

**The history of the participatory budget started in 1989 in a Brazilian city – Porto Alegre.** It was not expected then that the idea will be globally accepted and within thirty years it will spread all over the world, permanently growing into a civil prospect of local government. It was based on three levels of involvement: neighbourhood teams; councils of community delegates; urban council of delegates. Apart from civil councils instituted within a territorial division, the thematic meetings were organised collaterally. The experiment proved that three social groups got involved in the participatory budget procedure. These groups comprised the ones excluded so far from holding power: the inhabitants with the lowest income, women and young people. That is where we should discern success of the Brazilian budget. The people being so far on the fringes of a political system, became its significant participants. The result was, among others, co-financing districts with the smallest potential, previously „invisible” ones for politicians, which caused that the results of reforms became almost immediately noticeable. With time this institution was popularised in the cities of South America, Latin America, Africa and Asia, which is defined in the world literature as „the diffusion of democratic innovation”.

We may talk about the presence of budgets in Poland only for almost a decade. **The first budget was prepared in Sopot in 2011** and since then several local governments at all levels is continually increasing. Until 2018 the authorities of a given entity could decide about the implementation of the participatory budget. Each of the budgets was very specific and was based on different procedures. The new regulation of the participatory budgets was implemented into the generally applicable law by means of the amendment of 11th January 2018. Currently, the realisation of this form of social consultations with residents in cities with county rights is obligatory. Even though the regulations adopted constitute a general regulation of the procedure, the legislator imposing certain, specific requirements, profoundly restricted the independence of local government units and ‘the participatory’ dimension of the instrument discussed. Will, because of amending local government law, the institution of the participatory budget be evolving towards plebiscite or deliberative democracy? What is the difference between both approaches and what consequences the adoption of one of them will have both on the political system and its participants?

In the theoretical, analytical and practical dimensions, the participation, co-decision-making or the so-called multi-level governance are associated with a notion of deliberation, which is contemporarily regarded as one of the key notions applied in the conceptualisation, research and designing these qualities and the parameters of contemporary democratic systems. They predestine about the real access of citizens to discourse, programming, decision making, controlling and the evaluation of phenomena, processes and procedures within the circle of public politics and public management. Deliberation is a complex phenomenon of a processual character. It is characterised by four main features: a persuasive way of selecting arguments; orientation to achieving consensus in perceiving and realisation of common good, including and agreeing on particular interests; public and transparent nature of discourse and the open access to it, which in justified cases may be restricted with the clear provision of reasons and parameters of such restrictions and by preserving the possibilities of a discussion with a similar solution and the relevant appeal procedure. Voting, similarly to an array of other solutions may be additionally applied in deliberation, but at the same time deliberation cannot be reduced only to voting, whether majority or proportional with the voting being accompanied by the ways of inducing to make a particular choice from a list of options presented in advance. Deliberation builds social involvement (builds up participation), develops multilateral communication and leads to unitary, group and organisational learning, thanks to which not only common development and implementation of solutions (co-decision-making, governance) is possible, but also a common creation of “new knowledge” on the problems discussed.

Reducing deliberation to voting is not a solution then, but an error. This error denies the idea of deliberation, it distorts its meaning and inhibits, if it does not prevent its idea in cultural references from anchoring. Without their grassroots formation we cannot expect a success of top-down changes – and it also certifies the works of valued proponents of the model of the implementation of top-down public policy. The later the real practices of a deliberative co-decision-making will occur in Poland, the later it will be possible to conduct a complex systemic modernisation creating genuine and long-term developmental chances as well as generating social, economic and political-public resources and to develop solutions vital for dynamic but sustainable development in the conditions of expanding globalisation comprising broader and broader horizon of phenomena, processes and events.