

Review of: "Participatory budgeting for public involvement in environmental sustainability at a Thai university"

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The article is well-written and focuses in a very specific type of participatory budgeting (PB), evolving around its design and the participants' perceptions about the process. The data collection and analysis is directly related to the author's field of study, discussing the terms presented by the participants answers about the opportunity of taking part in a participatory democracy tool. The results and conclusions show the potential for PB to go further than its original intents (being a urban management instrument to propose changes in cities investments and to democratize local democracy itself), being a pedagogical tool to students (in this case at the university level) promote changes in their context of living. The article also has a strong connection with a recent debate around PB: its possible impact in sustainability, environmental and climate change policies, specially in the local level, seen in the work of researchers such as Yves Cabannes, Roberto Falanga and Shane Epting. I also points out the excellent idea for the voting system design and the many possibilities that it have for future experiments and maybe for public policy.

However, despite the clear quality of the work and the author pretty straightforward writing, some issues must be pointed. First of all - and the most important question - is that the paper isn't balanced enough. By this I mean that the conceptual and historical debates about participatory budgeting, sustainability and how they can relate in public policy is too superficial. Experts in PB and democratic innovations in general have a very good notion of how PB spread across the world, its changes since the dissemination in Brazil (and South America), the World Bank role, the different models and designs, and many other elements. But most of the readers don't. One of two more pages focusing on this world significantly increase the quality of the paper. The article got my attention and I found the results very interesting, but I had many unanswered questions during the reading. How PB went to Thailand? What are its influences (South American PBs? European? The World Bank?)? How PB is applied in Thai cities? When, why and from where the idea of designing a PB in college context came from?

For the other topics I will be very objective, and I would like to reinforce how the author puts very humbly the limitations of the work, promoting high quality science. The elements I want to point out are the following: a) The author puts the referendum as the only participation model that promotes decision-making to the broad public, but this is a very narrow perspective that focus only in representative democracy. As the works by Graham Smith, Yves Sintomer, Archon Fung, Sherry Arnstein and Marcelo Lopes de Souza (and many others) show, there are many other co-decisory methods occurring globally; b) Despite the quality of the bibliography, there are many sentences with very specific arguments that don't have citations; c) and the last, I believe that a more broad debate about the presence of democratic innovations and

participatory democracy in authoritarian countries (specially in the Asian context) would be good for the quality of the paper, with a good source being the last two PB atlas organized by Nelson Dias and collaborators.