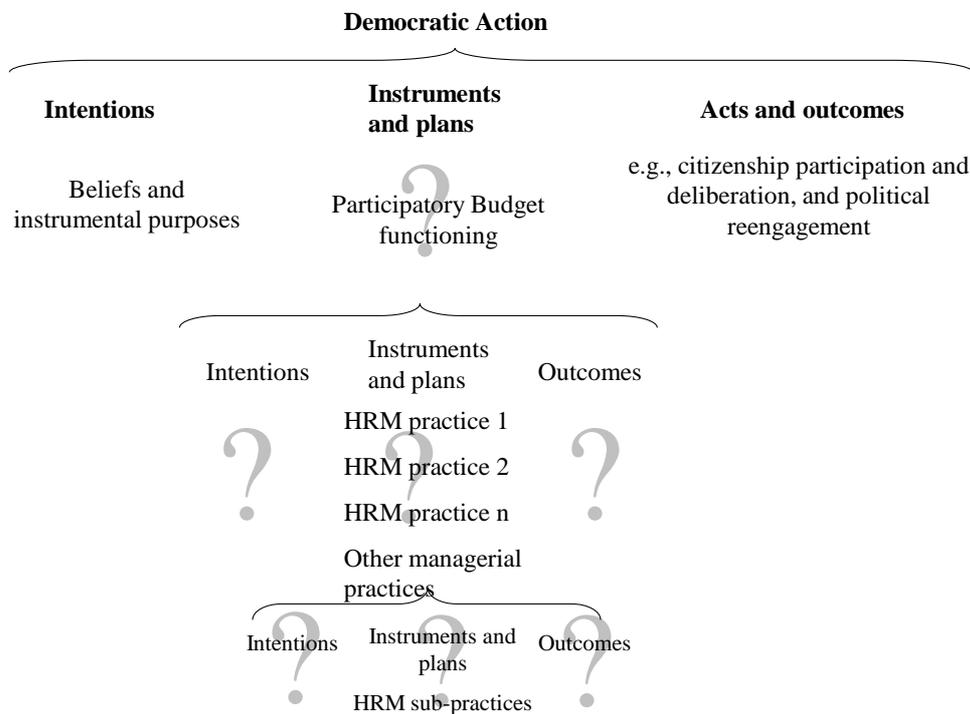
The way the data presented itself provided, although roughly, two research questions to orient the discovery. The questions are: How does human resources management practices work in the participatory budgeting? And, How does this practices impact political engagement?

## Methodology

As we are assuming that participatory actions occur because they are intended and that these intentions become narratives and instruments created *in order to* achieve the intended outcomes, we propose a historical-hermeneutic method capable of uncovering these intentions through the description of pre-conditions and interpretation of narratives. The evidences provided should be sufficient to bear the interpretation of these intentions' meanings. Conversely, for the empirical-analytical description, the methodology reveals the construction and functioning HRM instruments by observing their dynamics.

In the micro level, when the PB uses a particular HRM practice, it will have its own intentions, plans and instruments, and outcomes. Figure 1 demonstrates how a macro action can be subdivided into micro actions for interpretation and explanation. The interrogation marks represent some of the doubts this research aims to explain, viz., how the instrument and sub-instruments work.

**Figure 1** Democratic actions and sub-actions of the participatory budget



Source: Research data.

To rely on what is called a convergent methodology (Campbell & Fiske, 1959), or a *bricolage* of methods (Lincoln & Denzin, 1994:2), seems appropriate as any methodological tool alone cannot provide a more comprehensive understanding of this epistemological integration. The procedure of *bricolage* helps to complete the information that is missing in the macro and micro levels of analyses of HRM's functioning in participatory actions. In this respect, we add to the literature a clearer interpretation of the reasons 'why' the participatory budgeting process, and its consequent *sub-instruments*, are created, and the description of 'what' and 'how' human resources management instruments are used in the process.

Although limitations are several, any form of *bricolage* considers criteria for reliability, consistency and generalization. Once epistemological assumptions and research strategy are expressed (for upcoming discussion about reliability), triangulation of methods and comparison of cases are made (for consistence) and, theoretical sampling is considered (for generalization), limitations are somehow mitigated. So, in order to describe a micro level, it is used the methodological tools of documentation review and observations of behaviors and procedures (Hodder, 2003), case study analyses (Yin, 2009), in-depth-interviews (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997; Wengraf, 2001) and focus groups (Krueger, 2009).

The first step of our *bricolage* thus is to choose, or sample, cases with participatory budgeting. In fact, the investigation of the same democratic instrument (i.e. the PB) in different settings (i.e. cities) provides distinct sources of information about the macro and micro intentionality, the use of HRM instruments, and the assessment

of these instruments' development. Therefore, following the technique of theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 2009), the cities chosen were selected for both their similarities and their differences because theoretical sampling needs to pay attention to relevance and purpose.

As far as relevance is concerned, this selection process ensures that the substantive topic addressed is similar which, in case of being replicable and extendible, assumes the status of 'emerging theory' (Eisenhardt, 1989:537). Thus, the cases chosen must inevitably have implemented or have been implementing most of the sub-processes and management activities involved (e.g. meetings, trainings, elections, timetables, deliberative polls, and so on). For purpose, the cases are different in terms of number of inhabitants, location, and mainly, their maturity level. Whereas the similarities of the cases guarantee the presence of the practices, the differences demonstrate stability of conditions and elements, and replication of functioning.

More than two hundred cities in Brazil have already experienced the PB process in the last two decades. Until 2015, according to the Participatory Budgeting Brazilian Network (RBOP, 2015) almost five hundred cities are running or have run the PB. Among these several cases, we concentrated on five, two of them with indirect assessment (i.e. analyzing extensive secondary data) and three of them through direct exploration. The cases analyzed indirectly are São Paulo in its first attempt to put forward the participatory process, and Porto Alegre, the first and iconic PB in Brazil. Directly explored, we have city 1, the city of São Paulo, city 2 Campinas, and city 3, Belo Horizonte. Table A1 compares the cases on their similarities, differences, present status, research method, and data source used.

For similarities, the three cases directly explored belong to Brazilians' south-east states; all of them are large and metropolitan cities with a highly industrial economic base. The value of such election relies on the possibility of considering three contexts for interpretations of the intentions embedded on them.

In terms of similarities, the PT governs all three cities all, a political party that was born from the Metallurgic Workers' union, which had a long history of defending the labor force and social movements of large cities with often-similar demands. Yet, the cities belong to the two most industrialized states of the country. In terms of the differences, regarding size, case 1 with sixteen million inhabitants presents a 'problematic' initial implementation. Case 2 with one million people presents a total of four years of development (one mandate). While, case 3, which resembles Porto Alegre's case, with its two and a half million inhabitants is a twelve-year continued case of success (i.e. four consecutive mandates). With respect to maturity level, as the study of the developmental aspect of HRM instruments is another interest of this investigation the ideal strategy is the longitudinal study.

**Table 1** Description of methods used and present status of the participatory budget

Cases	Data source	Similarities	Differences	Output	Continuity
Porto Alegre	Secondary (articles, books, etc.)	Industrial environment Human capital intensive	Original endeavor	Success	Active
São Paulo 1	Secondary (books, articles, etc.)	Industrial environment Human capital intensive	Failed attempt Consultation only	Failure	
São Paulo 2	Primary (interviews) and secondary	Industrial environment Human capital intensive	15 million inhabitants Need to reorganize previously Start-up	Partial success	Discontinued
Campinas	Primary (interviews, focus groups, observations) and secondary	Industrial environment Human capital intensive	1 million inhabitants Early stage	Partial success	Discontinued
Belo Horizonte	Primary (interviews, focus groups, observations) and secondary	Industrial environment Human capital partially intensive	2,5 million inhabitants Later stage	Success	Active

Source: Research data.

What it is indeed distinct is not only the decision-making process of each case but also their enhanced capacity of solving problems. Table A2 describes the cases.

Our strategy consists in, albeit taking information in the same time, considering the cases on their different *momentum* (i.e. case 1 start-up stage, case 2 early stage, case 3 latter stage) which provides longitudinal treatment of events, problems, solutions and learning.

The method to interpret narratives uses similar procedure of content analysis suggested by Haney, Russell, Gulek, & Fierros (1998) in which we independently review the material and identify features that form a checklist. Then, we compare notes and reconcile differences. After that, we use the resultant consolidated checklist to apply coding independently. If the coding is similar, we consider it to be reliable and apply it to the rest of the material. So, from now on we categorize the data into two different sets: intention units (IU) and action units (AU). Intention units are evidences of pre-conditions for the creation of HRM practices and sub-practices.

In accordance, action units are the observable, to us, HRM practices implemented. Having in mind the stated assumptions and method, if the reader observes what we observe and come to the same conclusions, we can argue that our research is reliable.

**Table 2** - Description of the cases

Case	Period focused	Case description
Porto Alegre	1996 to present	The Porto Alegre's participatory budget process began its efforts in poor barrios, or slums, at Porto Alegre city. The Porto Alegre's PB was awarded on the 1996 United Nations Summit on Human Settlements in Istanbul an exemplary 'urban innovation', stood out for demonstrating an efficient practice of democratic resource management. The largest industrial city in the state of Rio Grande do Sul with 1.3 million inhabitants, Porto Alegre had by the moment of the implementation of the process a local economy worth over US\$ 7 billion. It is important to highlight the cultural context of the city which was known for hosting a progressive civil society led by intellectuals and labor unions experienced in mobilizing people to partake in public life, including opposing authoritarianism (Genro and Souza, 1999). Wealth distribution, quality of education, community focus and social engagement were the raw materials, which created this case.
São Paulo 1	1989-1993	São Paulo's first attempt failed. The attempt to implement a participatory process in late 80s is interpreted as a result of the city's deception towards participants by calling participatory and deliberative a process which intended only to 'consult' citizens (Singer, 1996). It can be argued however, that this failed attempt helped to set a key criterion for the success of the other participatory budget, that is, the need for deliberative power.
São Paulo 2 (case 1)	2001-2004 Focus on the first year of implementation	São Paulo is a large city of more than 16 million people. The PB was studied on its start-up stage. The city was obliged to 'prepare the field' to implement the process, because there are many pre-conditions without which the efficiency of the PB is reduced. One of these pre-conditions is that the organizational chart which defines the empowerment of the sub-municipalities must be clearly defined: that is to say, the cities within the cities had to organize their own areas in order to start the voting process to elect their representatives. Another issue often found is that new mayors need previously to pay, or refinance, the debt they inherit. In other words, they tried first to maximize financial resources available in order to transfer the responsibility of prioritization to the citizens. The process was terminated after the first mandate.
Campinas (case 2)	2001-2004 Focus on four years of implementation	Considered the Brazilian Silicon Valley, Campinas is a city of more than 1 million people. It had implemented the process during four years (early stage). It had already paid inherited debts, planned new projects, implemented some of them and approved future projects. This means that part of the budget had already been used, another part was in use and another has been earmarked for future purposes. The process was discontinued after its first mandate. As an anecdote, the new mayor who terminated the PB was, maybe not accidentally, impeached in 2011. He faces charges of corruption in the court of law. In April, 2012 the interim mayor re-launched the PB.

Belo Horizonte (case 3)

**1993 to present**  
Focus on sixteen years  
of implementation

Belo Horizonte is a city with more than 2, 5 million people in a later stage (nineteen years since the process was initiated). In this last case we find elements and practices that have been reproduced and enhanced over the years which to us suggest what has become fundamental for an optimized process, the 'best practice'. Belo Horizonte was the first city in Latin America to sign an agreement with Harvard University. Harvard students are learning about the city's expertise on public policy planning and citizenship participation.

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Source: Research data.

Municipalities in Brazil elect their mayors and city councilors every four years. A different party in power may compromise the existence of the PB. Conversely, contextual changes, like the widespread wealthy redistribution in recent years, affects the quality of the PB. These are some of the reasons why this is an on-going research in which data has been collected in several occasions.

In three occasions, data was collected for city 1: December-January of 2003-2004, an interview with one of the PB coordinators; on May, 2004, the mayor's speech followed by our interview is used as a testimony; July-September, 2004, other interviews were made with public servants and citizens. As the longitudinal strategy needed the information about the initial stage of this implementation, the material collected from city 1 focused only in its first year of implementation. The data collection of cities 2 and 3 happened on July-September, 2004. It has consisted in observing meetings, interviewing participants, and collecting, besides the literature reviews, documents referent to its PB (e.g. instructional manuals, magazines, flyers, webpages). On August, 2008 the data recollection (i.e. new interviews especially with non-participants on the processes) and revision has permitted to incorporate some of the still needed information. In 2014, the secondary data of new PB processes was collected and no additional information was found that would collide with the findings and conclusions made so far. Follow the trend towards open government, electronic voting, the 'Digital Participatory Budgeting', was introduced in some of the cities; and, yet, the Participatory Budgeting Brazilian Network was created in 2007 with the objective of facilitating the communication among the several initiatives in Brazil and in the world.

In total, four cities were directly scrutinized, about fifty interviews and seven focus groups were conducted.

## Results

We illustrate what we consider the key intentions the social actors involved in this participatory experience have. The intentions are: 1. To integrate the government with the civil society; 2. To recognize that the citizenship has the right to manage their own resources; 3. To be transparent and use a standardized criteria for selecting the projects to be carried out; 4. To provide a shared, technocrats and citizens, supervision of the implementations. These four major intentions are analyzed in relation to the HRM instruments found.

Metaphors are often used as scaffolds to build theory and convey knowledge (e.g. Oswick, Keenoy, & Grant, 2002). We use the metaphor of the solar system to better demonstrate our interpretation and explanation. In this metaphor, the PB process is the Sun around which many sub-actions, or planets, co-exist. All the planets revolve around the Sun, and rotate on their own axes. The revolution around the Sun represents the influences that one HRM sub-action has on the system as a whole and the rotation around the axis suggests the dynamics of intentions, plans, instruments and outcomes of each sub-action. Any unexpected event within the system or from the outside can impact and disrupt its gravitational forces. This metaphor allows us to convey the dynamics to the phenomenon through the acknowledgment of the presence and circumstantial activation of the elements. In the following it is described each Human Resources Management sub-action that appears generally.

*Job description, recruitment and selection process*

The initial stage of a PB process begins with the election of *barrio* delegates. The delegate is the vehicle through which historical demands (or intentions) from the civil society can be satisfied, this is our intention unit 1 (IU<sup>1</sup>). Accordingly, the process of recruiting and selecting the delegates, our action unit 1 (AU<sup>1</sup>), starts even before the PB because these delegates have often exercised leadership in the community. The leaders interested in becoming delegates have to overcome a difficult selection process. In order to achieve this personal intention (IU<sup>2</sup>), delegates must plan in advance, demonstrate that they are legitimate local leaders, participate in PB's committees, organize campaigns, provide information about the processes (AU<sup>2</sup>), persuade people to vote (AU<sup>3</sup>), prove to be capable to analyze the demands and adapt them to the resources available (AU<sup>4</sup>), and dig for funds to pay for transporting citizens to the polling stations (AU<sup>5</sup>).

The delegate also requires a portfolio of previous actions in favor of the *barrio* (AU<sup>6</sup>) as part of their '*curriculum vitae*'. This selection, as it is clarified below, can be analyzed using the idea of professional skills or competences such as persuasion, problem-solving and organization. This is the delegates' job description. For the professional roles played by the government, that is, policy-makers and public servants a different job description is also fundamental. Policy-makers must change their view about politics and the bureaucracy. The following extract of an interview with a municipal councilor (city 2) demonstrates new attitudes and skills needed:

In fact, the distinction between us and the old type of politicians, is that we are not afraid to talk to the people (IU<sup>3</sup>)... when the processes are open and participants discuss, they confront us (AU<sup>7</sup>) and we learn (AU<sup>8</sup>) from their different opinions. The old style of politicians used to be elected and then disappear.

In the Porto Alegre case, a notable change in attitudes of technocrats, well-versed in matters of budgeting and engineering, has also been observed as a result of their increasing interface with lay citizens. Called a jump from 'techno-bureaucracy to techno-democracy' (Genro and Souza, 1999), technical staffs have changed the way they communicate with the communities and have tried to make themselves understood in simple language. Technicians capable of listening, empathizing and

persuading with evidences and rationality are selected to work with the PB, as a public servant explains (city 3):

I have been working in the process for the last four years. When I start to learn about it (AU<sup>9</sup>) and to live it, the feedback was great (AU<sup>10</sup>). You engage on a body-to-body relationship (AU<sup>11</sup>). The citizens do not see you as a technician but as a friend (IU<sup>4</sup>) who will clarify things (AU<sup>12</sup>). Our dedication is enormous (AU<sup>13</sup>). We try to solve problems (AU<sup>14</sup>) along with a community (AU<sup>15</sup>) that we are also a member of (IU<sup>5</sup>). (she laughs).

The job description and selection process, like a planet, has its own intentions and dynamics (i.e. rotation) but the way it functions affects the whole system (i.e. revolution). If, for example, the community does not trust its delegate, the process is jeopardized simply by not voting on him/her again, losing continuity. This kind of setbacks may damage the whole system, making it lose legitimacy. Still, other elements orbit the planet like satellites.

The orbit shows not only the elements that support the sub-action but also the relative importance they have in different moments of time. A satellite that might be primordial in a certain phase becomes additional in the subsequent development of actions. Here the satellites are the needed skills selected (e.g. leadership).

#### *Socialization and training process*

The second planet that revolves around the PB is the socialization and training processes (AU<sup>16</sup>). The following fragment from a delegate in city 1 describes these processes: 'The delegates have to attend the meetings (IU<sup>6</sup>)... During the meetings, we learn how everything works in the government (AU<sup>17</sup>). We are no longer an ordinary citizen who had no notion about anything...'

The socialization and training processes intend to familiarize the participant with the functioning of the PB (IU<sup>7</sup>) in order to guarantee a better-informed decision-making (IU<sup>8</sup>). The processes are both structured (e.g. training in public budget) (AU<sup>18</sup>) and semi-structured (AU<sup>19</sup>), viz., learning may occur in formal (e.g. discussions in regular assemblies) or informal conversations (AU<sup>20</sup>). Learning skills (AU<sup>21</sup>) such as attention, memory, perception and reasoning, as well as open-mindedness and motivation to learn (IU<sup>9</sup>) are all satellites that rotate around the sub-action training.

During the training processes, the participants' plan is to attend all the activities (IU<sup>10</sup>) and learn the instruments available (IU<sup>11</sup>). There are different outcomes: the acquisition of knowledge about how the City Hall works (IU<sup>12</sup>) and, once feeling confident, citizens may undergo the decision-making phase that includes decision-making and compensation policy. Over the years, public servants kept in the process work as trainers or storytellers of past mistakes and successes helping new comers to start their job on a higher level of quality and knowledge.

#### *Decision-making*

In the decision-making phase (AU<sup>22</sup>), delegates represent the wishes (IU<sup>13</sup>) of needy *barríos* dealing with insufficient budget and, thus, trying to prioritize these demands (IU<sup>14</sup>). The delegates' plan is to convince others that their own *barrio's* needs should be prioritized (IU<sup>15</sup>). The instruments are attainment by consensus (IU<sup>16</sup>) through argumentation or, which is very uncommon, voting in what is consid-

ered priority (AU<sup>22</sup>). The use of presentation skills, such as communication, persuasion and reasoning, influence the decisions (AU<sup>23</sup>). However, to be legitimate virtues like respect, trust, truth telling, fairness, perseverance, empathy and orientation to the common good are also instrumental (IU<sup>17</sup>). Frustrations from the non-recipients of the budget are anticipated outcomes, and managing this disappointment is intended as well (IU<sup>18</sup>). Before the decisions are taken, the delegates visit the places (i.e. Priorities' Caravans) and/or discuss among themselves (AU<sup>24</sup>) as a way to gather evidences for the argumentation. The outcomes are normally projects such as constructing sewage systems, asphaltting streets, and building houses, schools, gardens and healthcare units (AU<sup>25</sup>). Nonetheless, invaded land was also regularized through financed purchase (AU<sup>26</sup>).

#### *Compensation policy*

The compensation policy is procedurally non-monetary. Politicians, public servants, and delegates feel compensated by other means. On this planet, the sequence intention-plan-outcome is not so overt, thus it needs some theoretical assumptions. The PB process provides opportunities for self-motivation (IU<sup>19</sup>). Satellites like, job enrichment, job enlargement, job rotation, empowerment, self-development and intrinsic motivation are examples of potent motivators conjectured by Herzberg (1993) and Deci and Flaste(1995). They also seem to satisfy the need for status and self-actualization (Maslow, 1987), and to work for the 'meta-objective' of a greater social good (Maslow et al., 1998). In particular, the technocrats seem to endure on an un-bureaucratic mode, a development also found by DeHart-Davis (2007) in other special situations. The new meaning of democracy in action reflects Frankl's (1985) concept of motivation, or tension, towards meaningfulness in humans (IU<sup>20</sup>).

The following excerpt provides evidence on the actualization of the participants' potentialities. A *barrio's* delegate of city 2 concludes:

You see the machines are here, the public tender (AU<sup>27</sup>) took place, everything will truly happen, (laughs)... The PB is the voice of the people... (IU<sup>21</sup>), people feel respected (IU<sup>22</sup>). It is sensational! ...We were able to take many people to the assemblies (AU<sup>28</sup>), putting them on buses (AU<sup>29</sup>), leading (AU<sup>30</sup>), talking and persuading them (AU<sup>31</sup>) to support us, which opens an opportunity for us to look after our own good (IU<sup>23</sup>)...

#### *Performance appraisal*

After about five months of discussions and negotiations (AU<sup>32</sup>), within the one-year period, the delegates come to decisions about *barrios* and projects to prioritize. The intention is to respond to *barrios'* demands; the plan is to argue well, based as much as possible on evidences. With these outcomes, or decisions, in hand, the delegates go back to the *barrios* and inform the citizens. The ones who received the demanded were applauded (i.e. social recognition) by the people (AU<sup>33</sup>). On the other hand, what happens to those who go back with empty hands? We will concentrate on this second group. The passage below demonstrates the issue (city 2):

...despite of the fact that we were asking for our pavement for the last 50 years, we did not get it in the first attempt.' The researchers ask: 'What did you tell the peo-

ple?’ The delegate answers: ‘Well, explained them that others were prioritized because they were in worse conditions (IU<sup>24</sup>), and that we had to start all over again (AU<sup>34</sup>). Most of the other barrios did not have water and sewage systems and children were drinking water from the dirty streets. Everybody understood that (IU<sup>25</sup>).

The absence of complaints from citizens, about the PB process within its twenty-five years of existence in Brazil demonstrates that the real objective of the PB, viz., to benefit the common-good through the participatory and fair redistribution of wealth, was understood by the citizens. The lack of resources announced upfront creates a dynamics in which the delegates are not assessed by the achievement of the demanded. Instead, they are assessed by the fairness and reasonability of the decision-making process (IU<sup>26</sup>). Thus, the satellites of the delegates’ rationality and persuasion capacities (AU<sup>35</sup>) surround the planet performance appraisal. The intention is to convince the citizens with hard evidences (AU<sup>36</sup>) and anchored on values like fairness and truth-telling (IU<sup>27</sup>). Moreover, it is important to highlight the capacity of the evaluators (i.e. the citizens) in assessing the delegates, that is to say, citizens must demonstrate maturity and reasonability (AU<sup>37</sup>) on appreciating the explanations provided. Citizens tend to evaluate delegates positively (AU<sup>38</sup>), which reinforces the assumption of human resources performance appraisal that assumes that any criterion once ‘accepted’ by evaluators and those who will be evaluated is more likely to work well (AU<sup>39</sup>).

The last phase, called the implementation of the projects, is characterized by two processes: career planning and making redundancies, and supervision of the decisions.

#### *Career planning and making redundancies*

The career of a delegate, our focus in this section, lasts at least two years (AU<sup>40</sup>). The reason for this is the procedural rule of rotation, which means that delegates know that they will forcibly be made redundant in two years period (AU<sup>41</sup>). Nevertheless, many things can be learned in a ‘two-year career’ and many objectives can be accomplished. In an illustration mentioned above, one of the *barrios* that we visited managed to lay the pavement it had been asking for 50 years in this two-year period (AU<sup>42</sup>). The leaders were proud of doing so much in such a short period of time (IU<sup>28</sup>). It was also clear that although the delegates leave the process, they encourage new representatives to take part of it. The interview below shows these aspects (city 3):

My sister was a delegate. When she was about to leave the PB, she told me to apply as a candidate. At the beginning, I thought it was too much trouble for nothing but now I now that it was one of the wisest decisions of my life.

The satellites that surround this planet are: commitment to a process that last only a couple of years (AU<sup>43</sup>); and, thus, the capacity to understand the need for replacement (AU<sup>44</sup>); capacity to recruit new candidacies (AU<sup>45</sup>); and, to educate candidates about the PB (AU<sup>46</sup>).

#### *Supervision of the decisions taken*

Typically, in a delegate's first year, he/she is introduced to the PB process and starts taking decisions, which, after a public tender, are implemented, monitored and supervised by the *barrio's* committee (AU<sup>47</sup>). Delegates and other local leaders who function as project managers (AU<sup>48</sup>) constitute the committee. One delegate tells us: 'The committee has access to the construction projects as auditors (AU<sup>49</sup>); if they find any mistake they can report it' (AU<sup>50</sup>). The procedure for reporting mistakes is simple: the committee or any citizen once observing inconsistencies with the approved plan can blow the whistle to the City Hall (AU<sup>51</sup>). If any irregularity is reported, the City Halls' call their technicians (AU<sup>52</sup>) who are legally responsible to oversee works and who audit the works and take corrective action (e.g. by rescinding the contract of the builders) (AU<sup>53</sup>). Many skills surrounds the planet supervision. In coordination with technicians, the new citizens' 'technical-eye', or their capacity to manage projects and assess works (AU<sup>54</sup>) aim to protect the *barrio's* achievements (IU<sup>29</sup>).

If one compares the initial situation with the 'end' of the process, he/she will identify a coherent but semi-structured development of HRM processes. The citizens and public servants learn and develop a variety of skills and capacities throughout the processes and, overall, become better persons and professionals.

Considerable improvements in the processes were found in the mature case. Such improvements are related to a better quality of sub-actions after years of development. Dropping out ineffective trainings and incorporating the demands of upper classes in the prioritization process are some examples.

The next session is a reflection about the repercussions and limitations of our *bricolage*.

### Research Limitations

We coherently integrate research consistence, generalization and reliability in the following manner. For research consistence, we rely on some approaches. First the idea of 'multiple operationism' developed by Campbell and Fiske (1959) to whom more than one method should be used in the validation process to ensure that the discrepancy reflected refers to the trait assessed and not to the methodology. We start with the triangulation of methods. After literature and documentation reviews, we use direct observations, focus groups and interviews. However, with the objective to provide interactive comparison of sources as well, we triangulated citizens who participated in the process, citizens who did not, public servants, and policy makers of three cases. We were able thus to guarantee 'stronger substantiation of constructs and hypotheses'(Eisenhardt, 1989:538) and to provide 'constant juxtaposition of conflicting realities [that] tends to 'unfreeze' thinking, and so the process has the potential to generate theory with less researcher bias than theory built from incremental studies or armchair, axiomatic deduction'(Eisenhardt, 1989:546). Yet, the longitudinal strategy adds to that validation the information about practices that were dropped out in the start-up and early stages and the ones that persisted and evolved until the latter stage.

Regarding research reliability, the way we refer to it is summarized by Giorgi (1985:96)who argues that 'the chief point to be remembered with this type of [qualitative] research is not so much whether another position could be adopted (this

point is granted beforehand) but (rather) whether a reader, adopting the same viewpoints as (those) articulated by the researcher, can also see what the researcher saw, whether or not he/she agrees with it.' In other words, the content analysis suggested by Haney et al. (1998) we have used attends the reliability issue.

In terms of generalization, we rely on Churchill and Wertz (2001:254) assertion that the 'attainment of various levels of generality, as well as knowledge of what is unique in a particular case, requires qualitative comparisons of different individual cases, real and imagined, in which the researcher strives to intuit convergences and divergences and thereby, gains essential insight into relative levels of generality.' In other words, the decision of choosing large and industrial cities with similarities and differences reflected the worry about the internal and external validity of the theory built (Wertz, 1983).

Besides being consistent, the three studies strengthen the internal validity of the theory proposed because they hold constant the factor of geographic area, economic model and industrial culture and demands. The election of three cities and comparison of them can also diminish the bias of studying the idiosyncrasies of only one case (e.g. the 'famous' case of Porto Alegre), which allows the generalization of the findings regarding the PB successes mediated by HRM. Nevertheless, for the same reason they present implications for external validity. The generalization thus can be better supported if restricted for the area researched.

## Conclusions

Based on evidences of 29 intention units and 54 action units presented above, the research suggests an emerging theory that relates the participatory budgeting with political engagement operationalized by human resources management. In this theory, the historic-hermeneutical epistemology permits us to recognize the presence and synergy of intentions from different stakeholders, whereas the empirical-analytical recognizes the HRM sub-areas enacted and their relationship with supportive elements, and yet suggests that HRM practices' quality sets the foundation for the efficiency of the PB process. Political engagement is achieved not only by the participants of the participatory process but also by ordinary citizens who now perceive their historical demands being taken into consideration and, if not fully attended, at least being evaluated by peers. The PB becomes a common place for civic (e.g. actively participating in the community), electoral (e.g. persuading others to vote), and political voice (e.g. arguing for historical demands) types of engagement as Zukin et al. (2006) points out.

The inference about the internal validity of the study only makes sense if the concept of intentionality is considered, and, at this point, the connection of the two epistemologies becomes evident. The sequence of intention, instrument and act for sub-actions and supportive actions must remain constant if the researcher wants to infer that the HRM practices create conditions for a successful PB, which represents a *ceteris paribus* clause. If the quality of the intentions change and/or the appropriate use of the sequence is broken, the researcher must consider the new context and, therefore, what is concluded here cannot be generalized. In effect, the 'solar system' may be disrupted in several ways. Once supportive intentions disappear the relation-

ship empirically assessed in both HRM sub-actions and their supportive actions disappears as well. Still, for the historic-hermeneutical interpretation it seems clear that the quality and synergy of intentions in both the civil society and the elected party play a decisive role. In the municipalities studied, the main intentions were related to the request for attention to the, so far neglected, demands made by social movements that historically supported the PT. Coherently, policy-makers' reacted based on their own beliefs, we summarize as, of exercising 'power with', rooted on the PT's Marxist origins. After being elected, there was no other way for the PT but to walk-the-talk. A relationship of trust is built and the promised actions are delivered by both sides, being the PB by the local government, and the commitment by the civil society.

The decisions to prioritize the neediest were often achieved by consensus. In case this maxim is betrayed, the legitimacy is jeopardized and the trust is broken and, as a result, citizens withdraw participation. This is one of the most important evidences that allow us to state that HRM must consider other elements of influence such as the virtues of trust and respect embedded in the context. In effect, the discussion on virtues involves interests that are more practical and critically oriented than simply technical as Habermas argues (1966), which demonstrates that considering HRM and Ethics as separate fields of study is unnatural.

The solar system scaffold permits a detailed description of HRM sub-actions and their coherent integration with other elements, yet it allows us to conclude that in reality the congruence approach of Nadler and Tushman(1980) and the universal approach to HRM proposed by Ferris et al. (1999) are also unnecessarily taken as competitive paradigms in HRM literature. Universal practices are supported by elements that revolve around them. If the understanding of the functioning of these sub-elements is neglected the research about the universal practices in HRM becomes static, a matter of presence or absence of each one of them. Understanding is expanded once the practices' relationships with revolving elements are considered, in special the relationship between the practice's intentions and the intentions of its supportive elements.

The HRM practitioner is able to observe that HRM practices rise within the PB process. They are part of it, influence it and are influenced by it. Instead of perceiving the HRM as a given reality, it is understood that this is a matter of appropriate use of the HRM within an intentioned social process. There is a multiple relationship and a sequential occurrence of actions (i.e. synergic intentions, first; PB creation, second; HRM practices implementation with quality, third; PB becomes a best practice resulting on political engagement, forth; restart the process and learn from the past, fifth).

To the policy-makers, thus, it is very important to observe characteristics of the context presented by our findings and after that compare both similarities and differences with his or her specific one. Similarly, the so often found confrontation between politicians and public servants is minimized as both play complementary roles for the achievement of complex goals. The observance of such details aligned with the assumption that democracy is civic participation and deliberation might lead to more successful endeavors alleviating negative experiences of government and citizenship relationships so often find in the literature (Moynihan & Pandey, 2010). Once policy-makers promote the re-conceptualization of democracy and government performance, they create a reality that is capable to refute the feeling that

consistent participation from the public may create a pressure on public managers to over justify decisions as Van de Walle and Bovaird (2007) observes. On the contrary, such description represents the initial stage of change because soon municipal councilors, mayors and technocrats perceive pressure being transferred from the government to the participatory process. Citizens do not assess government performance by the works and services delivered *per se*, instead they assess it by the quality of the participation/prioritization process taking place. In that sense, the participatory process is perceived as more relevant than its outcomes, something that the established performance indicators are incapable to assess. Such note adds evidence to other research findings that confronts the traditional perspective regarding the trade-offs between administrative and democratic decision-making (Neshkova & Guo, 2012), and argues that in reality a bicameral governance structure although counter-intuitive might be advantageous.

The re-conceptualized democracy forces the local government to account for its decisions with transparency, adding to its own decisions not only the reflections and experiences of the communities but also decisions, and deliberations, made by citizens. In this sort of bicameral governance structure, power is shared but also responsibility. The quality of an empowered participation becomes central to the democratic debate. Instead of worrying with the quantity of votes, societies may create opportunities for political engagement, being the participatory budgeting one of them.

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