

BACHELOR THESIS BSC MANAGEMENT, SOCIETY AND TECHNOLOGY

UNLOCKING CITIZEN POWER IN THE FACE OF AUTHORITARIANISM

A COMPARATIVE CASE-STUDY OF E-PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN CHENGDU AND CHICAGO

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ABSTRACT

The concept of citizen participation in various stages of the policy cycle has gained popularity over the last few decades, in research as well as in political discourse. Innovations, such as e-participatory budgeting are presented as key methods to improve deliberation and promote democratic ideals. In this thesis the extent of citizen participation in democracies and authoritarian regimes has been investigated through a comparative case study of e-participatory budgeting in Chengdu, China and Chicago, USA. To answer the explanatory research question “To what extent does e-participatory budgeting promote citizen participation in democracies and authoritarian regimes?”, a thematic analysis of secondary sources was conducted. Moreover, the various sources were analyzed using an analytical grid, consisting of Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation (2019) and Ebdon & Franklin’s Framework on Participatory Budgeting (2006), allowing a thorough evaluation of the two cases of PB. The findings of this research show that in both Chengdu and Chicago e-PB has successfully promoted citizen power at the local level, however contested by various challenges. Contrasting popular bias, this thesis shows that democratic innovations function in both authoritarian regimes and democracies alike, therefore presenting a possible avenue for the promotion of democratic ideals across the world.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CP – Citizen Participation

CCP – Chinese Communist Party

e-PB – e-Participatory Budgeting

ICT's – Information and Communications Technologies

PB – Participatory Budgeting

MDSD – Most Different Systems Design

MSSD – Most Similar Systems Design

OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

SDG – Sustainable Development Goals

US/USA – United States of America

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1. INTRODUCTION

The first case of Participatory Budgeting (PB) traces back to 1989. As Brazil was going through the transformation from dictatorship to democracy, citizens in the city of Porto Alegre were given the opportunity to participate more actively, by deciding how a percentage of the local budget would be spent on an annual basis. From this starting point, PB has spread globally with more than 2,700 governments around the world implementing this democratic innovation (Palacin et al., 2024). Through direct citizen participation and deliberation, PB has allowed citizens to participate in all parts of the policy cycle, transcending different levels of government, such as local, city or state levels. (Palacin et al. 2024). Over the past two decades, as ICT's have grown increasingly important in societies, digital participatory budgeting has gained traction (Palacin et al., 2024).

Commonly, *“efforts of promoting citizen participation and interaction are (...) perceived as fundamental elements of democratic politics”* (Maerz, 2016, p.727). Increased efforts in public deliberation are oftentimes considered a sign of transformation towards democratic ideals (OECD, 2020, p.3), as was the case with PB in Porto Alegre. Moreover, methods of citizen participation and deliberation are considered to have positive effects on democracy (Michels & De Graaf, 2017, p.875). With an increasingly complex world, it is therefore logical that such democratic innovations, such as e-PB have been implemented in many democracies around the world. However, over the past years e-participation has also gained significant traction in authoritarian regimes, with some of their initiatives surpassing those of Western democracies in terms of success (Maerz, 2016, p.727).

In the past, research on citizen participation has shown a blind spot concerning this development, focusing more on the various practices in democracies. Subsequently, *“Institutional innovation under an authoritarian regime is a significantly underexplored area in comparative studies of governance”* (Yan & Xin, 2016, p.405). In addition to this, the majority of research relies on single qualitative case studies of PB, hindering broader generalization (Bartocci

et al, 2022, p.770) which highlights the importance that comparative studies would carry in filling the present knowledge gap.

This research seeks to address this gap and help shed a light on similarities and differences in the e-PB-processes in different countries and in which way they promote citizen participation in democracies and authoritarian regimes. Around the world, there is a rise in authoritarianism and challenge to democracy (Freedom House, 2024). In the latest report of the non-profit organization Freedom House, it is revealed that “*eighty percent of the world’s people live in countries or territories that are rated Not Free or only Partly Free*”. These eighty percent make up billions of people, restrained from exercising fundamental rights. This report by Freedom House (2024) highlights the fragility of our democracies, making the aim of ensuring democratic stability critical. This is where democratic innovations, such as citizen participation and e-PB come into play, and along with it the importance of research efforts on such methods.

1.1 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

This thesis would therefore like to pose the main research question:

RQ: To what extent does e-participatory budgeting promote citizen participation in democracies and authoritarian regimes?

With the following sub-questions:

1. What is e-participatory budgeting and how does it relate to the concept of citizen participation?
2. How has Chengdu implemented e-participatory budgeting to promote citizen participation within an authoritarian regime?
3. How has Chicago implemented e-participatory budgeting to promote citizen participation within a democracy?

4. What conclusions can be drawn from this about processes of (digital) citizen participation in democracies and authoritarian regimes?

As can be seen in these questions, this research will focus two cases of e-PB in Chicago (USA) and Chengdu (China) to illustrate potential differences in citizen participation between the two national governmental systems.

To answer the central research question and sub questions thoroughly, this research will first provide a perspective on the current discourse surrounding the relevant topics in addition to a conceptualization of various notions. Thereupon, a theoretical framework will be developed and explained to guide the analysis and offer a basis upon which the qualitative data will be interpreted. Then, the methodology will introduce the methods utilized for this research. Consequently, the results will be presented and afterwards interpreted in the discussion. At the end, all the finding will be summarized in a short conclusion.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 DELIBERATION AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences defines Citizen Participation (CP) shortly, as that it “*refers to citizen involvement in public decision making*”. Citizens can be compared to the general idea of people, or more specifically “*individuals, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, religious, and political affiliations*” (OECD, 2022, p.13) which are located in a specific village, town, city, region, state, or country. CP involves the inclusion of these citizens, beyond democratic representation, allowing them to “*influence the activities and decisions of public authorities at different stages of the policy cycle*” (OECD, 2022, p.13) and hence be included in the decision-making of various policies. This notion of CP and the concept

of participatory democracy, emphasizing the vital role of citizen involvement in political decision-making, was founded on Rousseau's views (Michels & de Graaf, 2010, p.479).

CP can be described as a form of deliberation and method to ensure deliberative democracy. The Oxford Handbook on Deliberative Democracy (2018) provides a minimalist definition of deliberation as a concept that means “*mutual communication that involves weighing and reflecting on preference, values, and interests regarding matters of common concern*” (p.2). Their definition of deliberative democracy rests on an ideal in which people respectfully convene to examine mutual challenges and determine policies to help mitigate such issues, which are subsequently also key elements of CP.

Over the past few decades, the notion of digital citizen participation has gained popularity, as “*Researchers and developers have worked extensively to develop novel interfaces to support various forms of democratic decision-making*” (Palacin et al., 2024, p.2). Throughout the field of governance there is a notable trend characterized by a growing interest in digital platforms designed to facilitate civic participation in democratic governance (Palacin et al., 2024, p.2).

Nowadays there are many different types of CP which can differ in their extend of citizen power. However, all methods of CP, if they adhere to certain quality standards presented by the OECD (2022), should “*rely on principles of good practice to ensure their quality: clarity and impact, commitment and accountability, transparency, inclusiveness and accessibility, integrity, privacy, information, resources, and evaluation*” (p.11). To further elaborate on this, a theory will be provided in the framework section of this research.

2.2 PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING AND E-PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

One of the most popular and widely adopted citizen participatory programs is Participatory Budgeting (PB) (e.g. Palacin et al. (2024), Wampler (2012)). The European Parliament (2024) has defined Participatory Budgeting (PB) as “*a democratic innovation where citizens directly engage in making collective decisions about how to allocate public budgets, capital investment and*

grants” (p.2). Palacin et al. (2024) provide a similar definition, describing PB as a form of direct participation in which people discuss and decide on budgets for their community (p.2). As stated by the United Nations (2022) “*Participatory budgeting directly resonates with the call made by the 2030 Agenda for inclusive institutions, as expressed in SDG 11*” (p.2) which calls on the inclusiveness, safety, resilience and sustainability of cities and human settlements. More specifically, PB falls under Target 16.7, of SDG 11, which expresses the need to “*Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels*” (UN, 2022, p.2).

As for the development of PB, from literature it becomes apparent that “*PB programs are often adopted in a window of opportunity (...) to produce social change*” (Wampler, 2012, p.1). Whilst history presents different attempts and versions of PB, the most notable and successful PB-process was the Porto Alegre program, as briefly described in the introduction. Following the example of Porto Alegre, PB spread across the world with different diffusions and outcomes. However, through an extensive literature review European Parliament (2024) has identified five key features which set apart participatory budgeting from traditional public consultations (p.3):

1. *“Discussion of financial/budgetary processes*
2. *Involvement of the whole population*
3. *Repetition of the process*
4. *Public deliberation (discussions)*
5. *Accountability”*

There are also many different variations of what the steps of the PB-process can look like (Alfaro et al., 2010, p.40). To illustrate, a general approach according to Alfaro et al (2010) involves: problem structuring, debating, modelling, negotiation, voting, arbitrating and sampling (p.41). The PB-process according to Escobar (2021) on the other hand includes: ideation & development, feasibility analysis & co-planning, decision-making and implementation & monitoring.

Moreover, the available literature presents a complex discussion on the benefits and risks of PB and e-PB. On one hand, the *“technology impact on PB is controversial, and the quality of the final decisions is disputable”* (Bartocci et al., 2023, p.770). Additionally, ‘normal’ PB finds itself investigated with a *“more critical approach, recognizing the risk of both using PB symbolically to obtain legitimacy and exploiting PB to reinforce existing power mechanisms”* (Bartocci et al., 2023, p.770). Rose & Lipka (2010) also describe the risks that PB may unintentionally reinforce existing societal power structures, inadvertently marginalize disadvantaged groups whilst amplifying the voices of the already privileged, and they note that participants' limited perspectives may hinder the identification of innovative and globally relevant solutions (p.2).

On the other hand, PB *“fosters greater and more informed participation of citizens in policymaking”* (European Parliament, 2024, p.2). PB-processes promote more democratic, better outcomes and improve efficiency in public budget policymaking (European Parliament, 2024, p.2). Moreover, PB helps counteract *“populist narratives by involving citizens in complex discussions and decisions”* (European Parliament, 2024, p.2). The different components of PB-processes, as also described earlier, can be enhanced if supported with information and communication technology (ICT) (Rose & Lipka, 2010). Firstly, *“online participatory engagement reduces geographic barriers to participation”* (Palacin et al., 2024, p.4). Secondly, not only do *“Online platforms (...) relieve some practical organisational issues of real-world engagements”* (Palacin et al., 2024, p.4), but they also *“improve both the cost and the flexibility of the arrangement”* (Palacin et al., 2024, p.4).

2.3 CITIZEN PARTICIPATION & E-PB IN AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES AND DEMOCRACIES

On top of the described concepts, it is also important to investigate how literature describes the position of CP and PB/e-PB in the two government systems relevant to this research, authoritarian regimes and democracies, also in the context of this thesis' research objects: China and the US.

Before doing so, these two systems will be briefly defined. Authoritarianism, according to the Cambridge dictionary, means “*the belief that people must obey completely and not be allowed freedom to act as they wish*”, whereas the Merriam Webster dictionary, defines it as “*relating to, or favoring a concentration of power in a leader or an elite not constitutionally responsible to the people*”. The two important features of authoritarian regimes can therefore be summarized to firstly the limiting and infringement of citizens’ freedom, and secondly the accumulation of power by a single leader or elite. Democracy on the other hand, is “*a system of government in which power is held by elected representatives who are freely voted for by the people or held directly by the people themselves*” (Cambridge Dictionary), or more simply “*Government by the people*” (Merriam Webster Dictionary).

In most democracies, particularly local governments have taken point in implementing democratic innovations, citizen participation and e-PB (Michels & De Graaf, 2017, p.876). In the United States for example, concepts of citizen participation date back to New England town meetings in the 1960s (Stewart et al., 2014, p.194). Nowadays the empowerment of citizens in shaping public policy (OECD, 2020, p.3), as well as “*democratic values or aspects, such as influence (..) transparency and efficiency (...) and innovation*” in public institutions play an important factor in the inclusion of citizen participation processes in democracies (Michels & De Graaf, 2017, p.876). Discourse describes that the usual “*representation via elected officials that underpins most forms of democratic participation (...) may be limited in its capacity to include diverse citizens and produce decisions that address issues of inequality and justice*” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.862). Subsequently, scholarly interest in innovations such as e-PB, “*is motivated in part by the possibility that such alternatives not only offer a substantively different experience of democratic decision making (...) but are also able to support the recognition and input of individuals and interests who wield less influence within regular representative democracy, particularly at the local level*” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.862). In the case of the US, PB specifically has been considered an important democratic innovation as “*the White House declared participatory*

budgeting a best practice for making government more open and accountable” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.862).

Leaders of authoritarian regimes, on the other hand, have increasingly started to include democratic innovations to maintain elite power, promote social stability and protect their countries from further global democratic movements (Yan & Xin, 2016, p.405). Interestingly, *“innovative reforms are a crucial and defining aspect of authoritarian governance that reflect the self-renewing and self-enhancing capacities of such political systems”* (Yan & Xin, 2016, p.406). Citizen participation has become increasingly popular in this context. Therefore, the implementation of citizen participation and e-PB in authoritarian regimes is considered a way to present itself on the global stage as a modern and legitimate nation (Maerz, 2016, p.728). Furthermore, increasing internal pressure, for example from citizens, are also a motivating factor to authoritarian leaders (Maerz, 2016, p.734). As for the implementation of such methods in China, a research object of this thesis: since the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 Chinese leaders have worked on the establishment of a stable, assertive authoritarian political model (Crabbe-Field, 2023). PB here was first introduced in 2004. Since then, *“various PB experiments have been carried out in various places in China, characterized by “the development and improvement of rules for participation (...); the disclosure of detailed budget information; and an increase in people’s voice, whether or not as elected representatives”* (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.258).

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Overall, two main concepts are critical to this research: Citizen Participation and Participatory Budgeting. Considering the conceptualization and literature review provided above on the existing knowledge relevant to these two concepts, this thesis will now present two chosen theories that provide the basis for the analysis.

3.1 ARNSTEIN'S LADDER OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Building on the conceptualization of CP, this thesis will draw knowledge from the model of Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (2019) for the analysis. Arnstein (2019) is considered one of the most influential thinkers in the field of citizen participation (Sabbott, 2020). In her work she draws a clear relationship between participation and power, defining that "*citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power*" (Arnstein, 2019). To visualize this theory, she created the Ladder of Citizen Participation, as displayed in Figure 1. A theoretical framework which shows different states of 'citizen participation' and "*each ascending rung representing increasing levels of citizen agency, control, and power*" (Arnstein, 2019, p.2).

Starting at the bottom of the ladder, we find Manipulation. Manipulation in citizen participation essentially describes a state of illusion. Here the authority (e.g. officials, administrations, institutions) misguides citizens by including them in false participatory processes to limit their power (Arnstein, 2019, p.4). Secondly, Arnstein's ladder introduces Therapy which describes a situation in which public officials, institutions or administrators devise fake participatory programs. Such misleading programs try to make citizens believe they are the cause of the issues, while it's in fact established systems and policies that are causing the problems for citizens (Arnstein, 2019, p.5). Both Manipulation and Therapy fall under Nonparticipation where the "*real objective is not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programs, but to enable powerholders to 'educate' or 'cure' the participants*" (Arnstein, 2019, p.2). Moving up on the ladder, Informing sits at the third place. Here we find that on one hand the citizens are being informed of their rights, responsibilities, and options. On the other hand, however, the flow of information is only one-way and therefore allows no room for feedback or negotiation. (Arnstein, 2019, p.5). Following up on this, Consultation, at the fourth place of the ladder, describes a situation where citizens are invited to share their opinions, yet there is no accountability measure through which it can be assured that the concerns and ideas of citizens will actually be taken into consideration. (Arnstein, 2019, p.6). Placation on the other hand, occurs when tokenistic

participation of a few citizens is provided, however with very limited influence in the process (Arnstein, 2019, p.7-8). Informing, Consultation and Placation are all subsumed to Tokenism. In all three situations “citizens may indeed hear and be heard. But (...) they lack the power to insure that their views will be heeded” (Arnstein, 2019, p.2)

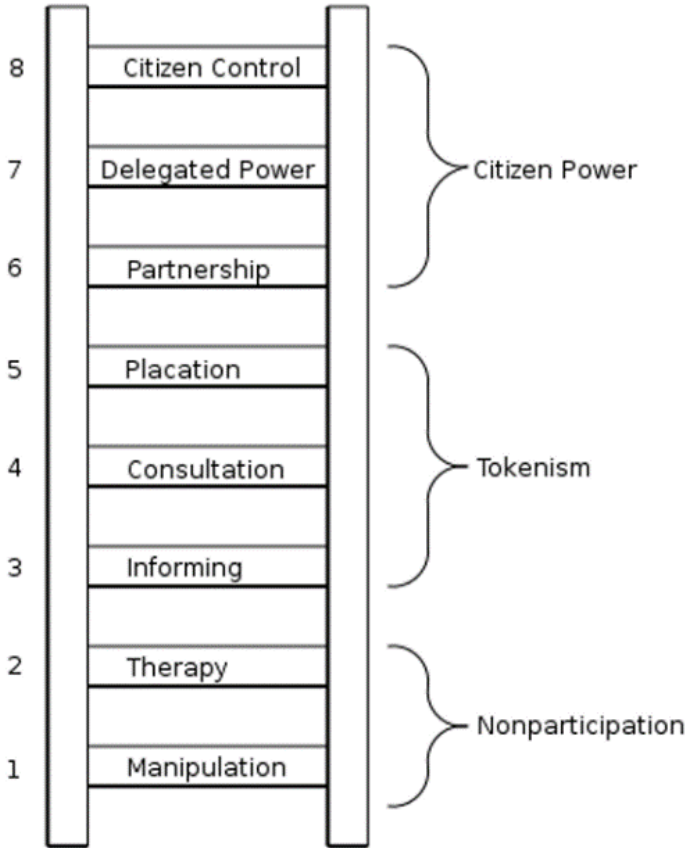


Figure 1: Ladder of Citizen Participation as presented by Arnstein, S. R. (2019). A Ladder of Citizen Participation. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 85(1), 24–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2018.1559388>

Next, Partnership describes the first step toward true citizen power. Here, the authority allows citizens to participate more actively in agenda-setting and negotiations. Still, oftentimes these situations or participation are limited by the fact that the power is not voluntarily shared. Citizens will have engaged in protest and/or campaigns to claim their right to participate (Arnstein, 2019, p.9-10). The second highest level of citizen participation Arnstein describes in the ladder is called Delegated Power. In this case one finds that at a certain level of

decision-making power and control are given to the citizens (Arnstein, 2019, p.10-11). The highest step on Arnstein’s ladder is reserved for the ideal of Citizen Control. Citizen Control describes the ultimate level of citizen participation, where participants have the full decision-making power over a certain program or institution. These resolutions cannot be overturned by ‘outsiders’ (Arnstein, 2019, p.11-13). Partnership, Delegated Power and Citizen Control make up the top of the ladder and belong to the umbrella of Citizen Power. Here, we find the ideal from which Arnstein

derived her definition of citizen participation, namely that successful citizen participation requires a shift in power, e.g. from an authority to the citizens.

3.2 EBDON & FRANKLIN’S FRAMEWORK ON PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

In the literature review PB and e-PB have been conceptualized. To further narrow down and analyze this concept, this research will make use of the framework developed by Ebdon & Franklin (2006), with key elements of Citizen Participation in Budgeting. Their framework identifies four key elements: Environment, Process design, Mechanisms, Goals and Outcomes. Each of these elements also include more specific variables (as can be seen in Figure 2). The element of

Table 1 Key Elements of Citizen Participation in Budgeting

Elements	Variables
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure and form of government • Political culture • Legal requirements • Population size and diversity
Process design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timing • Type of budget allocation (by program or earmarked funds, operating, capital) • Participants (selection method, numbers, representativeness) • Sincere preferences/willingness to pay
Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public meetings • Focus groups • Simulations • Advisory committees • Surveys
Goals and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce cynicism • Educate participants about the budget • Gain support for budget proposals • Gather input for decision making • Change resource allocation • Enhance trust • Create a sense of community

Environment mainly describes the governmental environment, including structure and form of government, political dynamics and culture, legal requirements and population size and heterogeneity. (Ebdon & Franklin, 2006, p.438).

Process Design on the other hand involves a variety of factors, namely timing, type of budget allocation, participants, and the sincere preferences (Ebdon & Franklin, 2006, p.439). Sincere preferences here describe the sincere willingness to pay once outcomes have been reached through PB.

Figure 2: Framework as presented by Ebdon, C., & Franklin, A. L. (2006). Citizen participation in budgeting theory. Public Administration Review, 66(3), 437–447. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2006.00600.x>

Mechanisms describes the methods used, such as public meetings, focus groups, simulations, committees and surveys (Ebdon & Franklin, 2006, p.440).

Lastly, Goals and Outcomes are established as important elements for PB. Ebdon & Franklin (2006) describe different goals frequently found in literature: informing decision-making, educating participants on the budget, gaining support for budget proposals, influencing decision-making and enhancing trust and creating a sense of community (p.441). Outcomes should therefore be measured by taking the goals into consideration and how they were achieved.

3.3 COMBINING THE THEORIES

Drawing from this, the following research will use the described frameworks, Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (2019) and Ebdon & Franklin's model on Participatory Budgeting - as greatly cited models in research - to study and examine the two cases of e-PB, in Chengdu and Chicago. For the analysis, this research will focus on the elements as described by Ebdon & Franklin (2006) to help establish an overview of the two cases of e-PB. The results of this analysis will then be used to place the e-PB cases on Arnstein's ladder. For this purpose, this research would like to propose an analytical grid, as can be seen below. The definitions and explanations of the different steps of the Ladder of Citizen Participation and the framework by Ebdon & Franklin, have been the guiding principle for this grid. Mechanisms and methods were categorized in the grid based on how much accountability is required from the organization or government, and to which extent citizens can directly influence the decision-making. As for timing in the category of process design, Ebdon & Franklin (2006) state that "*input that is received late in the process is less likely to have an effect on outcome*" (p.439). According to this statement it timing has been categorized in the grid. Concerning the participants, key factors for the grid were the openness and availability of the PB-process to all citizens, as well as a representative group of the local population. This is also relevant for the selection method, where it needs to be considered that "*selection methods that purposively seek to include a wide range of perspectives are better received than those in*

which selection is perceived as cronyism that supports a particular political agenda” (Ebdon & Franklin, 2006, p.440). For the categorization of goals into the grid the leading question was whether government is seeking to gain from the implementation of PB itself or whether citizen interests were taken into consideration.

Important to discuss here is that the grid itself only includes the three main categories of citizen participation from Arnstein’s Ladder. Overall, the grid will be a guiding framework for the interpretation of the results, specifically to place the cases of e-PB within the categories of Citizen Power, Tokenism and Nonparticipation. To place each case on a specific step of the ladder, the theories themselves above, did not offer enough detail. Therefore, further considerations are needed, and such interpretations will be presented in the discussion, especially concerning the comparability of certain steps and key elements, such as the Goals & Outcomes as described by Ebdon & Franklin (2006) and certain steps on Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation. E.g. the ladder step Informing (Arnstein, 2016) and the goal Educate participants about the budget (Ebdon & Franklin, 2006) describe the same idea.

3.3.1 The Analytical Grid

Elements & Variable	Nonparticipation	Tokenism	Citizen Power
Process Design – Timing	-	Late input of citizens	Early input of citizens Regular PB-processes
Process Design - Type of Budget allocation	-	-	Operating funds Non-operating funds
Process Design - Participants	Pre-selection by government or administrators Fake participants	Few participants Not representative	Open to all Representative group of participants

Process Design - Sincere preferences/ willingness to pay	No sincere preferences No willingness to pay	Unsure preferences Unsure willingness to pay	Sincere preferences Present willingness to pay
Mechanisms - Methods	Budget Simulations	Public Meetings Surveys Budget Simulations	Public Meetings Focus Groups Advisory Committees
Goals and Outcomes - Goals	Education Gaining support Trust	Informing decision-making	Influencing decision-making

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROACH

As described earlier, this thesis discusses the following research question: To what extent does e-Participatory Budgeting promote citizen participation in democracies and authoritarian regimes? To answer this question, a comparative case study of e-PB examples from two cities, Chicago and Chengdu, has been carried out. More specifically, this research has applied a cross-case design which can be defined as: *“two or more cases experiencing similar events or phenomenon are studied, and then the data obtained from different cases are compared to derive generalizable conclusions”* (Priya, 2020, p.101).

Concerning the methodological congruence, a case study fits the research objective and topic well, because of its *“unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence”* (Yin, 1984, p.11). In this research, an analysis of the e-PB-processes was performed through the use of many

different sources, academic as well as governmental. Furthermore, case studies are considered the preferred research design when analyzing “*a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control*” (Yin, 1984, p.13). Such a situation also applies to this research, as the e-PB-processes in Chicago and Chengdu are current cases in which the researcher was not actively involved. Moreover “*case studies allow for analytic generalizations in which a previously developed theory is used as a template to compare the empirical results of the case under study*” (Priya, 2020, p.103). For this research, the comparison of the two cities allows one to gain perspective on e-PB and therefore citizen participation within different government systems.

The most important criterion considered in the choice of the specific cases, Chengdu and Chicago, focused on their national governmental system. Hence, a priority was to choose cities, of which one lies within a democratic system, and the other in an authoritarian regime. This thesis will analyze Chengdu, the capital of the Sichuan province, a hub in the west of China. This city specifically was chosen, because the PB-process in Chengdu is considered “*one of the more pioneering expressions of PB, introducing practices that are innovative not just within China but even internationally*” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.257). On one hand, Chicago was chosen for its location in the mid-east of the United States of America to provide the case for a democratic system. However, it has also been, similarly to Chengdu, described as a model for the US, being the first locality in the United States to implement participatory budgeting (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.861). Therefore, though both cases are different in their national governmental environment, they are considered pioneers in their respective region and the field of PB (Cabannes, 2015, p.261).

With this choice, this thesis has engaged in a type of comparative research using the Most Similar System Design (MSSD), which entails “*comparing very similar cases which differ in their dependent variable*” (Steinmetz, 2019). At first the choice of MSSD over the Most Different

Systems Design (MSSD) might appear contra-intuitive, because of the objective of this research to analyze different government systems. However, it is important to consider that this research hopes to broadly investigate two 'similar' cases of e-PB and subsequently gain a better perspective on citizen participation in different government systems. Hence, because of the similarity of the e-PB-processes, MSSD offers a more appropriate research design. Although the complexity of participatory processes limits the ability of this comparative e-PB study to offer a universal generalization for all citizen participation in these two government systems, it can still contribute to the existing literature by examining the participatory processes of two distinct political systems that are often seen as vastly different.

4.2 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

For this research, qualitative research was performed. As mentioned before, the researcher was not able to actively take part in the e-PB-processes in Chicago and Chengdu. Therefore, this research has relied on secondary sources and performed a literature review of the variety of sources. This research looked at different reviews, reports and analyses on the e-PB-processes to gain insights into the cases. Important here is, as mentioned earlier, the inclusion of official/governmental sources in addition to academic sources. Both, critical perspectives on the cases as well as objective reports, are necessary to gain an understanding of the different elements of e-PB the research considered. This array of sources from various contributors also helps attain data triangulation and ensures the validity of the findings. The sources were mainly collected through a systemic search from the websites platforms like Google Scholar and Research Gate or the University of Twente Library services. A limitation in the data collection for this research has been the potential language barrier in finding sources for the case of e-PB in Chengdu. To overcome this issue the researcher has made use of various advanced translation tools.

4.3 QUALITATIVE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

For the data analysis, the researcher has performed a thematic analysis of the different sources. As stated in the introduction, this research aligns with interpretivist principles. Hence, knowledge was derived from interpreting indicators through an extensive literature review. Such principles were already implemented in the literature and theory section of this thesis, where the concepts and theories on citizen participation and participatory budgeting have been identified.

For the thematic analysis of the cases, deductive coding was utilized, as well as inductive coding. Therefore, a systematic coding scheme with an initial set of codes was developed and throughout the analysis process new codes were added. This method improved efficiency, considering the limited time available to conduct research. The use of a coding scheme for the analysis furthermore improved reliability and ensured that results are not subject to personal perspectives but maintain their objectivity and transparency.

The system of coding was mainly created by operationalizing the framework on PB by Ebdon & Franklin (2006) as described in the theoretical framework of this thesis. To elaborate on this, the elements described by Ebdon & Franklin (2006) make up the categories of the coding scheme, which are: Environment, Process Design, Mechanisms, Goals and Outcomes. In some cases, these categories were divided into subcategories, as for example can be viewed in the category Process Design. From these categories and subcategories, different codes were developed to help further operationalize the elements and variables Ebdon & Franklin (2006) developed. As this research aims to investigate e-PB, a code for the technologically enhanced methods was added. To avoid any confusion or misunderstandings, the coding scheme also includes a column for explanation. Here all codes were additionally clarified and interpreted. This also improves reliability and reproducibility.

4.3.1 The Coding Scheme

Categories	Subcategory	Codes	Explanation
Environment	-	Government System	Regarding the government system of the country in which the city lies (e.g. authoritarian, democratic)
Process Design	Timing	Timing of input	When input received in relation to the process (e.g. at the beginning, during the budget-adoption phase, etc.)
Process Design	Type of budget allocation	Operating budget funds	Specific reference to funds used the e-PB, here specifically the use of operating funds which usually involves expenses for the day-to-day operations of the community.
Process Design	Type of budget allocation	Nonoperating funds	Again, a specific reference to funds used the e-PB, here the nonoperating funds which could for example involve reserves.
Process Design	Participants	Number of people	Reference to how many people can participate in the process
Process Design	Participants	Representativeness	Reference to whether the participants are representative of the community in which the

			process takes place. This includes profiles of participants (age, gender, ethnicity, etc.).
Process Design	Participants	Participant-selection method	This could for example include individual self-selection or the invitation of specific neighborhood involvement.
Process Design	Sincere preferences/ willingness to pay	-	Includes the willingness of participants to pay their fair share of services and projects chosen through the PB-process.
Mechanisms	Method	Public Meetings	Such as forums for preliminary information sharing and public budget meetings. Usually, citizens don't have a direct influence here.
Mechanisms	Method	Focus Groups	More selective, small groups, that can provide an in-depth opinion on budget preferences and make decisions on a specific problem.
Mechanisms	Method	Budget Simulations	Simulations that allow participants to make decisions on hypothetical scenarios. Reveals sincere preferences as participants are educated

			on budget decision-making and must make trade-off decisions.
Mechanisms	Method	Citizen Budget Committees	A (representative) group of citizens that could for example advise the organization or government on budget decisions.
Mechanisms	Method	Citizen Surveys	Surveys containing questions that can help determine citizen satisfaction, needs and preferences.
Mechanisms	Multiple-input methods	-	Combination of methods, such as the ones mentioned above.
Mechanisms	Methods	Electronic Methods/ Technological Methods	Methods enhanced using technology such as ICT's.
Goals	-	Informing decision-making	Passive participation of citizens where participants can communicate their satisfaction with a certain decision.
Goals	-	Educating	Educating citizens and participants about the complexities of budget policy.
Goals	-	Gaining support	The goal of governments to gain citizen-support for budget proposals.

Goals	-	Influencing decision-making	Governments using citizen input to make decisions together.
Goals	-	Trust	Enhancing citizen-trust in government
Outcomes	-	Outcomes/ Achievement of initial goals	The results of the PB-process. Can be assessed by also considering the goals.

5. RESULTS

Considering the established background from literature, the theoretical framework and the description of the methodology and coding scheme applied (as can be seen in the appendix) this research will now present the results. The following section has been structured similarly to the analytical grid and the coding scheme, with the subsections: Background & Environment, Process Design, Mechanisms, Goals and Outcomes.

5.1 CHENGDU

5.1.1 Background and Environment

As described earlier in this research, a key factor considered in the (political) environment of citizen participation and e-PB in Chengdu is the national governmental system in China, an authoritarian regime. When looking at the specific environment of e-PB in Chengdu, it becomes clear that in Chengdu, e-PB takes place at a lower level of government, villages and urban communities (Frenkiel, 2020, p.15). Historically, Chinese villages have enjoyed a degree of autonomy from the state. However, under the current system the township is the smallest administrative unit, and the extent of village self-governance limited as” *village governance is*

however strongly influenced by the Party-state in the guise of the township and county governments and powerful Party cells in all villages” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.5)

Being the capital of the Sichuan Province, Chengdu encompasses a total of eleven districts under city administration, five county-level cities and four counties embracing 258 towns and townships and 117 urban street committees (Frenkiel, 2020, p.9). This altogether results in 1,650 communities and 2,686 village committees (Frenkiel, 2020, p.9). E-PB here takes place in Chengdu village councils (*yishihui*), a new institutionalized organ to support the participatory budgeting processes. In the case of Chengdu a new layer of official representatives has been developed, which interacts with the local People's Congress, though less directly (Frenkiel, 2020, p.15). Beyond the *yishihui* there also appears to be a diverse range of government agencies and departments are responsible for managing e-PB, highlighting the challenges of implementing this innovation in China (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.268)

Overall, the PB-process in Chengdu has been set up from a top-down perspective in a strong hierarchical environment, with the main goal of managing and mitigating the rural-urban divide and complexities of the property legal structures (Cabannes & Lipietz, 2015, p.16). This factor in the development of e-PB in Chengdu will be described more in the following sections.

5.1.2 Process Design

In the category of Process Design, a variety of important factors have been identified, surrounding timing, type of budget allocation, eligible projects and information surrounding the participants. For the code of sincere preferences/ willingness to pay the literature did not offer any information.

As for the code of timing, discourse presents that the process takes place annually, as each year government funds are provided and the e-PB-process stages are performed (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.261).

The budget of which the participatory innovation decides, are operating funds which the Chengdu Municipality and its township governments have set aside for rural public services (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.261). To provide an indication of the amount of funds dealt with Frenkiel (2020) described that from 2009 to 2014 a sum of 580 million RMB has been designated through participatory budgeting processes for the implementation of village infrastructure projects (p.10), which they describe ranks high compared to other PB-processes around the world (p.9). Since 2008, the different village communities each received at least 200,000 Yuan (approximately US\$ 30,000) and the annual amount is increasing gradually every year (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.264). Chengdu e-PB is also considered quite unique in discourse, because of the feature that in addition to the option of spending the budget on different projects, villages can supplement their PB-funds by applying for loans to undertake larger projects (Frenkiel, 2020, p.10). Cabannes & Zhuang (2013) describe in their research that this particular feature has provided Chengdu e-PB with a way to *“link short-term and longer-term planning without losing people’s participation”* (p.274).

E-PB in Chengdu is taking place in all villages of Chengdu’s city-region (Cabannes & Lipietz, 2015, p.16). Hence, it is open to tens of millions of citizens. As mentioned in the environment section of the results, the e-PB design in Chengdu makes use of representatives throughout the process. These representatives convene in the village council, the *yishihui*. Per *yishihui*, the e-PB-process usually involves around 25-29 representatives (Frenkiel, 2020, p.10). Therefore, one council representative is elected every five to fifteen households.

To choose these representatives, villagers vote every three years (Frenkiel, 2020, p.10). An important consideration in the election is the pursuit of an equilibrium between the selection of residents who are representative of the community and the appointment of 'super-residents' who possess the requisite administrative and political skills to efficiently facilitate communication between the community and government (Frenkiel, 2020, p.12). Besides the selection of the

representatives, the *yishihui* also includes the local party secretary, of the CCP, in each village who convenes and chairs the village council (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.262).

According to regulations, altogether the composition of the *yishihui* has to consist of an odd number of individuals, with a minimum of one-third being female. (Frenkiel, 2020, p.2). Whilst open to all citizens, Frenkiel (2020) does describe that these individuals are not ordinary citizens, but rather local elites and 'super-residents' who act as intermediaries between established elites and the general populace (p.2). Furthermore, they are often community-oriented people like former officials or party members (restricted to a minority). However, Yi (2019) describes in their paper that Chengdu has accomplished a shift “from an elite-dominated process to a citizen-centric process in which the ordinary residents lead the discussion and the decision-making processes related to budgeting.” (p.145)

5.1.3 Mechanisms

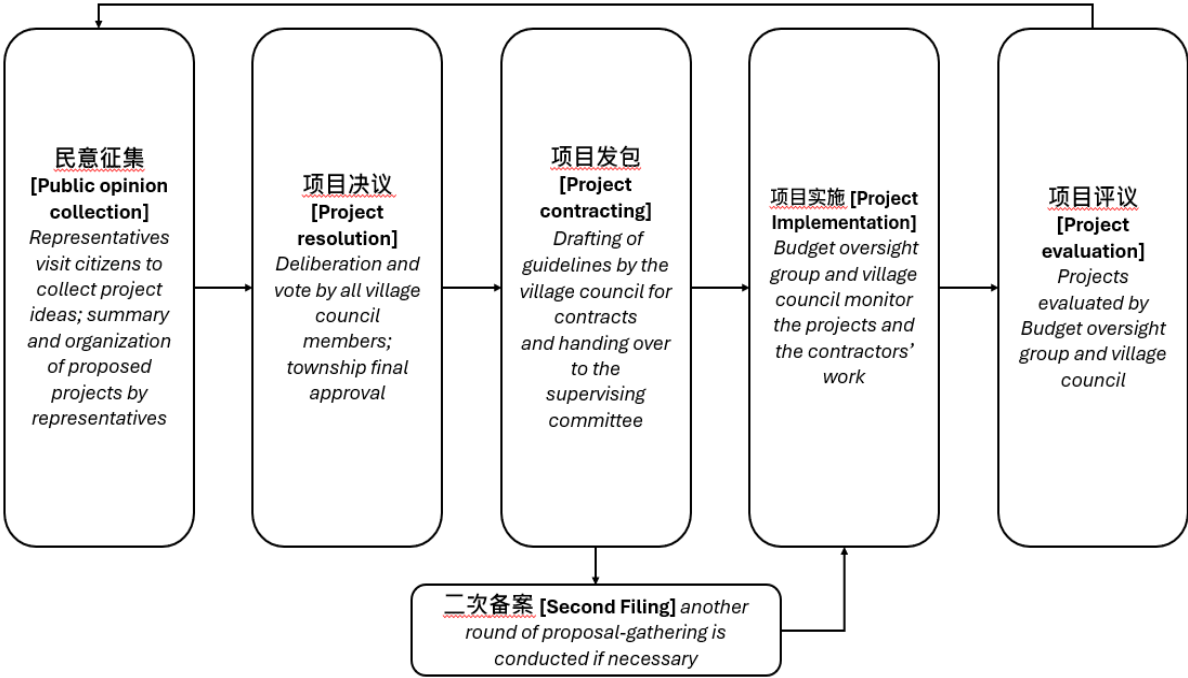


Figure 3: e-PB-cycle Chengdu adapted from cycle presented by Sichuan Online Edito, 2023, URL: [智慧化赋能资金管理使用！成都市龙泉驿区e管家优化升级_四川在线](#)

The e-PB-process in Chengdu utilizes a variety of mechanisms to ensure successful and efficient outcomes and the implementation of PB-cycles exhibits considerable variation among different

localities (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.267). Above, an illustration of a general cycle can be found, based on the e-PB-process illustrated by the Sichuan Online Editor (2023). The establishment of the *yishihui* is not displayed, but this process was briefly mentioned before. This democratic body of representatives carries different responsibilities, with the main task to regulate the village public service funds. Besides the *yishihui*, a variety of additional support focus groups are set up during the e-PB-process in Chengdu. These groups include “*residents/villagers discussion groups, residents/villagers financial groups and residents/villagers monitoring/supervising groups*” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.267).

As for the PB-process, in many cases, the program starts with the collection of public opinion. This involves public meetings for two different purposes. Firstly, Frenkiel (2020) described that local meetings are held to discuss village projects (p.9), serving a deliberation purpose in the project development stages. Moreover, information on the budget and budget process is publicly available through meetings (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.267), working towards the goal of education as described earlier. The representatives of the *yishihui* also collect proposal ideas from the households that voted for them, through surveys. The first step of the e-PB-process in Chengdu, besides information about the budget, is that all households receive a survey to fill in and express their ideas and project proposals. This process is also called “*each household, one questionnaire*” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.14).

After this phase, the members of the *yishihui* formulate proposals based on prior consultation with the constituent households (Frenkiel, 2020, p.10) and decide on how the village funds will be spent (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.267). As can be seen in the cycle, once all the ideas have been collected the *yishihui* prepare and develop project proposals, which will be handed in for approval by the town.

Once approval has been received, the projects will be handed over to contractors. Upon the completion or progression of projects, the representatives assigned to supervise and assess their

execution deliver reports during *yishihui* sessions. An important mechanism of the Chengdu case is the step that allows citizens to control the use of public money and development of their chosen projects “*through community-led mechanisms of monitoring*” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.258) as can also be seen in the cycle above. Moreover, during the implementation phase, the village council established a 'Fund Oversight Group' to monitor the use of budgetary resources after project decisions are made (Cabannes, 2015, p.273)

In addition to all these methods, the case of the City of Chengdu also provides participants with technologically enhanced participatory budgeting options to improve the efficiency of the use of community security funds. Through the so-called “e管家 平台” [e-manager platform] (Sichuan Online Editor News, 2023) residents can log in to participate in the suggestion of projects, viewing of proposals and online oversight of projects. In addition to this, social organizations can express opinions and register to undertake projects and communities can solicit project proposals, convene council meetings to make decisions, contract and implement projects, and provide democratic feedback on community security funds. (Southwest Petroleum University, 2022) Therefore the e-manager supports the e-PB-process in Chengdu at all stages of the cycle. The visual data report created through the e-manager platform enables organizers to “快速地对各项数据展开分析，这种数据驱动的决策和反馈机制，将帮助社区提高资金管理使用能效 [quickly analyze the data, and this data-driven decision-making and feedback mechanism will help the community to improve the energy efficiency of fund management and use] (Sichuan Online Editor, 2023).

5.1.4 Goals

As for the goals, coding of the different articles offered many different motivations for the implementation of e-PB in Chengdu. The first code in the category of goals, as described in the methodology, is informing decision-making, which was found in the case of Chengdu. Frenkiel

(2020) states that the primary goal of PB is to enhance governance, with participation simply serving as the chosen mechanism to achieve this aim (Frenkiel, 2020, p.14). Moreover, literature describes that in order to adequately represent such a populous and heterogeneous population, such as the community of Chengdu, the national government, and subsequently the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), must engage in a comprehensive consultation process to create policies. Such processes should therefore be involving not only the eight officially recognized non-communist parties, but also diverse political, economic, and academic elites, as well as the general populace (Frenkiel & Lama-Rewal, 2019, p.117).

Besides the goal of informing decision-making, e-PB was established to provide education to the people of Chengdu. On one hand the different steps of the process “*are conceived as ways to improve lay citizens’ understanding of the intricacies of policymaking*” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.12). On the other hand, the education aspect of this motivation also lies in the process of deliberation itself for example, an understanding of democratic precepts and the ability to express oneself publicly (Cabannes & Lipietz, 2015, p.24)

As briefly mentioned above, the original objective of the establishment of participatory processes and e-PB, was the increasing divide between the urban centers of Chengdu and the rural outskirts. At larger, this played into the motivation of the governmental actors and stakeholders, to gain support (coded as Gaining support) with reforms for integration and balanced rural-urban growth (Frenkiel, 2020, p.9). In line with this, it can be perceived that different sources describe the goal to alleviate public dissatisfaction and citizen discontent with local officials and policies, which have previously caused *shangfang* (petition and complaints) slowing down policy implementation (see Frenkiel, 2020, p.9; Frenkiel & Lama-Rewal, 2019, p.115)

In addition to informing decision-making, education and gaining support, the e-PB-process in Chengdu was also motivated by the goal of influencing decision-making, as described in the coding scheme. Not only does the participatory budgeting process aim to inform policies, but

citizens also influence the decisions through the project proposals, meetings and the voting process. Therefore, it is claimed that *“the regularly convened and tightly organized yishihui allows participants to finally gain some of the former power of the village party secretary (also called yibashou, “the number one guy”) who tended to hold onto his/her traditional monopolistic power and make budget decisions in all discretion”* (Frenkiel & Lama-Rewal, 2019, p.119)

Finally, the goal of trust also describes an important factor in the development of e-PB in Chengdu. In short, the establishment of this participatory innovation was designed to end corruption, correct misrepresentation, and restore trust (Frenkiel, 2020, p.12). Subsequently, PB is presented in the discourse, as a tool to fight against corruption, through which trust by citizens could grow (Frenkiel & Lama-Rewal, 2019, p.117). Altogether, PB was intended to become a localized mechanism for administrative incorporation, expanding participation to diminish contestation and sustain social equilibrium. (Frenkiel, 2020, p.11)

5.1.5 Outcomes

The outcomes of e-PB in Chengdu offer both more immediate as well as long-term improvements. In the timespan from 2009 to the end of 2014, through the e-PB-process citizens were able to allocate up to 5.8 billion RMB corresponding to 12,000 projects, which had a significant impact on the community (Frenkiel, 2020, p.9). Furthermore, considering the intended main goal, these projects managed to mitigate the growing disparity between urban and rural development, enhance land tenure security, and ultimately improved the quality of life for millions of rural residents (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.257).

Cabannes & Zhuang (2013) also describe how the impact has gone beyond physical improvements to the area or strengthening social and economic interest, claiming that e-PB has been an investment in local solidarity (p.273). Additionally, Frenkiel (2020) states that participatory budgeting has succeeded in opening the decision-making process to a more diverse and inclusive group of people (p.2), in addition to an increasing accountability in the use of

government funds (p.14). An important factor here appears to be the *yishihui*, which due to their institutionalization “*give more clout to local congresses especially regarding budget issues, forcing local officials to respond more to the actual needs of the local population*” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.15)

Besides this, the inclusion of electronic features in the PB-processes has reduced the burden as the time to collect project ideas and proposals has shortened to 7 days as well as reduce the cost of work by 72% (Sichuan Daily Date, 2021). The Sichuan Daily Date (2021) also reports that the rate of participation generally increased by 160% and the participation of young people in the community increased by 80%.

All in all, e-PB has been favorably received by the populace and villagers, but not necessarily by village leaders and authorities (Cabannes, 2015, p.278). Discourse describes that whilst all the above-mentioned benefits are noticeable, e-PB in Chengdu is heavily influenced by the party-state through township, county governments and powerful party cells in every village (Frenkiel, 2020, p.9).

5.2 CHICAGO

5.2.1 Background and Environment

As the first city in the United States to have its citizen engaged with PB, Chicago presents an interesting case. In general, when discussing e-PB in Chicago, one is working within the regulatory environment of the municipality (Pin, 2022, p.390). Historically Chicago’s municipal government has been driven by machine politics and the traditional budget had left citizens with few opportunities for meaningful participation (Weber et al., 2015, p.262). Nowadays in Chicago “*power remains highly centralized in the mayor’s office*” (Weber et al., 2015, p.265). With such machine politics and centralized power, community engagement and involvement, for most citizens, had therefore mainly been focused on petitioning their alderman. However, these

aldermen, who are elected representatives that form the Chicago City Council, have also been feeling discontent with efforts to consolidate power (Weber et al., 2015, p.265).

e-PB in Chicago takes place in its different wards. The choice of when a ward wishes to organize or participate in PB lies with the alderman, as in Chicago, discretionary aldermanic funds support participatory budgeting projects (Pin, 2022, p.390). In 2009, the 49th ward was the first to ever organize PB, led by alderman Joe Moore.

5.2.2 Process Design

Concerning the timing of the e-PB-processes the Chicago participatory budgeting process follows an annual cycle (Pin, 2022, p.365), meaning that the participating wards organize e-PB every year. However, according to PB Chicago the entire process, as described later in the Mechanisms section, takes approximately six months, of which the community representatives meet regularly over a five-month period (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.867).

As briefly mentioned above, the type of funds involved in e-PB in Chicago involve aldermanic discretionary funds. Generally, local authorities below the city level, such as in Chicago's wards "*receive a small portion of the overall city or federal district budgets*" (Cabannes, 2015, p.267). Therefore, the \$1.3 million annual menu money given to each Chicago alderman, the core of PB Chicago's budget, constitutes a minor fraction of the city's overall budget (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.868; Cabannes, 2015, p.267). Subsequently, from these \$1.3 million, aldermen can choose how much they want to provide to PB, for example in the 13th cycle of the 49th ward, a total of \$977.000 were spent on a variety of projects.

In the sources available, there are no current numbers on the amount of people involved in the PB-process in the different wards. However, there is data available for cycles some time ago. For example, in the cycle 2012-13 (four wards participating) a total of 476 participants took part in the neighborhood assemblies that were held in October and November of 2012 (Crum et al., 2013, p.6). Furthermore, 2,574 Chicago residents voted on the different project proposals in May 2013.

2012 (Crum et al., 2013, p.8). Whilst there is little information on the exact numbers of participants today, literature discusses the representativeness of participants in-depth. Pape & Lim (2019), in their paper, state that the PB Chicago voters were disproportionately white, college-educated, and from higher-income households compared to both the general population and politically engaged residents in Chicago (p.861). Hence, there is an overrepresentation of highly educated participants in e-PB, unlike the demographic picture presented by the different wards. The fact that voters look very different from residents in the participating wards, indicates a strong selection bias according to Pape & Lim (2019, p.869). Weber et al. (2015) also state that the participants of e-PB in Chicago were *“the usual suspects in that they were likely to have prior experience with formal politics”* (p.268). To mitigate this lacking representativeness wards have made efforts to boost participation and inclusion by holding meetings and elections across the ward on various dates (Stewart et al., 2014, p.215). In addition to this, all information available for and during the e-PB-process is made available in both English and Spanish to increase latino participation (Stewart et al., 2014, p.215).

As for the code of participant-selection method, the e-PB-process is open to all residents aged 14 and over, regardless of eligibility to vote in typical elections (PB Chicago). For those who wish to participate more actively and support the PB-process, they can do so voluntarily (Cabannes, 2015, p.273). The community representatives are based on self-selection (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.867). All these participants are supported by the alderman’s staff, however their limited capacity to conduct PB-processes likely explains why external institutions are contracted to perform various activities (Cabannes, 2015, p.275)

As for the sincere preferences and the willingness to pay, as described in the coding scheme, literature does not provide a literal answer. However, as Pin (2022) explains when an alderman adopts participatory budgeting, they relinquish direct control over their sole source of discretionary municipal funds, shifting from individual decision-making to a participatory

democratic process (p.396). Therefore, there should be no need for anyone’s willingness to pay, as citizens should take control of the discretionary funds.

5.2.3 Mechanisms

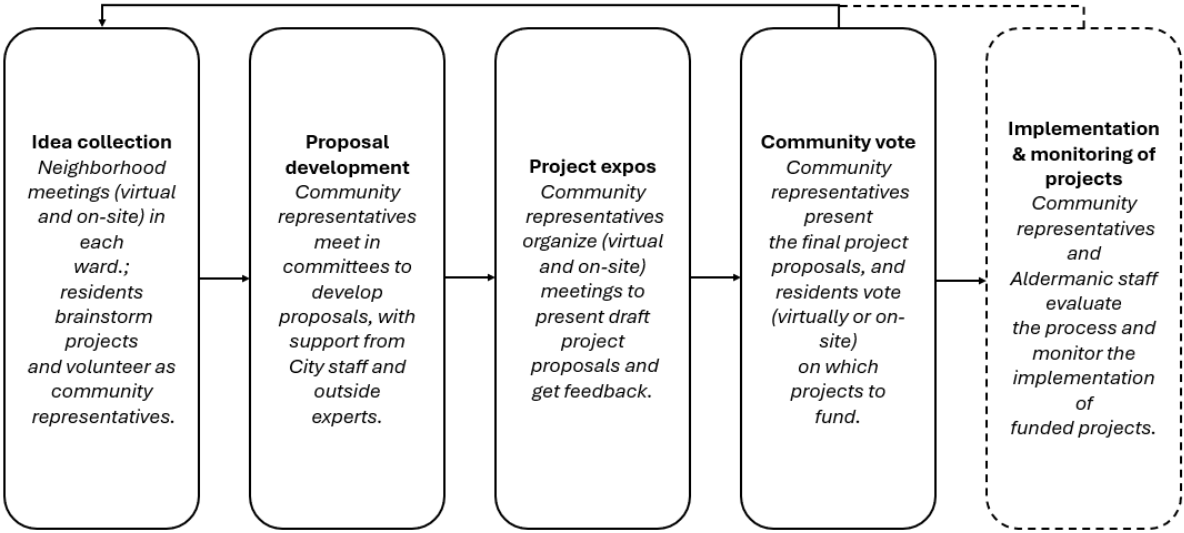


Figure 4: Cycle PB Chicago adapted from cycle presented by University of Illinois: Great Cities Institute, 2021, URL: [Participatory Budgeting | Great Cities Institute](https://www.greatcitiesinstitute.org/participatory-budgeting/)

In Chicago the e-PB-cycle begins with neighborhood assemblies, where residents learn about the process and suggest project ideas to fund (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.867). These meetings are followed up by a proposal development stage and project expos, ultimately leading to the vote of which projects to fund.

As mentioned before and described in the PB-process above, the different steps in the cycle of e-PB Chicago are mainly organized by volunteers and self-selected community representatives. Therefore, PB Chicago has no formalized community bodies. More specifically, the “*leadership committees set up in Ward 49 in Chicago remain informal structures*” (Cabannes, 2015, p.273). The entire process is supported and overseen by an advisory steering committee comprising of the alderman’s staff and the above-mentioned representatives of citywide and local civil society organizations, tasked with planning the process and providing input on effective outreach strategies (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.867). As can be seen in the graphic of the PB-cycle in Chicago, there is no formal step for implementation or evaluation, however it is described that after the

vote *“the steering committee may continue to meet and liaise with the aldermanic office to ensure that projects are implemented in a timely fashion”* (Pin, 2022, p.396). Yet, Stewart et al. (2014) describe that it is less certain whether participants can sustain the dialogue and continue learning throughout project implementation (p.215).

Overall, there is a variety of ways in which all citizens can participate more directly, beyond their representatives. In the e-PB-process in Chicago. This can be done through the PB-platform, at community gatherings, via social media, through surveys, by email, or over the phone (PB Chicago). Hence, PB Chicago is based on a multi-methods mechanism.

These different methods also display how technology has been utilized in the participatory budgeting process in the different wards of Chicago. The PB-platform mentioned here is provided through Decidim, *“a widely adopted open-source digital platform for participatory democracy”* (Palacin et al., 2024, p.3). Through this platform citizen can propose ideas for projects, view the different PB-projects developed by their representatives and vote on their preferred project. Furthermore, the public meetings, where citizens receive information, propose project and deliberate, are organized on-location as well as virtually at the ‘virtual community assemblies’ (PB Chicago). In addition to the display of the project options on the PB platform, the project expos are also presented on-site as well as during online meetings.

5.2.4 Goals

e-PB in Chicago was established through a variety of motivations. In short, Crum et al. (2013) describe through their research, in cooperation with the PB Chicago organization, that the goals of the participatory budgeting program include equity, inclusion and community building. Inclusion here surrounds the motivation *“to change the face of local politics by reducing the presence of “the usual suspects” and “groups with more resources””* (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.863) When discussing equity, Weber et al. (2015) describe that PB Chicago sought to empower politically marginalized communities to have a greater say in public spending decisions (p.268).

This goal includes the goal of community building and empowerment, which also entails another motivation behind e-PB in Chicago, namely the education of participants. This includes the chance to gain skills, knowledge, and influence (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.863). In addition to this, another motivation described in literature, surrounds the influencing of decision-making, as citizens get to decide directly on the spending of public budget (PB Chicago). The code of trust was not found.

Pin (2022) also elaborates in their research that a main motivating factor behind the establishment of e-PB has been the pursuit of electoral support. In their analysis of the first PB-process in Chicago, in the 49th ward, they found that the “*reputational considerations of the alderman were significant, in particular the opportunity to take credit for a novel, innovative policy mechanism*” (Pin, 2022, p.394). As the initiation of PB-process lies within the discretion of aldermen, Pin (2022) claims that PB has become a tool to promote electoral support” (p.399) and ensure positive constituency relations (p.399). All in all, the research states that officials implement participatory budgeting to bolster their democratic legitimacy and expand their political base (Pin, 2022, p.388).

5.2.5 Outcomes

As for the outcomes, initial success stories of PB in Chicago for example report that in the cycle 2016-2017, the nine participating wards were able to allocate \$8.1 million in public infrastructure funds according to the citizens’ votes (Pin, 2022, p.395). Whereas in 2012–2013, PB Chicago brought together almost 3000 residents in only four wards allocating \$4 million from the aldermen’s discretionary budget. The PB Chicago Rulebook (2021) states that since 2012 over 38,000 residents have directly decided how to spend over \$40 million in public dollars, collaborating to create and vote for funding on over 190 community projects.

Overall, literature and collected evaluation data present that the goals of community building and equity have been realized (Crum et al., 2013, p.45). Through an extensive survey research, Crum

et al. (2013) found that participants were very satisfied with their participation in the wards' PB-processes (p.3). Moreover, "*PB Chicago brought together thousands of residents from diverse backgrounds who do not typically participate in other types of civic activities in their communities*" (Crum et al., 2013, p.45) providing them with a space for civic learning about their ward, neighbors, and the city budgeting process (Weber et al., 2015, p.275). The goals of inclusion and equity also provided more insight into the priorities of citizens, informing further decision-making. Through comparison it was found that the types of projects funded by citizens through PB, display a very different set of priorities than those used in standard aldermanic budgeting (Stewart et al., 2014, p.214)

However, Pape & Lim (2019) also state in their research that the exclusive emphasis on capital works within the PB Chicago framework proved insufficient in addressing the needs and interests of less privileged residents (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.861). In addition to this Stewart et al. (2014) found that limitations in structure and programming hinder full realization of the many different goals described before. Weber et al. (2015) also state that "*aldermanic offices used the same methods that helped them get out the vote at election time, they reached the "usual suspects and did not necessarily advance goals of inclusion"*" (p.275).

6. DISCUSSION

This thesis would now like to present the discussion of the results, taking into consideration all the previous sections. More specifically, the following will now use the completed analytical grid (as seen in appendix) to place both cases of e-PB on the Ladder of Citizen Participation, as presented by Arnstein in the theoretical framework section on this research. Both cases, e-PB in Chengdu and e-PB in Chicago, predominantly display characteristics of Citizen Power according to the analytical grid. However, either example also describe process design features,

mechanisms and goals of both tokenism and nonparticipation. To elaborate on this more, the following will compare the results on e-PB in Chicago and Chengdu, as displayed in the *Comparison Table Results Chengdu and Chicago* below.

Firstly, in both cases the process of e-PB is limited to localities, in Chicago's wards and Chengdu's villages. However, in Chengdu the number of participating areas is much bigger than in Chicago, indicating a broader commitment from stakeholders, especially the local, regional and national government levels.

Concerning the timing of citizen input, the case of e-PB in Chengdu promotes citizen input at the beginning of the process. Similarly, Chicago also includes citizen's input in the first steps of e-PB. Besides this, with the establishment of the institutionalized *yishihui* and a complex regulatory framework, the system established Chengdu has insured "*stability and anchorage for the PB-process*" (Cabannes & Lipietz, 2015, p.16). PB in Chicago on the other hand lies at the discretion of aldermen. Though some wards have organized e-PB annually and for many years in a row, others have been discontinued by newly elected alderman, underscoring the limited commitment by municipal government and local government.

This also relates to the factor that the funds for Chicago PB involve the discretionary funds of aldermen and are therefore categorized as non-operating funds, whereas the funds for Chengdu PB come directly from municipal funds and are operating funds. The size of the budget available in Chengdu is quite larger in comparison to other PB-processes around the world (Frankiel, 2020, p.9). Yet, in both cases Chengdu and Chicago, the money available to PB concerns only a small part of the overall local and municipal budget. As with the previous indicators, the amount of money invested in PB Chicago and PB Chengdu highlights the lack of commitment to fully embrace democratic innovations. However, the amount of money available has made significant impact of the citizens in either community.

For the participants, the results present a mixed picture, for both cases. As described above, different sources present that the PB-process in Chengdu is mainly visited and organized by elites (Frenkiel, 2020), limiting representativeness. Participants of PB in Chicago, though not described as elites, also mainly include white, highly educated people, not representative of their neighborhoods. Furthermore, in both Chengdu and Chicago, the PB-process works through the establishment of representatives, which limits the number of participants. In Chengdu these representatives are elected, whereas in Chicago these are self-selected volunteers. In either case, the *“PB program’s use of representatives to determine project desirability and feasibility risks undermining its broader deliberative spirit”* (Stewart et al., 2014, p.215), especially also considering the lacking representativeness of participants. Evidently, Chicago PB has taken measures to mitigate this, such as the inclusion of bilingual material (Spanish and English), whereas literature does not present such attempts for Chengdu. However, the regulations of PB in Chengdu enforce a certain percentage of women and limit the presence of party members, whilst the self-elected committee of representatives in Chicago remains quite unregulated. In both cases the PB-process has been made available to all citizens, however the limited representation and inclusion in the reality of PB Chicago and Chengdu call attention to the fact that in both cases this goal has not been prioritized and hence limit the extent of citizen power.

As for the willingness to pay, literature did not offer too much insight in either of the cases, but considering the outcomes and amount of money invested, sincere preferences seem to be present in Chengdu. However, it is critical that this discussion includes the fact the cycle of PB in Chengdu requires township approval before the money is transferred, also relating to the need for support from the Communist Party (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.275). This corresponds with the general discourse on CP in authoritarian regimes. In Chicago on the other hand, PB diminishes an alderman's direct control over their discretionary municipal funds (Pin, 2022, p.396). Hence, the sincere preferences are more explicitly mentioned in literature.

Both cases of PB display similar methods. Neither make use of budget simulations and the only difference appears to be that Chengdu makes use of surveys whereas Chicago does not. Besides this, both in Chicago and Chengdu the PB-processes involve public meetings, focus groups and advisory committees. Important here is that in either case, the public meetings serve the purpose of informing citizens, but also allow for feedback and therefore contribute to accountability of the representatives and supervisory staff. Furthermore important: the cycles, as presented in the results section, differ in another significant way. Whilst in Chengdu the PB- process has clear mechanisms for the implementation and evaluation phase, such measures are voluntary in Chicago. As the step of monitoring is crucial to fully achieve citizen power, its lacking in Chicago underscored the aim of aldermanic offices to implement PB for democratic support, hence prioritizing the perception of the process rather than the actual functioning.

Besides this, there are no significant differences in the goals described for both cases of PB. The results show that the motivations of education, gaining support, trust, informing decision-making and influencing decision-making, were all factors included in the development of PB in Chengdu. As for Chicago, the PB-process was motivated by the goals of education, gaining support, informing decision-making and influencing decision-making. Moreover, political interests in both cases factor into the development and upholding of PB, which also agrees with the discourse presented in the literature review section. The aim of aldermen in Chicago to implement PB to improve their democratic legitimacy and the goal of the CCP to utilize PB in Chengdu to ease citizen unrest and gain further control, undermine the goals of PB to empower citizens and therefore limit the extent of citizen power. In the case of Chicago, this has also led to the exclusion of certain population groups, which is also echoed by the risks of PB presented in the literature review before. Subsequently, the only difference between the goals of these two cases of e-PB is the factor trust.

In summary, these findings indicate little difference between the two cases of e-PB, despite their different governmental systems. Overall, both cases can be considered Citizen Power, whilst also displaying some signs of Tokenism and Nonparticipation. As for the specific steps in the category of citizen power on Arnstein's ladder, both cases do not qualify as Partnership, because in neither situation protests were needed to make this claim. Furthermore, both cases do not exhibit Citizen Control, the highest step on the ladder, as citizens are not empowered to fully control the PB-processes. In Chengdu PB still relies on support from the CCP and in Chicago aldermanic offices still control the development, implementation and continuation of the PB-processes. Subsequently, both cases are best described by the step of Delegated Power, where a certain level of decision-making power and control given to the citizens.

On one hand, whilst the PB-process in an authoritarian country has struggled with the control of central government, the PB-process in a democracy struggles with the mingling electoral interests of public officials. Both processes seem to be implemented with ulterior motives of legitimizing power through participation. In Chengdu this is visible on a larger scale with the CCP and its current strategy to maintain its position in the country through grassroots participation (Frenkiel & Lama-Rewal, 2019. p.113). In Chicago, this is evident on a smaller scale with alderman elections and therefore political figures aiming to secure their position. Moreover, representativeness in both cases is found lacking and the funding available only displays a small amount of the municipal budget. Also, both Chengdu and Chicago display the limit of democratic innovations, such as PB, to a local level. This coincides with the discourse presented in the literature review of this research. On the other hand, both cases highlight the success of citizen participation at the local level, regardless of the national governmental system. This goes against the general bias, that democratic innovations cannot or do not function in authoritarian regimes. Therefore, such democratic innovations can provide a good avenue for national and international actors to promote democratic ideals at the local level, in the light of the rise of authoritarianism and fragility of democracies around the world.

6.1.1 Comparison Table Results Chengdu and Chicago

	Chengdu	Chicago
Background and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Authoritarian Regime - Village-level implementation - Top-down approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Democratic context - Ward-level implementation - Aldermanic discretion
Process Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early citizen input - Annual process with strong regulatory framework - Municipal funds - Village councils (<i>yishihui</i>) with elected representatives - Limited representativeness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early citizen input - Annual process - Aldermanic discretionary funds - Open to all residents aged 14+ - Self-selected community representatives - Limited representativeness
Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public meetings - <i>Yishihui</i> deliberations - Citizen surveys - Online platform (e-manager) - Community monitoring groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neighborhood assemblies - Project Proposals - Public Voting - Online Platform (decidim) - Community representatives deliberations
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informing decision-making - Education - Gaining support - Influencing decision-making - Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equity - Inclusion - Community building - Empowering marginalized communities - Influencing decisions - Electoral support
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved rural infrastructure - Enhances local-solidarity - Increased citizen participation - Improved accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased citizen participation - Community empowerment - Improved project alignment with citizen priorities

6.2 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Limitations of this research include the language barrier, as described in the methodology. To limit this issue, cross-translations with various translation tools were performed. Another significant limitation of this research is the potential for bias in the coding process, as it was conducted solely by one researcher. To mitigate this, a second round of coding was employed to enhance consistency. In addition to these limitations, some of the information, particularly for Chicago, was somewhat outdated. Therefore, it would be interesting to repeat this research with collecting data more directly rather than leaning on existing literature.

While the long-term implications of PB on China's political, social, and spatial dynamics remain uncertain, these experiments offer a rare glimpse into the workings of a system that is often characterized by oppression and control. It would be very interesting to continue the path of the research presented in this thesis, perhaps including a larger set of case studies and following the further development of PB in these countries. Moreover, having established that democratic innovations can in fact work in authoritarian regimes, future research should continue to explore the exact ways and configurations in which digital citizen participation can take place. This research highlights the lack of knowledge currently available on authoritarian governments and the need to further explore the opportunities of citizens under such powers.

7. CONCLUSION

To conclude, this thesis has aimed to investigate and explore the extent to which citizen can participate through e-participatory budgeting in two different governmental systems. To do so, the main research question was posed:

RQ: To what extent does e-Participatory Budgeting promote citizen participation in democracies and authoritarian regimes?

This comparative case study of e-PB in Chengdu and Chicago, utilizing an analytical grid combining Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation and Ebdon & Franklin's Framework on Participatory Budgeting, reveals a nuanced picture. Even though both cases exhibit characteristics of Citizen Power, with citizen influence over local budgets, significant limitations are evident. Whereas in Chengdu, the influence of the CCP and aim of limiting public dissent pose challenges to genuine citizen control, in Chicago, the pursuit of voter support and democratic legitimacy by alderman corrupts the participatory process and limits the extent of citizen power. Furthermore, both cases underscore the challenges of achieving truly representative participation, with limited representativeness of participants observed in both cities.

Despite these challenges, this research has shown that e-participatory budgeting successfully promoted citizen participation in both authoritarian regimes and democracies alike. In both cases, PB Chicago and PB Chengdu, it has been found that citizens have been empowered by e-PB to make decisions at the local level on various budgeting decisions. Most significantly, this thesis has found that both cases differ surprisingly little in their mechanisms, process design or goals. These unexpected findings present a stark contrast to the bias, oftentimes found in discussions surrounding the implementation of democratic innovations in authoritarian regimes. To ensure the effectiveness of e-PB, critical issues such as power dynamics, representation, and long-term sustainability need to be addressed. Further research is needed to explore strategies for overcoming these challenges and maximizing the democratic potential of e-PB initiatives. The findings of this research underline the opportunities of empowering citizens to partake in the policy cycle, regardless of the national governmental structures and with the rise of authoritarianism and the fragility of democracy around the world, the promotion of democratic innovations such as participatory budgeting is as salient as ever.

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9. APPENDIX

9.1.1 Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

During the preparation of this work, I used the AI Tools Grammarly and Google Gemini to find synonyms and improve structural challenges. After using this tool/service, I thoroughly reviewed and edited the content as needed, taking full responsibility for the final outcome.

9.1.2 Coding: Chengdu

Categories	Subcategory	Codes	Quotes
Environment	-	Government System	<p>“In theory Chinese villages are, with a long historical legacy, ruled autonomously from the state as, under the current system, the last administrative echelon is the township.” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.5)</p> <p>“In reality, village governance is however strongly influenced by the Party-state in the guise of the township and county governments and powerful Party cells in all villages” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.5)</p> <p>“In Chengdu, PB takes place at a lower level (villages and urban communities) and the main outcome is rather the creation of a new layer of official representatives, which also interacts with the local People’s Congress but more distantly.” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.15)</p> <p>“wide array of authorities and bureaus are involved in the administration of PB, indicating the complexity of introducing this innovation within the Chinese context” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.268)</p> <p>“represents a top-down attempt to address the twin challenge of rising rural-urban disparities in China and rising pressure on villagers’ land use</p>

			rights” (Cabannes & Lipietz, 2015, p.16)
Process Design	Timing	Timing of input	“Each year, Chengdu Municipality and its township governments set aside additional budgets for rural public services” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.261)
Process Design	Type of budget allocation	Budget funds	<p>“From 2009 to 2014, 580 million RMB have been allocated in the participatory budgeting processes to implement village infrastructure projects.” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.10)</p> <p>“In addition, villages can apply for a loan along with the PB funds they receive, to allow them to finance larger projects.” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.10)</p> <p>“Over the three PB cycles during the 2009–2011 period, the total value of projects funded in Chengdu through the PB process was equivalent to around US\$ 325 million, (9) and the annual amount is increasing gradually year-on-year.” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.264)</p> <p>“Chengdu has found a way to link short-term and longer-term planning without losing people’s participation” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.274)</p> <p>“Zhuang, an academic and member of the NGO HuiZhi, acknowledges that PB investments in Chengdu, although very large in absolute terms, are marginal when compared with investments in urban areas” (Cabannes. 2015, p.270)</p>
Process Design	-	Eligible projects	“Projects eligible for PB fall into four major categories: culture, literacy and fitness; basic services and infrastructure for local economic development (...) agricultural training

			<p>(...) and village management” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.9)</p> <p>“Projects eligible for PB are primarily “... public services that can be delivered and monitored by local villagers and residents.” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.264)</p>
Process Design	Participants	Number of people	<p>“25-29 representatives” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.10)</p> <p>“one council representative is elected every five to fifteen households” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.10)</p> <p>“Each village council generally has a dozen or more members elected by and from among local villagers” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.262)</p> <p>“PB in Chengdu is taking place in all 2,308 villages of Chengdu’s city-region and is open to over 5 million citizens.” (Cabannes & Lipietz, 2015, p.16)</p>
Process Design	Participants	Representativeness	<p>“not exactly ordinary citizens but rather local elites and “super residents” bridging the gap between established elites and residents” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.2)</p> <p>“Participants must be an odd number and include at least one third of women. They are often community-oriented people like former officials, Party members (restricted to a minority) and notables” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.2)</p> <p>“one of the differences of PB in Chengdu is that it changed from an elite-dominated process to a citizen-centric process in which the ordinary residents lead the discussion and the decision-making processes related to budgeting.” (Yi, , p.145)</p>
Process Design	Participants	Participant-selection method	<p>“every three years, villagers vote for their village committee members as well as their village council</p>

			<p>representatives where village councils are set up” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.10)</p> <p>“pursuit of an equilibrium between the search for the most common of the residents, and the selection of “super-residents” who will be acquainted with the administrative and political logics, and able to efficiently play the role of a go-between.” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.12)</p> <p>“The Party Secretary in each village convenes and chairs the village council.” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.262)</p> <p>“Party Secretary can only play their role as a regular member of the council and cannot impose their views as a Party official” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.262)</p>
Mechanisms	Method	Public Meetings	<p>“local meetings are organized to discuss village projects, which have been made transparent and open to deliberation within the framework of these village council</p> <p>“representatives” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.9)</p> <p>“Information on the budget and on the budget process is made public through (...) and meetings” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.267)</p>
Mechanisms	Method	Focus Groups	<p>“residents/villagers discussion groups, residents/villagers financial groups and residents/villagers monitoring/ supervising groups are established” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.267)</p>
Mechanisms	Method	Citizen Budget Committees	<p>“According to regulations, in each village, the yishihui decides how the village budget is to be spent.” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.10)</p> <p>“Representatives first make proposals based on prior consultation of the households which voted for them” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.10)</p>

			<p>“When the projects are in progress or completed, the representatives responsible for supervising and assessing their execution give reports during the yishihui” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.10)</p> <p>“establishment of a new village level governance mechanism, the village council, to regulate the allocation of village public services funds.” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.262)</p> <p>“second step is decision-making by those elected to the village council” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.267)</p> <p>“In Chengdu, the village council put in place for the implementation phase set up a “Fund Oversight Group” that controls the use of the budgetary resources once the project fs are taken.” (Cabannes, 2015, p.273)</p>
Mechanisms	Method	Citizen Surveys	<p>“more systematic process of outreach, named « each household, one questionnaire » also takes place.” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.14)</p> <p>“Every household is handed out information on the past year’s allocation of funds and the yearly budget, as well as a questionnaire to fill in and express their ideas on how to allocate funds” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.14)</p> <p>“The first step is to gather proposals from all village households as to what projects are needed” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.267)</p>
Mechanisms	Multiple-input methods	-	<p>“Residents in each community have the power not only to decide on the use of public money but also to control it through community-led mechanisms of monitoring” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.258)</p>

			<p>“PB cycles are not identical in all localities” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.267)</p>
Mechanisms	Methods	Electronic Methods	<p>“Through the visual data report, we can quickly analyze the data, and this data-driven decision making and feedback mechanism will help the community to improve the energy efficiency of fund management and use.”</p> <p>“through early warning timely feedback to the community on the results of the regulatory process, to further promote the progress of the project's establishment”</p> <p>“This year, in order to improve the efficiency of the use of community security funds, Chengdu City has launched an online interactive function”</p> <p>“requirements of Chengdu Municipality for each community is that the login rate of the residents should reach 10%, and the participation rate should reach 6%,”</p> <p>“Instructions for the use of Chengdu Community Security Fund e-Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step 1: Scan the QR code below to enter the “Chengdu Community Security Fund e-Manager” small program. - Step 2: Click “My”, choose “Resident Login”, and select “Xindu District - Xindu Street - Southwest Petroleum University Community” - Step 3: Click on “Democratic Review” to review the seven programs being carried out by the community” <p>“full-cycle community protection fund supervision and utilization platform built by Chengdu City.</p>

			<p>Residents can log in and register to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participate in project proposals and supervise the implementation of projects online; - social organizations can participate in the expression of opinions and also sign up to undertake projects; - communities (villages) can carry out project solicitation, resolution of the council, project contracting, project implementation, - and democratic comments on the community security funds through the platform. <p>“intelligent means to empower the management”</p> <p>“public's low satisfaction and other issues are timely discovered, reminded and resolved to ensure that the community The protection of funds can give full play to its effectiveness and better meet the needs of residents for a better life.”</p>
Goals	-	Informing decision-making	<p>“The main objective of PB being to facilitate and improve governance while participation is simply the means chosen to do so, the priority is not citizen empowerment” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.14)</p> <p>“In order to represent such a diverse and large population (and now officially recognized as such), the Party must not only organize consultation of the eight authorized non-communist parties (especially thanks to institutions such as the United Front), diverse political, economic, academic elites but also</p>

			the common people.” (Frenkiel & Lama-Rewal, 2019, p.117)
Goals	-	Educating	<p>“meetings are conceived as ways to improve lay citizens’ understanding of the intricacies of policy-making and therefore their compliance with government decisions” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.12)</p> <p>“One key area of citizen education relates to the process of deliberation per se – for instance knowledge about democratic rules, daring to speak in public - as clearly expressed in the Chengdu case” (Cabannes & Lipietz, 2015, p.24)</p>
Goals	-	Gaining support	<p>“A regular platform was needed to discuss budgets and projects, as well as to alleviate citizen discontent with local officials, which slowed down policy implementation and led to petitioning and protests.” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.9)</p> <p>“reforms to integrate and balance rural-urban development”</p> <p>“manage public dissatisfaction and protest” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.9)</p> <p>“alleviate citizen discontent with local officials, which slowed down policy implementation and led to shangfang (petition and complaints) and protests” (Frenkiel & Lama-Rewal, 2019, p.115)</p>
Goals	-	Influencing decision-making	<p>“the regularly convened and tightly organized yishihui allows participants to finally gain some of the former power of the village party secretary (also called yibashou, “the number one guy”) who tended to hold onto his/her traditional monopolistic power and make budget decisions in all discretion” (Frenkiel & Lama-Rewal, 2019, p.119)</p>

Goals	-	Trust	<p>“PB (canyushi yusuan) (...) becomes a local tool of administrative incorporation, expanding participation so as to narrow contestation and maintain social stability” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.11)</p> <p>“meant to put an end to corruption, correct misrepresentation and restore trust” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.12)</p> <p>“PB is presented, in the discourse of the organizing party, as a means to associate citizens to decisions that concern them, but also as a way to fight corruption” (Frenkiel & Lama-Rewal, 2019, p.117)</p>
Outcomes	-	Outcomes/ Achievement of initial goals	<p>“PB does contribute to opening the decision-making process to formerly excluded participants” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.2)</p> <p>“In reality, village governance is however strongly influenced by the Party-state in the guise of the township and county governments and powerful Party cells in all villages” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.9)</p> <p>“From 2009 to the end of 2014, the village-level Special Funds invested by the Chengdu Government amounted to 5.8 billion RMB corresponding to 12,000 projects” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.9)</p> <p>“PB has indeed led to more accountability in the use of government funds in Wenling and Chengdu” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.14)</p> <p>“The institutionalized village councils in Chengdu to some extent (...) give more clout to local congresses especially regarding budget issues, forcing local officials to respond more to the actual needs of the local population” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.15)</p> <p>“The regularly convened and tightly organized yishihui seem to allow</p>

			<p>participants to finally gain some of the former power of the Party secretary and even alleviate some of their dependence on township authorities” (Frenkiel, 2020, p.16)</p> <p>“projects addressed the growing divide between urban and rural development and increased security of land use rights, resulting in large improvements in the day-to-day lives of millions of villagers” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.257)</p> <p>“PB funds have helped to strengthen local people’s common social and economic interests. It is an investment in local solidarity, not just in village public services and infrastructure” (Cabannes & Zhuang, 2013, p.273)</p> <p>“Chengdu’s PB has proved to be durable and stabilized” (Frenkiel & Lama-Rewal, 2019, p.115)</p> <p>“For Chengdu, M Zhuang notes that PB “has been well received by people and villagers, but not necessarily by village chiefs and authorities”” (Cabannes, 2015, p.278)</p>
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9.1.3 Coding: Chicago

Categories	Subcategory	Codes	Quotes
Environment	-	Government System	<p>“municipal regulatory environment” (Pin, 2022, p.390)</p> <p>In Chicago “power remains highly centralized in the Mayor’s office” (Weber et al., 2015, p.265)</p> <p>“in Chicago discretionary aldermanic funds are used to finance participatory budgeting projects, meaning the decision to engage in</p>

			participatory budgeting rests solely with the alderman” (Pin, 2022, p.390)
Process Design	Timing	Timing of input	<p>“public participation began with neighborhood (...) where residents were invited to (...) suggest ideas for projects to fund” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.867)</p> <p>“Self-selected “community representatives” then met regularly over a five-month period” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.867)</p> <p>“participatory budgeting process in Chicago operates on an annual cycle” (Pin, 2022, p.365)</p> <p>“entire process takes approximately six months” (PB Chicago)</p>
Process Design	Type of budget allocation	Budget funds	<p>“Local authorities below the city level (such as in Chicago’s 49th Ward (...)) receive a small portion of the overall city or federal district budgets” (Cabannes, 2015, p.267)</p> <p>“Chicago and the budget considered here for 49th Ward is only the untied resources at the disposal of the alderman” (Cabannes, 2015, p.267)</p> <p>“Each ward used the process to allocate “menu money,” the discretionary \$1.3 million capital works budget awarded annually to every alderman in the city of Chicago” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.863)</p> <p>“total of \$1 million per ward had been allocated” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.867)</p> <p>“The \$1.3 million menu money allocated annually to each of the city’s alderman, which serves as the budget focus of PB Chicago, represents only one very small part of the city’s broader budget.” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.868)</p>
Process Design	-	Eligible projects	“ultimately funding a range of projects including road resurfacing, park

			<p>improvements, bike lanes, murals, and security cameras” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.863)</p> <p>“money comes from capital infrastructure funds, which is very much tied to physical space” (Madden, 2023)</p>
Process Design	Participants	Number of people	<p>“49th Ward of Chicago seem the most understaffed, but they are districts within cities and higher levels of government cover various functions of theirs.” (Cabannes, 2015, p.275)</p>
Process Design	Participants	Representativeness	<p>“residents who voted in PB Chicago were more often white, college educated, and from higher-income households relative to both the local population and politically active residents in Chicago” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.861)</p> <p>“voters look very different from residents in each of the four participating wards, indicating a strong selection bias” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.869)</p> <p>“overrepresentation for homeowners and residents with a college degree or higher is particularly striking” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.870)</p> <p>“higher income PB Chicago voters are somewhat less likely to actively participate in the process beyond voting” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.872)</p> <p>“participants were the “the usual suspects” in that they were likely to have prior experience with formal politics” (Weber et al., 2015, p.268)</p> <p>“efforts were made to increase participation and inclusion by locating meetings and elections throughout the ward and on different days” (Stewart et al., 2014, p.215)</p> <p>“holding Spanish-language meetings and providing ballots in that language</p>

			were designed to increase Latino participation” (Stewart et al., 2014, p.215)
Process Design	Participants	Participant-selection method	<p>“can be joined by volunteers involved in the PB process and who want to become more actively committed” (Cabannes, 2015, p.273)</p> <p>“Their capacity to conduct PB processes is limited and this probably explains why they have contracted external institutions to carry out various activities” (Cabannes, 2015, p.275)</p> <p>“Self-selected “community representatives”” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.867)</p> <p>“process was open to all residents aged 16 and over, regardless of eligibility to vote in typical elections” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.867)</p> <p>“Residents who live in the ward and are at least 16 years of age can vote for projects, regardless of citizenship status or eligibility to vote in local elections.” (Crum et al., 2015, p.5)</p> <p>“Residents who live in a participating ward and are at least 14 years of age are welcome to vote” (PB Chicago)</p>
Process Design	Sincere preferences/ willingness to pay	-	<p>“When an alderman engages in participatory budgeting, they cease to directly control their only source of discretionary municipal funding. Perhaps more significantly, they replace individual discretion with a participatory democratic process” (Pin, 2022, p.396)</p>
Mechanisms	Method	Public Meetings	<p>“cycle of PB Chicago, opportunities for public participation began with neighborhood assemblies in each ward, where residents were invited to learn about the process and suggest ideas for projects to fund” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.867)</p>

Mechanisms	Method	Focus Groups	“overseen by an advisory steering committee comprised of ward staff and representatives of citywide and local civil society organizations whose role was to plan the process and provide input on effective outreach strategies” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.867)
Mechanisms	Method	Citizen Budget Committees	“Chicago, have no formalized community bodies. The “leadership committees” set up in Ward 49 in Chicago remain informal structures that can be joined by volunteers involved in the PB process and who want to become more actively committed” (Cabannes, 2015, p.273)
Mechanisms	Multiple-input methods	-	“variety of ways including on the PB Platform, at community meetings or events, through social media or surveys, in an email or through a phone call” (PB Chicago)
Mechanisms	Methods	Electronic Methods	<p>“For those wishing to vote online, simply fill out an online registration form at bit.ly/PB49Register or by clicking the button below, and a staff member will respond with the voting site link and a special access code that will allow you to vote” (PB Chicago)</p> <p>“You may also view the PB49 virtual project expo” (PB49 Chicago)</p> <p>“the first step to get involved is to attend the virtual Community Assemblies” (PB Chicago)</p> <p>“Using this test space, you will be able to try out different components of Decidim and learn more about engaging in the processes on the platform. “ (PB Chicago)</p>
Goals	-	Informing decision-making	“The intention of PB Chicago was to empower politically marginalized communities around public spending decisions.” (Weber et al., 2015, p.268)

Goals	-	Educating	“opportunity to develop skills, knowledge, and influence” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.863)
Goals	-	Gaining support	<p>“officials mobilize support for participatory budgeting to enhance their democratic legitimacy and build their constituency networks” (Pin, 2022, p.388)</p> <p>“reference to the initial adoption of the process in the 49th ward, finding that reputational considerations of the alderman were significant, in particular the opportunity to take credit for a novel, innovative mechanism” (Pin, 2022, p.394)</p> <p>“participatory budgeting became appealing to some alderman as a means of fostering positive constituency relations” (Pin, 2022, p.399)</p> <p>“tool to shore up electoral support” (Pin, 2022, p.399)</p>
Goals	-	Influencing decision-making	“community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget” (PB Chicago)
Goals	-	-	<p>“stated goals of “inclusion,” “equity,” and “community building,”” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.863)</p> <p>“aimed to change the face of local politics by reducing the presence of “the usual suspects” and “groups with more resources”” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.863)</p> <p>“The goals of the multi-ward process would be Equity, Inclusion, and Community Building” (Crum et al., 2013, p.5)</p>
Outcomes	-	Outcomes/ Achievement of initial goals	“Of particular note, the needs and interests of less privileged residents were not met by the narrow capital works focus of PB Chicago” (Pape & Lim, 2019, p.861)

			<p>“In the 2016-2017 participatory budgeting cycle, nine wards participated in disbursing approximately \$8.1 million in public infrastructure funds” (Pin, 2022, p.395)</p> <p>“PB provided participants with a space for civic learning about the needs of their ward, the interests of their neighbors, and the city budgeting process” (Weber et al., 2015, p.275)</p> <p>“PB Chicago engaged residents who do not typically participate in other civic activities in their communities” (Crum et al., 2013, p.2)</p> <p>“Participants exhibited high levels of satisfaction with their involvement overall in the PB process.” (Crum et al., 2013, p.3)</p> <p>“Research and evaluation data demonstrate initial success in achieving the first two goals” (community building and equity) (Crum et al., 2013, p.45)</p> <p>“PB Chicago brought together thousands of residents from diverse backgrounds who do not typically participate in other types of civic activities in their communities” (Crum et al., 2013, p.45)</p> <p>“when looking at what types of projects were funded and funding levels, citizens in the 49th Ward had a very different set of priorities than those used in standard Aldermanic budgeting” (Stewart et al., 2014, p.214)</p> <p>“there are still structural and programmatic limitations that undermine full realization of any of them” (the goals: inclusion, deliberation, and social justice) (Stewart et al., 2014, p.215)</p>
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9.1.4 Analytical Grid: Chengdu

Elements & Variable	Nonparticipation	Tokenism	Citizen Power
Process Design – Timing	-	-	Early input of citizens Regular organization of PB processes
Process Design - Type of Budget allocation	-	-	Operating funds
Process Design - Participants	-	Few participants Not representative	-
Process Design - Sincere preferences/ willingness to pay	-	-	Sincere preferences Present willingness to pay
Mechanisms - Methods	-	Public Meetings Surveys	Public Meetings Focus Groups Advisory Committees
Goals and Outcomes - Goals	Education Gaining support Trust	Informing decision-making	Influencing decision-making

9.1.5 Analytical Grid: Chicago

Elements & Variable	Nonparticipation	Tokenism	Citizen Power
Process Design – Timing	-	-	Early input of citizens
Process Design - Type of Budget allocation	-	-	Operating funds Non-operating funds
Process Design - Participants	-	Few participants Not representative	Open to all -
Process Design - Sincere preferences/ willingness to pay	-	-	Sincere preferences Present willingness to pay
Mechanisms - Methods	-	Public Meetings	Public Meetings Focus Groups

			Advisory Committees
Goals and Outcomes - Goals	Education Gaining support	Informing decision-making	Influencing decision-making

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