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The Emergence of Collaborative Innovation through Participatory Budgeting: The Case of Budapest

Álmos Gubányi-Kléber (3001202)

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1st Supervisor: Igor Tempels Pessoa

2nd Supervisor: Veronica Junjan

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Abstract

Globally, municipalities are increasingly looking to mobilise their citizens to take an active part in shaping the development of their locale. Among many approaches to citizen participation, participatory budgeting (PB) became a well-recognised tool for increasing engagement between residents and local governance. PB, by encouraging collective action in local matters, enables the emergence of collaborative innovation (CI). However, various barriers may affect this feature of PB. This thesis's goal is to analyse the underlying factors that affect the ability of PB to become a tool that supports CI in the city of Budapest, using a novel approach that broadens the academic understanding of PB. To explore the drivers and barriers, the research makes use of the theory of CI in the public sector set out by Sørensen and Torfing. The research relies on a qualitative case study analysis, inspecting secondary data on current PB tendencies, incorporating the analysis of relevant academic literature, public policy document examination and stakeholder interviews. Accordingly, the research is framed around the following main question: *How does participatory budgeting facilitate or hinder CI in Budapest?* Additionally, relevant sub-questions have been established to guide the research and the in-depth exploration of the topic. The research highlights numerous barriers to collaboration, including the weak feedback provided to citizens and the systematic challenges caused by the financial crisis in Budapest. Ultimately, Budapest's city-level PB partially facilitates CI.

In this work, I made use of generative artificial intelligence. Please see the appendix for the disclosure statement

List of abbreviations

PB – Participatory Budgeting

CI – Collaborative Innovation

CSOs – Civil Society Organisations

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1. Introduction

The inception of the participatory budgeting (PB) practice can be traced back to South America, more specifically to Brazil and the city of Porto Alegre. Since the initial experiences in the late 1980s, the concept has gained significant attention among both scholars and policymakers, which is proven by the continuously increasing number of PB-themed scientific publications and the growing number of worldwide practices. Generally, PB is agreed to be defined as a practice of making citizens actively participate in budget allocation. In practice, however, a variety of approaches can be identified. Some rely on simpler approaches, providing a platform for citizens to express opinions on budgetary decisions, while in other cases, more extensive frameworks are being used with the goal of practising direct and representative democracy (Bartocci et al., 2022).

PB arrived in Budapest in 2016 with the first initiative emerging in the 19th district. Later, the concept expanded to other parts of the city, and during the COVID-19 pandemic, the first city-wide PB process was launched, which is subject to analysis in this thesis. The five-year history that the city-level PB demonstrates in Budapest enables a meaningful empirical analysis to emerge, which scrutinises the program's ability to facilitate collaborative innovation (CI).

As mentioned above, relatively extensive research is available concerning PB in Budapest, especially regarding the moderate history of the concept in Hungary (Oross & Kiss, 2021; Kiss et al., 2023; Kovács, 2024; Gosztonyi, 2024). This study is keen on building upon and incorporating the valuable findings of scholars in the field. The existing literature on PB in Budapest so far has approached the topic through political, democratic and governance lenses. However, the extent to which PB can facilitate CI in Budapest remains underinvestigated. Generally, limited studies can be found that investigate the emergence of joint ownership, mutual learning or empowered participation through the analysis of the interaction dynamics between relevant stakeholders in the context of PB. This approach is conspicuously absent from academic discussion concerning PB in Hungary and Budapest. This thesis contributes to the existing literature by filling this research gap and introducing the CI lens pertaining to PB in Budapest. This approach brings novelty to the literature and assesses PB in Budapest from new perspectives. CI is the idea of creating public innovation through the inclusion of diverse stakeholders. In the public sector, in such way governments can acquire a wider range of knowledge that can enhance the quality of innovation generation and the effectiveness of implementation. To allow a closer inspection of the process of such CI, Sørensen and Torfing have established an analytical framework and model, which is adopted in this study (Sørensen & Torfing, 2011).

Deriving from the introduced research gap, the goal of this thesis is to explore the extent to which PB facilitates or hinders the emergence of CI and thereby to broaden the academic understanding of this participatory tool in the context of Budapest. The analytical framework and the model of Sørensen & Torfing adopted in this research allow and guide this exploration.

Next to contributing to the academic understanding, this thesis strives to highlight policy-relevant areas for improvement that could enhance participatory processes in Budapest.

1.1 Research question

According to the identified research gap and the discussed goals, the thesis is framed around multiple research questions that guide the exploration of the topic. These research questions are principally guided by Sørensen & Torfing's approach regarding the assessment of CI. The main research question to be addressed is the following:

RQ: How does participatory budgeting facilitate or hinder CI in Budapest?

Accordingly, with the following sub-questions:

- SQ 1: What initial conditions can be identified that affect PB's ability in Budapest to facilitate a CI?
- SQ 2: Which are the key actors involved in PB in Budapest, and what factors influence their collaboration?
- SQ 3: What are the drivers of collaboration that enable the emergence of a CI process in PB in Budapest?
- SQ 4: What are the barriers of collaboration that disable the emergence of a CI process in PB in Budapest?

The answering of the main RQ of this thesis offers insights into whether the programme of PB, created to increase the democratic involvement of citizens in public decision-making, can be a facilitator of CI, where solutions are the results of participation of empowered actors who co-own the end-products of the joint effort. The insights presented by this research are context-specific to the city of Budapest, which holds a specific historical, institutional and political context shaping the collaborative outcomes. That is even more evident in places like Budapest, where participatory concepts are new. This nature of PB explains where the urgency of this research lies. It is timely to pinpoint possible shortcomings of the current process, to ensure that Budapest's policies are being steered in the direction of ensuring meaningful and empowered collaboration. The lack of studies observing PB's relationship with CI means that answering this research question allows the filling of the research gap that exists in the context of participatory democracy and public innovation studies.

Regarding SQ 1, this question allows to understand the interaction arena, where PB takes place. It is essential to unravel the social, political, legal and civic background of Budapest's story with PB and participatory democracy. Exploring these conditions is essential, as these contexts fundamentally define the ability of PB to facilitate CI. There are numerous studies exploring the Central European and Hungarian context of participatory democracy, meaning that on its own, this research question does not fill any significant research gap. However, without the exploration of this context, this thesis would be superficial that neglecting the importance of the socio-political grounding of PB. Conversely, SQ 2 offers significant contributions to the

knowledge gap and offers a new perspective to examine PB in Budapest. Mapping the constellation of stakeholders in Budapest's PB is an essential part of exploring how CI emerges, if it does at all. Whether CI can occur is naturally dependent on the dynamics that are present in the stakeholder relationships. SQ 3 and 4 are aimed at highlighting the positive and negative mechanisms that drive PB's ability to facilitate CI. Identifying what works for and against this ability is crucial. These questions are innovative on their own and strive to fill the research gap that has been discussed above regarding the limited use of this CI scope. Answering these sub-questions largely depends on the exploration of SQ 1 and 2. Ultimately, all sub-questions were established to guide and frame the analyses and to help the answering of the main research question.

As discussed before, addressing the main research question will demand a careful examination of the sub-questions. These questions are, made of different natures. SQ 1 is a descriptive question and focuses on the identification of initial conditions, while SQ 2 employs explanatory reasoning as well for analysing factors that influence stakeholder collaboration. Lastly, SQ 3 and 4 are also explanatory questions seeking to explore the causal relationship between drivers and barriers in relation to the CI process. The mix of the two different research question types will allow a comprehensive exploration of PB in Budapest in the context of CI. Regarding the research traditions, the thesis will make use of a qualitative interpretivist approach, which allows the in-depth exploration of dynamics that define the link between PB and CI.

2. Theory

The upcoming chapter justifies the choice of the core theoretical foundations of this thesis. First, the concept of PB is shortly reintroduced, reviewing the approaches used and topics touched upon in existing literature concerning Budapest. This is followed by the unwrapping of the key underlying ideas of the theory of CI in the public sector. These two main elements are then connected through the revealing of the analytical framework and the adapted analytical model of Sørensen and Torfing, which guide the analysis. The abstract concepts of the model are operationalised, which allows the systematic analyses. Additionally, the research questions are theorised with elaboration on how the theory and the analytical framework support the answering of these questions, hence allowing to reach its goal of the research. Lastly, the limitations of the given theory are also discussed.

2.1 Participatory Budgeting (PB) and Budapest Related Literature

The concept of PB has already been introduced in the first chapter of this thesis as a process that entails that citizens have a direct and active role in influencing budget allocation decisions. The adaptation of this process has been continuously growing worldwide since its late 1980s launch in Brazil. The variations in practices and adaptations have also been discussed above. The growing adaptations resulted in increased academic attention, and analysing the citizen engagement and deliberation potential of the concept became a salient topic among scholars (Bartocci et al., 2022).

In Budapest, the city examined in this research, the first indications of PB emerged in 2016 with the introduction of the concept of community budget in the 19th district of the city. However, the topic is not unexplored among Hungarian scholars. Numerous studies approached and examined PB trends in Budapest and in Hungary in general through various lenses. Budapest City introduced PB unfavourably amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which aroused interest among scholars to explore how such a crisis affects collaborative and deliberation processes (Kiss et al., 2023) Past research also uniquely explored the political background of the introduction of PB in the city, with identifying the logic and thinking that politicians have behind advocating civil participation (Oross & Kiss, 2021). Furthermore, existing literature explores different aspects of the process of different Hungarian PB practices. Kovács' paper, for example, examines the topic using the theory of collaborative governance, drawing conclusions on the purposes of the implementation of PB (Kovács, 2024). On the other hand. Gosztonyi explores lessons of PB from the 8th district of Budapest in the context of democratic processes (Gosztonyi, 2024). This thesis focuses on the PB programme of Budapest City *(Közösségi Költségvetés).* There are numerous ongoing PB programmes present in the different districts of the capital, which are taken into consideration throughout the analysis; however, the emphasis remains on the city-level PB. Additionally, it is notable that the programme is called 'Community Budget' in Hungarian*;* however, following the practice of previous academic studies, this thesis utilises the term 'PB' when referring to the programme in Budapest. Although Hungarian PB practices are continuously being subjected to scientific examination, the CI dimension of the process is yet to be explored and researched. Existing studies observe PB using various logics; however, whether such a process can facilitate CI remains unexplored in the Hungarian context.

2.2 Collaborative Innovation in the Public Sector

The public sector is often subjected to the critique of not overcoming the perpetual challenge of red tape and the resistance to depart from the status quo (Sørensen & Torfing, 2011). Such neoliberal arguments often claim that the public sector lacks innovative and dynamic approaches. Eggers and Singh, however, disagree with these voices and believe that there is significant innovation present in the public sector, and the problem is of another origin. Namely, that innovation is only intermittent in the public sector and is a result of such unforeseen events that demand the emergence of new ideas (Eggers and Singh, 2009). Building on this argument, Sørensen and Torfing state that a *new innovation agenda* must be established that makes innovation permanent in the public sector (Sørensen & Torfing, 2011). This agenda is the foundation that allows the emergence of the theory of CI in the public sector, which functions as the backbone of this thesis.

 Collaboration between relevant stakeholders is seen as a catalyst that allows the enhancement and strengthening of innovation in the public sector (Sørensen & Torfing, 2011). The theory claims that collaboration positively affects the different phases of the innovation cycle, which is set out by Eggers & Singh and used as an orientation point regarding innovation by Sørensen and Torfing in their theory (Eggers and Singh, 2009). Firstly, the theory highlights that collaboration between relevant actors allows the flow of various perspectives and experiences

during the development of new ideas. These ideas are then contested by actors and undergo transformation, resulting in the expansion of perspectives and innovative solutions. Ultimately, this concept of many ideas being present on the table allows the emergence of mutual learning, which is a key notion of CI in the public sector. Furthermore, the implementation of innovative ideas is also enhanced by collaboration, as the co-creation of initiatives results in joint ownership of the innovation, which alleviates the resistance to implementation. Mutual and transformative learning, with joint ownership, provide the central ideas for the theory and are essential for CI. Additionally, these two concepts are complemented by the idea of empowered participation that enables actors to take the lead in actively shaping the outcomes of deliberations. Overall, the idea of CI with the lens of this theory can be summarised and defined as a multiactor process that enables the emergence of innovative solutions through mutual learning, joint ownership and empowered participation. However, the theory of CI in the public sector is not naive to believe that collaboration unconditionally generates public innovation. The theory emphasises the examination of initial conditions that affect the way collaboration is realised. A supportive political and institutional context can be crucial in enabling PB's potential regarding CI, while contrary contexts can have disabling effects. The theory of CI suggests that these initial conditions are also vital for the emergence of the institutional arenas of interaction. The institutional arenas of interaction are the settings where formal and informal engagements between actors take place. This arena has a case-specific structure and norms that are highly driven by the above-mentioned initial conditions. The theory is also well aware and emphasises the exploration of barriers to collaboration. Such barriers can be of different kinds, including cultural, institutional, inter-organisational and have a disabling effect on the emergence of the CI process and hinder the formation of mutual learning, joint ownership and empowered participation. On the other hand, drivers of collaboration also exist that facilitate the emergence of the discussed ideas. Such drivers are the strong interdependencies between actors, the mutual agreement on the mission and goals, and the high level of trust between actors (Sørensen & Torfing, 2011).

The goal of this thesis is to explore whether PB is able to facilitate CI in Budapest and if it does, how this facilitation occurs. There are limited studies using this theoretical approach to examine PB, and none of these existing studies cover such contextually captivating cases as Budapest. Pulkkinen et. al are so far the only ones that partially followed this approach to analyse PB's ability to construct CI capacity in the Finnish city of Lahti (Pulkkinen et al., 2023). Conversely, the theory is more frequent in other types of citizen participation analysis, for example, in the thesis of Bridgers, focusing on emergency response (Bridgers, 2020). Hence, this thesis strives to fill this research gap and to bring a form of novelty with the lens of CI, to the literature on PB, and more specifically to Budapest-related PB research.
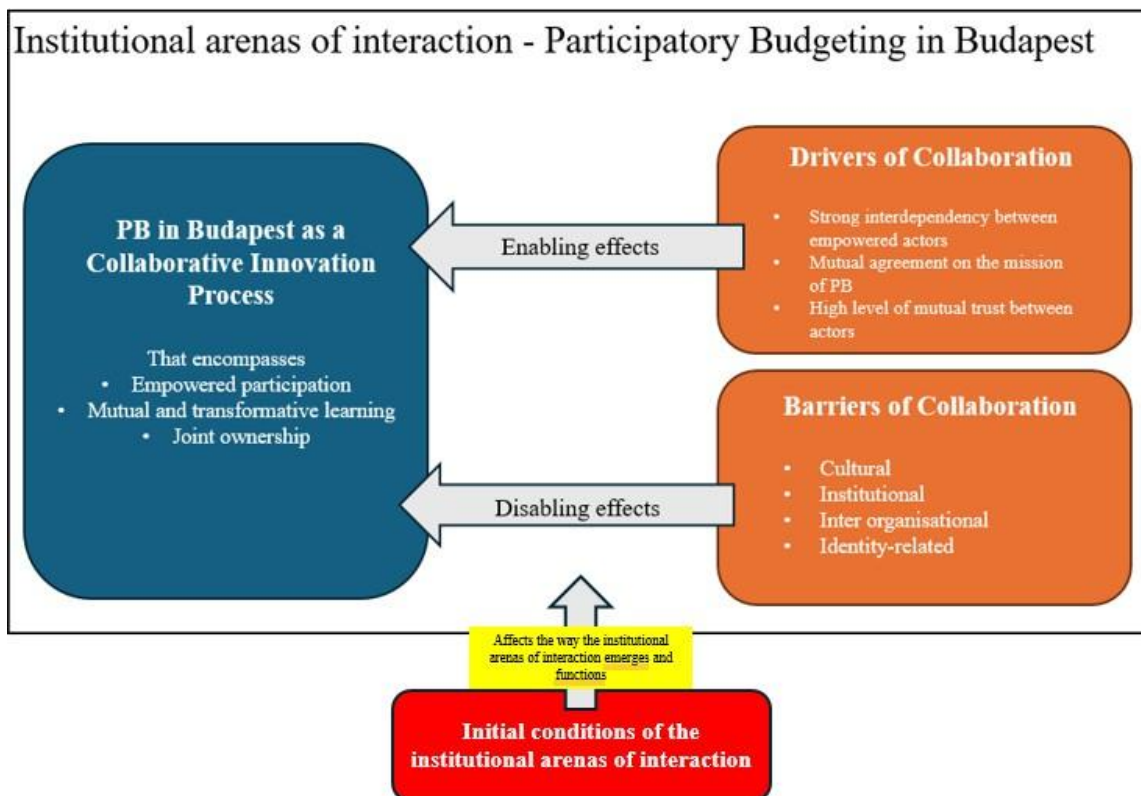
Figure 1. Adapted from Sørensen and Torfing - (2011)

2.3 Analytical model

Now that both key concepts of this thesis, namely PB and CI, have been carefully introduced, it is timely to turn the attention towards how these two concepts are connected in this thesis. Sørensen and Torfing have established an analytical model with a relevant analytical framework to study CI (Sørensen & Torfing, 2011). This model provides the theoretical bridge between the two described concepts. The structured framework supporting the analytical model allows the thesis to evaluate whether and how PB in Budapest is able to facilitate CI. This thesis adopts this analytical model from Sørensen and Torfing (Figure 1), making it relevant to the case and functional for answering the research questions. The way the adapted model functions and contributes to answering the research questions and reaching the goals of this research will be discussed in this section, including the transformation of abstract concepts into observable variables. At the same time, it is also essential to theorise the established research questions and clarify their relationship with the theoretical framework.

To answer the main research question, it is necessary to address the sub-questions first. SQ 1 aims to investigate the baseline conditions that exist regarding the process of PB, a concept whose importance is also emphasised in the theory of CI, as discussed above. The framework provides a three-layered analytical guide in regard to the exploration of the initial conditions. The analysis of the macro, meso and micro level conditions will enable a comprehensive

understanding of the context in which PB operates in Budapest. Regarding the operationalisation of these conditions, on the macro level, the thesis observes the past and current tendencies in regard to participatory democracy and PB in Hungary, considering political, social and civic aspects. On the meso level, the institutional setting of Budapest must be inspected with the identification of the main challenges that the current government faces. Lastly, the micro-level analysis looks for citizen engagement trends regarding PB in Budapest. Here, the tendencies, concrete secondary source statistics are introduced and discussed in the context of PB in Budapest (Appendix B). This analysis is crucial to identify gaps that exist in the PB process that might create fundamental hindering characteristics regarding CI.

SQ 2 explores the key actors in the PB process and their interaction dynamics. As discussed above in the introduction to the key ideas of the theory, the multiactor nature of the CI process is highly emphasised. The analysis of the also described interaction arena is essential, as key concepts of CI, comprising joint ownership, mutual learning or empowered participation, and whether they can emerge, are directly affected by the quality of this arena. The analytical framework does not provide specific guidelines on how to identify relevant actors in the arena; this remains the responsibility of the researcher. The thesis consults the literature review of Bartocci et.al to identify key actors. Additionally, the framework also does not provide guidelines for exploring the interaction dynamics between the different actors. This gap in the theory will be filled by the review of secondary sources and the conduct of qualitative interviews with relevant actors, to explore the key characteristics of the interactions, and in this way thoroughly answer SQ 2. Transforming the abstract concept of the arenas of interaction, this thesis observes the formal and informal ways actors interact with each other. Platforms for engagement are observed and scrutinised. Furthermore, the actors' attitudes towards each other in regard to PB will be examined, focusing on possible tensions or synergies.

The theory also clearly states the importance of identifying the key drivers and barriers of the CI process. These aspects are also emphasised in this research and are observed in SQ 3 and 4. Simply put, exploring the drivers and barriers will help in the identification of the aspects that either make collaboration possible or break it down. Sørensen and Torfing laid down crucial concepts and dimensions in their theory that characterise both the drivers and barriers of collaboration. These concepts have been introduced above in the discussion concerning the theory of CI. The mentioned concepts are operationalised in this thesis to guide their identification. The thesis looks for evidence of trust among actors and agreement on the goals of PB in Budapest. Furthermore, the thesis seeks to identify the occurrence of mutual influence and support between actors. Regarding barriers, the analytical framework of Sørensen and Torfing provides more detailed indicators that help the understanding and identification of the concepts. These indicators, both concerning drivers and barriers, are further touched upon in the methodology section and can be seen in the coding scheme used in this thesis (Appendix 1).

 Empowered participation, mutual and transformative learning and joint ownership are key concepts of CI theory and are carefully observed if present throughout the PB process in Budapest. Hence, the operationalisation of these concepts is also essential. Regarding

empowered participation, the thesis aims to identify aspects that point to meaningful participation. Whether citizens and their proposals are taken seriously by the municipality is observed in this case. Regarding mutual and transformative learning, the study investigates whether participation in the PB process in Budapest results in gaining knowledge from the perspective of other stakeholders. This aspect is observed from both the civil participants and the municipality's angle. Lastly, regarding joint ownership, the thesis observes if and how participants are involved in the realisation of their submitted idea, and how they relate to the realised project, and whether they feel that the outputs belong to them as well. The established coding scheme further supports the identification of these concepts.

The analytical framework of Sørensen & Torfing, with the relevant operationalisations, firstly theoretically connects PB and CI. Secondly, this link enables the thesis to break down and analyse the process of PB in regard to CI. This way contributes to the goal of this research, allowing us to explore whether PB facilitates CI in Budapest. Additionally, this approach enables the highlighting of success areas in the process and areas that demand attention from decision-makers, which was also established as a key aim of this thesis. Using the introduced theory of CI coupled with the analytical framework of Sørensen & Torfing comes with certain limitations. The theory is highly focused on abstract concepts, for instance, mutual learning, that lack universal metrics and can be hard to measure. Even with the adopted ideas from the analytical framework and the operationalisation presented in this chapter, some parts of the thesis can become more interpretive and less based on empirical findings. Furthermore, the attention is turned towards the aspects of collaboration, and other important elements of PB, including transparency and accountability, might be overlooked. However, the described characteristic in this chapter makes the theory and analytical framework of CI in the public sector a functional and relevant tool that will allow the examination of previously neglected aspects in the context of PB in Budapest.

3. Methods

3.1 Research design and the Case of Budapest

The thesis follows a qualitative single case study approach to answer the research questions (George and Benett, 2005). To examine PB and CI, and their relationship, hence filling the research gap, the theory and analytical framework that guide this thesis demand the analysis of the various dimensions. The qualitative case study approach fulfils the demand of the theoretical framework of this thesis and allows the comprehensive examination of concrete factors that influence the emergence of CI in the context of PB in Budapest. The approach taken in this study integrates the analysis of legal documents, stakeholder interviews, and existing research papers. Alternative designs, namely quantitative surveys or experiments, were not selected due to their variable-isolating nature, whereby one single causal relationship is highlighted. Rather, this thesis strives to incorporate multiple factors and their interactions in a real-life context.

The qualitative case study method allows the careful observation of all dimensions adopted from the theoretical and analytical framework. The four key theoretical dimensions adopted from the Sørensen and Torfing, namely (1) the initial conditions of collaboration, (2) the analysis of the emergence of the institutional arena and interaction dynamics between actors, (3) the drivers and (4) the barriers are all in-depth investigated, which is allowed by the chosen single case study approach. This in-depth investigation supports the thesis in reaching its overall goal in exploring the extent to which PB facilitates CI in Budapest. Furthermore, the single case study approach also allows this thesis to draw specific conclusions that can be beneficial for policymakers working on the development of the PB process in Budapest.

Regarding the case selection, Budapest introduced PB on the city level in 2019, with the first actual program commencing the following year. PB was initiated in the name of enhancing citizen participation, which creates a pertinent environment to study CI. The post-socialist legacies in Hungary, affecting both institutional and social functioning, create significant complexities regarding PB in Budapest. This unique historical context, infused with a peculiar current political milieu in Budapest, presents a compelling setting for analyses in the paradigm of citizen participation initiatives.

3.2 Method of data collection

The thesis collected both primary and secondary data. Primary data is gathered through interviews with key stakeholders in the process of PB in Budapest. Altogether, six participants were interviewed. The interviews were designed in strong connection to the theory of CI. Questions were established to elicit the possible signs of CI, comprising joint ownership or mutual learning. Furthermore, this primary data collection method was crucial to explore the drivers and barriers of collaboration in the case. Interviews followed a semi-structured approach (Davies, 2006). The sampling followed a purposive method, frequently employed in similar themed research, that ensures that participants have direct experience or influence on PB. Participants in this study had different backgrounds and roles related to the PB process in Budapest (Table 1). In most cases, participants have submitted a winning idea or proposal, while in one case, the participant (representative of a civil organisation) only took part in the realisation of an idea. The selected and interviewed participants cover the key actors of PB in regard to CI. Two different interview guides were established for this research, one specifically focusing on the municipality's approach and views, and one with the goal of exploring participants' experiences. The interview guides followed the logic of the above-described theoretical and analytical backbone of this thesis. Based on the semi-structured approach towards interviews, the questions in the interview guides were not used in a set order, but rather supported the researcher to steer the discussion into relevant directions and ensure comprehensive data gathering (Appendix C). The thesis ensured the ethical integrity of the research by providing clear informed consent to participants and keeping confidentiality. The primary data collection was conducted by following the ethical procedures approved by the BMS Faculty's Ethics Committee (Approval No. 250598). All participants were provided with

a clear informed consent form, highlighting the purpose of the study, the data which is being collected and all confidentiality terms. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and anonymised.

Category of Participants	Number of Participants
Municipal Officials	2
CSO Representatives	3
Citizens participating in the PB process	1

Table 1 – Category and Number of Participants

Regarding secondary sources, the thesis reviews legal documents, official reports, statistics and existing literature concerning PB in Budapest. These documents were accessed through the website of the municipality and through the freely accessible scientific literature search engines (Google Scholar; Academia.edu). Additionally, social media posts of the Mayor of Budapest were also considered. Both the primary and secondary data collection methods were utilised, aligning with the theoretical framework of Sørensen and Torfing.

3.3 Methods of data analysis

Regarding the methods of analysing the gathered data, the study followed a qualitative thematic content analysis, which is driven by the theory of CI in the public sector. The interpretation of the text-based data was carried out through a coding process. The coding employed both deductive and inductive coding. The coding scheme (Appendix A) is divided into four code groups and follows the logic of the research questions and employs insights from the theory and the analytical framework. The first code group was established to identify the initial conditions regarding the emergence of the institutional arena. The theory of Sørensen and Torfing highlights the need for macro, meso and micro level analyses of these conditions. These three levels were established as indicators of initial conditions. The description of these indicators that supported their identification was established in line with the operationalisation, which was discussed in the theory section. The second code group complements the identification of drivers of collaboration throughout the PB process. Here, three sub-groups were created following the theoretical framework that sees the drivers of collaboration as a result of three main concepts, which were mentioned in the theory section. To operationalise these three main concepts, numerous indicators were created that support the identification and analysis of the drivers. A similar approach is followed regarding the third code group, concerning the barriers to collaboration. Here, similar sub-groups were created, comprising cultural or institutional barriers. However, here the theory provides clear indicators for these sub-groups, that was adapted in the coding scheme. The final code group was established to identify the three main concepts of the CI process (mutual and transformative learning, joint ownership, and empowered participation). In this case, indicators were also established based on the operationalisation in the theory section. Additionally, data collection, especially

considering the qualitative interviews, resulted in the emergence of new themes that are not part of the theoretical framework. These themes were related to the drivers and barriers of collaboration, where data collection highlighted new, by the theory of Sørensen and Torfing neglected. Specifically, the financial difficulties of PB in Budapest, that was a continuously returning barrier to collaboration, hence added to the coding scheme.

The interviews were line-by-line analysed to identify relevant aspects regarding the different dimensions adopted. Considering the secondary sources mentioned above, these sources were thematically analysed rather than line-by-line; however, the focus remained on the exploration of the various dimensions.

Using multiple sources of qualitative data, the thesis expects to enhance the reliability and validity of the findings and allow the emergence of triangulation, whereby results can be cross-checked across the different sources.

For the qualitative analysis, the thesis made use of the software tool Atlas.ti to execute the coding of the textual data. This tool allows for coding documents in a clear way that facilitates the exploration of key patterns and themes in the data. Furthermore, Atlas.ti also allows the creation of code groups, which allow the consistent application of codes throughout all documents.

While the data collection and analysis strive to provide a comprehensive set of knowledge for this thesis, limitations must be recognised. The research is limited in terms of time and resources. This means that the saturation point was only reached regarding certain aspects, which limits the depth of the research. Additionally, measures had to be taken to mitigate the bias that naturally occurs when carrying out qualitative research. The already mentioned triangulation ensures the validation of the findings. Furthermore, the transparent and clear usage of criteria, adapted from the theoretical framework, further minimises the risk of research bias. On the other hand, the positionality of the researcher of this thesis must be mentioned as well. As a native Hungarian speaker, the researcher had the opportunity to read legal documents and conduct interviews in Hungarian, which allowed the exploration of deeper nuances. However, this positive positionality also demanded that the researcher adhere to the established coding scheme and theoretical framework to ensure the objectivity of the research.

The collection and analysis of secondary data was a continuous process while the interviews were carried out in May and June 2025. Due to the intense political environment at present around Budapest, it is essential to note that the information presented in this thesis is accurate as of June 2025.

4. Analysis

This upcoming chapter introduces the key findings of this thesis. The aim of this chapter is to logically break down and explain the results of the conducted data collection and analysis and provide comprehensive answers to the research questions. The analysis chapter follows the previously discussed logical order of the research questions, supported by the theoretical framework.

4.1 Initial Conditions of CI - The case of Budapest

The first section of this chapter (4.1) addresses SQ 1: *What initial conditions can be identified that affect PB's ability in Budapest to facilitate a CI?* Exploring the political and social context and background of participatory democracy and PB in Hungary is crucial to any research addressing this topic. The theory and analytical framework adapted in this thesis demands the exploration of this context in the name of initial conditions to the emergence of the institutional arena of interaction and CI. Hence, contextual questions will be addressed through the three-layered analytical guide introduced in the theory section.

4.1.1 Macro level

It has been 35 years since the process of transitioning from a socialist to a democratic political system was concluded with free parliamentary elections in Hungary. However, this transition did not result in the complete erasure of patterns that the country had collected throughout its communist rule, particularly in regard to social, institutional, and democratic norms (Kiss et al., 2023). These patterns still highly affect the way public services are carried out and the views on participating in public decision-making. Hence, this context is highly relevant for this study as well. Regarding the social aspects, throughout the communist regime, the state had full control over the citizens, and activities outside the control of the Communist Party were restrained. This repressive attitude kept the citizens far away from any organ responsible for decision-making, creating political disengagement and scepticism towards collective action. This former tendency still has an impact on the way Hungarian citizens see their relationship with governmental organisations and decision-makers (Kiss et al., 2023). The distance that was created in the socialist era between the citizens and decision-makers has only marginally eroded. Studies show that Hungarians are still mostly passive receivers and unresponsive actors of public services and keep themselves distant from participating in public affairs (Kovács, 2024; *Transparency International Hungary*, 2022). Furthermore, trust in state entities and initiatives presented by any civil groups is low. Concurrently, the democratic institutional transition in the early 1990s did not set the ground for participatory mechanisms, and the upcoming decades also did not see the emergence of an institutional foundation related to participatory democracy; rather, contrary tendencies can be observed.

Since 2010, FIDESZ-KDNP has won all the parliamentary elections with large majorities. Throughout the 15 years of the FIDESZ-KDNP government, Hungary experienced a multitude of constitutional and legal changes. Participatory democracy and its facilitating tools, including

PB, are realised in the municipal context. In 2011, the parliament agreed to an Act that aimed to diminish the authority and control of local governments, and hand the power over to the state. The original idea was that the state takes over the debt of local governments, in exchange for restricted borrowing; however, key responsibilities of municipalities, specifically education or healthcare, have been centralised under state control, significantly limiting their resources and competencies (Klotz, 2021). These competencies of municipalities were further weakened during the COVID-19 Pandemic and after the 2019 municipal elections (*Transparency International Hungary*, 2022). The 15-year FIDESZ ruling is characterised by an illiberal attitude rejecting pluralistic decision-making, which faces the critique of lacking transparency and accountability (Wilkin, 2018). The discussed points are the national and historical context of participatory democracy, which fundamentally affects the emergence of PB in Hungary, and more specifically in Budapest. This characteristic of this emergence is discussed in the following section of this chapter.

4.1.2 Meso level

In the meso level analysis, the focus is finally turned towards Budapest. This section introduces and contextualizes Budapest and its PB process. Firstly, the institutional setting of the city will be addressed, followed by the exploration of the key challenges the City of Budapest faces currently. The section then introduces the short history of PB in Budapest, and the regulations and functioning of the current process.

Regarding its institutional set-up, Budapest already presents an interesting case. The capital functions in a dual self-government system. There are 23 autonomous districts in the city, which have their own municipalities and function as smaller 'towns' with self-regulating power (Kiss et al., 2023). Next to these exists the central municipal government, in this thesis also referred to as City Council (*Fővárosi Önkormányzat),* overseeing affairs related to the whole city, led by the mayor of the city, Gergely Karácsony (*Budapest Portál | the Municipality of Budapest*, n.d.). The city of Budapest faces significant challenges that began to appear with the COVID-19 crisis, where tax incomes related to tourism and business were significantly reduced. Additional emergency measures like the introduction of free parking and the cut in motor vehicle tax increased the financial stress on the city (*Transparency International Hungary*, 2022). Furthermore, the political environment in the country, which created enormous tensions between Budapest City and the Hungarian government, further amplifies the strain on the capital and its governance. In the 2024 local elections, 15 of the 23 districts in Budapest were won by oppositional, left-wing mayor candidates, with Gergely Karácsony also being a key oppositional figure to the FIDESZ-KDNP government party in recent years. The illiberal attitude of the Hungarian government reached to point where national policies since 2020 resulted in an even harsher decrease in the Budapest municipal revenues, with subsidies also being withheld by the government (Musil & Yardımcı-Geyikçi, 2023). This tension between Budapest and the national government seems to be reaching its peak when this thesis is written. The situation escalated to the point where, in May 2025, Mayor Karácsony announced that the city is on the verge of bankruptcy (Karácsony, 2025). Talks between the Karácsony

administration and the Orbán administration have been announced, with no substantive progress by the time this thesis was finalised (Karácsony, 2025a).

Amid this turbulent environment, PB was introduced on the city level in Budapest in 2019. Some front-runner districts, for instance, the XIX and XXII, have already introduced the idea of allocating budgets for PB (Oross & Kiss, 2021). Furthermore, certain initiatives were already aiming at involving citizens in the affairs of the city. Such an initiative is Passer-by (jarokelo.hu), where residents could report problems around the city, they find important and urgent to get fixed, and the website helps them to get their observation or issue on the table of the appropriate authorities (Sipos & Reszkető, 2019). The Budapest level PB started in 2020, after in the 2019 local elections campaign, candidate Karácsony promised, as Mayor, he would introduce such a program, following Paris's precedent (Klotz, 2021). Numerous studies observed the implications of the suboptimal timing of the start of the programme at the outset of the worldwide spread of coronavirus, significantly reducing the room for the Karácsony administration to manoeuvre (Baranyai et al., 2021; *Transparency International Hungary*, 2022) The PB programme of Budapest is accepted every year at the debate of the annual budget, whereby the changes concerning the implementation and process are discussed. In the debate in November 2024, concerning the fiscal plan for 2025, the PB programme was proposed to be stopped due to its high costs amid the already difficult financial situation of the city. The proposal of Dávid Vitézy, who barely missed out on beating Karácsony in the mayoral election earlier that year, was first accepted; however, in the December debate, the programme was saved and agreed to be supported the upcoming year as well ("*A Fővárosi Közgyűlés 2024. December 18-i Ülésének Jegyzőkönyvéhez,*" 2024). This also entails that in Budapest and in Hungary, PB has no legal background. The PB process in Budapest is only regulated by a Municipal Decree, agreed by the General Assembly of the Municipality of Budapest. As per the City Council allocates 1 000 million HUF (~2.4 million euros), around 0.2% of the total budget, is allocated to be used according to the results of a wide social consultation ("*Előterjesztés 2024-2025. Évi Közösségi Költségvetési Keretösszeg Felhasználására,*" 2024). The process of this social consultation, running under the name of *Közösségi Költségvetés,* in this thesis referred to as PB, includes five main steps. The process starts with the submission of ideas through the dedicated website – 'otlet.budapest.hu'. Any citizen aged 14 or above, living, working or studying in Budapest, can submit ideas and proposals. Since the third year of the programme, ideas can be submitted within five categories (Table 2) that have specific budgets and project limits. This aims to diversify the set of ideas present in the PB process. The next step in the process debuted this year. To alleviate the workload that the experts faced in assessing the high number of ideas, a 'residential support' step was introduced, with the goal of filtering the most supported ideas by residents, before they are assessed by experts. This entails a provisional voting, whereby the top 300 ideas voted by residents get on the table of the experts. This leads to the third step of the process, where professionals and experts in urban planning assess the 300 ideas according to their compliance with feasibility conditions. Such experts are members of the Department of Landscape Architecture or Urban Planning, or representatives of the authority responsible for the planning and regulation of public transport (BKK). Additionally, the expected cost of the realisation of the idea is set. The approved ideas

qualify for the ballot. The main voting, as the fourth step in the process, takes place approximately 7-8 months after the provisional 'residential support' voting. Eligibility regarding voting matches the eligibility of who can submit ideas. Voting happens online through the same dedicated PB website and in person, with no explicit elaboration in the Decree on how in-person voting is implemented. 10 days after the closure of the voting, the winning ideas and the Council decision regarding their realisation must be announced on the website. This leads to the final step of the process, realisation. Proposals with the most votes are funded by the annual budget for the year ("*Hatásvizsgálat, 2020-2024*," 2025).

Category	Category Budget	Project Value Limit
Opportunity creating Budapest (*Esélyteremtő Budapest*)	120 million HUF (~300.000 EUR)	120 million HUF (~300.000 EUR)
Green Budapest (*Zöld Budapest*)	120 million HUF (~300.000 EUR)	120 million HUF (~300.000 EUR)
Open Budapest (*Nyitott Budapest*)	120 million HUF (~300.000 EUR)	120 million HUF (~300.000 EUR)
Local Small Ideas (*Helyi kis ötletek*)	400 million HUF (~1.000.000 EUR)	50 million HUF (~125.000 EUR)
Local Big Ideas (*Helyi nagy ötletek*)	240 million HUF (~600.000 EUR)	Min 50 million HUF (~125..000 EUR) Max. 120 million HUF (~300.000 EUR)

Table 2 – Idea submission categories (*"Hatásvizsgálat, 2020-2024"*, 2025)

4.1.3 Micro level

The macro-level analysis and discussion explained the historical heritage that affects participatory attitudes in Hungary. This thesis does not strive to further analyse in detail why the participation rate is low in PB and related programmes in Hungary, although it is a valid discussion point. Rather, it strives to analyse what might hinder collaboration between actors. At the same time, it is a crucial contextual point to discuss how PB perform in terms of numbers in Budapest. This section discusses the micro-level analysis regarding initial conditions of CI and closes the contextual exploration journey of this thesis regarding PB in Budapest. A significant increase can be identified in the number of voters since the 2020 introduction of the programme. In that year 13.344 citizens decided to vote. Throughout the years, this number constantly increased, with 29.406 citizens casting their votes in the 2023/24 programme ("*Hatásvizsgálat, 2020-2024*," 2025). The self-evaluation report shows that more and more

people are involved in the voting process, meaning that PB in Budapest reaches out to a greater number of citizens. However, this turnout is still meagre compared to the 1.7 million residents of Budapest. A persistent trend can be identified regarding idea submissions, with an average of around 650 ideas sent in per year, since the start of the program. Concerning the population of voters, most participants are between the ages of 25-34. Minimal activity can be observed from the young generation, aged less than 20 and from the age of 50 upwards. Lastly, it is insightful to mention that most of the submitted ideas originate from the inner districts of the city, while activity from the suburban districts is significantly lower. The discussed statistics show that awareness of PB in Budapest, although increasing, is still low, with an imbalance between interest shown from the different districts. Additionally, generations Z, X, and older are barely captured by PB in Budapest ("*Hatásvizsgálat, 2020-2024,*" 2025).

The first sections of this chapter explored the initial conditions that influence the kind of interaction arena that emerges in Budapest. These conditions significantly affect the ability of PB to facilitate CI in Budapest. The exploration of these conditions also enabled the thesis to provide a comprehensive overview of the contextual driving forces of PB in the Hungarian environment. The findings of these sections allow a thorough answer to SQ 1. To support the comprehension of this section, the results regarding SQ 1 are summarised in Table 3. The main initial conditions identified in this thesis include the legacy of the socialist era, the centralisation tendencies of the national government, the strained relationship in the intergovernmental relations, the fragmentations in Budapest's institutional set-up, the financial difficulties of the capital and low citizen engagement regarding PB. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the interaction arena of PB that emerges in Budapest is a politically contested and institutionally fragmented environment, where the financial taps are drying up, but in the midst of these challenges the program continues to survive, with this keeping participatory democracy alive on the city level.

	Initial Conditions

Macro level – National Context	• Post-socialist legacy
	    ○ Distrust in decision-making bodies
	    ○ Passivity towards involvement in public affairs
	• Centralisation tendencies
	• Limited autonomy and power of municipalities

Meso level – Budapest context	• Budapest dual self-government system • Financial difficulties of Budapest • No legal basis for PB
Micro level – Citizen Engagement	• Low citizen engagement • Underrepresented generations • Uneven distribution of participation between districts

Table 3 – Initial conditions

4.2 Key Actors in PB in Budapest

The upcoming two sections of this chapter (4.2 & 4.3) addresses SQ 2: *Which are the key actors involved in PB in Budapest, and what factors influence their collaboration?* Bartocci et.al divide key actors of PB into two groups: internal and external (Bartocci et al., 2022). Internal actors operate within the political or public administration sphere. They have an essential role in the design, implementation, coordination and oversight of the PB process. They have a key role in engaging with citizens and establishing dialogue channels. Internal actors often include politicians, bureaucrats or public managers. Conversely, external actors include citizens and CSOs. These actors are outside of the formal institutions of (local) governments, have various roles. Citizens submit ideas, participate in voting and in workshops or similar events organised by the municipality. CSOs, according to Bartocci et.al, play crucial roles in the promotion and design of PB, by consulting the municipality and expanding the reach of the program. Keeping in mind these aspects, the key actors in the PB process in Budapest are identified as follows. Regarding internal actors, the City Council, also known as the General Assembly of Budapest, can be understood as the most powerful actor. The City Council has a total of 33 members; each is an elected politician. It includes the mayor, the 23 mayors of each district in the city, and the leftover 9 seats are allocated to politicians from Party Lists based on the results of the elections (*Budapest Portál | the Municipality of Budapest*, n.d.). As discussed in the meso level initial conditions analysis, the Council has a crucial role in accepting PB as part of the annual budget and has responsibilities concerning both the process itself and the implementation of the winning ideas. Another key internal actor is the Department of Social Cooperation, more specifically, the group responsible for participation. This group is responsible for designing and coordinating the process. This actor can be considered the primary organiser of PB in Budapest. This Department and group naturally include public servants executing the responsibilities and administering the PB process. Additionally, experts in the field of Urban Planning or Landscape Architecture, and the representatives of other organs under the ownership of the municipality, including the BKK, are also essential actors in the process. These actors judge the proposals and ideas of the citizens based on their expertise ("*Hatásvizsgálat, 2020-2024,*" 2025).

In the internal level, naturally in the context of Budapest as well, citizens are key actors. Citizens, who in the case of PB in Budapest include residents and people studying and working in the city, submit ideas, vote on projects, and most likely follow the implementation of winning ideas. The other key actor identified in Budapest is the CSOs. Plenty of such organisations exist in the city that strive to advocate for various matters, including sustainability, inclusivity, transparency, or more specifically regarding the rights of cyclists. In the context of PB in Budapest, the role of CSOs slightly differs from the views of Bartocci et.al. The consultation towards the municipality characteristics of these actors can hardly be

identified. Rather, CSOs are active participants in the process by submitting ideas and promoting voting among their followers. Additionally, these CSOs are returning actors in the implementation or realisation phase of the process. More on this later in this chapter. Here, it is crucial to insert a brief contextual explanation of the current situation of CSOs in Hungary, as it complements the understanding of the upcoming analysis sections. Such organisations are in an extremely difficult situation, regarding financial, legal and public perception aspects. The lack of financial support from the government and the hostile legislation, disabling foreign financial support, mean that these organisations are, according to multiple participants of this study as well, 'fighting for their daily bread' (Interview 2, 3, 5). Furthermore, administrative and bureaucratic burdens are also high on these organisations, with endless requirements and high operational costs. Additionally, these actors are often subjected to stigmatisation and are marked as foreign-supported organisations working against the state (Gerő & Kerényi, 2025).

4.3 Relationship Dynamics Between Key Actors

To uncover the dynamics that define the interaction between the key actors, hence answering SQ 2, this section draws on the above-identified two groups of actors. The main focus is on exploring the dynamics between the internal and external actors; however, tensions arising among internal actors will also be touched upon. Regarding the internal actors, this thesis does not focus specifically on elected officials and politicians and their relationships with citizens or CSOs. Rather, internal actors are treated as a consolidated unit, referred to as the 'municipality'. The upcoming analyses and discussions are based on the interviews conducted throughout this research with key actors. Additionally, secondary sources, including the evaluation study of PB, ordered by the City Council, are utilised.

4.3.1 Municipality and Citizens

Regarding citizens, differentiation can be made between citizens who are not participating in the PB process (yet) and are trying to be reached by the municipality and citizens who already participate in the process. As it has been discussed in this thesis as well, PB participation rates are low, especially compared to the size of Budapest. This suggests that the municipality faces significant challenges in reaching a wide range of the population in the city. This struggle and the cruciality of this question are recognised by the municipality, which was confirmed by the interviews carried out with representatives of the Department of Social Cooperation, responsible for all PB-related activities. Through the interview, it became clear that although there would be a commitment to do more to get the program of PB to the people of Budapest, the already discussed financial difficulties of the city simply make further steps impossible. In the 2023/24 PB campaign, the municipality contracted a company called Budapest Brand to promote the program. This company managed to sign influencers in addition to the city-wide billboard and online video advertising, which proved to be successful and resulted in an

increase in participants. However, from 2025, referring to financial difficulties, the City Council decided not to invest in such promotion. This further makes interaction between the municipality and non-participating citizens difficult (Interviewee 3 and 4, 2025; "*Hatásvizsgálat, 2020-2024*," 2025).

Regarding participants, the interaction finally becomes two-sided. The perception of participants, meaning citizens who submitted ideas or took part in the voting, is mixed. Firstly, the interviews conducted in this research show that participants, whether being only citizens or members of CSOs, have a strong feeling for the transparency of the PB process. "All communication from the Municipality was transparent, not just towards us but generally towards anybody, thanks to the website, social media platforms and emails" - stated one participant of this study (Interviewee 4). Opinions suggest that the process overall is very transparent, with relevant information being easily accessible (Interviewees 1, 2,4,5,6). The findings derived from the conducted interviews are supported by secondary scientific sources (Kiss et al., 2023), allowing the emergence of triangulation. On the other hand, the PB evaluation study found that participating citizens, much more communication from the municipality regarding the status of their ideas. Citizens want to receive more extensive feedback regarding their idea. Especially if the idea was rejected by the experts ("*Hatásvizsgálat, 2020-2024*," 2025). The conducted interviews support these findings (Interviewee 1, 5). According to the representatives of the municipality, there are forums designed to discuss details related to the realisation of a winning idea, where the owner of the idea is also invited. However, in the first place, participants find this amount of involvement too little and would demand more information regarding the status of their winning idea. Additionally, one participant in the interviews of this thesis reported zero contact from the municipality, since their idea won in the voting (Interviewee 1). Hence, it can be concluded that the amount of interaction between the municipality and both the non-participating and participating citizens is limited. Concerning the quality of the interaction, when it exists, the evaluation report suggests positive feedback from citizens ("*Hatásvizsgálat, 2020-2024*," 2025).

The participatory group inside the Department of Social Cooperation organised several events to create a platform for citizen engagement. At the early stage of PB in Budapest, PB-related board game events, aimed at introducing the program to citizens, were launched, with little to no success due to the low participation rates. Since that, the group has been continuously working on organising workshops. The *idea salon* is an initiative where a larger location is rented by the municipality, where representatives of other relevant Departments are present. In these workshops, citizens can ask questions to experts in the field of urban planning or landscape architecture. Discussions with experts improve the feasibility of ideas that citizens have and want to submit to the PB process (Interviewees 3 and 4). Ultimately, it is essential to highlight and conclude that the interaction between the local governance and citizens remains formative, with, for instance, initiatives as the *idea salon* being promising steps towards more meaningful participation.

4.3.2 Municipality and CSOs

The difficult situation of CSOs in Hungary has been discussed before. Still, these actors are crucial in the PB process. As ideas in the program can only be submitted as a single citizen, CSOs are also submitting ideas under the name of a colleague, rather than under their own name. This entails that in the idea submission and voting phase, these organisations are not separated or highlighted from citizens. However, some organisations have great reach and follower base and have strong mobilising abilities. Such an organisation is the cycling club (*Magyar Kerékpárosklub),* which can create significant support for their ideas and mobilise their members or followers to take part in the voting. This results in cycling-related ideas being well-represented and supported in the PB process (Interviewees 3 and 4). This phenomenon also creates tensions, formulated by some politicians, who argue that this creates a strong lobby for certain topics, leaving less room for others. In specific cases, CSOs are key actors related to the realisation of ideas as well. Winning ideas are mostly realised through municipal companies. For example, public transport-related works fall within the competence of BKK. However, in some cases, the municipality announces public procurement for the realisation of ideas. In these cases, CSOs come into the picture as they apply to these procurements, and if they win, they become the subcontractors of the municipality, entrusted with the realisation of a winning idea-related project (Interviewee 2, 3, 4, 5, 6).

Throughout this research, different ways of this process have been identified. In some cases, the civil organisation itself comes up with an idea, which is submitted by a member. In this example, the idea managed to get significant support from the public and won on the PB voting and was released for realisation through a public procurement. Then, the same civil organisation applied to and won this procurement and became responsible for the realisation of the idea. In this case, the civil organisation was a key actor from the first to the last step of the PB process. A representative of such a civil organisation was interviewed in this research. Their experiences further support the argument that the PB process and the actions of the municipality are transparent. Difficulties in the specific case arose only due to the bureaucratic procedures at the realisation phase. Communication with the municipality was found to be sufficient, with numerous consultations throughout the realisation process (Interviewee 5). There are also examples where a civil organisation solely takes part in the realisation phase as a subcontractor. Such a civil organisation member was also interviewed in this research, experiences being similar to highlighting the satisfaction related to transparency (Interviewee 1).

Regarding the interaction between the municipality and CSOs, there are continuous idea generation events that occur, where representatives sit together to discuss ideas, insights and challenges. According to the representatives of the municipality, these events and talks are highly progressive, creating an excellent environment for sound and innovative proposals to arise, which, however, are often subject to financial barriers (Interviewees 3 and 4). Experiences of CSOs regarding these talks and events were not captured in this research. Some participants took part in similar events in specific district-related PB projects with positive feedback, which suggests the constructive nature of such initiatives (Interviewees 1 and 5).

The interview conducted with the representatives of the municipality revealed that the municipality would expect more effort from the CSOs in bringing the PB program to a wider range of people. As it has been discussed before, participation rates are relatively low, and participation demographics are skewed. The municipality would expect more endeavour from CSOs, which are involved in social inclusion or integration matters, to expand the PB program into more marginalised districts and populations. At the same time, the representatives of the municipality also highlighted that it is not the lack of will from CSOs that keeps them away from helping this aspect of the program, but the extremely difficult situation, which puts their 'survival' above (Interviewees 3 and 4). This aspect has been discussed above in more detail.

4.3.4 Internal tensions

The interview with the representatives of the municipality revealed that conflicts of interest arise internally between departments due to the serious financial deficit of the municipality. According to the representatives, certain departments receive zero funds from the municipality to execute particular types of tasks (Interviewee 3 and 4). As these departments provide key experts to the PB process, tasked with evaluating submitted ideas. It occurs that ideas are filtered by experts to benefit the field of the department, so it receives funds allocated to PB to execute its own ideas. Although consensus is always reached among representatives, a clear tension point is identified with the described phenomena.

This section of this thesis carefully explores the key actors and the dynamics concerning their interaction. Hence, a careful addressment of SQ 2 was carried out, which is summarised in Table 4. Regarding SQ 2, a comprehensive answer can be formulated. The key actors of PB in Budapest include various municipal bodies, CSOs and citizens. Their collaboration is influenced by resource-related constraints, bureaucratic challenges and limited interactions along the PB process.

Actor interaction	Platform/ nature of interaction	Dynamics of Interaction
Municipality – Non-participating citizens	Municipality is trying to reach citizens via various campaigns, workshops and forums	Limited results, low participation rates compared to the population of the city Still continuous development and an increasing number of participants
Municipality – Participating citizens	Idea submission, voting, involvement in realisation workshops and forums	Mixed, appreciated transparency coupled with a feel of being underinformed regarding the status of submitted ideas

Municipality - CSOs	Discussions, idea exchange, CSOs taking part in the realisation	Efficient and transparent, appreciation from the CSOs
CSOs - Citizens	Mobilisation of members inside organisation to vote	Effective in some cases within active network, not a widespread tendency across CSOs
Internal Municipal Department	Internal interactions	Conflicts arising due to lack of funds and departments pushing for their own interest in the evaluation phase of the submitted ideas

Table 4 – Interaction Dynamics

4.4 Drivers and Barriers of Collaboration

This final section focuses on SQ 3 and 4. *What are the drivers of collaboration that enable the emergence of a CI process in PB in Budapest? & What are the barriers of collaboration that disable the emergence of CI process in PB in Budapest?* This section identifies the key drivers and barriers regarding collaboration that either support or hinder the ability of PB in Budapest to facilitate CI.

4.4.1 Drivers

Regarding the interdependency between actors, positive aspects can be noted. The Municipality strives to organise meetings with actors, and there is a clear will to try to involve as many citizens as possible. The interviews with representatives of the municipality also revealed that there are high ambitions present regarding such involvement events, where joint problem-solving or idea generation is possible (Interviewees 3 and 4). The involvement of CSOs in the realisation process through formal agreements further supports interdependency between actors. Signs of mutual reliance are also present, as in the implementation phase, contracted CSOs expect the financial support from the municipality, and the municipality expects the civil organisation the carry out the realisation. At the same time, this interdependency between actors cannot be called strong yet. The communication that exists with CSOs is sufficient; however, with citizens, there is a big room for improvement.

The theory used in this thesis highlights the importance of agreement on the mission. The interviews conducted show strong agreement between actors on the importance of PB in Budapest (Interviewee 1, 2, 5, 6). There is a common understanding that the program further strengthens transparency. Furthermore, the representatives of the municipality stated that the goal of PB in Budapest was initially to try to get citizens involved in public decision-making and bring people closer to the municipality. The 'democracy development' nature of the program was also highlighted. Similarly, interviews clearly showed that participating citizens agree with this agenda. On the other hand, on the political level, less agreement can be identified regarding the program.

Regarding mutual trust, the increasing number of participants suggests the presence of increasing trust from the external actors towards the municipality. The interviews in this thesis also showed that external actors are keen on participating in the program again (Interviewee 1, 2, 5, 6). "I find this (PB) a great idea, and I would participate again", -stated Interviewee 1, for example. Furthermore, the presence of strong transparency in the PB process is identified as a powerful trust-building practice. Additionally, the collaboration between actors, especially concerning the one between CSOs and the municipality, further implies the presence of mutual trust.

Concluding the drivers of collaboration, it is essential to discuss which are the key characteristics of CI present in the PB process of Budapest. Regarding mutual and transformative learning, numerous aspects can be identified that show the presence of this concept. The events and workshops organised by the Municipality, coupled with extra panel discussions with CSOs, suggest that ideas are circulating, with the exchange of ideas between actors. However, the amount of such events and the reported low participation rates in these still suggest that although mutual and transformative learning exists, it concerns only a limited population close to the process itself ("*Hatásvizsgálat, 2020-2024,*" 2025). Furthermore, PB is continuously developing in the city, with an adaptive nature, which can be seen in the changes made in the process to ensure efficiency and to reduce the burden on experts. At the same time, the disputes between the national government and the municipality hinder transformative learning aspects that could exist across institutions. Ultimately, signs of mutual and transformative learning are present, but contextual and outreach-related aspects constrain them.

Regarding joint ownership, the conducted interviews show that CSOs that took part in the realisation of their idea have a very strong ownership feeling towards the output of the process (Interviewee 2, 5, 6). A citizen interviewed in this research, who received no information whether and how their winning idea has been realised, already stated that "It would fill me with pride (if their idea was realised)" (Interviewee 1). As discussed above, the evaluation report of the municipality also showed that citizens demand more feedback on their ideas. These findings of this thesis suggest that stronger ownership occurs when an actor is involved to any extent in the realisation of their idea. However, further study could explore the question of ownership on a deeper level. Eventually, joint ownership is partially evident but not institutionalised and lacks consistency among actors.

Regarding empowered participation, few results can be reported. One actor valued that their contribution was recognised in a ceremony, where winning ideas were announced by the Mayor (Interviewee 1). The interviews conducted at the municipality showed that the contributions of citizens are highly valued. Representatives explained that the municipality is keen on continuously learning from citizens and CSOs and in this way developing the program (Interviewees 3 and 4). This suggests empowerment of citizens; however, deeper research could explore the question of empowerment regarding PB in Budapest.

4.4.2 Barriers

The main barriers have been described already throughout the contextual analysis and in the exploration of the actor dynamics. Hence, the purpose of this section is to explicitly identify these barriers in the context of the theoretical framework and analytical model. For better and simpler understanding, these barriers are summarised in Table 5, with an explanation provided regarding their impact on collaborative processes. Additionally, this section strives to shed light on identifying the most pressing challenge of PB in Budapest.

Concepts to be identified, drawing from Sørensen & Torfing	Findings	Impact on collaborative processes in the context of PB in Budapest
Cultural barriers	Post-Socialist political disengagement and low trust in decision-making bodies	Undermines the willingness of citizens to participate in PB and hinders the emergence of wide mutual trust among
Institutional barriers	Centralised national governance with reduced autonomy of municipalities	Restricts the capabilities of the municipality of Budapest, ultimately affecting PB-related discourse and collaboration with actors
	No national legal framework for PB	PB is not strongly embedded in the law, which reduces its stability, causing less institutionalized collaboration
Interorganizational barriers	Intergovernmental conflict	Conflict between the Budapest municipality and the national government creates political tensions that undermine horizontal collaboration inside public institutions that could enhance PB.
	Conflict between departments	The conflict of interest between departments makes collaboration and the emergence of shared goals difficult
Organizational barriers	Lack of feedback to citizens	Poor feedback on ideas limits the understanding of citizens and weakens their trust and engagement towards the process, key aspects regarding successful collaboration
Systematic barriers	Financial difficulties	Municipal budget challenges limit the ability of the PB process to have a greater outreach. CSOs related financial difficulties hinder the ability of such organisations a full-fledged participate

Table 5. - Barriers to collaboration

The results of the analysis in this thesis show that financial difficulties of the city permeate the whole PB process, creating foundational challenges. According to the representative of the municipality, this overarching financial difficulty affects the basic development of the city. This means that ideas of citizens submitted to the PB program continuously represent the need for basics, for instance, pedestrian crossings. To live with the example of the representative, PB should be the cherry on the cake in city development, where innovative ideas flourish; however, there is simply no cake, and innovative ideas are suppressed by basic needs (Interviewees 3 and 4). This financial struggle evidently affects collaboration between actors. Even though the interview with the municipality confirmed that there is a clear ambition to work together with citizens and CSOs on a larger scale, providing more feedback to citizens and involve CSOs in innovative idea generation, the financial difficulties create such deep-rooted capacity problems, that disallow the development of the process from a collaboration perspective.

Answering SQ 3, it can be concluded that there is a growing interdependency between the Municipality and CSOs, embodied in the perceived transparency and the signs of mutual learning and joint ownership. These aspects drive the emergence of CI in the context of PB in Budapest. Regarding SQ 4, the severe financial difficulties at both the Municipal and CSO levels hinder PB's ability to facilitate CI in the city. Additionally, the intergovernmental and interdepartmental conflicts, and the inherited post-socialist low civil engagement rates, further roll barriers in front of CI.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This thesis explored the extent to which PB in Budapest facilitates CI, through analysing various dimensions comprising initial conditions coupled with key contextual aspects, exploring the interaction dynamics between the actors, and identifying the drivers and barriers of collaboration. The conclusion of this thesis draws from the answers to the sub-questions. The analysis shows that PB's ability to facilitate CI is affected by post-socialist legacies, intergovernmental disputes, and severe financial difficulties. Meanwhile, city-level PB in Budapest presents a transparent process that builds mutual trust between actors and shows signs of mutual and transformative learning. Accordingly, the answer to the main research question is the following: PB in Budapest partially facilitates CI, with early signs indicating the emergence of the concept. However, numerous aspects were identified, related to the PB process in Budapest, that disable the complete emergence of CI. The overarching barriers of collaboration identified in this thesis dominate over the drivers, which means that the concept

of CI, including joint ownership, although it occurs, is not fundamentally embedded in the process. The financial crisis situation of the city fundamentally stifles PB's ability to facilitate CI. It hinders the capacity of the responsible departments to execute their ambitions, and on a deeper level, negatively affects the collaboration between the various departments in the municipality. Additionally, the existence of weak feedback loops further limits the extent to which PB facilitates CI in Budapest. Regarding the summary of the answers for the sub-questions, which enabled the comprehensive answering of the main research question, consult Table 6. Ultimately, this thesis concludes that PB's facilitation of CI is rudimentary, with various factors hindering its full potential.

Research Question	Answer
RQ: How does participatory budgeting facilitate or hinder CI in Budapest?	PB in Budapest **partially facilitates** CI, with early signs indicating the emergence of the concept. However, numerous aspects were identified, related to the PB process in Budapest, that disable the complete emergence of CI
SQ 1: What initial conditions can be identified that affect PB's ability in Budapest to facilitate a CI?	The main initial conditions identified in this thesis include the **legacy of the socialist era, the centralisation tendencies of the national government, the strained relationship in the intergovernmental relations, the fragmentations in Budapest's institutional set-up, the financial difficulties of the capital and low citizen engagemen**t regarding PB.
SQ 2: Which are the key actors involved in PB in Budapest, and what factors influence their collaboration?	The key actors of PB in Budapest include various **municipal bodies, CSOs and citizens**. Their collaboration is influenced by **resource-related constraints, bureaucratic challenges and limited interactions** along the PB process.
SQ 3: What are the drivers of collaboration that enable the emergence of a CI process in PB in Budapest?	There is a **growing interdependency** between the Municipality and CSOs, embodied in the perceived **transparency** and the signs of **mutual learning and joint ownership.**
SQ 4: What are the barriers of collaboration that disable the emergence of CI process in PB in Budapest?	The **severe financial difficulties** at both the Municipal and CSO levels hinder PB's ability to facilitate CI in the city. Additionally, the **intergovernmental and interdepartmental conflicts, and the inherited post-socialist low civil engagement rates**, further roll barriers in front of CI.

Table 6 – Answers to Research Questions

The research gap was identified in the first chapter, namely that no study has analysed Budapest's PB from a CI perspective has been address. This thesis broadens the existing literature by bridging two academic concepts and connecting PB and CI. Furthermore, this thesis enriches the literature using the CI theory and its relevant analytical framework with the compelling case of Budapest's PB. Pulkkinen et al. were the first one connect PB and CI (Pulkkinen et al., 2023). The relevance of this connection is further supported by this thesis, as findings point towards essential challenges of the current PB process in Budapest. Concerning the existing literature on PB in Hungary and Budapest, this thesis complements the findings of Kiss et.al regarding the importance of the low civic trust limits participatory democracy efforts by highlighting that this tendency also negatively affects the emergence of CI (Kiss et.al, 2023). Furthermore, this thesis adds to Oross and Kiss's discussion on the importance of a political backing of PB and related participatory initiatives, as financial struggles and lack of funding from higher political levels can undermine the potential of the PB process (Oross and Kiss, 2021).

Reflecting on the theory and analytical framework used in this thesis, this researcher posits that the CI theory and the complementary analytical framework allowed the thesis to carry out a well-structured analysis, exploring numerous dimensions that allowed for the exploration of what enables or hinders PB's ability to facilitate CI. However, certain concepts of the theory, specifically empowered participation or joint ownership, are found to be vague and difficult to operationalise.

This presented research is limited due to various aspects. Regarding the methodology, the number of conducted interviews is relatively small due to the time constraint. The nature of the research affects the extent to which the findings related to the experiences of participants could be generalised. At the same time, overlap was identified between this thesis and the evaluation report of the municipality, which allows a combined generalisation. Furthermore, the scope of this thesis is wide, striving to capture numerous aspects, including contextual questions, interaction dynamics and collaboration influencing factors. As a Hungarian researcher, the positionality of the writer of this thesis was advantageous and allowed to carry out in-depth research. On the other hand, familiarity with the current political context posed the risk of unconscious bias to appear. The triangulation of collected data allowed the researcher to mitigate this aspect and ensure objectivity.

Regarding practical implications, the thesis highlights the lack of sufficient feedback provided throughout the PB process towards citizens. This thesis recommends that a much stronger, institutionalised connection between the relevant departments and the PB process should be established. Departments, like the urban planning department, which play an important part in the realisation of projects anyway, should be able to initiate direct communication with citizens. Throughout both the evaluation and the realisation of ideas, every

decision regarding steps should be documented, and through a designated contact person, an extract of these decisions should be forwarded to the owner of the idea. This mechanism would enhance the currently weak institution of feedback provision and enhance citizen satisfaction, and would ultimately benefit the whole process of PB in Budapest. Regarding the established goals of this research, the thesis reached its goal of exploring the extent to which PB facilitates or hinders the emergence of CI in Budapest. The thesis also broadens the academic understanding of PB with the analysis. On the other hand, the thesis also established the goal of providing policy-relevant areas that demand attention. The thesis does not fully reach this goal. Due to the numerous dimensions that were explored throughout the research, the scope of the analysis remained comprehensive and not narrowly defined, which prevented the thesis from highlighting specific policy areas for improvement. Deriving from this, the thesis opens and recommends several avenues for further academic inquiry. Firstly, future research should take a prescriptive approach to provide clear and context-sensitive feedback to municipalities. More explicit translating of theory-based analysis into practical guidance would be essential for municipalities, policy, and decision-makers. Lastly, future research, if intending to use the CI lens, could focus on fewer concepts of the theory, but in more detail. For example, the explicit and direct exploration of the j*oint ownership* concept in different contexts could create a more in-depth understanding of the mechanism defining the collaboration innovation facilitator potential of participatory processes.

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7. Appendix

Appendix A: Artificial Intelligence (AI) - Disclosure Statement

During the preparation of this work, the author used ChatGPT, Google Gemini and Grammarly to find synonyms for words and to check for possible grammatical errors in the submitted text. Furthermore, for translation purposes, the author made use of DeepL. After using these tools, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the work.

List of Artificial Intelligence tools used in this work

- ChatGPT (https://chatgpt.com/)
- Google Gemini (https://gemini.google.com/
- Grammarly (https://app.grammarly.com/)
- DeepL (https://www.deepl.com/en/translator)

Appendix B: Coding Scheme

Indicator	Description
Initial conditions of the emergence of institutional arenas for CI	
Macro level conditions	Description of traditions, past and current tendencies or experiences of participatory democracy or PB in Eastern Europe and Hungary across Description of historical patterns of citizen participation, the political culture and climate in Hungary *In Hungarian sources:* *A részvételi demokrácia/közösségi költségvetés /polgári részvétel a közügyekben múltjának, történelmi fejlődésének leírása Magyarország/Kelet Európa kontextusában*
Meso level conditions	Description of the institutional background of Budapest and local decision-making Description of the institutional background of PB in Budapest Description of challenges faced by the local government of Budapest Description of debated topics on the local government level *Budapest intézményes háttrének leírása* *A közössségi költségvetés intézményes hátterének leíráss* *Az önkormányzat kihívásai a közelmúltban* *Az önkormányzati szinteken felmerülő vitapontok Magyarországon és Budapesten*
Micro level conditions	Statistics concerning previous PB processes.

	Mentioning of challenges encountered in previous PB processes
	Description of previous outcomes of the process, with demographics of the participants and successes and failures
	Korábbi KK folymatok statisztikai adatai Korábbi KK folyamatok kihívásai Korábbi budapesti KK folyamat részvételi/demográfiai adatai és a folyamat értékelése

Drivers of collaboration
Presence of strong interdependency between actors

Joint decision-making	Mentioning of the involvement of actors in planning, implementing, and evaluating processes
	Közös döntéshozatal megjelenése A szereplők bevonásának említése a KK különböző ciklusaiban
Dependency	Explicit mentioning that progress and results of the process depend on other actors as well
	A KK folyamat sikerességének más szereplőktől való függőségének említése
Challanges in coordination	Mentioning how difficulties can arise due to the presence of multiple stakeholders in the process
	Kihívások és nehézségek említése a több szereplőnek köszönhetően
Platforms for co-creation	Available platforms for join idea generation
	Közös ötletgenerálást elősegítő platformok létezése és elérhetősége

Agreement on the overall mission

Shared mission	Agreement on the importance of PB
	Egyetértés a KK fontosságában
Shared goals	Mentioning alignment on key objectives
	A KK céljának való egyetértés megjelenése
Institutional dedication	Mentioning institutional aspects comprising policies, agreements or frameworks that prove the existence of shared goals.

	Intézményi aspektusok említése amelyek a közös célok meglétét jelzik
Consensus focused approach	Presence of events, discussions, or initiatives with the goal of aligning interest *Eseményel, viták és kezdeményezések jelenléte, melyek az érdekek összehangolásában érdekeltek.*
High level of mutual trust	
Past experiences	Positively mentioning past collaboration experiences regarding PB. *Korábbi KK-hoz kapcsolódó együtműködés pozitív említése*
Transparent Communication	Mentioning of good communication between actors *Poziítív megjegyzés a KK során létrejövő kommunikációról.*
Repeat participate	Numerous occasions of participation, willingness to participate again *Többszöri részvétel a KK folyamatban, hajlandóság és motiváció újabb részvételre*
Barriers to Collaboration **Cultural barriers**	
Prevalence of legalistic, zero-error culture (Sørensen and Torfing, 2011)	Signs of strictly obeying rules and regulations with a focus on avoiding mistakes. *A jogszerűséget és hibamentességet előtérbe helyező kultúra megjelenése*
Predominance of paternalistic professional norms (Sørensen and Torfing, 2011)	Presence of a strict hierarchy, whereby citizens and non-governmental actors are seen as passive users of public services. *Szabályközpontúság, szigorú hierarchia jelenléte, melyben a lakosok és civil szereplők passzív fogadói a közszolgáltatásoknak*
Institutional barriers	
Strong separation of politics and administration (Sørensen and Torfing, 2011)	Strict divide between policy-makers and policy implementers *A közigazgatás és a politika erős szétválasztódásának jelenléte*

Use of inappropriate designs for dialogue (Sørensen and Torfing, 2011)	Poorly structured platforms for actor engagement (top-down approach) *Rosszul és/vagy gyengén felépített rendzser a részvevők bevonására*
Interorganizational barriers	
Predominance of bureaucratic silos (Sørensen and Torfing, 2011)	Governance working strictly isolated form. No information and resource sharing are present *Kormányzat elszigetelt működése, kevés információ és erőforrásmegosztás jelenléte*
Organizational barriers	
Lack of focus on innovation (Sørensen and Torfing, 2011)	Priority of existing procedures and processes to avoid possible instability. Innovation culture is not supported and rewarded. *Már meglévő folyamatok előtérbe helyezése és az innováció kulturájának nem támogatása*
Absence of procedures for exploration and exploitation (Sørensen and Torfing, 2011)	No or poorly structured way to test and implement new approaches *Új megközelítések kipróbálásank struktúrája gyenge vagy nincs jelen*
Systemic barriers (not part of theory, result of inductive coding)	
Financial challenges	Resource related constraints and difficulties *Erőforráshoz köthető nehézésgek említése*
Political challenges	Conflict between actors rooted in political disagreement *Szereplők és érdekelt felek közötti konfliktus említése*
CI Process	
Mutual and transformative learning	
Circulation, challenging and transformation of ideas	Ideas are constantly shared, debated, tested and exchanged between actors

	Az egész KK folyamattal kapcsolatos ötletek folyamatos megosztása és megvitatása a résztvevő felek között
Adaptation	Sign of shift in how problems are perceived and tackled as a result of actor engagement *Problémák érzékelésének és kezelésének megváltozása a szereplők bevonása által*
Reflection	Presence of critical reflection on own actions during or after collaboration *Kritikus önreflexió jelenléte az együttműködés során*
Joint ownership	
Shared accountability	Sign of feeling equal responsibility for the success and failures of the process *A folyamat sikereivel és kudarcaival kapcsolatos felelősségvállalás érzése*
Collective decision-making	Presence of joint decisions, where contribution from diverse stakeholders is present *Közös döntések jelenléte, amelyekhez különféle szereplők is hozzájárulnak*
Involvement of citizens in realisation/implementation	Citizens are involved in the implementation of their idea/proposal *Az állampolgárok bevonása saját ötletük/javaslatuk megvalósításába*
Proudness	Mentioning of being proud to the output of the process *A folyamat eredményeire való büszkeség említése (megvalósult ötletek)*
Shared goals	Mentioning alignment on key objectives *A kulcsfontosságú célokkal való összehangoltság jelenléte/említése*
Empowered participation	
Collective/Shared decision-making	Presence joint decisions, where contribution from diverse stakeholders is present *Közös döntések jelenléte, különböző szereplők bevonásával*

| Valued input of citizens | Presence of citizens' voice being recognized and taken seriously

Az állampolgári/lakossági/civil vélemények elismerése és komolyan vétele |
|---|---|
| Recognition of contribution | Citizens' inputs in the process are integrated into the process

Az állampolgári/lakossági /civil visszajelzések beépítése a folyamatba |

Appendix C: Interview guides

English translation, which was carried out through Google Gemini, and was reviewed by this researcher can be found below.

1. Interview Guide for discussion with PB participants (citizens and representatives of CSOs) (Hungarian version)

Bevezetés

- Tájékozott beleegyezés aláírása (Informed Consent)
- Hangfelvétel elindítása
- Kutatás rövid bemutatása

1. szekció: Háttér

- ❖ Hogyan és/vagy hol hallott először a részvételi/közösségi költségvetés (KK) kezdeményezéséről?
  - ➢ A budapesti bevezetése révén, vagy már korábban is hallott róla?
  - ➢ Hogyan értesült a KK budapesti indulásáról?
- ❖ Mi motiválta Önt arra, hogy benyújtsa ötletét a pályázaton?
  - ➢ Mikor nyújtotta be?

2. szekció: Ötlet

- ❖ Bemutatná röviden a benyújtott ötletét?
- ❖ El tudná mesélni, hogyan zajlott az ötlet benyújtása?
  - ➢ Egyértelmű volt, hogy hova és hogyan kell benyújtani?
  - ➢ Volt bármilyen nehézsége a folyamat során?
- ❖ Részt vett a (győztes) ötletek megszavazásában?
- ❖ Hogyan történt az eredmények kihirdetése?
- ❖ Megvalósult már az Ön ötlete?
  - ➢ Tudna mesélni a megvalósulás folyamatáról?

3. szekció: Együttműködés és bevonódás (*Mutual and transformative learning*)

- ❖ Volt kapcsolata más állampolgárokkal vagy érintettekkel a KK-folyamat során?
- ❖ Ha igen kikkel és hol?

- ❖ Workshopokon, közösségi megbeszéléseken?
  - ➢ Tudja-e hogy van ilyen?
- ❖ Tanult valami újat a KK-folyamat során? Milyen tapasztalatokat szerzett?
- ❖ Például a budapestiek igényeiről, városi jogszabályokról, részvételi lehetőségekről?
- ❖ Gondolja, hogy mások is tanultak az Ön ötletéből, javaslatából?
  - ➢ A városvezetés tanult az Ön ötletéből?
- ❖ Tapasztalt együttműködést a lakosok és az önkormányzat munkatársai között?
  - ➢ Hogyan írná le ezt az együttműködést?
- ❖ Kapott hivatalos vagy informális úton bármiféle visszajelzést a benyújtott ötlettel kapcsolatban? Volt bármiféle visszajelzés kifejezetten az ötlettel vagy a megvalósítással kapcsolatban?
  - ➢ Benyújtás után, eredmények után, megvalósítás alatt?
- ❖ Tájékoztatták Önt arról, hogyan áll az ötlete megvalósítása?

4. szekció: *Joint Ownership*

- ❖ Mennyire érzi sajátjának a (megvalósult) ötletét? És az ötleteket amikre szavazott?
- ❖ Esetleg a megvalósuló ötlethez kapcsolódóan érez tulajdonjogot? (Ez az enyém/miénk lett)
  - ➢ Gondolja, hogy az Ön ötlete valóban hozzájárult egy helyi probléma megoldásához vagy a környék fejlődéséhez?

5. szekció: *Empowered Participation*

- ❖ Mennyire érezte úgy, hogy a KK során az Ön hozzájárulása a szervezők által meg van fontolva/értékelve van?
- ❖ Érezte, hogy a város vagy a szervezők valóban figyelembe vették az Ön meglátását/ötletét?
- ❖ Érezte bármikor úgy a folyamat alatt, hogy valódi hatással volt a város bármilyen formájú fejlődésére?
  - ➢ Úgy érzi számít a véleménye?

6. szekció: Innováció és hatás észlelése

- ❖ Hogyan látja a közösségi költségvetést Budapesten?
  - ➢ Gondolja, hogy a KK lehetőséget nyújt új és kreatív ötletek bevezetésére a városi döntéshozatalban? Miért igen/nem?
  - ➢ Hasznos a KK?

7. szekció: Akadályok és javaslatok

- ❖ Milyen (más) kihívásokkal találkozott a KK folyamat során vagy utána?
  - ➢ Van bármely meglátása, hogyan lehetne fejleszteni és/vagy javítani a KK-t Budapesten?

Záró kérdések

- ❖ Ha újra lenne lehetősége, részt venne a részvételi költségvetésben? Miért igen vagy miért nem?
- ❖ Van még bármi, amit szívesen megosztana a KK-val kapcsolatos tapasztalatairól?

Lezárás

Nagyon köszönöm az interjút és a megosztott tapasztalatait!

2. Interview Guide for discussion with representatives of the Municipality (Hungarian version)

Bevezetés

- Tájékozott beleegyezés aláírása (Informed Consent)
- Hangfelvétel elindítása
- Kutatás rövid bemutatása

1. Háttér

a. Be tudná mutatni a szerepét és feladatait a közösségi költségvetés folyamatában Budapesten?
    - Mikor csatlakozott a folyamathoz?

b. Mi a közösségi költségvetés története Budapesten?
    - El tudná mondani, hogyan indult el a folyamat?
        1. Mi volt a KK budapesti bevezetésének kezdeti célja?
        2. Az évek során milyen főbb dolgok változtak az önkormányzat szemszögéből?
        3. Tudna mesélni a jelenlegi folyamatról (KK 2024–25)?

c. Ön szerint kik a kulcsszereplők ebben a folyamatban?

2. Kapcsolat a civil szervezetekkel

a. Milyen szerepet játszanak a civil szervezetek (CSO, helyi egyesületek) a KK folyamatában?

b. A KK mely szakaszaiban vesznek részt ezek a szervezetek?
    (pl.,megvalósítás)

c. Hogyan kerülnek kiválasztásra ezek a szervezetek?

d. Tudna példát mondani egy civil szervezettel való együttműködésre?

e. Milyen kommunikációs platformok léteznek a civil szervezetek és az önkormányzat között?

-Mik segítik az együttműködést?

f. Ön szerint eredményesn működik az együttműködés ezekkel a szervezetekkel?
    - Úgy látja, hogy ez javította a folyamat minőségét és legitimitását?

g. Milyen kihívásokkal néznek szemben a szervezeteknek a bevonásával kapcsolatban?

3. Kapcsolat a KK-ban részt vevő állampolgárokkal/lakosokkal

a. Hogyan történik az állampolgárok/lakosok bevonása a KK során?
     (pl. tájékoztatás – megvalósítás)

b. Tapasztalt-e változást az állampolgárok/lakosok részvételében a KK budapesti indulása óta? (Minőségben, aktivitásban)

c. Van szerepük az állampolgároknak az ötlet benyújtáson és a szavazáson túl is?
     - Van befolyásuk a döntéshozatalra?

d. Hogyan kommunikál az önkormányzat az ötletet benyújtó állampolgárokkal?

e. Hogyan zajlik a kommunikáció azokkal, akiknek az ötlete (nem) nyert a szavazáson?

f. Hogyan kommunikál az önkormányzat a megvalósításról a résztvevőkkel?

4. Együttműködés

a. Hogyan jellemezné az önkormányzat, a civil szervezetek és az állampolgárok/lakosok közötti együttműködést?

b. Milyen platformok segítik elő ezt az együttműködést? Milyen események viszik közelebb a KK-t az emberekhez, civil szervezetkehez?
     (pl. fórumok, műhelyek)

c. Milyen jellegűek ezek az események? (inkább formális?)

5. Kihívások

a. Melyek a legfőbb kihívások az önkormányzat és más szereplők közötti hatékony együttműködés fenntartásában?

b. Vannak-e forrás- vagy kapacitásbeli korlátok?

c. Ön szerint milyen fejlesztések lennének szükségesek a hatékonyabb együttműködés előmozdításához?

6. Záró kérdések

a. Hogyan látja a KK jövőjét Budapesten?

b. Van-e bármi egyéb, amit szívesen megosztana, és ami szerinte fontos az önkormányzat és a civil társadalom kapcsolatának megértéséhez?

Köszönöm szépen az idejét és az értékes válaszait!

English translation of the interview guides

3. Interview Guide for discussion with PB participants (citizens and representatives of CSOs) (English version)

Introduction

- Signing the Informed Consent form
- Starting the audio recording
- Brief introduction of the research

Section 1: Background

- How and/or where did you first hear about the participatory/community budgeting (PB) initiative?
- Was it through its introduction in Budapest, or had you heard about it before?
- How did you find out about the launch of PB in Budapest?
- What motivated you to submit your idea for the application? When did you submit it?

Section 2: Idea

- Could you briefly describe the idea you submitted?
- Could you tell us about the process of submitting the idea?
  - Was it clear where and how to submit it?
- Did you encounter any difficulties during the process?
- Did you participate in voting for the (winning) ideas? How were the results announced?
  - Has your idea been implemented yet?
    - Could you tell me about the implementation process?

Section 3: Cooperation and Involvement (Mutual and transformative learning)

- Did you have contact with other citizens or stakeholders during the PB process?
  - If so, with whom and where?
  - At workshops, community meetings? Are you aware that such events exist?
  - Did you learn anything new during the PB process? What experiences did you gain? For example, about the needs of Budapest residents, city regulations, or opportunities for participation?
  - Do you think others learned from your idea or proposal?
    - Did the city administration learn from your idea?

- Did you experience cooperation between residents and municipal staff? How would you describe this cooperation? Did you receive any feedback, formal or informal, regarding the submitted idea? Was there any specific feedback about the idea or its implementation? After submission, after the results, or during implementation? Were you informed about the status of your idea's implementation?

Section 4: Joint Ownership

- How much do you feel a sense of ownership over your (implemented) idea?
  - And over the ideas you voted for?
  - Do you feel a sense of ownership related to the implemented idea? (This has become mine/ours).
  - Do you think your idea truly contributed to solving a local problem or developing the city?

Section 5: Empowered Participation

- To what extent did you feel that your contribution was considered/valued by the organizers during the PB process?
- Did you feel that the city or the organizers genuinely took your insight/idea into account?
- At any point during the process, did you feel you had a real impact on the city's development in any form?
  - Do you feel your opinion matters?

Section 6: Innovation and Perception of Impact

- How do you see community budgeting in Budapest?
  - Do you think PB offers an opportunity to introduce new and creative ideas in urban decision-making?
  - Why or why not?
  - Is PB useful?

Section 7: Obstacles and Suggestions

- What other challenges did you encounter during or after the PB process?
- Do you have any insights on how PB could be developed and/or improved in Budapest?

Closing questions

- If you had the opportunity again, would you participate in the participatory budgeting process?
  - Why or why not?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with PB?

Conclusion Thank you very much for the interview and for sharing your experiences!

4. Interview Guide for discussion with representatives of the Municipality (English version)

Introduction

- Signing the Informed Consent form
- Starting the audio recording
- Brief introduction of the research

1. Background

- a. Could you describe your role and responsibilities in the participatory budgeting (PB) process in Budapest? -
  - When did you join the process?
- b. What is the history of participatory budgeting in Budapest? - Could you tell us how the process started?
  - What was the initial goal of introducing PB in Budapest?
  - What major changes have occurred over the years from the municipality's perspective?
  - Could you tell us about the current process (PB 2024–25)?
- c. In your opinion, who are the key stakeholders in this process?

2. Relationship with Civil Society Organizations

- a. What role do civil society organizations (CSOs, local associations) play in the PB process?
- b. In which stages of the PB do these organizations participate? (e.g., implementation)
- c. How are these organizations selected?
- d. Could you give an example of cooperation with a civil society organization?
- e. What communication platforms exist between civil society organizations and the municipality?
  - - What facilitates cooperation?
- f. Do you think cooperation with these organizations is effective? -
  - Do you see that this has improved the quality and legitimacy of the process?
- g. What challenges do you face regarding the involvement of these organizations?

3. Relationship with Citizens/Residents Participating in PB

- a. How are citizens/residents involved during the PB process? (e.g., information dissemination – implementation)
- b. Have you experienced any changes in the participation of citizens/residents since the launch of PB in Budapest? (In terms of quality, activity)
- c. Do citizens have a role beyond submitting ideas and voting? - Do they have an influence on decision-making?
- d. How does the municipality communicate with citizens who submit ideas?
- e. How does communication take place with those whose ideas did (or did not) win the vote?
- f. How does the municipality communicate about the implementation with the participants?

4. Cooperation

- a. How would you describe the cooperation between the municipality, civil society organizations, and citizens/residents?
- b. What platforms facilitate this cooperation? What events bring PB closer to people and civil society organizations? (e.g., forums, workshops)
- c. What is the nature of these events? (Are they more formal?)

5. Challenges

- a. What are the main challenges in maintaining effective cooperation between the municipality and other stakeholders?
- b. Are there resource or capacity limitations?
- c. In your opinion, what developments would be necessary to promote more effective cooperation?

6. Concluding Questions

- a. How do you see the future of PB in Budapest?
- b. Is there anything else you would like to share that you consider important for understanding the relationship between the municipality and civil society?

Thank you very much for your time and valuable answers!