

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: IMPLICATIONS FOR AGENCY, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

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This study examines participatory budgeting (PB) as an important kind of citizen participation in the Dominican Republic (DR) and the implications of this recent practice for agency, democracy, and development. PB is a process that intends to drive change with specific outcomes: through deliberative decision-making, ordinary citizens select well-being- and agency-enhancing projects that ideally lead to more local and authentic development. Together with the attainment of these tangible outcomes, valuable subjective states may also come about: people feel more in charge of their own lives, community groups become more collaborative and cooperative, and more and better democracy is fostered. Taking a step forward from previous studies that only focus on PB from an urban planning or public finance perspective, the overall objective of this study is to provide a deeper understanding and assessment of how PB works in the localities under analysis, its association with different measures of agency, the characteristics that drive its success or failure, and its general impact on the lives of individuals and communities. Drawing on normative and policy-based literatures and specifically following an agency-oriented capability approach, this study uses a mixed-methods approach to analyze interview, survey, and direct observations of PB public assemblies, and archival data with respect to the 2013 budget cycle in four DR municipalities. A regression analysis finds that participation in and awareness of PB are both significantly correlated with individuals reporting higher levels of individual and collective agency when compared to non-participants and unaware individuals. These measures of agency are contextualized to the municipal budget-planning cycle. A process tracing analysis concludes that PB is likely, under certain conditions, to increase democratic participation and deliberation. However, due to certain democratic deficits, PB in two DR municipalities does not always increase agency, group cooperative functioning, and good development. Thus, PB must be analyzed on a case-by-case basis because differences in the characteristics of each PB assembly may lead to different outcomes. It is finally argued that rather than condemning democracy because of the failures of the current PB system, we should advance PB's democracy further by improving it in various ways.

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC:
IMPLICATIONS FOR AGENCY, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

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PREFACE

Growing up in the Dominican Republic (DR), a country where the state often lacks competent ways to provide public goods and services, I watched my fellow citizens individually “adjust” to inefficiencies, rather than collectively demanding or trying to affect change. It was (and still is) common to see households—often with minimal economic capacity to pay—seek private solutions to public problems: since electricity is not reliable, let’s buy generators; since public schools’ quality is extremely low, let’s send our children to private schools; since public transportation is a disaster, let’s buy private vehicles and use them at all times; and the list goes on. In sum, the common scenario has been one of people acting independently to create a decent private version of what an acceptable provisioning of public goods and services should be. I cannot say that I have never seen groups of people acting together as a strong, united front to request credible change from the authorities, but such actions were usually related to costs (e.g., protests because gas or food prices have increased) rather than the mediocre provision of public goods and services. As a result, most, if not all, improvements that have finally come about have been the result of delayed political action, often conveniently provided near election times for the purpose of gaining votes, and not due to civic pressure.

Due to our lack of awareness of our rights as citizens and our limited ability successfully to influence public policies, we still suffer from many old problems. I can only presume that these repeated disappointments, together with the typically negative incentives that make achieving collective action difficult, have restricted the type of citizen participation that drives changes. Even with our democratic system in place, we have stopped believing in the power we have as “the people” and hence, we “adjust.”

These personal interpretations of Dominican society are the ones that have inspired my research. However, I acknowledge from the very beginning that I will not try to tackle this triangular issue of citizen participation, the ability to affect change, and effective change from the perspective of citizen involvement directed towards the solution of macro-level issues. Instead, I examine citizen participation within local participatory and democratic settings that seeks answers for strictly local problems. I argue that such local participation is the first step in the generation of citizen awareness of the importance of being agents of change and the gradual achievement of not only a kind of development that is sustainable and led by politicians, but also one that is authentic and in which citizens play conscious and active roles.

When I first became interested in studying the phenomena and forums of participatory democracy, and particularly one mechanism known as participatory budgeting (PB), in which communities have a voice in the way local resources are spent through deliberative dialogue and/or voting, I initially concentrated on Nicaragua, Peru, and other Latin American experiences. The last thing I imagined was that some municipalities in my very own DR were already conducting PB. And I was even more surprised when I discovered that since 2007, there has been a municipal law that mandates PB in all municipalities. Given the novelty of the process in DR and its very limited publicity, I was not the only one in the dark—many of my relatives, friends, and ex-colleagues whom I informally polled in the fall of 2011 had never heard of it either.¹ Before proceeding, however, I had to consider an important trade-off: I could study a well-

¹ I became aware of the practice of PB in the DR in the fall of 2011, when an official of Santiago's local government came to a conference in Washington, DC, and asked me about my research, which led to a very informative discussion about the subject.

documented locality where PB has been established for a longer period, and therefore would have more noticeable effects, or, with the hope of throwing new light on PB, I could investigate an unstudied and relatively new PB in a different setting, one in which I had easy access to both sources and sites.

After visiting different communities within four municipalities² in the DR, conducting interviews, observing public consultation processes, analyzing survey data, and seeing the diversity of local PBs, I have concluded that PB should be understood and evaluated in relation to their differing local contexts. This research has not radically changed my views about citizen participation as a whole in the DR, for I still believe that Dominican society is largely passive and conformist. Nonetheless, this study, although based on a micro-level perspective, gives me some reason to believe in the positive prospects of a direct democracy framework to increase people's control and sense of control over issues that matter to them. This work also speaks to the way in which varying community-level characteristics can shape its inhabitants' degree of integration and their ability to influence change.

It is also pertinent to acknowledge that while a government agency might be interested in a cause-effect relationship between PB and some sort of monetary efficiency or political support variables, I am more interested in the relationship between PB and agency—peoples' ability to make decisions about things that they care about and, thereby, influence change. It is my normative belief that this is an empirical relationship important enough to inform the creation of evidenced-based policies in support of PB as an official

² The territorial division of the DR is as follows: the country is divided into provinces, provinces into municipalities and/or municipal districts (these are the equivalent of cities), municipalities into towns, and towns into communities/neighborhoods.

political tool for budget planning. In other words, I believe that projects and practices that bolster agency, as does PB at its best, should be seriously considered when designing institutions and making policies in a democratic society. I argue these practices can lead to the type of authentic development that this study supports.

Although very limited in its scope, this work aspires not only to enrich the institutional performance of local governments so that governments, citizens, and civil society organizations (CSOs) can increasingly forge better public policy, but also to document and analyze people's individual perspectives, regardless of whether or not they participate in a PB, with respect to their power to bring about positive change in their cities. Do people believe that their participation in or access to a PB enables them to bring desired change to their communities? More precisely, do they believe that their involvement in the decision-making process, which distributes a portion of the local budget, has this beneficial impact? Alternatively, do participants tend to see the process as one which they cannot fully trust, one in which local leaders manipulate them or simply one that is interesting for a while but eventually becomes boring? In the worst of cases, do participants in a PB see the process as so useless that it does not merit their attendance? By answering these and other questions, assisted by quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis, I hope to contribute to recent literature that assesses participatory forums, such as PB, their legitimacy, and their contributions to a more inclusive and deeper democracy of multiple stakeholders.

To my daughter, Mila

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Thank you God, because without you, I am nothing.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1. Introduction	1
1.1 Research Framework	1
1.2 Research Objectives and Questions.....	3
1.3 Contributions	5
Chapter 2. Theoretical Framework and Background to Participatory Budgeting in the Dominican Republic	11
2.1 The Starting Point: Citizen Participation.....	12
2.2 A Brief Introduction to the Capability Approach	15
2.3 Participatory and Deliberative Democracy.....	26
2.4 Understanding Participatory Budgeting	32
2.5 Participatory Budgeting in the Dominican Republic.....	41
Chapter 3. Participatory Budgeting and Perceptions of Agency: An Empirical Evaluation.....	52
3.1 Research Context.....	54
3.2 Data.....	59
3.3 Agency and Participation in PB.....	80
3.4 Agency and Awareness of PB	102
Chapter 4. Participatory Budgeting in the Dominican Republic:	113
A Qualitative and Normative Methodological Framework	113
4.1 Research Context.....	115
4.2 Methods: Process Tracing	119
4.3 Conceptualizations: Variables and Mechanisms	125
Chapter 5. Participatory Budgeting in the Dominican Republic: Results and Implications	135
5.1 Process Description	137
5.2 Diagnostic Evidence (Results) and Implications.....	143
Chapter 6. Conclusions, Policy Recommendations and Future Research	177
6.1 Final Normative Assessments	178
6.2 Policy Recommendations	185
6.3 The Way Forward.....	191
Annexes	198
References	230

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Advantages and Disadvantages of Participatory/Deliberative Democracy (P/DD).....	31
Table 2. Advantages and Risks of PB.....	37
Table 3. Expansion of PB in the Dominican Republic, 2003-2013	46
Table 4. Municipalities under Study	60
Table 5. Profiles of PB Municipalities.....	61
Table 6. Distribution of Data Across Populations	67
Table 7. Survey Data Summary	77
Table 8. Data Design.....	85
Table 9. Determinants of Individual PB Agency (SDE vs SDO)	90
Table 10. Determinants of Collective PB Agency (SDE vs SDO)	91
Table 11. Determinants of Individual PB Agency (STI vs LVG).....	94
Table 12. Determinants of Collective PB Agency (STI vs LVG).....	95
Table 13. Participation Model.....	97
Table 14. Empirical Association between Participation and PB Agency	101
Table 15. PB Awareness and Collective PB Agency (SDE vs SDO).....	107
Table 16. PB Awareness of Community Assemblies and Collective Agency (SDE).....	109
Table 17. Research Data	116
Table 18. Logic Model from Community's Point of View using SDE and STI's PB Experiences for 2013	124
Table 19. Plausible Causal Relationships in PB	133

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Map of the Dominican Republic	62
Figure 2. Individual PB Agency Score by Group	76
Figure 3. Collective PB Agency by Group	76
Figure 4. Collective Agency and Awareness in SDE/SDO	105
Figure 5. Awareness and Agency in SDE & SDO.....	107
Figure 6. Theory-Testing Process Tracing - The PB Case.....	122
Figure 7. Timeline of PB	123

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CONARE	National Council for State Reform
CP	Community Participation
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DR	Dominican Republic
FEDOMU	Dominican Federation of Municipalities
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LVG	La Vega
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares
ONE	National Office of Statistics
PAPI	Pen and Paper Interview
PB	Participatory Budgeting
P/DD	Participatory and Deliberative Democracy
PE	Psychological Empowerment
PICO	People Improving Communities through Organizing
PSM	Propensity Score Matching
SDE	Santo Domingo Este
SDO	Santo Domingo Oeste
STI	Santiago
US	United States

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Research Framework

This is a study about citizen participation—particularly about citizen participation through participatory budgeting in the Dominican Republic and its implications for agency, democracy, and development. Let us provisionally define agency as the capability to have a say in things one cares about, to be able to act on such choices, and to make a difference in the world. The worldwide incidence of participatory expenditure programs has increased significantly in recent decades; participatory budgeting, with its participatory and deliberative features, is a case in point.

Since at least the 1970s, democratic activists and scholars of democracy have increasingly identified deliberative and participatory practices as a means of deepening and invigorating the political lives of ordinary people, an ideal that lies at the very heart of the notion of democracy.³ Philosopher Peter Levine (2003), for example, presents three key reasons why an enriched democracy requires such processes:

- (1) to enable citizens to discuss public issues and form opinions,
- (2) to give leaders insights on the issues that the public cares about, and
- (3) to enable citizens to explain and justify their opinions in order to separate good ideas from bad ones and optimize public policy.

To these points, a fourth might be added: to go beyond diversity of opinions to (more

³ There is a long and healthy debate in the literature as to when “deliberative democracy” began as a conceptual framework. Baiocchi et al. (2010) trace its roots back to Aristotle, noting periodic revitalization of the concept in “the works of Rousseau, Carole Pateman, and most recently Habermas among many others.” (p. 1). See also Dryzek (2010).

or less) unity in action.

Spurred on by such advocacy, numerous governments—especially at the municipal level—have experimented with participatory processes, most frequently in the domains of budgeting and public planning. Baiocchi, Heller, and Silva (2010) succinctly define one such practice known as participatory budgeting, as “the idea ... that citizens can and should play a direct role in shaping the budget of the towns and cities in which they live.” (p. xi) As a relatively recent phenomenon, however, there have been few systematic studies of PB. Most, like Baiocchi et al.’s *Bootstrapping Democracy*, have focused on the effectiveness of PB compared to more traditional models of urban planning, and not on the procedure’s normative justification.

Important approaches have included not only Porto Alegre’s (Brazil) pioneering model of an open and deliberative budgeting process, but also other innovations in consultative decision-making. The key concept is that during the public consultations that accompany PB processes, citizens engage in a reason-giving discussion and negotiation about what they believe should be the priorities for their communities. Because the key stakeholders contribute to the budgeting process, this process adds democratic value to the expenditure decisions and increases the likelihood that basic necessities are met and that the participants gain ownership (also referred to as “buy-in”) with respect to the process and its results. In other words, at least theoretically, a better allocation of resources can be ensured when participatory practices like PB are included in local governmental structures. Furthermore, with stakeholder ownership comes a commitment to the legitimacy of the procedure and results. My aim is to investigate an example of this democratic innovation and its logic. My motivation is the belief that citizen participation can lead to authentic development—

a kind of social change in which citizens play a direct role in the setting and achievement of goals.

1.2 Research Objectives and Questions

Taking a step forward from previous studies that only focus on PB from an urban planning or public finance perspectives, the overall objective of this study is to provide a deeper understanding of how PB works in the various localities under analysis, the association between PB and different measures of agency, the characteristics that drive its success or failure, and its general impact on the lives of individuals and their communities. This analysis is performed based on observations of the 2013 budget cycle in four municipalities in the DR (Santo Domingo Este, Santo Domingo Oeste, Santiago, and La Vega).

This work is organized in six chapters. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the relevant literature that serves as the theoretical framework. Specifically, this chapter addresses notions of civic participation and the potential or existing link between forms of citizen participation, like PB, and normative ideals of agency, democracy, development, mainly based on the capability approach. This chapter also presents a background for PB, including specificities of the Dominican context, in order to contextualize the rest of the study.

Chapter 3 presents an empirical assessment of how participation in PB is positively correlated with individuals' perceptions of agency. The focus on agency as an outcome is significant because of its advantageous consequences, both normatively and practically. As development ethicist David Crocker explains, "when people or communities are in charge of or have ownership over their own enterprises, they are more apt to be responsible

for them, be invested in them, and benefit from them.” (2012, p. 49) If this holds true, then agency should be a critical factor to consider when making development policies in democratic settings, so that the type of development achieved is of the kind where those affected take reasoned action (i.e., Crocker’s authentic development).

Chapter 3 also discusses the use of subjective well-being measures for empirical analysis and what strategies have been previously employed to measure the relationship between citizen participation and agency. This part of the thesis explores whether individuals who participate in PB report higher levels of perceived individual and/or collective agency than similar individuals who do not have such PB option available. This is done with the application of quasi-experimental methods of analysis, specifically, propensity score matching and differences in differences. The analysis is performed on newly collected survey data from the four municipalities in the DR alluded to earlier, two of which employ PB and two of which do not.

A multiple regression analysis explores whether awareness of PB is positively correlated with non-participants’ perceptions of collective agency. Such analysis teases out spillover effects of PB to those who do not participate in the assemblies. The main findings are that participation and awareness are both significantly correlated with individuals reporting higher levels of agency.

With the objective of moving beyond correlations, Chapter 4 presents process tracing tools of analysis to track enabling conditions that link citizen participation in PB with normative outcomes such as the ones evaluated in Chapter 3. The chapter proposes (and defines each component of) the following hypothesis: if the subsequent conditions of the PB process are met—assemblies are fair, effective, inclusive, and deliberative, and civil

society actors share at least minimal initial principles of cooperation—PB participants become agents (in the PB context), increase their cooperative group functioning, become witnesses to more and better local democracy and protagonists of authentic development.

Chapter 5 applies the qualitative methodology presented in Chapter 4, and presents an evaluation of the PB public consultations at the community and block levels. The analysis concludes that how the PB system increases (or does not increase) agency, empowerment, group functioning, democracy, development, and so forth, must be analyzed on a case-by-case basis because differences in the characteristics of each PB assembly may lead to different outcomes. The chapter presents detailed evidence of such different characteristics and how they may affect the intended results of PB. The general conclusion is that rather than condemning democracy because of the failures of the current PB system, we should advance PB's democracy further by improving it in various ways.

Finally, Chapter 6 presents the main challenges and limitations of the PB process and proposes pertinent policy recommendations. The final evaluation addresses (from the normative grounds of this study) what is good, what is bad, and what can be improved in the PB process. A way forward regarding future research is briefly presented. This robust analysis should inform and guide future evidence-based policy.

1.3 Contributions

It is important to study forms of citizen participation like PB in order to help build democracy by transforming, through deliberation, the preferences of ordinary citizens and

transmitting them to government officials, which in turn reduces conflict, increases social cohesion, and eases the process of political decision-making.⁴ Young (2010) argues that deliberative democracy is different from aggregative democracy, where preferences are grouped merely by voting, because it is “not only a means through which citizens can promote their interests and hold the power of rulers in check. It is also a means of collective problem-solving which depends for its legitimacy and wisdom on the expression and criticism of the diverse opinions of all the members of the society” (p.6). I echo Young’s support for inclusive democracy: it promotes more just outcomes through mutual persuasion among participants about the “justice and wisdom” (p.4) of their arguments, tolerance for different opinions, and the willingness to let views be transformed through deliberations.

Although the literature presents many assessments of PB’s impact on governance indicators (such as the management of resources, transparency, services delivery, and the likelihood of an individual paying taxes), most studies are highly skewed to the Porto Alegre experience and there is a specific analytical gap that can benefit from further evaluation—namely, the actual association of civic participation in a forum like PB with agency, and how it differs from the experience of agency felt by non-participants. The latter, especially when understood as a notion of empowerment, has become an important goal in development policy and direct practice due to its association with community-organizing, health, social work, social policy, ethnic minority groups, among others measures and aspects (Speer & Peterson, 2000). To fill such gap, in this study I assume

⁴ Young (2010) explains that “active participation and political representation do not exclude one another, and sometimes even work together to produce policy outcomes” (p.3).

(but also explain) a normative foundation (based on the agency-based capability approach) and then examine cases of PB in the DR with respect to what happens in the PB process and in participants' lives. I later ask what are the implications for policy of these empirical findings.

The empirical claim at the core of the argument in favor of participatory processes like PB, and for which tests are at best scarce, is that their implementation not only positively affects governance, but also may improve individual citizens' and communities' quality of life through the political agency they sustain, the democracy they deepen, and, most significantly, the authentic democracy to which they lead and contribute. The problem is that policy experts are ambivalent about how to approach this knowledge gap, which involves quantifying concepts that are normative in nature.

Crocker (2012) contends that “policy and institutional proposals for a better future can and should be normatively guided as well as empirically based” (p. 48). Similarly, but citing current empirical deficits, PB experts Baiocchi et al. (2010) posit that “ideas of participatory democracy are strong on theory and moral-philosophical founding, but rather weak on evidence and empirical testing” (p. 1). Steiner (2012) also suggests that while empirical data cannot by itself answer normative questions, they can certainly enlighten them. Although that necessity has been repeatedly set out, other scholars, such as Mansbridge (1999), have expressed skepticism concerning the ability of social science instruments to measure such changes in character.⁵

⁵ Frank Bryan and Jane Mansbridge have studied town hall meetings in the United States for several decades, and as a result have made significant contributions to this literature, including descriptive and empirical ones. These authors have looked at aspects such as rates of participation, the distribution of such participation, characteristics of attendees, and topics discussed. I build on their work, hoping to advance the discussion by looking at the specific link between a kind of institution similar to that which they observe in town hall

Because of this skepticism, and the fact that the question of whether participation in PB correlates with increased perceptions of agency, remains scarcely tested, this portion of my work is largely exploratory and advances an initial attempt to approach the normative concept of agency with a quantitative method.⁶ In particular, to my knowledge, no one has previously attempted this study's effort to assess the spillover effects of PB to non-participants who are aware of PB.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study thus contributes to the literatures of deliberative/participatory democracy, PB, community-level politics and community-driven development by empirically testing the existence of a link between participation in and awareness of PB and measures of perceived agency. A substantial contribution is the finding of a positive externality for awareness of PB (regardless of participation)—an indirect path to agency for the PB context. Another specific contribution is that, advancing Baiocchi et al., I use their city-pairing approach, but instead of doing qualitative research, I use the contrast structure for quantitative analysis. This use of statistical tools has special value as they drive us away from misleading interpretations based on a few observations of people involved in the process, and also it allows for drawing comparisons among contrasting cases. Such observations represent municipalities with and without PB, individuals with and without the option to participate, individuals who participate and do not participate, and individuals who are aware or unaware of the PB process/assemblies. (Note that previous studies have usually focused only on observing participants/delegates during community meetings). The empirical findings and the pragmatic recommendations

meetings, and agency and different dimensions of democracy. See Bryan's *Real Democracy* (2004) and Mansbridge's *Beyond Adversary Democracy* (1980) for a detailed account of US participatory processes.

⁶ The initial interest was to assess causality, but unfortunately, the data is not suitable for detecting impact.

derived therefrom can have an important impact in the role of participatory institutions in advancing a type of social change that responds to citizens' demands.

The in-depth assessment of the quality of the participatory democratic process (what works, what doesn't, and why and what should be the criterion of "works") is also valuable for policy-making purposes, as my findings may lead to the improvement of such participatory practices in the interest of inclusive governance and "deeper" citizen participation in decision-making. Advancing previous findings by Wampler (2007, 2012) and Selee and Peruzzotti (2009) about the Brazilian and Mexican cases, respectively, I find that the informal and strategic bargaining that occur prior to PB meetings, as well as the analysis of incentives and disincentives for successful inter- and intra-group relationships, are important contributions to the literature of participatory institutions in regards to the non-linear trajectory that they follow. This finding implies that for the DR case the process of building agency is more community-based than based on a wide and vibrant civil society connected to political channels. This result is also of interest because even though most of the political science and public policy literatures focus on studying formal institutions, this research shows that for the cases studied most of the decision-making is occurring informally. In other words, the agency that is enhanced through PB is "genuine" in the sense that it does not take place through the traditional political structures, such as political parties, as happens in other well-known cases of participatory institutions, such as in Brazil's PB or Venezuela's community councils.

An additional contribution is that although in the DR a vast number of municipalities have started implementing participatory practices of this kind, to my knowledge, no scholarly studies have analyzed the policy and normative issues as applied

to these cases. This thesis sets a precedent that hopefully will motivate future research about the link between participatory governance and normative values or perceptions.

Three clarifications of what this thesis does not address are imperative. First, although important, this study does not try to infer or prove causality with respect to whether PB can explain other broad characteristics of the municipalities, such as aggregate income, number of development projects, provision of basic services, or corruption (or its absence). That is, this study looks at PB from the perspective of an agency-oriented capability approach, for which outcomes such as individual and collective agency and well-being matter, rather than income variables. Similarly, this research is not about decentralization in the sense of a transfer from the central government to the municipality of funds, the responsibility for the generation of tax revenue, or service provision. Instead, this study deals exclusively with decentralization of decision-making power—that is the empowerment of the citizens over local-level expenditure programs. I make a case not only on instrumental grounds, for example, PB as conducive to better development, but also on intrinsic grounds, for example, as an expression of self-determination.

Second, the intention of this study is not to provide an in-depth literature review of the political science and psychology discussions of citizen political participation and public deliberation. The literature (including empirics) is quite extensive in this regard, and a thorough review would be a thesis in itself. Instead, I present a selection of works that are relevant to the PB context and specifically to the normative theoretical framework upon which the analyses are based. The quantitative portion of the study incorporates an empirical review, which focuses not only on citizen participation empirics, but also on the measurement of subjective well-being notions. For a comprehensive summary of the

empirical literature on citizen participation, see Delli Carpini, Cook and Jacobs (2004); for a compendium of the empirical literature on deliberative democracy, see Steiner (2012).

Third, as a professional trained in economics, development, and policy analysis, when dealing with normative and political concepts and premises (as it is done for much of this study), I make no attempt to contribute directly to current normative philosophical and political theory with respect to the normative foundations of deliberative democracy or citizen. Concepts relevant to the context of PB and inspired by the capability approach literature are introduced, and alternative accounts are presented in the theoretical framework section as the basis for the policy analysis that follows. The main purpose is to apply practical evaluation methodologies (in both qualitative and quantitative ways) to better understand an issue that is both empirical and normative at its core, while making meaningful contributions to the policy literature. What can we learn about the impact of PB on the lives of its participants and what are the implications for agency, democracy, and development?

Chapter 2. Theoretical Framework and Background to Participatory

Budgeting in the Dominican Republic

*“When [people] participate, thereby becoming active subjects of knowledge and action, they begin to construct their properly human history and engage in processes of authentic development”
(Goulet, 1989, p.165)*

Participatory Budgeting can be studied from different perspectives. Regardless of PB's institutional and pragmatic nature, this chapter focuses on its normative, rather than purely practical aspects. With this interest, it becomes relevant to introduce a theoretical framework that provides such a normative analytical component and is transferable from a philosophical view to a policy application. Such a framework is the so-called "capability approach," and I emphasize its normative ideals of citizen participation, democracy, agency, empowerment, and development. Later, I will examine specific details of the PB process. The chapter is organized as follows: Section 2.1 introduces the notion of citizen participation in a space like PB; Section 2.2 covers the theoretical framework of the capability approach; Section 2.3 presents a brief literature review of participatory and deliberative democracy; Section 2.4 presents an overview of participatory budgeting as a tool for local budget planning and a direct democracy practice; and Section 2.5 covers relevant background information of PB as applied in the DR.

2.1 The Starting Point: Citizen Participation

In recent normative theory, the concept of citizenship⁷ often has been used to define

⁷ Soltan (1999) defines citizenship as "a bundle of rights that the state grants to some people (and refuses to others), allowing those persons to influence the policies of the state and the choice of its top decision-makers" (p. 2). More broadly, Kymlicka and Norman (2000) establish that the concept of citizenship combines the ideas of citizenship as legal status (defined by civil, political, and social rights), as political agents who actively participate in a society's political institutions, and as persons with a sense of belonging to a political community.

the idea of individuals belonging to a political community. In turn, a citizen is called a member of a political community, because the latter recognizes him/her as such (Posas, 2003). The aggregate of citizens makes up what is called the civil society. The concept is often used to contrast a society's state or government with the people who make up that society. Civil society groups include families, religious and cultural groups, and advocacy groups.⁸ The actions (or lack thereof) of civil society are critical to the development of any democratic community and to the achievement of desirable social change.

When defined with a social justice component, the result is the conception of the citizen not only as an individual who possesses an identification card or passport, but also as one who participates in deliberations and decisions that are taken in respect to political affairs that affect him/her and the community to which he/she belongs. Bottomore and Marshall (1998), when referring to the conception of "social/critical citizenship," argue that building a just society is impossible without the responsible and active participation of a strengthened civil society that accepts citizens' role as protagonists of change. CEPAL (2000) adds that citizenship goes further than only demanding rights, since it also entails the capacity of acting as an agent of one's own development.⁹

Scholars understand such active participation in many different ways. Leonardo Avritzer (2009), in his book *Participatory Institutions in Democratic Brazil*, presents a summary of different conceptualizations of participation as a way of highlighting the

⁸ Social theorists have also offered a threefold composition of society: the state, civil society, and the market (also called the private or commercial sector), the latter demarcating institutions that are for-profit as well as non-state (see Michael Edwards, *Civil Society*, 2014).

⁹ I take these latter definitions of citizen as given and use them when referring to the citizenship evoked by participation in the PB process. I offer no further philosophical or political discussion concerning the definition of "citizenship" or the "good citizen." However, this is a possible topic for future work.

importance of definitions:

Abers refers to participation as “increasing citizens’ control over the state and improving the capacity of ordinary people to understand and decide about issues affecting their lives” (2000: 5). Nylén refers to democratic participation as “the exercising of real power over decisions” (2003: 28). Baiocchi links the origins of participation in Brazil to social movements that challenge “representative democracy by calling for participatory reforms” (2005: 11). For Fung and Wright, participation refers to “the commitments and capacities of ordinary people to make sensible decisions” (2003: 5). (p. 3, citations in original)

From a political, rather than sociological point of view, and within the context of a democracy like the DR (defined in its constitution as participative and pluralist), citizen participation can be understood as a constitutional right that Dominicans have actively to participate in decision-making on matters that affect their economic, political, and social surroundings. More specifically and with relevance to the focus of this study, the Dominican Federation of Municipalities (FEDOMU) understands citizen participation as the essential participation of all men and women who would like to get involved in the problems that affect them by contributing points of views, concerns, and solutions. For FEDOMU, such participation serves as the best mechanism of social control and collective integration that strengthens local management and the links of trust between communities and institutions (Jorge et al., 2012). Although citizen participation can take many different forms, ranging from a mere nominal participant—for the present case that could be an individual who belongs to a neighborhood council but does not attend the PB assembly—

to a deep deliberator who engages in reason-giving for arriving at decisions,¹⁰ the type of participation pertinent to the succeeding analysis is of a “micro” type. That is, this study does not focus on civic or social participation where matters of broad, national interest, such as Dominican culture, politics, or economics, are concerned. Instead, it focuses on communal participation, through which residents from a locality come together and organize to demand significant change in their communities, regarding their specific local interests and needs. Communal participation, in its ideal form, concerns citizens who are respectful of and relate to each other as equals.

Ideally, PB, as a participatory institution, enables a form of citizen participation that looks a lot like the kind of citizen participation described above. Moreover, as a practice of direct democracy, when certain enabling conditions are present, it is likely to empower and makes agents out of individuals and communities, and can lead to enhanced well-being and authentic development. Crocker argues that policies that lead to development should be assessed not only on the basis of the results they generate but also on their success in—and potential for—promoting, protecting, and reinstating agency. In general agreement with such an outlook, let us address the literature that deals with these and related concepts and ideas, particularly focusing on the works of Sen and Crocker, who advance the theoretical framework selected for this study—an “agency-oriented capability approach.”

2.2 A Brief Introduction to the Capability Approach

¹⁰ These two extremes (i.e., nominal and deliberative participation) are part of Crocker’s (2008) distinction of seven modes of participation. I address such modes later in this study.

The capability approach is a philosophical framework that rests on two normative claims: “First, the claim that the freedom to achieve well-being is of primary moral importance, and second, that freedom to achieve well-being is to be understood in terms of people’s capabilities, that is, their real opportunities to do and be what they have reason to value” (Robeyns, 2011, para 1). The approach, which Amartya Sen pioneered, has been used beyond the philosophical realm, and social scientists have recently recognized its transferability and practical value for development studies and policy-making (among other fields). In its narrowest form, the capability approach provides an analysis of human functionings (beings and doings) and capabilities (the opportunity to accomplish such functionings), allowing for cross-unit comparisons of well-being. This feature of the approach is of use in this study, as I can draw comparisons among those who engage in PB and those who do not.

2.2.1 Sen

Let us analyze further Sen’s framework and reasoning. In his 1999 book, *Development as Freedom*, Sen proposes that (good) development be conceived as the expansion of the capabilities of persons to lead the kind of life they value and have reason to value. The more valuable freedoms people have, the greater their ability to help themselves and to make significant changes in the world. The freedom to prioritize and decide on freedoms, to act freely, and to have an impact on the world—is a special kind of freedom that Sen calls “agency freedom”. This agency aspect of the capability approach, which Crocker emphasizes and discusses in more depth, will be central for the rest of my study. Sen believes that valuable capabilities can be promoted and protected by public policy, but he also clarifies that citizens’ exercise of their agency freedom can influence

public policy. In this matter, he argues that people should have the liberty to participate in social choice and in the making of public decisions that they have reason to value. For him, this collective agency is a key part, as we shall see later, of what he calls “process freedom” as a fair decision-making process (in contrast to “opportunity freedom” which has to do with capabilities). Sen adds that exercising agency entails people making their own decisions about their individual and communal well-being and freedoms, rather than acquiescing to the “force of circumstances” or letting scientists and politicians make all the decisions.¹¹

Exercising agency also implies active deliberation (that prioritizes valued capabilities), decision, and implementation processes that enable individuals and collectivities to make a difference in the world. For Sen, the exercise of agency is instrumentally valuable (when it leads to well-being of self and others) and constructively valuable (when it shapes and forges values). In addition, agency is intrinsically valuable insofar as it is intrinsically good that people are authors of their own lives and not mere effects of internal or external causes. Thus, it is fair to say that if PB works as it should, then Sen would be a fan because, among other things, it expresses agency, shapes values, and has good consequences with respect to individual and communal well being (the realization of valued capabilities).

¹¹ It is necessary to point out that Sen is not against assistance coming from other groups, for example, scientists or officials, as long as their help promotes rather than compromises the agency of the agents. Also, these views of exercising personal agency have important links to the previously discussed concepts of citizenship. Sen (1999) believes that the idea of citizenship highlights the necessity to consider people as agents in and of their own lives, rather than as beings who are determined by external or internal forces, or whose “administered” well-being or advantage is the only actual or desirable goal. In harmony with Sen’s views, Posas (2003) explains that “to achieve human development as freedom, individuals have to use or exercise their capacity for agency (a sort of supercapability, one by which the agent prioritizes and decides on lower level capabilities or freedoms). Individuals must believe themselves not as passive recipients of aid, but rather as active agents of their own development, as the driving force of change, as social subjects able to transform their own situation and the society where they live” (p. 15).

When individuals have power, Sen adds, they can and should participate in the process of creation and implementation of social justice. When they lack power, they should contest and gain power, that is, become “empowered.”¹² This idea of becoming an agent includes not only planning projects that promote social justice (equality of basic capabilities), but also being involved in the formulation and determination of moral values on which such programs are based. From this, one could conclude that agency freedom and achievement is the link that connects human development and an active, responsible, and creative citizenship, which in turn should be a key aspect in a democratic society. Nonetheless, for this link to exist, society must count on an open and receptive government, in which citizens have a say in the administration of public matters, including the improvement of their own well-being (Jorge et al., 2012).

In the democracy sub-section of this chapter I shall have more to say about how these normative notions link to the vision of, an inclusive and deep democracy. But for now, I note that Sen (1999) views not only agency but also democracy as intrinsically, instrumentally, and constructively good. Sen does not understand democracy merely as elections or majority rule; instead, he believes that the ideal of democratic governance implies much more than the right to vote and the duty to respect election outcomes.¹³ Some

¹² In a recent essay *Empowerment, Agency and Power* (2013), Canadian philosopher and development ethicist Jay Drydyk establishes that empowerment has three dimensions. The first is agency: “people are *empowered* insofar as they are better able to shape their own lives” (p. 260). Although agency is necessary for empowerment, it is not sufficient, for empowerment also is connected—as agency alone is not—to certain notions of well-being and power (the other two dimensions). A person or group is not empowered if it exercises its agency to decrease others’ well-being. Moreover, an individual or group is not empowered if it fails to contend with and seek to overcome domineering powers. Drydyk argues that any development change that fails to deliver one of these three dimensions is less empowering than an alternative scenario where all three dimensions prevail. Drydyk’s ideal of empowerment will be particularly useful in future analysis that concerns not only the participatory decision-making stage of PB, but also its project execution stage, during which results that ultimately increase or decrease well-being are achieved (or not).

¹³ Similarly, in his essay “When is Development More Democratic” (2005), Drydyk explains that common definitions of democracy—in which only voting in general elections or electing representatives are the sole

examples of those implications are the protection of liberties and freedoms, the right of free speech, and the respect for legal entitlements. Sen considers democracies to be better than other governance systems in the sense that democracies put greater emphasis on responding to people's needs/preferences and as well as on enabling members to exercise agency. He believes that democracy has constructive value because it provides institutions and processes that allow people to construct and decide on the values and priorities they have as a society. The problem is that even in countries recognized as democracies at the national level, local-level politics, which is the level at which civil society members can more easily influence outcomes, might fall short of the democratic ideal. This work highlights different kinds of local settings in the DR to explain and defend this last point.

Finally, let's turn to Sen's views of development. Sen understands development from a broad perspective: an appropriate conception of development must not only look at

conditions considered for labeling a system democratic—are too narrow. Such conceptualization leaves out too many people and too many activities from the scope of democracy. (It should also be mentioned that recent studies examine cases in which authoritarian regimes have employed “elections” to camouflage and justify authoritarian control. See Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*, 2010). If a conception of democratic activity should include citizen involvement in more ways than merely voting, then Drydyk asks two important questions: To what extent would political activism constitute enhancement of democracy? Should activity only within democratic institutions be deemed as democratic activity? To answer such interrogations he introduces a criterion of democratic functioning in which he emphasizes the role the degree of citizen influence when evaluating how democratic a system is. He argues that “not all participatory schemes make development more democratic, and those that do may do so incompletely, reducing some democratic shortfalls while leaving or creating others. Therefore, merely calling for development to be more participatory is not adequate. What we must call for is making development more democratic” (p. 249). The core idea behind this notion goes back to the capability approach; for Drydyk, no democracy in which people are deprived from influencing social conditions that affect them and impede them from living in ways they have reason to value is a worthy social goal. He goes further, positing that what matters is not the presence of participation and deliberation, but the extent to which people can actually and effectively make the desired difference (a real impact), and impede further damaging of the capabilities they have reason to value. From this latter claim, it can be noted that he values the availability of democratic activities, on the one hand, and the effectiveness of such activities (influence), on the other hand (Crocker's soon-to-be-presented idea of running one's own life and making a difference in the world). That is, PB in itself does not make the municipalities that implement it more democratic; it is its existence combined with the well-being and agency freedom and achievement that people acquire through it that makes PB more democratic.

economic measures and income-related variables. Instead, he suggests that without ignoring these matters, the development of a society also depends on social and political arrangements, and on civil rights. For Sen, expanding freedoms and agency becomes the end of development and economic growth its means. Sen explains that “what people can positively achieve is influenced by economic opportunities, political liberties, social powers, and the enabling conditions of good health, basic education, and the encouragement and cultivation of initiatives” (p. 5). PB, in this context, would constitute one of such institutional arrangements.

Sen posits that development is a process that allows people to expand the real freedoms they enjoy. From the notion of freedom, we have seen that he differentiates between the process and the opportunity aspects of freedom. The process aspect is what allows people to be free to act and to decide what they believe is better for them and their group. The opportunity aspect refers to the opportunities for well-being (one’s own and that of others) made feasible by one’s actual personal and social circumstances. The application of these ideas to my topic is that while actively participating in PB represents the process aspect of such political liberty and social power, the opportunity aspect would be that of being a resident in a municipality that does PB, and being eligible and enabled to participate meaningfully in deciding priorities for individual and communal well-being. Among the real valued opportunities might be the capabilities to be healthy, adequately nourished, and adequately informed/educated. On the other hand, the opposite concept—unfreedom—can come about because, for example, a person is denied the right of voting or because inadequate opportunities, such as involuntary starvation, may impede the individual from achieving his/her minimum goals or basic capabilities. Again, in the PB

context, the absence of such participatory bodies (or the absence of any other means to constitute a forum with a similar reach), where citizens can deliberate about what their priorities are and hold politicians (and themselves) accountable for the implementation of such priorities, is an unfreedom when compared to those who have such forums available. Because unfreedom impedes individuals from attaining their minimum goals, Sen understands poverty as a lack of opportunities, a social deprivation, and, finally, a deficit of agency and democracy. Together these unfreedoms are the opposite of (good) development.

2.2.2 Crocker

David Crocker has broadened the scope of the capability approach to feature a more explicit and nuanced accounts than Sen of agency and democratic participation and their implications for ethically-based development. As such, his contributions can be characterized as an “agency-oriented” capability approach.

In his book *Ethics of Global Development: Agency, Capability and Deliberative Democracy*, Crocker (2008), in agreement with Sen, presents his view that development should be studied by considering not only measures of growth and economic progress, but also by considering its normative aspect, which includes posing moral questions and providing answers through public discussion and deliberation. From this perspective, Crocker argues that a developed society “is one whose established institutions realize or approximate (what the proponent believes to be) worthwhile goals. These goals include the overcoming of economic and social deprivation” (p. 42). He stresses that development should not treat human beings as tools for development; instead, human beings are the center and reason for development.

Regarding capabilities, Crocker's view is similar to Sen's—he views capabilities or freedoms as the set of functionings open to the person, given the person's personal characteristics as well as economic and social constraints. Agency, for him (following Sen), is a super-capability that enables an agent to select and prioritize other freedoms or capabilities and implement them in the world. Moreover, agency, which comes in kinds and degrees, is something all human beings should have at least at a basic level (as well as be over a basic threshold of well-being). Exercising agency implies an active deliberation about values and options for action, as well as choice making and impact on the world. For Crocker “individuals and communities are agents to the extent that they scrutinize reasons for various courses of action, decide for themselves, act, and have an impact in the world” (2012, p. 48). From this latter ideal, one could infer that the more an individual or a community is able to move beyond being a mere effect of impersonal causes or the passive recipient of the actions of others, and instead conceive of, deliberate about, decide on, and realize goals and policies on their own, the more agency they enjoy. Although agency can be exercised to do bad things, such as reduce the agency and violate the rights of others, when used responsibly and informed by an ideal of moral equality, agency results in the achievement of valuable functionings for the agent and others. By engaging in a public deliberation and making decisions concerning proposals for policy and action, a setting, such as PB can—and is likely to—serve as a platform for groups to realize and protect valued capabilities.¹⁴ If such ideal is realized, then authentic development is attained—

¹⁴Connecting the idea of agency with that of citizenship, Posas (2003) makes an important point: the condition of citizenship should not only be analyzed from the angle of belonging to a political community; instead, it should also be analyzed from the capacity to act and have the ability to produce significant changes, and such changes should be judged based on the values and objectives of the social subjects. This capacity to choose and accomplish goals is what Sen and Crocker identify as agency, and recognize as essential for a full sense of citizenship in a democratic society. For Posas, it is agency, indeed, that allows citizens to confront successfully the existence of inequality, social exclusion and poverty in our societies. He explains that agency

“Authentic development occurs when groups at whatever level become subjects who deliberate, decide, and act in the world rather than being either victims of circumstance or objects of someone else’s decisions, the tool of someone else’s designs” (2008, p. 339).

As a way to better conceptualize agency, Crocker derives from Sen’s works four elements:

(1) *self-determination*: the person decides for himself or herself rather than someone or something else making the decision to do *X*; (2) *reason orientation and deliberation*: the person bases his or her decisions not on whims or impulses but on reasons, such as the pursuit of goals; (3) *action*: the person performs or has a role in performing *X*; and (4) *impact on the world*: the person thereby brings about (or contributes to bringing about) change in the world. (2012, p. 80)

For Crocker, a person is an agent and exercises agency to the extent that his or her actions realize each and all of these components. I will come back to these criteria when evaluating PB’s effect on individuals and communities perceptions of their own agency.

I see the freedom for and achievement of agency as the link that connects human development and an active, responsible, and creative citizenship, which in turn should be a key aspect in a democratic society. Now to use this framework for the evaluation of the *democratic* quality of PB, let’s turn to Crocker’s views on democracy. He believes that democracy should be analyzed not as an either/or affair, but rather as a more-or-less phenomenon. He explains that groups are more or less democratic along five dimensions: *breadth, depth, range, control, and separation* or plurality of institutional powers. The

enables citizens to: 1) effectively participate in the political decisions that govern their lives, 2) participate together with the other citizens, in the decisions about “what,” “how” and “for whom” the decisions and changes are made, and 3) establish the required social links to act—with a spirit of tolerance, respect and negotiation in differing solutions—on their surroundings and transform them.

dimension of *breadth* refers to the degree of inclusiveness,¹⁵ that is, a more inclusive democracy is that which has wider participation from various groups and individuals, for example, the least advantaged. *Depth* refers to the modes of participation, a democracy where only voting occurs is not as deep as one in which other modes, such as free discussion and deliberation, also take place. To illuminate some of the different modes of participation, Crocker proposes—in relation to the degrees to which citizens exercise agency—the following classification for participation in decision-making:¹⁶ (1) nominal participation, (2) passive participation, (3) consultative participation, (4) petitionary participation, (5) participatory implementation, (6), bargaining, and (7) deliberative participation. “The further we go down the list, the “thicker” is the participatory mode in the sense of more fully expressing individual or collective agency” (Crocker, 2008, p. 344).

Going back to democracy’s dimensions, *range* alludes to the kind of questions that citizens can have a say on, and to the kinds of institutions that are democratic (which may include non-governmental institutions/groups). The *control* dimension is about the extent to which individuals can influence decisions and make a difference in the world. Finally, the *separation of power* refers to institutional balance among governmental institutions and between them and non-governmental bodies, such as a free press, political parties, unions, and independent advocacy groups. To avoid domination, in which some unfairly diminish the agency of others, it is important in democracy that there be countervailing powers.¹⁷

¹⁵ It must be noted that even inclusive democratic models differ with respect to which inhabitants are counted as (full) citizens.

¹⁶ For specific definitions of these modes of participation see Annex one.

¹⁷ Anticipating some of the dimensions set forth by Crocker, Carson and Hartz-Karp (2005) characterize deliberative democracy as a process that requires: “Influence: capacity to influence policy and decision-making; Inclusion: representative of population, inclusive of diverse viewpoints and values, equal

There may be limits to each of these dimensions and more of one may mean less of another. For example, more inclusiveness may result in less depth. Similarly, there may be plenty of democratic deliberation regarding a wide set of issues, but little impact is achieved. One democratic task is to decide—in a particular context—on the limits of each dimension, the balance of the different dimensions, and the demands as well as the limits of that decision-making process.

Crocker argues that democracy is, in addition to its instrumental and constructive value, intrinsically valuable because it provides citizens with agency freedom/achievement. For democracy provides citizens with opportunities to exercise the intrinsic good of agency both individually and collectively, shape public policies, and influence beneficial change. As an advocate of deliberative democracy, Crocker puts emphasis on the exchange of reasons in the making of democratic decisions—the democratic process of debate and deliberation aims to identify and solve concrete problems and to provide a fair way in which free and equal members of a group can present proposals justified in a way that others can understand and accept. In this way, members can overcome their differences and reach more or less agreement about action and policy (see pp. 310-12). Sometimes, agreement is unanimous; more often, it involves voting, but the winning majority often seeks to do justice to the minority's concerns. In Chapter 5, I discuss the ways in which PB succeeds and fails to realize these features of Crocker's model of democracy, and the ways it presents problems that could be overcome by evolving more and better democracy within the PB context.

opportunity to participate; and Deliberation: open dialogue, access to information, space to understand and reframe issues, respect, movement toward consensus” (p. 2).

The capability approach is without question broader and more complex than what the previous lines suggest, but the explanations of agency, democracy, and development as understood by capability scholars like Sen and Crocker capture a lens by which DR's PB will be analyzed, hence making this literature review an appropriate theoretical framework. However, I believe that we must add to our lens by appealing to some additional ideas from the literatures of participatory and deliberative democracy. Hence, I will take a step outside the capability approach to include a discussion of both models of democracy.

2.3 Participatory and Deliberative Democracy

No matter how history is read, one can definitely find different types of relations between the state and civil society. Since the emergence of nation-states, both the state and society have fought for their own autonomy and power, arriving at situations such as absolutism, in which civil society has little to say; democracy, in which civil society plays a role in the political affairs and governance; and anarchy, in which state governance is altogether absent. Democracy, the type of governance of interest here, is not understood or practiced in the same manner across time or geography.¹⁸ Today, one can talk of different views of democracy that range from a minimalist perspective, which only embraces voting, individual liberty, and the rule of law; to a maximalist one, which emphasizes empirically and promotes normatively the relationship between the state and the citizens, as well as

¹⁸ Regardless of the different ways in which democracy is carried out, Dahl (2010) synthesizes three necessary conditions for democracy, in general: "1) control of military and police by elected officials; 2) democratic beliefs and political culture; and 3) no strong foreign control hostile to democracy" (p. 147). He also sets forth two non-necessary, yet favorable conditions for democracy: "1) a modern market economy and society; and 2) weak subcultural pluralism" (p. 147). See, Chapter 12 of Dahl's (2010) *On Democracy*, to expand on these conditions to democracy.

their civic, political and social rights. Due to these differences, the literature has made distinctions among models of democracy, and their correspondent characteristics.¹⁹ In the current study I focus on two models: participatory and deliberative democracy (P/DD).

These two models of democracy can be tracked back to antiquity, especially to ancient Greece. Different from contemporary politics where citizens are usually passive subjects in policy-making, Ober (2010) explains that in classical Athens, especially, policy-making needed to satisfy not only experts, but also the community, from which vital information was gathered and taken as useful knowledge for policy-making. This use of innovative participatory institutions of self-government made ordinary Athenian citizens just as responsible for public affairs as experts, making the former group politically capable without becoming political masters of all government practices.²⁰

Since the 1960s, the notions of P/DD have re-emerged. Hendriks (2010) defines participatory democracy as an integrative (non-majoritarian) and direct or face-to-face (self-governing) type of democracy; it combines direct self-governance, with integrative decision-making in a face-to-face power-free dialogue where people deliberate over issues together. In a participatory democracy model, citizens play a role of player/speaker (i.e., voting is not the only task of citizens). As a result, speaking in public, cooperating, and participating actively are crucial citizen activities/responsibilities. Hendriks (2010) states that one of the main characteristics of participatory democracy is that, “it is shaped interactively from the bottom up,” which refers to how the democratic process consists

¹⁹ See David Held’s *Models of Democracy*, 2006, and Frank Hendriks’ *Vital Democracy: A Theory of Democracy in Action*, 2010.

²⁰ Ober (2010) explains that one of such innovative institutions was the Council of 500: a group of 500 elected citizens representing the different tribes/demes, with the responsibility of deciding which matters to discuss and decide in the full Assembly of Athenian citizens (which was open to all men in good standing).

largely—if not entirely—of citizens’ active participation rather than rule by elected politicians and appointed technocrats. According to Ober (2010), one valuable normative outcome of this model of democracy is that it expands “the scope for human flourishing through the exercise of individuals’ political capacity to associate with others in public decision making” (p. 5).

In the case of deliberative democracy, Baiocchi (2003) refers to it as a substantive—in contrast to a normatively neutral, purely procedural—version of democracy based on public justification. “It calls for the deliberation of citizens as reasonable equals in the legitimate exercise of authority. It offers a way of transforming the preferences and intentions of citizens to enhance the possibilities for social cooperation” (p. 46). Developing the concept of deliberative democracy, Crocker (2008) states that “the point of deliberation is to provide a fair way for morally free and equal group members to cooperate together and forge... a reasoned agreement about their goals, values, policies, and actions.”²¹ As a result, deliberative democracy publicly ‘transforms’ rather than merely aggregates preferences” (p. 312). Deliberative democracy encompasses a justification and transformation of preferences, rather than taking them as given, as occurs in merely aggregative forms of democracy, where what matters is only stated preferences and not reasons (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004).²² By comparing this definition to that of

²¹ Ober (2010) adds that a “democratic commitment to deliberation requires decisions to be made by persuasive discourse and reciprocal reason-giving, while democratic tolerance for political dissent allows critics to expose inconsistencies between core values and current practices” (p. 4).

²² Without a doubt, aggregative forms of democracy have important advantages, among which can be highlighted their ability to produce determinate outcomes and the uncontroversial way in which disagreement can be handled; these advantages show the neutrality embedded in such models. One of the main disadvantages, however, is that aggregative democracy may reinforce existing inequalities in society and does not offer principles to contest whether a result is or is not unfair (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004).

an aggregative and representative democracy,²³ in which citizens participate by merely electing their representatives and other leaders, it is then clear how deliberative democracy enables the functioning of a more active and engaged citizenship in public affairs. It should be noted that in deliberative democracy, deliberation can and should take place within representative or appointed bodies as well as between representatives and their constituents.

Fung and Wright (2003) sum up the principles of participatory democracy in a way that brings together participatory and deliberative democracy (P/DD). They argue that what they call “empowered participatory governance” is participatory in its practical orientation—bottom-up participation, and face-to-face solution-generation. For example, in Brazil’s PB, face-to-face deliberation about local problems takes place in neighborhood assemblies. However, these groups also elect representatives to city-wide bodies that in turn deliberate about city-wide priorities and policies. Gutmann and Thompson, two vigorous proponents of deliberative democracy for the US, identify a multiplicity of sites for governance by deliberation, for example, the US Senate and the Supreme Court.

Even though one of the clear differences between participatory and deliberative democracy is that the former only occurs in face-to-face relationship, while the latter also can involve deliberators who themselves are elected (with or without prior deliberation), it might also be noted that some scholars—for example, Hendriks—insist that participatory

²³ I hereby summarize some of the main differences between an aggregative (voter) democracy and a participatory one, as in Hendriks (2010), Figure 6.1: a) In a voter democracy an aggregation of individual preferences forges public opinion, while in a participatory democracy this happens by more than just adding individual preferences; b) bigger populations are better for statistical aggregation in voter democracy, whereas quality matters more for participatory democracy rather than quantity; c) the best match in a voter democracy is made between consumers and suppliers of public goods, while in a participatory democracy the main match is between citizens who engage in deliberation; free speech of free agents fuels a voter democracy, whereas committed dialogue does the same for participatory democracy (see p. 108).

democracy always employs decision-making by absolute consensus. Most theorists and practitioners of deliberative democracy, in contrast, argue that absolute consensus often has the defect of either protecting the status quo or giving a minority unfair power. Hence, deliberative democracy sometimes endorses majority rule, but only following efforts to reach consensus and to embody minority concerns in the result of voting. In the rest of this dissertation I will emphasize DR's PB processes as examples of face-to-face participation in which deliberation is a prominent feature.

Gutmann and Thompson (2004) set forth four necessary conditions for deliberative democracy:

(1) Deliberative democracy needs to be *reciprocal*—the reasons behind each side's arguments should be acceptable to free and equal individuals interested in fair cooperation;

(2) Deliberative democracy needs to be *accessible*—reasons must be expressed in public and communicated in a language that can be equally understood by all stakeholders;

(3) Deliberative democracy needs to be *binding*—whatever the decision that is made with deliberations, it should be enforced for some period of time (in other words, deliberations are not just talk, but instead a process that leads to action by a responsible party); and

(4) Deliberative democracy needs to be *dynamic or provisional*—participants' ideas can be transformed through reason-giving dialogue, and such transformation of ideas may change previous decisions.

Based on these conditions, Crocker (2008) follows Gutmann and Thompson and proposes three deliberative ideals that should regulate deliberations:

(1) *reciprocity*—“each group member makes proposals and offers justifications in

terms that others can understand and can accept” (p.312);

(2) *publicity*—each member is free to engage in the deliberative process, which must be transparent to all; and

(3) *accountability*—each group member must offer acceptable reasons and be accountable to other deliberators.

I revisit these necessary conditions and ideals when assessing the democratic quality of PB assemblies in Chapter 5.

Just as there is no formation in football that does not have merits as well as weaknesses (an aggressive attacking offense leaves a side vulnerable to counter attacks), so any approach to governance will have strengths as well as weaknesses, the latter which may to some extent be mitigated by institutional designs. In Table 1, which now follows, I summarize current views of the promises and advantages,²⁴ as well as the risks and disadvantages of participatory/deliberative institutions.

Table 1. Advantages and Disadvantages of Participatory/Deliberative Democracy (P/DD)

Advantages	Disadvantages or Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P/DD creates equal opportunities for all members of a group to make meaningful contributions to the decision-making process. That is, it illustrates and promotes a form of egalitarianism. • P/DD increases people’s perception of the legitimacy of the political system and it increases faith in the democratic process since people who deliberate become authors of the process, become empowered, and feel that the political system is indeed “of the people” (Fishkin, 1995) • P/DD seeks to broaden the range of people who have access to such opportunities That is, it increases Crocker’s breadth dimension of democracy, especially those previously marginalized or without voice • P/DD allows communities to solve issues that affect each of them directly, and that the solution are likely to result in better quality of life, at least in distributive terms. That is, it promotes the common good and social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When participation is not fair, discussion-based decision-making may be affected by the existence of powerful groups (e.g., the elite) who may manipulate the conversation by enhancing their own position to advance their own interests • Ordinary citizens are sometimes happy to leave political decision-making to the authorities, since most have no time for lengthy nights of democratic participation and

²⁴ Luigi Pellizzoni summarizes the positive consequences of deliberation by claiming that “it produces ‘better citizens: individuals who are more informed, active, responsible, open to the arguments of others, cooperative, fair, able to deal with problems, [and] ready to alter their opinions” (as in Steiner, 2012, p. 222).

<p>justice. One reason justice is more likely than in aggregative democracy is that participants must consider how acceptable and fair one's views and votes will be in front of other people, rather than just in relation to one's own interests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P/DD allows people to discover the benefits and enjoyment of collective efforts • P/DD increases transparency and accountability, since decisions are made publically and representatives and local authorities are held accountable • P/DD widens knowledge about one's own and other people's needs, experiences, and ideas (Delli Carpini et al., 2004) • P/DD produces greater levels of consensus and increases tolerance for opposing points of view (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996) • P/DD fosters win-win situations for most if not all participants • P/DD promotes both the most justifiable conceptions when dealing with moral disagreements among the participants (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004) • P/DD recognizes and promotes human dignity because it expresses individual and collective agency (Crocker, 2008) • P/DD represents one means of democratizing in the larger national sphere, as it provides access to the disadvantaged to engage in democratic participation and to be part of social change (Dreze & Sen, 2002) • P/DD creates formal linkages of responsibility, resource distribution, and communication, in a way that local units of empowered ordinary citizens are connected to other super-ordinate centralized authorities (Fung & Wright, 2003) • P/DD balances the importance of what happens before and after voting in the decision-making process (Crocker, 2012) 	<p>deliberation—cost of participation is high (Mansbridge, 1980)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most citizens lack the skills and/or opportunities to take on deliberations in an effective manner, and as a consequence a deliberative process can produce unintended results (Delli Carpini et al., 2004) • Similarly, for highly technical issues that require specialized knowledge, a decision arrived at by an ignorant group of average citizens might be detrimental • Class, educational, caste, ethnic, and other inequalities can be reproduced and even accentuated (Baicocchi, 2003) • Indeterminacy—there are too many power imbalances that make it difficult for deliberation to occur • The success of deliberations (including people's motivations and capabilities to do so) is context dependent on cultural and institutional conditions. (Delli Carpini et al., 2004)
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In the following analysis, I proceed as if deliberative democracy is a case of participatory (face-to-face) democracy in which deliberations are a crucial step in the aggregation and transformation of preferences.

2.4 Understanding Participatory Budgeting

When PB is analyzed in places where it has been implemented, its experimental, innovative, and flexible nature becomes apparent. Although the exact process of PB varies

from one place to the other, generally it can be described as one of democratic participation and deliberation in decision-making, in which ordinary citizens have a direct voice in the way a portion of a municipal budget is allocated. More formally, according to Shah (2007), PB is “a tool for educating, engaging, and empowering citizens and strengthening demand for good governance” (p. 1). PB follows a bottom-up design, in which all citizens, rather than a selected few, can participate in their respective community assemblies. As Avritzer (2009) explains, PB is also bottom-up because the government does not have a vote, only a voice—the municipal governments bounds itself to facilitating the process of deliberation and leaves—at least some—decisions to the people.

The first experience of PB is usually tracked back to 1989 in Porto Alegre, Brazil. It came about as a citizen and institutional response to local problems—such as sanitation and infrastructure—and the limited resources and competence of the local government, often caused by income and social inequalities in the municipality.

Defined as a democratic practice and a participatory institution, PB has features of both direct and representative democracy approaches in the making of budgets.²⁵ PB is direct because it offers citizens an open entry and face-to-face opportunity to influence the allocation of public resources by deliberating, negotiating, and engaging in decision-making; and PB is also representative as communities elect representatives to the second level (the municipality). To highlight these mixed features, it is important to note that in some PB experiences, such as in Brazil and the DR, it is individual citizens who vote in

²⁵ Selee and Peruzzotti (2009) present two interesting remarks about this dual democratic characteristic of PB: on the one hand, that a direct democracy practice like PB is likely to work well in smaller communities since it enables face-to-face interaction and the creation of strong social norms among residents. The authors also claim that modern and complex societies require representation as a way to safeguard political equality, a feature that is a fundamental idea of democracy. In chapter 5 I present evidence that validates this double perspective.

PB, at least in the first-level assemblies, and then represent their neighborhoods in second or higher level assemblies; whereas in other cases, for instance, Peru, participation follows a “corporate model” from the start, where voting participants are strictly representing CSOs.

It is also important to highlight the link between the academic literatures of PB and P/DD, both of which have as objectives prompting more effective citizen participation in the development of policies and political decision-making (Wampler & Hartz-Karp, 2012). In many instances, and certainly in the case of the DR to be studied in the following chapters, PB includes deliberative processes, in which ordinary citizens are given a voice, within a respectful and egalitarian process, that enables them to influence social change. However, and as pointed out by Wampler and Hartz-Karp, such deliberation in PB is not as robust as it is in programs that focus primarily on deliberative processes.. The authors find that “deliberative practices associated with PB often fall short of the standards set in the academic literature for high-quality public deliberation” (p. 1).²⁶ The questions of interest become whether the limited decision-making power that is transmitted to ordinary citizens via PB can influence the way in which local authorities allocate resources, and whether purely deliberative processes can overcome the failure of past experiences in achieving substantive change. I revisit these questions in subsequent chapters.

With PB’s link between participation and deliberation, it is necessary to understand the deliberation that occurs within PB not only as the public debate that takes place during assemblies, but also as “part of a broader ongoing conversation among citizens and

²⁶ Regardless of such relative failure of deliberations within PB, Wampler and Hartz-Karp still believe that deliberative practices within PB are relevant to deliberative democracy scholars given its widespread expansion that have transformed PB into one of the “most widely used form od deliberative, participatory policymaking in the world” (Wampler & Hartz-Karp, 2012, p.1).

government officials” (Wampler, 2012, p.9). Wampler explains that deliberations provide important lessons for participants who may never have had access to political power before: they gain information, learn how authority is exercised, gain a glimpse of the decision-making process government officials go through when facing difficult trade-offs, and make bonds with other citizens whom they would otherwise most likely not have met.

The nature of PB deliberations can be very different, and in some communities—when compared with ideal public deliberation—it looks a lot like “strategic bargaining”.²⁷ Chapter 5 will analyze the variety of such strategic and deliberative interactions that take place in the DR before, during, and after PB assemblies, and where and how such bonds of solidarity and alliances are formed. The analysis will show the equal (and even greater) importance of informal deliberations outside of PB’s structured meetings when compared to official deliberations. As Wampler explains, and as the evidence will show later for the DR case, “PB depends on the crafting of these alliances because the success of these programs depends on having a robust number of citizens who are willing to participate each year” (Wampler, 2012, p. 11). This discussion could be summed up with the idea that deliberation should be analyzed not only based on the content of what is said and done during PB public consultations, but also on the growth of the public sphere and its wider societal effects (Wampler, 2012).

Another important normative implication of PB is that it serves as a tool for decentralizing or local decision-making power—PB “contributes to democratic deepening if and when it expands the scope and depth of citizen participation in public decision-

²⁷ Andrew Selee (2009) documents a similar finding for deliberations in participatory institutions in Tijuana, Mexico, without disregarding how such “strategic deliberations” still “increase the range of issues and voices involved in the debate” (p. 13).

making” (Heller, 2001, p.140). However, such expansion of power is not guaranteed by the mere existence of the process. Wampler (2012) explains that when PB is analyzed as a social change tool, two types of processes should be distinguished: one designed to produce desired social change and one led by the government and its CSOs allies to make nothing more than marginal improvements that minimally serve their purposes of holding onto power. Regardless of the reason behind the design of a PB, Wampler assumes that citizens tend to support it insofar as they are able to identify beneficial changes due to their participation. In contrast, when citizens do not perceive tangible and good change in their lives, participation is unlikely to continue. In Wampler’s terms “support for improving democratic legitimacy is not an abstract ideological position, but it is linked to increasing individuals’ empowerment and improvements in social well-being” (p.2). Although this study, unfortunately, does not observe the stage of project *execution* that leads to such improvements, later chapters do analyze participation in terms of the dimensions alluded to in the preceding lines (i.e., depth, breadth, control and range).

Let us now turn to discuss briefly the benefits and risks of PB. If done right, as shown in Table 2, PB presents many benefits, both pragmatically and from a social justice perspective: (a) it enhances transparency and accountability, (b) it reduces patronage and clientelism, (c) it strengthens local social capital,²⁸ (d) it produces more egalitarian social policies by inserting civil society (a grassroots dimension) into the broader polity, (e) it strengthens inclusive governance by allowing the least advantaged to voice their opinions and influence decision-making and (f) it enables governments to move beyond political

²⁸ Putnam (1993) defines it as the “glue” in social life that enables “participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives” developing in the process trust, norms and networks (p.167).

parties and informal networks to obtain information about citizens' preferences. As a bonus, PB can also help change the way citizens think about problems, moving individuals to a belief in the importance of collective solutions to public or common problems.

Regardless of the attractiveness of this list of strengths, PB also comes with major risks, which are summarized below. Among them is the danger that elites may capture the process and results. These elites are of various kinds, such as economic, political, intellectual, ethnic/religious or gender (Shah, 2007). This capture can perpetuate—through manipulation and other abuses of power—existing social injustices by eclipsing or overriding the participation of marginalized groups. Another danger is that people may view PB as yet another consultative exercise with no real delivery of solutions for basic needs. Also worrisome is that the information that governments obtain through PB regarding citizens' political and policy preferences, could be used not to affect social change positively, but to reinforce government maintenance of and control over the status quo (Wampler, 2012). Finally, as we shall see, there is also the risk of the DR version of PB, for it may create unrealistic expectations that all communities will be winners when, in fact, only a limited number of communities have their proposals funded.

Here is a summary of the advantages and risks of PB:

Table 2. Advantages and Risks of PB

Advantages of PB	Risks of PB
PB fosters/strengthens: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency • Accountability 	PB could: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be hijacked by elites/interest groups who may abuse it by exercising illegitimate and unjust power²⁹

²⁹ This includes the case of autocratic leaders presented by Cameron, Hershberg and Sharpe (2012) when referring to potential antidemocratic pitfalls in the expansion of participatory processes like PB: “ autocratic

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence/avoidance of patronage and clientelism • Social Capital • Egalitarian social policies • Inclusive governance • Direct communication of citizens' preferences • Collective action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclude groups from decision-making (especially the most vulnerable or deprived) • Perpetuate existing social disparities • Be viewed as a bandwagon • Elevate the expectations of all participants, when not all can win • Decrease participation (and public learning) over time if focused on specific public works (i.e., people stop participating after the improvements they need have been made)
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With these benefits and risks in mind, it is now useful to explore possible pre-requisites for the success of PB. Heller (2001) argues that “the building of local democratic government, even under the most favorable conditions, is anything but linear. It requires not only that a favorable political alignment be maintained but that a delicate and workable balance between the requirements of institution building and grassroots participation be struck” (p. 133). Analyses of different countries’ experiences highlight the importance of such historical, legislative, and cultural contexts—which not all may look the same—for the success of PB settings. For example, Goldfrank (2007) identified lessons from Latin American cases in Bolivia, Brazil, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Peru. He found that despite significant design challenges for PB, it has succeeded across localities with very different underlying conditions. Without claiming them as necessary and sufficient conditions, Goldfrank finds that the following five factors typically correlate with PB success: (1) the majority of participants are of an indigenous ethnicity, from a party of the left, or both;³⁰ (2) there is weak or non-existent opposition from local political elites; (3) national or

leaders may deploy these institutions not to buttress citizen autonomy but to maximize their own power at the expense of their opponents” (p. 6).

³⁰ These two factors are not relevant to consider in the case study that follows, since in the DR there is no significant difference in ideology between the two major political parties, both of which have center-left political discourses and together have about 97% of the national vote. Moreover, in the DR there are no indigenous peoples or other minority ethnic groups.

international aid agencies provide funding or technical assistance; (4) the municipality has enough revenues to make significant investments in projects and programs; and (5) there is a strong sense of civic engagement, and civil society organizations (CSOs) that have not been destroyed by guerrilla warfare³¹ or clientelist politics. Goldfrank carefully clarifies that even though PB has succeeded in some dimensions, there is no evidence of dramatic reduction of poverty levels.

For the Brazilian case, Baiocchi et al. (2010) find that PB increases transparency, encourages innovation, improves accountability, strengthens the political capacity of civil society, and incentivizes agency by providing tangible returns in the form of investment projects that the participants have chosen. The authors find that PB has potential to realize pragmatic and normative goals as long as there is a “high” willingness from civil society to participate and “high” willingness from the municipal power to not just foster a consultative and non-binding participation, but to delegate authority to ordinary citizens in a way that they can truly influence policy-making.

Folscher (2007a) examines a different region, Central and Eastern Europe, and finds that citizens are skeptical of the prospects of PB and collective action because historically they have been detached from decisions that affect them. She explains that these informants, seeing themselves to be merely passive recipients of public services, believe that they cannot affect what local governments do about their problems. This suggests that people in Folscher’s study would report low levels of agency (certainly low agency achievement, but possibly, low agency freedom as well). At the same time, another

³¹ This is yet another factor non-relevant in the DR scenario, since DR has had no internal conflict since the 1960’s.

factor that characterizes PB in this region is that, with few exceptions, NGOs have initiated PB and funded it, which, according to Folscher, makes PB and the collective decisions it generates less valuable and less sustainable. This evidence confirms the assumption that local government autonomy and local resource availability are favorable enabling conditions for successful PB.

Folscher (2007b) also examines Asian experiences and finds that whether PB programs are successful depends both on environmental factors, such as public actors willing to listen to each other, and on the design and implementation of PB, such as well-designed mechanisms that allow citizens direct access to participate. She finds that participation is counterproductive in cases where local officials and office holders have no real interest in aligning policy and spending with citizens' preferences. This evidence shows that the political support of the authorities is vital to the success of PB and that not only the quality of deliberation and participation among citizens matter. Folscher's findings for Asia are in line with what He (2011) finds for the particular case of China, where officials seem to be using programs like PB to solidify their power, rather than to expand that of citizens' (as in Wampler, 2012).

Finally, also adding to the importance of the political context, Heller (2001) finds that bottom-up and grassroots democratic initiatives in Kerala (India) and Porto Alegre have had successful expansion and results because they were part of a political project and counted with strong local government support.

The brief summary I have presented depicts the strong potential of institutional reforms of this participatory kind to produce transformative consequences. However, this result only happens where decision-making power is at least partially given to citizens, so

that they become authors of their own lives. Moreover, some prior conditions, such as a strong civil society and the political willingness of local authorities, seem to be clear determinants that favor the success of such inclusionary practices. It is important to note, however, that these enabling conditions are helpful or favorable rather than necessary prior conditions, for they can also develop in and through PB itself. I will subsequently evaluate whether these conditions enable PB in the DR context.

2.5 Participatory Budgeting in the Dominican Republic

Before explaining how PB is done in the DR, it is necessary to provide a brief country overview. Note that in Chapters 3 and 5 I will provide a more detailed description of the characteristics of the municipalities and the local PB processes under analysis.

2.5.1 The Dominican Republic – Brief Country Overview

The DR is a developing country with the largest economy in the Central America and Caribbean region. It occupies two thirds of an island shared with Haiti and has a surface area of 48,442 square kilometers (about 16,000 square kilometers larger than the state of Maryland). The country is divided in 32 provinces, which, as I have noted, are then divided into municipalities or municipal districts (which are equivalent to cities). Municipalities are divided into zones, zones into blocks, and blocks into communities/neighborhoods (*barrios*).

The Dominican population approximates 10.28 million inhabitants. This population is predominantly of mixed European and African origin. No ethnicities derived from

indigenous groups persist.³² Highlands and mountains with fertile valleys dominate the geography of the Dominican side of the island. The main industries are tourism, sugar processing, mining (ferronickel and gold), textiles, cement, and tobacco.

The country has been governed by a representative democracy (heavily presidentialist). For the last 18 years the *Partido de la Liberación Dominicana* (Dominican Liberation Party) and the *Partido Revolucionario Dominicano* (Dominican Revolutionary Party) have held power (the latter only for four years, 2000-2004, of the 18). There are no significant ideological differences between these two political parties.

According to World Bank indicators for 2012, the DR's current (US\$) gross domestic product increased to 59.05 billion and its current (US\$) gross national income per capita to \$5,740. Between 1991 and 2012, the Dominican economy grew at an average rate of 5.8 percent per year. Nonetheless, such economic growth has not translated into an equal progress in human development indicators. By 2011, around 40% of the population was considered poor, a situation aggravated by a declining access to basic public services and significant problems in service delivery. The 2013 World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index placed the country in the 105th position (out of 144 countries); the low scores responded to problematic factors such as government corruption (which includes clientelism and nepotism as well as embezzlement of public funds), wastefulness

³² The Hispaniola or Santo Domingo island was populated in pre-Columbian times by an indigenous group called Taínos. The Taínos, however, became quickly extinct due to forced labor and diseases brought by the Spaniards, who discovered the island in Christopher Columbus' first voyage. Columbus imported African slaves, so that production could be kept at similar levels regardless of the decrease in numbers of indigenous laborers. Spain made Santo Domingo the first city of the new world. In 1697, Spain conceded the Western part of the island to France, hence, Haiti or Saint Domingue (as it was then known) emerged. Haiti claimed its independence from France in 1804. The oriental portion of the island, or Santo Domingo Oriental, remained under Spain's dominion until 1821. In 1822, after separating from Spain, Haiti invaded the eastern half of the island. It was not until 1844 that Santo Domingo obtained independence from Haiti, and used the name of Dominican Republic for the first time.

in government spending, organized crime, inefficient police services, trade and tax barriers, and an extremely low quality of electricity and public education.

2.5.2 The Dominican Practice of PB

According to Juan Castillo, a *Fundación Solidaridad*,³³ expert on the topic of citizen participation in the DR and PB, beginning in the 1990s, CSOs, NGOs and citizen participation in general took a new shape in the DR. These initial steps included the creation of neighborhood councils. This emergence of citizen participation was the result of substantial reforms to education and labor as well as DR's transition to a new democracy after strongman Joaquín Balaguer's exit from power. Before the 1990s the degree of integration of civil society depended largely on a mayor's willingness to encourage such associations or on internal characteristics of a given community. The people's participation in budget and investment decisions was not structured, and mostly negligible. Nowadays, however, such citizen involvement is seen as a right of citizenship and civil society, and no politician would ever pronounce himself against this sort of participation. However, Castillo believes that there is usually a disconnect between politicians' discourse and reality, a claim that finds support in my observations from the case studies to be presented later.

The origin of PB in the DR cannot be summarized as a single story for the whole nation—different municipalities have had different experiences. According to Allegretti et al (2011), PB emerged as an initiative of civil society in 85% of the municipalities that

³³ *Fundación Solidaridad* is a Dominican NGO based in Santiago that develops projects to strengthen the capacity of CSOs to produce change, projects of participatory democracy and transparency promotion, and training for CSOs and local governments in topics related to local development. It has been a pioneer in the implementation of PB in the DR (see www.solidaridad.org.do).

employ it,³⁴ and as an initiative of a public figure (e.g., a mayor) in 15%. The authors explain that the first experiences of PB in the DR can be traced to the late nineties when communities and leaders wanted to replicate the success of PB in other countries in the region, particularly Brazil, as well as to respond to increased interest in democratizing municipal governments and making them more effective. The first PB was held in the municipality of Villa González (in the province of Santiago), with assistance from *Fundación Solidaridad*, and technical support from the U.S. Agency for International Development and several other international agencies.

In 2005, as a result of efforts of different mayors, a coalition, which included the National Council for State Reform (CONARE), the National Federation of Municipalities (FEDOMU), and other national and international organizations, established a National Unit for the Technical Supervision and Assistance to Participatory Budgeting. This unit, with quarters in FEDOMU, would serve as the main body responsible for providing technical assistance to PB processes all over the country (Allegretti et al., 2011). Different institutions in this coalition would assist PB in different regions of the country. For example, *Fundación Solidaridad* took over the northwest, which included the already mentioned Villa González, and other institutions helped specific municipalities in the adoption of PB (Coalición, 2005).

In 2007, as a consequence of a dramatic increase in the number of municipalities performing PB (see Table 3),³⁵ the Dominican government enacted a new Municipal Law,

³⁴ Allegretti et al (2011) clarify that for the Dominican context the notion of civil society encompasses FEDOMU, NGOs, INGOs, foundations, and international agencies, rather than specifically local social actors.

³⁵ Although the increasing pattern is evident, FEDOMU as yet has provided no explanation of the dramatic decrease in the number of municipalities doing PB from 2010 to 2011.

Ley 176-07. FEDOMU suggests that such increase was due to good communication among municipalities, FEDOMU and other key players, methodological flexibility, political will, and the fact that municipalities have not prevented, avoided, or—waiting for ideal conditions—delayed the PB process.

The Municipal Law establishes the process of PB as a mechanism of citizen participation—within all communities and neighborhoods—for the discussion, making, and monitoring of municipal budgets.³⁶ The law also specifies that forty percent of the budget for each municipality must be used for capital and investment expenditures.³⁷ From this portion, (by consensus of local governments), 40% should be allocated by the people through PB assemblies for infrastructure and development projects that enhance the socioeconomic conditions of each locality.³⁸ According to FEDOMU, of the annual PB investment, municipalities spend an average of 65-85%. PB projects must belong to a fixed pre-approved list, which the government puts together for the whole country. This list includes such items as schools, road pavement, parks, and libraries; see Annex 2 for Santiago's list as an example. Only in rare cases do PB processes have agendas with a thematic focus, such as youth opportunities or gender equity.

³⁶ The new Constitution of 2010 also establishes that municipal investments would be made through the progressive development of PB processes in order to foster the integration and co-responsibility of citizens in the definition, execution, and control of local development policies (Art 206).

³⁷ Most of the budget for a municipality comes from the 10% of the state's revenues, which, as stipulated in the Law 166-03, must be transferred to the local governments. The capacity of municipalities to generate their own revenues is highly limited and represents, on average, less than a 13% (Allegretti et al., 2011). In any case, data from the National Office of Statistics (ONE) shows that municipalities on average have spent less than the 40% established by the law for non-financial assets. Also, it should be noted as a feature of the DR context, that municipal spending has represented around 3.5% of total public spending, which is already pretty low when compared to other countries, representing only an average of 17% of the GDP (data from ONE, 2004-2010). With such low figures, Allegretti et al (2011) conclude that the monetary capacity of Dominican municipalities is very low, both in relative and absolute terms (p. 141).

³⁸ I have extracted the 40% figure from report of SDE's 2013 budget presented by the local government's department of planning and programming.

Table 3. Expansion of PB in the Dominican Republic, 2003-2013

Period	Number of Municipalities
2003-2004	4
2004-2005	30
2005-2006	59
2006-2007	120
2007-2008	230
2008-2009	239
2009-2010	234
2010-2011	151
2011-2012	173
2012-2013	173

Source: Reyes (2014, personal electronic mail communication) and Allegretti et al. (2011), based on Reyes (2010).

The government's reasons for mandating PB are found in the preface of the above-mentioned law, and the following are some of the reasons especially relevant to the normative focus of this study:

(a) a need exists for a new democratization process that facilitates the generation of a citizenry that is more aware, critical, and demanding;

(b) based on a citizen's right to establish municipal priorities for public projects and services, it is important to create channels for people's direct participation;

(c) it is important to inaugurate a new kind of municipal power based on citizen participation and transparency, institutionalized in a permanent process of consultation so that the population and the local government can jointly make decisions; and

(d) it is important to provide local governments with indicators of the priorities that should be taken into account when elaborating budgets.

The law also declares that it is a responsibility of local governments to provide all

means necessary for the organization of, invitation to,³⁹ and celebration of all activities related to PB. One requirement would be the training of specialists and officials to facilitate all stages of the process, with special emphasis on the feasibility studies of proposed projects.

Let us consider now the structure and process of a DR PB. A PB is divided into three stages, and the Law clearly sets forth the processes involved in each:

Stage 1: Preparation, Diagnosis of Communal Problems, and Generation of the Strategic Vision for Development (Solving the Problems)

This stage typically occurs between the months of July and September each year. During this time, the local authorities and organizations establish how and when the PB will be carried out, and determine the amount of money available (the latter is highly discretionary). Resources are pre-allocated to groups of communities (so-called blocks) in the municipality based on their population size. Local government employees, who will serve as the PB facilitators, are also trained during this stage, and finally, the calendar of assemblies is distributed through various means of communication.

Stage 2: Public Consultations

This stage usually takes place annually between the months of September and December. Based on the available budget per block, the people identify their priorities and decide on the projects they want the local government to execute for their communities during the next fiscal year. Three sets of assemblies occur in sequence:

³⁹ The invitation to assemblies is usually done by sending letters to local organizations, putting up publicity signs, and/or uploading the calendar of assemblies to the local government's website (when existent and functional). In Santo Domingo Este, according to the Memoirs of 2013 of the Vice-Mayor (<http://www.asde.gov.do/Memorias%202012-2013/parte1.pdf>), information about the 2013 PB assemblies were distributed through a publicity spot from the mayor in three radio stations, eight television channels and advertising signs placed in strategic places throughout the municipality.

- First, community assemblies (in localities with more than thirty families)⁴⁰ give highest priority to three projects and elect four delegates who will represent them in subsequent block assemblies;

- Second, block assemblies are held, and community representatives vote to select the projects for a block; and

- Third, municipal assemblies meet, select municipal wide projects, and approve a Municipal Investment Plan.

The way in which local governments organize this sequence of assemblies diverges significantly from one municipality to the next. Each municipality has room to innovate with respect to its own way to do PB, but its selection is always founded on the three-stage basic process. Particular differences observed between the two PB municipalities evaluated will be highlighted in the multiple case studies presented in Chapter 5.

In regards to the participation that is expected in these assemblies, four criteria are applied (in theory) to ensure broad participation: 1) *representativeness*: participation from at least one member of each family or household, 2) *gender*: balanced participation of women and men, 3) *age*: participation of people of different ages, and 4) *leadership*: participation of recognized leaders in the neighborhood or block (Allegretti et al., 2011, p. 76). My observations of many assemblies suggest that these four criteria are neither binding nor always fulfilled (more on this later on).

After the public consultations, and during the municipal assemblies, follow-up committees are formed. According to the law, among others responsibilities, the follow-up

⁴⁰ Santo Domingo Este also considers CSOs that meet the minimum size requirement.

committee:

(a) supervises the progress of the local government in executing the annual investment plan approved through PB (and each project in particular) and evaluates it periodically;

(b) knows the budget and nature of the PB projects;

(c) encourages communities to participate in the execution of the projects and make sure they do what has been asked of them in accordance to the established agreements; and

(d) helps disseminate local government reports and criticizes breaches in the PB process.

Stage 3: Transparency and Follow-up of the Municipal Investment Plan and Projects Execution

This stage lasts for the whole calendar year; it starts in January after the second stage concludes in December of the previous year. PB projects are executed throughout the year following a calendar that establishes when each project would be started. Communities elect a Social Auditing Committee to supervise construction works and maintenance of projects, once they are finished. Twice a year the mayor must publicly deliver reports to PB representatives.

2.5.3 Normative Implications of PB based solely in the Law

While implications derived from the field research done for this study will be presented later on, some brief and anticipatory notes are pertinent here about the normative implications of PB based solely in the normative expectations of a DR PB. On this point,

Allegretti et al (2011) remarks that although the law promotes the notions of local development, balanced civic participation, access to information, and gender equality, explicit objectives regarding social justice are in fact often disregarded (p. 67). Such shortcomings do not necessarily mean that PB participants seek no social justice, since many municipalities make special mention in their individual PB guides that they are directing resources towards the poorest and most vulnerable groups/sectors.

Based on Goldfrank (2006), Allegretti et al also point out that the existence of a national legislation requiring PB is not necessarily entirely positive, since overly formal institutions can result, and, consequently, only existing and powerful organizations benefit from the process. Open debate and deliberation are more common when the process originates from local initiative. Another issue is how binding the law is: what is decided in a public consultation should be respected; but, in practice, it is common that a local government faces no legal sanction if it chooses not to carry out an already approved project. In a similar way, no repercussions tend to occur if local authorities get substantially delayed, beyond the annual cycle of each PB, in the execution of projects or choose to forgo PB completely in a given year. For example, conveniently, the breaking of ground for the 2012 projects approved in Santo Domingo Este occurred during the same week that was leading to the public event in which the mayor details public spending (*rendicion de cuentas*) during the previous cycle. Similarly, the mayor of Jarabacoa decided to skip altogether the PB in 2013 because the municipality had not been able to start the 2012 works by the time the 2013 assemblies were supposed to have started. People thought

skipping the current year's PB would allow them to sustain the credibility of the process.⁴¹ Other critics, such as Castillo, also argue that including PB in the larger reformed municipal law has not been entirely positive, because, for him, at least, the discourse that PB empowers people has become highly politicized and is nothing more than a publicity stunt perpetrated by municipal authorities.

Regardless of the organizational differences and the legal enforcement shortcomings, the PB process is likely to improve the quality of the democracy at the grassroots level, for the public consultations serve as participatory (and sometimes deliberative) forums for community/section members to voice (ultimately with a vote) what they believe the priorities of the community should be and use such priorities to try to influence the allocation of resources within the municipality. Consequently, public consultations give civil society an important role in the creation of development plans and implementation strategies and supervision (Ausland, 2010). One could then infer that, in theory, PB assemblies are empowering and give more agency (control over life) to community members who participate in them—and possibly even to community members who do not participate but have indirect exposure to and involvement in the PB system. These latter claims are tested on the next chapter.

In the present chapter I have presented the theoretical and practical frameworks that inform the rest of the thesis. I have explained what are the characteristics of a P/DD, in which the practice of PB fits, and the characteristics of the Dominican PB model. With these general and specific models of democracy and PB, respectively, in mind, I now move

⁴¹ Personal communication of 10/24/12, with Deyanira Pérez, who is the main PB official of Jarabacoa's municipal government.

to tracking to what extent PB is linked to the occurrence of normative outcomes of interest—agency, more and better democracy, and more and better development. The first way in which I do this is with a quantitative and comparative analysis of survey data—specifically focusing on the outcome of agency—regarding two PB and two non-PB municipalities in the DR. In Chapter 4, I will expand the analysis to the other outcomes mentioned.

Chapter 3. Participatory Budgeting and Perceptions of Agency: An Empirical Evaluation

Town hall meeting expert Frank Bryan (1999) has acknowledged that “the study of real democracy is in desperate need of data” and of a development of empirical parameters (p. 197). Similarly, as noted in Chapter 1, participatory budgeting experts Baiocchi, Heller, and Silva (2010) have contended that “ideas of participatory democracy are strong on theory and moral-philosophical founding, but rather weak on evidence and empirical testing” (p. 1). While that desideratum has been clearly set out, other scholars, such as

Mansbridge (1999), have expressed doubts about measuring such changes in character with social science instruments. Because of this skepticism, there have been few previous studies addressing the specific relationship between citizen participation and measures of subjective agency from a quantitative point of view. Subjective agency is only one feature of an individual's doing and being that might be the object of empirical investigation.⁴² The concept refers to a survey-based measure of agency, based on "people's self-evaluation of whether or not they are free to act as agents" (Alkire, 2005, p. 218). Moreover, given that there are indeed many limitations with respect to data, this part of the current study is largely exploratory. My objective is only to advance the scholarly discussion about a quantitative way to evaluate the relationship of interest, and I do so by using a different dataset, research context, and methods than those used in previous works by other scholars. Because the approach I use is far from ideal, I believe that more resources conducive to a better evaluation design could be set up in the future for a more rigorous assessment—one that leads us to less biased estimators and some evidence of causality, rather than only correlations. In my concluding remarks, I return to possible and desirable future research directions.

This chapter is largely empirical but draws on the normative concepts previously introduced in Chapter 2. Specifically, this chapter presents the application of empirical methodologies to test, primarily, the relationship between citizen participation in PB and individuals' *perceptions* of individual and collective agency, and secondarily, the

⁴² There are two recent examples of similar uses of subjective measures in the PB context. First, McNulty's (2012) study "*An Unlikely Success: Peru's Top Down Participatory Budgeting Experience*" for relies on different perception measures of PB participants regarding the process. Second, Wampler's (2007) study, "Participatory Budgeting in Brazil: Contestation, Cooperation, and Accountability," in which he looks at PB delegates and their attitudes about decision-making power in PB.

association between awareness of PB and agency. I find that a) participants, on average, report higher levels of individual and collective agency than non-participants, and b) that non-participants who are aware of the community assemblies report higher levels of collective agency than non-participants who are unaware of the meetings.

The rest of this chapter is organized as follows: section 3.1 covers the research context; section 3.2 presents the data; sections 3.3 and 3.4 cover the applied methods and results, and section 3.5 concludes.

3.1 Research Context

3.1.1 Research Questions

Let us assume that when people have greater access to political life in a democratic manner and forge political consensus through dialogue (as in PB), such opportunities correlate with—and perhaps affect—what people value as part of a good life (more agency). I have decided to test such an assumption empirically.

More precisely, the main hypothesis under test is that participants in PB report, on average, higher levels of feelings of agency than their counterparts. The specific questions are: “*Do individuals who participate in PB report higher levels of perceived individual agency, when compared to similar individuals who do not participate?*”⁴³ And “*Do individuals who participate in PB report higher levels of perceived collective agency, when compared to similar individuals who do not participate?*” For simplicity, I will refer to

⁴³ Please note, however, that the question that has been included in the instrument to measure perceptions of agency does not use the word “agency”, which may escape many respondents’ understanding; instead, it makes reference to being able to making a difference, as it will be shown later.

the questions from now on as *Q1a* (participants report higher individual PB agency scores?), and *Q1b* (participants report higher collective PB agency scores?).

A secondary hypothesis, and a more novel one, derives from Helliwell and Putnam's (2004) claim that social networks have value, they embed a norm of trust, and they have positive externalities. About externalities, they elaborate with an example suggesting that "dense social networks in a neighborhood—barbecues or neighborhood associations, etc.—can deter crime, for example, even benefiting neighbours who do not go to the barbecues or belong to the associations. Social capital can be embodied in bonds among family, friends, neighbours, in the workplace, at church, in civic associations...." (p. 1436). Inspired by this argument/example, I explore the possibility of an indirect relationship between PB and agency that can come through social networks. That is, people may not directly participate, but feel indirectly more like agents (as part of a collectivity) if the participation of their peers enables the non-participants to feel that they too can better achieve their goals. The specific question is: Q2 "*Do non-participants who live in PB municipalities and are aware of PB report higher levels of perceived collective agency when compared to those who are not aware of the process?*" The idea here is that some people for various reasons cannot or might not want to participate in a PB, but still value having the option to participate, and having that capability available may make them feel more like agents, even if they choose not to exercise such agency;⁴⁴ I argue that this may happen especially if members of their social network, in whom non-participants may trust,

⁴⁴ Crocker (2008) may call this type of participation "nominal"—"the weakest way in which someone participates in group decision-making is when someone is a member of a group but does not attend its meetings. Some people, of course, are not even members. Some are members but are unable to attend, because of other responsibilities, or are unwilling to attend, for instance because they are harassed or unwelcome" (p. 343).

have exercised such agency and contributed to bringing about mutually desired change.

Please note that in this chapter I will be drawing from the literature on psychological empowerment, given its (almost) equivalent conceptualization to that of agency.

3.1.2 Empirical Research Framework

Empirical analysis studying the relationship between measures of empowerment and community participation (CP) is shaped by the field of psychology. In this discipline, empowerment has been conceptualized as psychological empowerment (PE), which is defined as “a mechanism by which individuals gain greater control over their lives, participate in democratic decision-making processes, and gain critical awareness of their social and political environments” (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995, p. 570). The authors claim that “empowering processes at the community level might include collective action to access government and other community resources. . . . Empowered outcomes for individuals might include situation-specific perceived control and resource mobilization skills” (p. 570). Given the similarity of this definition to the one of agency employed in this study, I use the findings, which Christens, Peterson and Speer (2011) summarize from an array of work in psychology, as a starting point.

Christens et al. explain that when analyzing the relationship between CP and PE, most studies have been of the cross-sectional type. From the few that have used longitudinal data, interesting results are those of Gutierrez (1995), who finds, for Latino populations, that empowerment can result from participation in discussion groups; and those of Itzhaky and York (2000), who find that the more time an individual engages in

CP, the higher PE he/she reports. Particularly Itzhaky and York find that CP over time makes residents more involved in, more loyal, and more identified with their community. These two researchers also find that experienced activists are less euphoric than new activists (the latter report higher feelings of well-being). Because their study does not have a control group of non-activists, Itzhaky and York make no claims about whether CP is that which is responsible for increasing such feelings of well-being and empowerment, but only conclude a correlation exists.

Because of serious endogeneity issues are rightly suspected in the relationship of citizen participation and (subjective) agency, significant correlation cannot be equated with directional causality from participation to agency, or vice versa. Christens et al. do explain how there are many studies providing significant evidence of an existing relationship between CP and PE, but more research is needed to understand the principles behind such relationship, such as the direction of causality.⁴⁵ The authors fill this void using a cross-

⁴⁵ Christens et al.'s study highlights three hypotheses with respect to theorized causal relationships between CP and PE. These hypotheses help contextualize my first set of research questions:

1) *Socialization*: CP precedes PE.

The understanding is that "people gain knowledge and skills that lead to psychological advantages through participation in community activity" (p. 340). This goes in line with the idea that agency/empowerment is more than just a personality trait; instead, structural influences also matter for perceived control.

2) *Selectivity*: PE leads to CP.

People who already have or value agency put themselves in settings in which they can exercise this agency. The understanding is that "the selectivity mechanism hinges on the tendency of people to avoid putting themselves in situations or environments whose demands outstrip their capabilities, and to exercise agency when their self-perception lead them to believe they will be successful" (p. 340). The authors also explain that this mechanism refers to differences in skills, resources or internal individual attributes / beliefs / attitudes / perceptions, that determine different motivations for participation.

3) *Reciprocal Causality*: The causal relationship between CP and PE is bi-directional.

People who have and relish their agency select settings to exercise their agency and, in turn, their (subjective) agency is enhanced. The understanding is that there is mutual influence over time between CP and PE, as part of a developmental process that embodies both cognitive and behavioral change. The reader can consult Christen et al. for a list of works that support each of these hypotheses.

lagged panel analysis based on pre-test and post-test data involving participants in the People Improving Communities through Organizing's (PICO) National Network (i.e., the treated), and community residents screened as non-participants (i.e., the comparison group).⁴⁶ Christens et al. find support for the hypothesis that CP precedes PE. Moreover, they stress that their “findings reinforce conceptualizations of empowerment as a social process that takes place in a community and organizational contexts rather than a characteristic of individuals or a precursor to action. Skill acquisition and attitudes undoubtedly predispose certain people to participate in certain settings, yet the findings reported here point toward an understanding of PE as an outcome or byproduct rather than a precursor to participation” (p. 343). In other words, empowerment is more part of a community and organizational process, and less a psychological trait that directs people's behaviors. The authors also touch upon the relationship of motivations and actions with the exercise of human agency. Using the PICO data, they show that what people choose to do in public and political life is likely to precede higher feelings of agency, rather than follow such perceptions.

With the research questions at hand, it would be ideal to count on longitudinal or experimental data so as to be able to tease out causality. However, the latter was not possible for this portion of the present study. Once again, the current study tests, only the relationship between CP and perceptions of agency, but within the specific context of PB, and using a new dataset and using quasi-experimental techniques—specifically, propensity

⁴⁶ Investigating five different communities across the United States, these researchers measured CP with Speer and Peterson's (2000) five-item scale that assessed the frequency of individuals' involvement in community activities. They measured PE using Zimmerman & Zahniser's (1991) Sociopolitical Control Scale, which assesses individuals' perceptions about their ability to mobilize people within their communities and influence policy-making.

score matching (PSM) and differences in differences. Although these techniques are usually applied for teasing out causality, I use them to provide evidence that further advances the discussion of the relationship between participation and agency, and that may lead me to better estimates of the correlation coefficients than a simple regression.

Given the data limitations, my results suffer from being context specific. There are potential biases introduced by self-reported measures and by not being able to account for unobservable characteristics of the respondents that are endogenous to the relationship of interest. As well, the lack of a longitudinal design across more than two waves of data does not allow me to show patterns over time in the relationships between participation and agency.⁴⁷ To supplement these quantitative (albeit, limited) findings, Chapter 5 tries to move beyond correlation and presents a qualitative analysis that examines the different enabling conditions that may govern the relationship between PB and agency as applied to the Dominican reality.

3.2 Data

3.2.1 Data Collection Process: Sites Selection

Although I am not able to fully isolate the “PB effect,” as Baiocchi et al. (2010) claim to do with qualitative tools, in this quantitative analysis I follow their approach of pairing same-sized and same region PB and non-PB municipalities. I study four

⁴⁷ Another constraint in establishing causality is that differences in the way that the PB process is conducted, even at the community level, might introduce variations to the impact pathways from participation to agency for each individual assembly. Nonetheless, the worry about character unobservables from individual participants is here assumed to be a more serious concern.

municipalities (2 pairs)—Santo Domingo Este (SDE), Santiago de los Caballeros (STI), Santo Domingo Oeste (SDO) and La Vega (LVG). As indicated in Table 4, the first two municipalities carry out PB, and the other two do not.

Table 4. Municipalities under Study

PB	Non-PB
Santo Domingo Este (SDE)	Santo Domingo Oeste (SDO)
Santiago (STI)	La Vega (LVG)

The municipality of SDE is the capital of the Santo Domingo province, and STI is the capital of the Santiago province, which are the first and second most important provinces respectively, in the country, based on population sizes⁴⁸ and contributions to GDP (excluding the National District). SDE and STI are appropriate for a multiple case study of PB because neither is a new adopter of the process. Baiocchi (2003) finds, for the case of Porto Alegre, that inequalities between citizens and normative features of PB were a problem in the beginning stages, but these issues were offset after repeated participation over time. Folscher (2007a) also highlights that localities learn by doing. Based on this evidence, priority of selection was given to municipalities that adopted PB early on. The rationale is that responses will be guided by lived experience rather than (merely) by early enthusiasm for PB based on philosophical attraction to the idea.⁴⁹ SDE has officially

⁴⁸ According to the 2002 Census, the population of the Santo Domingo province of 1,821,218, represents a 21.27% of the national population, and that of Santiago of 908,250, represents 10.6% of DR's total population.

⁴⁹ Although, theoretically, the selection of early adopters would allow, among other things, decreasing the risk that inexperience from the organizers/facilitators and/or the participants would be the reason behind a

implemented PB since 2006, and STI has done so since 2005.

To work as controls, I selected SDO in the Ozama region, as a comparison group for SDE, and LVG⁵⁰ in the Cibao region as a comparison group for STI. As shown in Table 5 below, which summarizes some key characteristics of these four municipalities,⁵¹ SDO and LVG present observable characteristics that are similar to that of SDE and STI, respectively, except for the presence of PB in the latter cities but not the former. In other words, after considering that there is no other closer match for each PB city than each selected pair, the main difference between them is that citizens (who are not part of the mayor's cabinet) in the non-PB cities have no regular or extended access to policy-making (in regards to formally influencing budget allocation).

Table 5. Profiles of PB Municipalities

	SDE	STI	SDO	LVG
Population Size ¹	948,885	591,985	363,321	248,089
Population Density ²	5,609 hab/km ²	1,458 hab/km ²	6,728 hab/km ²	386 hab/km ²
Territorial Size	169.2 km ²	474.1 km ²	54 km ²	526.2 km ²
Poverty Rate (percentage of poor households; includes extreme poverty) ³	19.1%	19.9%	20.7%	38.4%
Illiteracy Rate Population of age 15+ ⁴	7.4%	10.4%	8.1%	12.1%
Unemployment Rate ⁵	7.0%	5.6%	7.0%	5.4%
Percentage of participation in 2010's municipal	40.0%	48.0%	48.0%	60.9%

frustrated assembly, I observed that regardless of the amount of years conducting the process of PB, many facilitators still lack adequate experience.

⁵⁰ A caveat: LVG and SDO in fact do a version of PB, but it is neither widespread nor inclusive. Hence it cannot be said that no PB occurs in such municipalities. The process, however, is not systematically advertised or applied throughout the municipality; and, hence, for practical purposes, it can be categorized as non-PB. This echoes Baiocchi et al.'s (2010) claims that a) "the mere existence of PB structures does not translate into participation as such" (p. 70) and b) "even in the absence of institutional reform from above, an organized and engaged civil society can impact governance" (p. 79), which (as I note subsequently) seems to be a plausible case for LVG's arrangements.

⁵¹ In regards to size, it is interesting to note that these municipalities are significantly larger than those analyzed in Baiocchi et al. (2010). In their case, the largest municipality, Diadema (Brazil), has an electorate of 220,292. While the figures presented in Table 5 correspond to all inhabitants, which includes children unable to vote, the difference is drastic enough to conclude that they would still be larger, even if only the electorate was considered.

elections ⁶				
Amount of capital spending account in 2013's local budget ⁷	RD\$ 1,158,422,718	RD\$ 522,018,101	Data not reported	Data not reported
Percentage of capital spending account that is allocated through PB (2013) ⁸	22.83%	12.8%	N/A	N/A

Sources: 1-6: ONE provincial profiles, based on: 1,2: 2010 Census; 3: Focalización de la Pobreza en RD (2005), with data for 2002; 4-5: 2010 Census; 6: Junta Central Electoral; 7-8: FP-08 2013 forms.

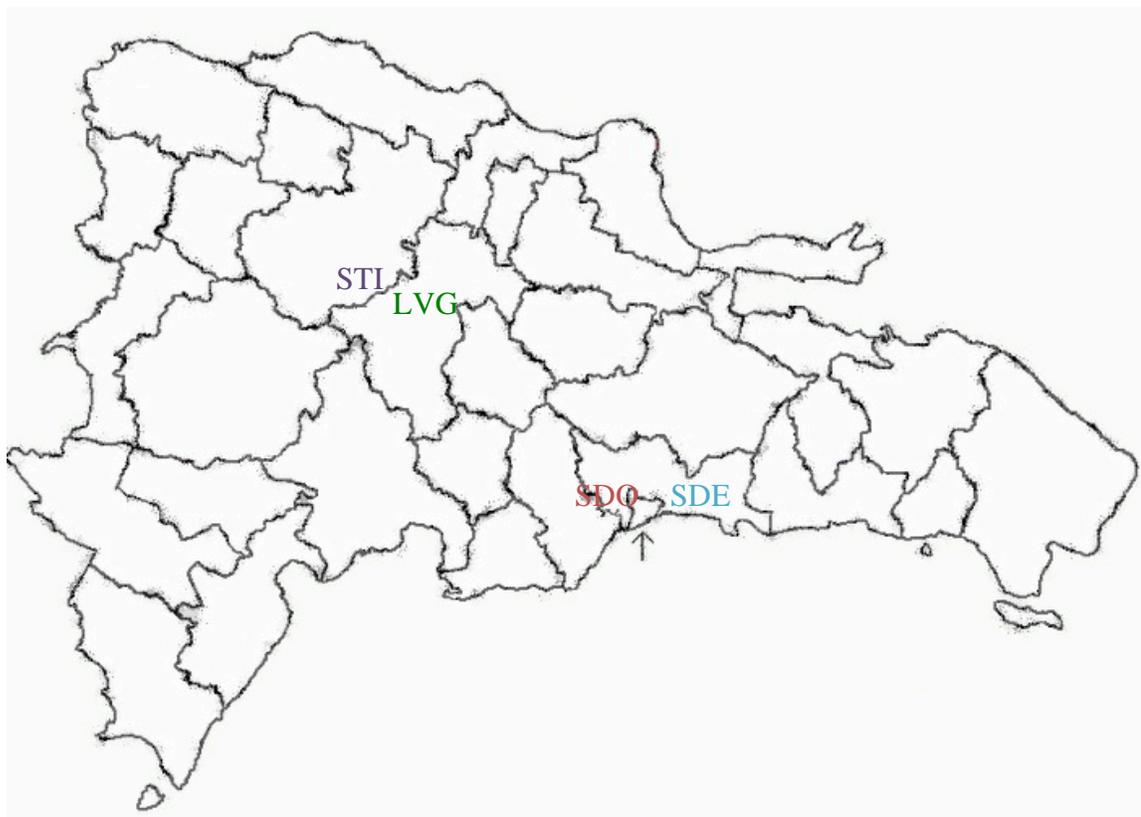


Figure 1. Map of the Dominican Republic (municipalities under study marked)

As Figure 1 shows, SDE is located in the south central part of the country, next to the east side of the National District, and it belongs to the Ozama region. The municipality is divided in three zones (*circunscripciones*), which are subdivided into a total of 23 blocks. There are 460 neighborhood councils registered at the municipal government. Santo Domingo Oeste, is also located next to the National District, but to the west. The

municipality is not divided first into zones but is directly divided into 14 blocks. Only 52 neighborhood councils are registered in the local government archives. Both of these municipalities were created in 2001 and started functioning in 2002. This new arrangement occurred following a restructuring of the national territory, established in the Law 163-01.

Commerce is the main economic activity in both localities. These two cities are very similar in terms of many human development indicators, and they have reasonable access to everyday life services. However, the main large-scale differences between these two municipalities are related to the quality of urban planning and implementation. While both municipalities have areas that are equally underdeveloped, SDE's center is more structured than SDO's, in the sense that the streets are wider, in better condition, cleaner and more organized (including home residences, buildings and businesses); SDO's center, in contrast, is more chaotic, convoluted (extremely limited space for further expansion), rather filthy, and streets are narrower.

STI is located in the north-central part of the country, belonging to the Cibao region. The municipality is divided in eight planning zonal units, which together contain 62 blocks. STI's economy is mostly based on the trade of agricultural and livestock products, finished goods, and the production of goods in free zones. The municipality has 1,177 neighborhood councils registered as of September of 2013. LVG is located next to STI's south-east boundary, and 120 kilometers away from the nation's capital. The municipality's main industries are also agriculture and livestock. Despite our best efforts to obtain the number of neighborhood councils registered in LVG's municipal government, the quantity is still

unknown.⁵² Both of these municipalities enjoy having good transportation access, as the Duarte highway, the main road in the country, goes through both cities. While, in comparison, LVG is the closest to STI, it must be noted that the latter is a larger and more developed city, which means everyday life in STI looks somewhat different from its counterpart in LVG, where life is less affected by the mixed blessing of such big city “perks” as more traffic, more businesses, and more entertainment options.

Besides the already discussed criteria of early adoption for the PB cities, when selecting the pairs, population size and density⁵³ have been taken into account because of a collective-action rationale—it could be expected that the smaller and more concentrated the population (at least when it is subdivided at the town or neighborhood level), the easier it is to engage in participatory practices, as “everybody knows everybody” (and presumably each other’s priorities), information travels faster, everybody can express themselves more easily (as there are fewer people hoping to participate), and so forth (see Selee and Peruzzotti, 2009). Differences in poverty levels have also been taken into account because previous results have found that on average the very poor and the very rich tend not to participate. Thus, I selected municipalities that were as close as possible in their poverty ranges.

Note that in contrast to Baiocchi et al.’s (2010) object of study (Brazil), the DR is a small country where geographical characteristics are very similar throughout the country, where political ideology for both majoritarian parties is very similar, and where there is no

⁵² LVG is also significantly poorer than STI, and besides the population density and rural/urban composition differences, this responds to the fact that LVG has grown in the shadow of STI.

⁵³ Although the population densities of STI and LVG are significantly different, this match was the closest possible.

significant ethnic diversity. Hence, in contrast to Baiocchi et al., it has not been necessary to select based on such factors. It is also necessary to point out that these four municipalities do not represent all the (albeit, limited) diversity of Dominican municipalities, especially along the dimension of income. Thus, no national-level conclusions are claimed from this analysis.

3.2.2. Data Collection Process: Sampling Design

The sampling design for this study is a combination of stratified random sampling and choice-based sampling. Different populations are involved: one of such populations consists of participants of PB in the chosen PB cities. Because the number of participants is not very large in relative terms, efforts were made to survey as many of them as possible. I did so by targeting these PB participants when visiting communities, and then randomizing whenever possible those to survey among the participants pool. As a result, participants have been oversampled in relation to their actual frequency in the population. Ideally, I would have been able to completely adopt a sampling approach like Christens et al.'s (2011). These authors were able to randomize fully the sample of participants due to the existence of databases containing the information of participants/members of the organization they were studying. Unfortunately, a similar database does not exist listing PB participants; hence, that degree of randomization was simply not possible under the circumstances in which I collected data.

Apart from the targeted surveys of participants in the two PB municipalities of SDE and STI, the research team also surveyed other groups of individuals: (a) adults residing in PB municipalities, regardless of their participation or non-participation in PB; and (b)

adults residing in the non-PB municipalities, who by definition are not participants, but who were also surveyed for control purposes, as explained earlier. For the unrestricted populations, the sampling frame design consisted of all occupied private households (proxy: houses) within the geographical boundaries of the municipalities. In households where more than one eligible adult lived, only one could make it into the sample. Some households turned out to be located in remote/unsafe areas, and had to be excluded from the sampling frame due to being inaccessible to the research team. The sampling method followed was that of “the Nth house on the block.” This was a viable selection method because many areas in the studied municipalities have grown without any urban planning; consequently, house listings for a potential computerized random selection were impossible to obtain.

Once a house was selected, the respondent was chosen with the probabilistic approach of the next birthday⁵⁴ (only adults, which in DR stands for 18+); the research team applied this selection method during the screening stage.⁵⁵

My selection of the data collection mode responded to several aspects of local conditions. In spite of the higher costs of face-to-face interviews, when compared to web or telephone surveys, I selected the former because of concerns regarding technology access constraints, the education level of respondents, sampling frame issues, and lack of access to filtered contact data. To collect the responses, the team used pen and paper interviews (PAPI) with a printed questionnaire. Interviewers were trained to make two

⁵⁴ A potential challenge to this selection procedure is the lack of knowledge of the individual being screened about the birth dates of the other adults in the house; however, according to the information given to me by the research team, this only happened a handful of times, and in such cases interviewers asked interviewees to use their best guess on whose birthday was next.

⁵⁵ Using this selection procedure, rather than a more “convenient” one, such as interviewing the person who opens the door, should produce better estimates of the population composition.

attempts per household, covering communities of all income levels, and as distributed in the municipality. The research team made such attempts during different days of the week (including weekends), and at different hours. They put a certain emphasis on conducting visits after regular work hours, in hopes to decrease the amount of missed opportunities to interview the selected respondent due to him/her being at work. To minimize interviewer effects, the field team was trained to follow a script, and to avoid any deviations from it. Such script incorporated definitions and clarifications that I presumed some respondents could bring up during the interview. A power analysis to determine the required sample size led me to conduct a minimum of 980 surveys (245 per municipality).⁵⁶ I was able to collect answers from a total of 1,039 respondents who answered in a voluntary, independent, and anonymous manner. Data was collected between January and April of 2013, and the PB related questions in the questionnaire correspond to the assemblies for the 2013 budget cycle, which occurred during the Fall of 2012. Table 6 below summarizes the distribution of the data across the populations of interest.

Table 6. Distribution of Data Across Populations

	SDE (PB)	SDO (Non-PB)	STI (PB)	LVG (Non-PB)
Participants	n=52	n/a	n=82	n/a
Non-Participants	n=202	n=248	n=190	n=265
All	n=254	n=248	n=278	n=265

⁵⁶ I estimated the sample size using a sampling error of +/-5%, a confidence level of 95%, and an estimated variability in regards to participation in PB of 20%. This later estimation is only representative in the sense that it is known that the percentage of the residents of a municipality who participate is usually around 1% of the population. Hence, coming up with a representative sample would be prohibitive in terms of the cost. Because of this, the research team targeted part of the sample (around 20%) exclusively to known participants, and randomized at the community level (e.g., choose a community randomly, and then look there for participants). Also, non-PB municipalities do not have this characteristic of interest but I assumed that if PB had been available participation levels would have been similar. Based on these parameters, the sample size resulted in 245 for each municipality. I did not consider non-response rates in the estimations of the sample since survey efforts would be continued until the desired sample was reached.

3.2.3 Use of Subjective Variables in Empirical Analysis

Helliwell and Putnam (2004) call human well-being, especially well-being as defined by the individual him/herself, as the *ultimate* dependent variable in social science. In line with this assumption and if we for the moment assume that agency is a feature of human well-being, the main dependent variables in our empirical exercise are not objective measures of agency, but subjective ones based on people's reporting of *feelings* of such phenomena. Ibrahim and Alkire (2007) argue that "while we support the direct use of objective information for policy purposes, it may nonetheless be valuable to obtain information on people's views, and interpret them carefully to inform the analysis" (p. 28). According to Ibrahim and Alkire, perceptions of the self can inform whether the individual values the domain of agency that the question is alluding to, it can help explain different patterns of decision-making, and it also informs policy makers if changes are needed in order to nudge views in a new direction.

The use of subjective measures of well-being (and agency, if this normative notions is included in well-being) is not new. Graham and Lora (2009) explain how the use of survey data on expressed subjective responses of well-being measures has become more accepted in recent years. They posit that this has happened due to the availability and application of statistical methods that allow researchers to control for unobservable features of the polled units, such as personality traits, that otherwise might introduce bias into the

measurements. Without claiming it as a panacea,⁵⁷ and recognizing existing problems and limitations, Graham and colleagues have succeeded in explaining the relationship between subjective measures of well-being and variables like income, migration decisions, inequality, insecurity, employment, marital status, health, social networks, access to information and other measures.

Another warning for working with subjective well-being measures is that of question framing. Graham (2010) and Graham and Lora (2009) explain how question framing can be a problem when dealing with subjective well-being survey data. Therefore, they recommend that certain well-being questions be placed at the beginning of the instrument, before other questions, such as employment status and financial situation, might bias the answers. In the present case, I asked general well-being questions before any other socio-demographic question. However, subjective well-being measures for the PB context were placed after several questions regarding the PB process itself. I decided to proceed in that order given that it was necessary to establish that the individuals knew what PB was before proceeding with opinion questions about the process and the outcome measures. Given the limited advertisement of the process, at least in one of the studied municipalities, the fear was that some individuals had a general idea about these assemblies, but did not recognize official terms or were basing their perceptions on imperfect information. Besides the potential bias due to question placement, given the

⁵⁷ In various writings, Graham provides a detailed account of possible perception paradoxes that must be recognized when dealing with opinion survey data. See, for example, Graham and Chattopadhyay (2008) and Graham and Lora (2009), both of which summarize such paradoxes.

political openness in the DR, I expect that sampled individuals presented no constraints in answering faithfully as to their real preferences/beliefs (even after the systemic framing).⁵⁸

Once we decide to move forward with the use of subjective measures, we need careful interpretation of the responses, since there may exist endogeneity (e.g., those who already feel like agents are the ones who participate), and in order to identify potential habituation effects and adaptive preferences⁵⁹ that cannot be controlled for, hence introducing bias to people's self-evaluations. This latter notion of adaptive preferences reflects one's unconscious downgrading of one's desires for things one cannot access (e.g., the happy peasant/the frustrated achiever, the optimistic poor, the realistic agent, or the educated women who feels low levels of autonomy). Moreover, we should take into account the inter-temporal problem that may exist in measuring agency through PB. While I reserve a detailed analysis of this problem for Chapter 5, it is useful to introduce it succinctly here: a participant may live in a community that has won a PB project in the assemblies and, in turn, feel a certain level of agency at the time when surveys were conducted, which corresponds to the early months of the execution stage, when many

⁵⁸ Given previous findings by Graham and collaborators about how Latin Americans tend to report remarkably positive well-being measures (possibly due to cultural optimism or the aspiration paradox), it is interesting to see how people's attitudes toward PB compare to the more general trends previously found.

⁵⁹ The following passage from Sen (1984) is useful for understanding the idea of adaptive preferences:

The most blatant form of inequalities and exploitations survive in the world through making allies out of the deprived and the exploited. The underdog learns to bear the burden so well that he or she overlooks the burden itself. Discontent is replaced by acceptance, hopeless rebellion by conformist quiet, and—most relevantly in the present context—suffering and anger by cheerful endurance. As people learn to survive to adjust to the existing horrors by sheer necessity of uneventful survival, the horrors look less terrible in the metric of utilities. (p. 309)

Recently, Serene Khader (2011) has made a case for revising the classic concept of adaptive preference, based on a number of normative claims. She suggests that we think of it as “preferences inconsistent with basic flourishing that a person developed under conditions nonconductive to basic flourishing that we expect her to change under conditions conducive to basic flourishing” (p.17). See Khader's *Adaptive Preferences and Women's Empowerment* (2011).

projects have not yet been executed. If the year ends and that same individual has not yet seen his project be executed, such feelings of agency may drastically change. In other words, a self-described agent in the PB decision-context in t , may not be one in $t+1$ if certain conditions, such as project-execution, are absent. With these points in mind, let's now move to discussing the instrument and selected variables.

3.2.4 Instrument & Indicators

For the design of the questionnaire, I examined the literature to identify questions associated with and appropriate for the theme of this study. This study used two versions of the questionnaire—one for SDE and STI and a modified one for SDO and LVG to adjust for the absence of PB there (Annexes 3a and 3b). These questionnaires compile information about respondents' perceptions of agency and some well-being measures at the individual and collective levels, political and ideological views, community integration, awareness of and experience in PB, and socio-demographic information.

Alkire (2005) presents a detailed account of different survey-based measures of agency (and empowerment), based on peoples' self-evaluation. Although I included some of such survey questions for the general accounts of agency, the dependent variables of interest for this study are subjective measures of agency exclusively within a domain of municipal budget planning. Because of this context specificity, I had to come up with my own questions, which are discussed next.

Agency Measures

It is possible that a person might be an agent in respect to household decisions, and

a non-agent in respect to PB decision-making. Alkire (2005) explains that “agency might be more accurately evaluated with respect to different functionings rather than globally. Agency is often exercised with respect to distinct dimensions and indeed it is precisely the dimension-specific agency levels that may be of interest” (p. 226). Because of this consideration, in addition to an agency question framed for life in general,⁶⁰ the survey also contains questions specific to the PB context at the individual and collective levels. Once the questions are translated from Spanish (the original language of the questionnaire) back to English, they read as follows: *In a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you think that you as a citizen are contributing to making a difference in the way that the local government manages and uses its resources? One means that you are making no difference, and five it means that you are making a profound difference.* The collective version reads: *Now think*

⁶⁰ The instrument also gathered a measure of perceived agency/empowerment. Such question was placed at the very beginning of the questionnaire and concerns a general level regarding power over/control over personal decisions. It tells us the extent to which individual believes he or she is in control over daily activities. This question serves as an approximation of intrapersonal agency/empowerment, addressing the confidence and worth respondents feel they possess about acting for themselves (Zimmerman, 1995). The question has been asked with respect to both individual and collective levels. I used a modified version of a question that Graham and Chattopadhyay (2009) already employed, which in turn derives from one asked in the World Values Survey. In part, the modifications responded to Spanish translation logistics. The individual-level question, once translated back to English, reads as follows: *“Think about the freedom you have to make decisions about things that affect your life. Please indicate in a ladder from 1 to 10 how much control you think you have to make decisions. The first step in this ladder means that you have no control to make decisions, and the tenth step means that you have total control.”* The collective-level question reads as follows: *Please think now about your life in this community. Please indicate in this same ladder, how much control do you think the members of this community, in a collective manner, have in the decision-making of things that affect your life as a community. One in this ladder means that the community has no control in making decisions, and ten that it has total control.”* Although I do not use this measure as the dependent variable of interest in the analysis, it does allow me to have an idea of my sample’s perception patterns with respect to agency. This finding is important when interpreting results, because it may highlight adaptive preferences, that is, the way people adjust their expectations and aspirations to fit contextual constraints and opportunities. The questionnaire also includes a question that, although it will not be used in the quantitative analysis, serves as a closer approximation to actual, rather than perceived agency; *Have you done anything lately to help with the betterment of the community of which you feel pride?* This question approximates to what Zimmerman calls behavioral empowerment, which reflects an individual’s participatory skills and activities of participation. However, given the direction in which this research question sets, my interest is to know whether participation makes people (more complete) agents, as I am testing the hypothesis that participation in PB (or option to participate) is linked to increases in agency.

about your community. In this same scale, how much do you think that the community collectively is contributing to making a difference in the way the local government manages and uses its resources? One means that the community makes no difference, and five means that the community is making a profound difference. Note that this question does not specifically asks about PB since residents of non-PB cities—by default—do not participate in PB, and that in the PB cities, not everybody participates. However, for simplicity purposes, and since the idea is to evaluate how having access to and/or participating in PB is associated with people's reported scores, in the rest of this analysis I refer to these two measures as *individual and collective PB agency*, respectively, and they represent the two main outcome variables.⁶¹ These two questions approximate a type of agency that takes place in a particular context. That is, they reflect the participant's critical understanding of the forces that shape the environment (the causal mechanisms), knowledge of resources and methods to produce social change, and the decision-making and problem-solving skills to do so (Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz & Checkoway, 1992).

PB-related Measures

The main survey question related to the PB process is the one determining participation in the assemblies. For the PB municipalities the survey asks those who knew of their community assemblies whether or not they participated in them. *Participation* is then a dummy that takes the value of 1 for individuals who participated and 0 for

⁶¹ Note that for the question at the community level the unit of analysis is still the individual, but the question asks respondents to assess the level of empowerment they perceive at the community level for the domain of interest (i.e., life in general or PB).

individuals who did not (including those who were unaware of the assemblies). This is the key independent variable for Q1a and Q1b.

The instrument included a question asking respondents whether they had heard about PB before. This variable is important for the second research question of spillover effects as it allows me to tease out the existence or lack thereof of an awareness/availability effect. I refer to this variable as *awareness*: it takes the value of 1 for individuals who knew of PB and zero otherwise. A stronger version of awareness is available for respondents from PB cities, and the instrument captures it by the question, previously mentioned, of whether people knew of their community's assembly. Answers to this question also take the value of 1 for individuals who knew of their respective PB assembly, and zero otherwise. I refer to this variable as *awareness of assembly*. Control variables are introduced in the sub-section that follows.

3.2.5 Description of Data

For a full account of all measures gathered, see Annex 3, which contains the metadata, that is, information on all variables collected with the questionnaires, and their main statistics. The following is a summary of this data, especially as related to this study's research questions.

The average age of respondents is 42, 63% live together with a partner or are married, 62% are heads of households, 59% are educated (associates degree or more), 23% have difficulty meeting basic needs, 92% are employed, and 58% believe their health is "good". In regards to matters related to PB, 90% of the respondents are not clear about the decision-making process regarding the municipality's budget. Furthermore, only 46% are even aware of the existence of the PB process. From those who were aware of PB in the

PB cities, only 39% in SDE and 51% in STI are aware of their communities' specific assemblies. However, these latter percentages should be interpreted carefully, since part of the surveys targeted participants who by definition were "aware." That is, the percentage of people *truly* aware, either of PB in general, or of the assemblies, is likely to be significantly smaller in the real population.

Although subjective measures of agency are discussed next, it is worth noting that 38% of the sample claimed to have done something for the community of which they are proud. Depending on the context, this claim (and pride) could be an indication of real (or behavioral) agency rather than merely perceived agency.⁶² The highest percentage of this sort of "agentful" behavior was found in LVG (55%), which might explain why people from this city reported such high levels of all indicators of subjective agency.⁶³

Figures 2 and 3 show the percentages of respondents in each group—that is, participants from a PB municipality, non-participants in a PB municipality, and non-participants in a non-PB municipality—that have either a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 individual or collective PB agency score. In each figure, the three columns to the left correspond to SDE

⁶² It is interesting to note the close connection between actual and perceived agency within the context of PB and community development: In PB city SDE, 64% of the 92 respondents who reported actual agency also reported an individual PB agency score of 4 or 5. In that same city, only 15% of the 157 who did not report actual agency also reported an individual PB agency score of 4 or 5. In non-PB city SDO, 51% of the 39 respondents who reported actual agency also reported an individual PB agency score of 4 or 5. In that same city, 44% of the 206 who did not report actual agency also reported an individual PB agency score of 4 or 5. In PB city STI, 48% of the 117 respondents who reported actual agency, also reported an individual PB agency score of 4 or 5. In that same city, only 34% of the 149 respondents who reported no actual agency also reported an individual PB agency score of 4 or 5. Finally, in the non-PB city LVG, 70% of the 141 respondents who reported actual agency also reported an individual PB agency score of 4 or 5. In that same city, a surprising 63% of the 117 respondents who reported no actual agency also reported an individual PB agency score of 4 or 5. With the exception of LVG, in the other three cities it becomes evident that people who reported high levels of agency within the municipal budget context, are more likely to have also reported having contributed to making a change in their communities with some action they feel proud of.

⁶³ People in LVG may have a channel other than PB for exercising their agency that need to be studied in the future. LVG results open up the idea that PB is one way but not the only way (or even the best way) to exercise and experience agency. Also, given that LVG the smallest of the four cities, the results are not surprising, in the sense that people feel more empowered in smaller communities.

and SDO, and the ones to the right to STI and LVG. Recall that for simplicity, I refer to PB agency as the variable that measures whether respondents feel they are making a difference in the way that the local government manages and uses its resources, regardless of whether the person actually participates in PB or not. And I do so, because individual and collective PB agency are the outcome variables with which I evaluate whether participation in or access to PB are linked to differences in such agency scores.

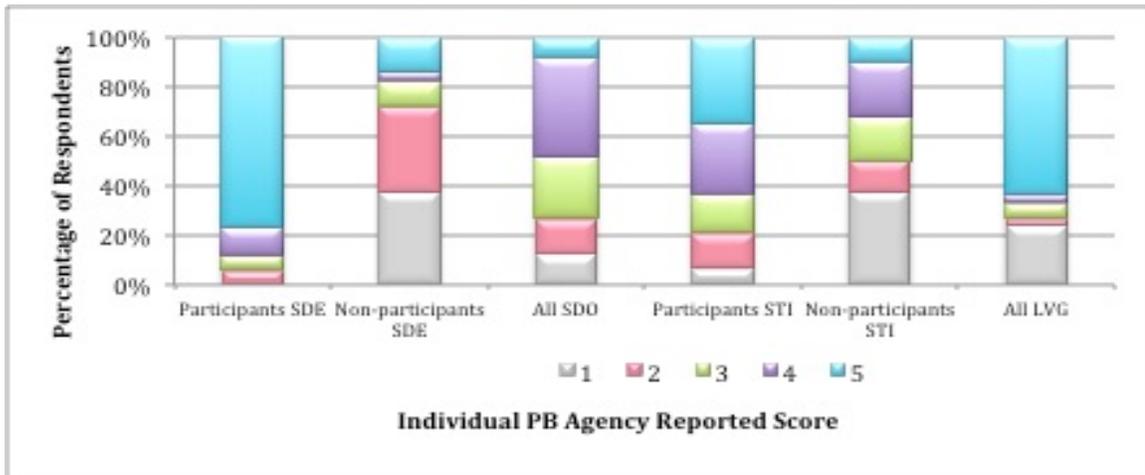


Figure 2. Individual PB Agency Score by Group

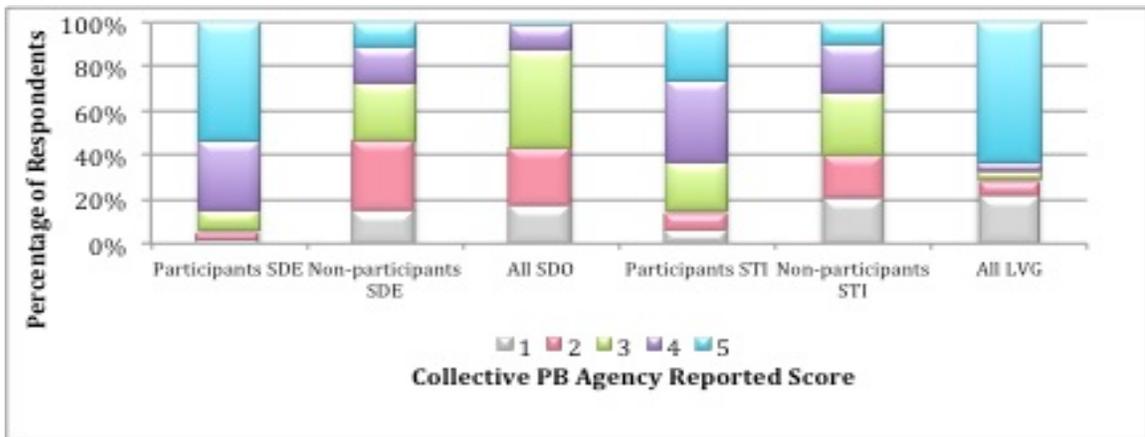


Figure 3. Collective PB Agency by Group

Table 7. Survey Data Summary

Variables	PB municipalities						Non-PB municipalities		Differences					
	SDE			STI			SDO	LVG	SDE part vs non-part (9)	SDE all vs SDO (10)	SDE part vs SDO (11)	STI part vs non-part (12)	STI all vs LVG (13)	STI part vs LVG (14)
	All (1)	Part (2)	Non-Part (3)	All (4)	Part (5)	Non-Part (6)	All (7)	All (8)						
Avg Individual Gral Agency (1-10)	8.99	9.16	8.95	7.97	8.22	7.87	8.64	5.80	0.21	0.35	0.52**	0.35	2.17***	2.42***
Avg Collective Gral Agency (1-10)	5.59	6.65	5.31	5.94	6.98	5.54	6.53	3.95	1.34***	-0.94	0.12	1.44***	1.99***	3.03***
Avg Individual PB Agency (1-5)	2.72	4.60	2.23	2.88	3.70	2.55	3.16	3.80	2.37***	-0.45***	1.43***	1.16***	-0.91***	-0.09
Avg Collective PB Agency (1-5)	3.09	4.31	2.77	3.07	3.69	2.82	3.81	2.53	1.53***	-0.57***	1.78***	0.88***	-0.74***	-0.11
Avg Economic Ladder (1-10) ¹	4.64	5.04	4.54	3.07	3.69	2.82	6.41	3.82	0.51**	1.78***	-1.37***	0.63**	1.21***	1.64***
Avg Age	41.8	47.7	40.3	44.7	49.8	42.4	40.9	40.2	7.4***	0.92	6.78***	7.32***	4.5***	9.6***
Percentage Unemployed	15.7	10.0	17.2	7.0	6.2	7.7	6.6	2.7	7	-9.17***	0.03	-1.5	4.3**	3.5
Percentage Educated ²	31.0	32.7	30.6	45.8	43.9	47.1	71.7	41.4	2	40.62***	-38.97	-3.2	4.5	2.5
Percentage Married/Co-living	60.5	67.3	58.7	74.0	81.7	70.9	64.9	51.6	8.6	4.42	2.41	10.8*	22.4***	30.1***
Percentage Participating in CSOs	64.0	88.4	57.8	70.8	97.5	58.4	76.7	65.8	30.8***	12.6***	11.8*	39.1***	5.0	31.8***
Avg Perception of Corruption (1-10) ³	4.9	3.0	5.4	6.3	5.2	6.3	4.7	6.4	-2.4***	-0.17	-1.8***	-1.1***	-0.5*	-1.3***
Avg Trust in Mayor (1-3) ⁴	2.2	2.6	2.1	1.8	2.0	1.7	1.8	1.6	0.5***	-0.4***	0.8***	0.3***	0.3***	0.4***
Avg Trust in Neighbors (1-3) ⁵	2.4	2.7	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.6	0.3***	-0.3***	0.6***	0.2***	-0.2***	-0.02
Avg Wallet Return (1-10) ⁶	2.7	4.2	2.1	3.3	3.1	3.3	5.3	2.6	1.9***	2.6***	-1.1***	-0.3	0.7***	0.5*

ttest of differences in means significant ***1%, ** 5%, * 10%. Notes: 1) “Economic Ladder” is a variable that derives from people being asked to place themselves in a 10-step ladder where the first step they would be the poorest and in the tenth step they would be the richest. It is a subjective wealth measure; the question does *not* identify a reference group. 2) “Educated” is defined as people who have obtained education beyond high school. 4) “Trust in Mayor” is defined in a 1-3 scale measured as (1) no trust, (2) some trust and (3) a lot of trust. 5) “Trust in Neighbors” has been defined in a 1-3 scale measured as (1) no trust, (2) some trust and (3) a lot of trust. 6) “Wallet” return refers to a question, derived from the World Gallup Survey question in which people estimate how many people would return their wallet if it got lost; in the present case the group of reference is restricted to fellow residents of the municipality. Helliwell and Wang (2010) used this question previously when they evaluated the links between trust and well-being.

Table 7 above shows the mean values of some of the key variables discussed, as well as the differences in these values (and their significance) across groups.⁶⁴

With respect to perceptions of PB agency, from the table and figures above it is interesting to highlight several patterns:

(a) Intra-PB city comparisons: On average individuals from PB municipalities who participate in the assemblies report statistically significant higher levels of both measures of PB agency (individual and collective) than non-participants in their municipalities.⁶⁵

(b) Distribution of scores in PB cities (SDE and STI): Figure 2 shows that in both PB cities a higher proportion of participants vis-à-vis non-participants report a high individual/collective PB agency score (4 or 5) rather than a mid or low one (1, 2 or 3).⁶⁶

(c) Inter-city comparisons: Columns 10 and 13 on Table 6 show that, on average, individuals residing in PB municipalities (regardless of participation) report lower levels

⁶⁴ These are some general trends for PB participants in SDE in comparison with SDE's non-participants: On average, in SDE PB participants are older, more likely to be unemployed, educated, married or co-living. Moreover, SDE participants in CSOs, have a lower perception of corruption in the local government, have more trust in the mayor or neighbors, and believe that more people are willing to return a lost wallet (a proxy for social trust). However, the differences in unemployment, education, and marital status are not statistically significant.

These are some general trends for PB participants in STI in comparison with STI's non-participants: On average, in STI PB participants are older, more likely to be employed, uneducated, married, participants in CSOs, have a lower perception of corruption, more trust in the mayor or neighbors, and believe that less people are willing to return a lost wallet. However, the differences in unemployment, education, and return of wallet are not statistically significant.

⁶⁵ Column 9 shows that for SDE, PB participants report an average individual PB agency of 4.60, that is 2.37 points higher than that of non-participants. SDE participants' average collective PB agency score is 2.23, and 1.53 points higher, than non-participants' scores. Column 12 shows that participants in STI report an average individual PB agency score of 3.70, which is 1.16 points significantly higher than that of non-participants. In STI, the participants' average collective PB agency score is 2.55, and 0.88 points higher than that of non-participants.

⁶⁶ In SDE 88% of participants and 63% in STI report a high individual PB agency score. In turn, most non-participants from either PB city report mid or low levels of individual PB agency – 82% of non-participants in SDE and 68% in STI. In regards to collective agency, in SDE, 85% of the participants, and 63% in STI, report a score 4 or 5. In contrast, most non-participants from either PB city declare a mid or low collective PB agency score—72% in SDE and 68% in STI.

of individual and collective PB agency than those in non-PB municipalities. However, it must be noted that these results are based on unweighted averages.⁶⁷ In the case of SDE, when only participants are considered vis-à-vis all SDE inhabitants, the average score for either PB agency measure of participants is indeed significantly higher than that of SDO residents. For the other pair of cities, when only STI participants in PB, rather than all STI residents, are considered, they still report individual PB agency scores lower than those of LVG residents (but such lower scores are not statistically different than that of LVG).

These results are suggestive of the worth of conducting an exercise to evaluate the impact of PB in a comparison group setting, and with appropriate controls. Moreover, although the differences in means of both measures between STI participants and LVG residents is not statistically significant, it is worth noting that potential reasons for the STI's modest level of agency are explored in Chapter 5 and might respond to fundamental problems in the PB structure and process in this city.

(d) Distribution of scores in non-PB cities (SDO and LVG): In SDO, individual PB agency scores are divided almost evenly, since high (4 or 5) or mid/low scores (1, 2 or 3) are each chosen by half of the sample. In the case of collective agency, 88% of SDO respondents selected a mid/low score. On the other hand, the percentage of LVG respondents who have a 4-5 individual or collective PB agency scores is 67% in both instances.⁶⁸

One of the stories that the data might be telling is that the mere existence of PB

⁶⁷ Specifically, the average individual PB agency score of all respondents in SDE is 2.72, which is 0.45 points lower than in SDO, and in STI is 2.88, which is 0.91 points lower than in LVG. The average collective PB agency score of SDE residents is 3.09 and 0.57 points lower than in SDO, and in STI is 3.07 and 0.74 points lower than in LVG.

⁶⁸ Given these high PB agency scores, investigating which channels for exercising agency LVG residents have will be an important future research task.

does not guarantee a sense of empowered or agentful participation, at least not in equal ways across cases (note how LVG shows a pretty high sense of agentful participation without PB). A higher proportion of participants in SDE report high levels of agency than participants in STI; this may hint that, all else constant, there are important differences in the nature of the PB process in the two municipalities. The reasons why this may be the case are explored in detail later, but my observations of the assemblies lead me to conclude that STI's PB process suffers from more structural problems than does SDE's. And these structural features may impede people from being able to translate participation into high feelings of agency. These differences in the patterns of reported agency scores among respondents in both pairs of municipalities support my decision to treat SDE/SDO and STI/LVG each as an individual case study rather than combining data from both PB cities (SDE+STI) and comparing them to the non-PB cities (SDO+LVG).

3.3 Agency and Participation in PB

3.3.1 Empirical Methods

The objective with Q1a and Q1b—which, respectively, concern individual and group agency—is to assess whether PB participation is associated with more agency. Although preferably I would test for causality, citizens self-select to participate in PB, and they do so on the basis of observable and unobservable characteristics that may in fact influence agency and perception of agency. Unfortunately, while I have been able to account for observable features, such as age or gender, I have not been able to account for

unobservable characteristics.⁶⁹ That is, the independent variable of participation might potentially be a choice variable correlated with unobservable factors that have been relegated to the error term. In other words, participation may be endogenous if the decision to attend a PB meeting is correlated with unobservables that affect perceptions of agency. To this end, there are many personality characteristics that could affect participation decisions and/or agency. For example, how grumpy, depressed, lonely, lazy, absent-minded, or angry the individual is may help explain why a person does not participate in PB. Another example is that it may be that an agency-loving person participates in a PB precisely to get the thrill of running his or her own life or playing a key role in community affairs. A risk of only acknowledging, yet not being able to account for such unobservable covariates, is that of attributing incorrectly the treatment effect to PB, when other factors could be actually causing the relationship.

Under certain conditions, some scholars support the claiming of causality only on the basis of selection on observables. Dehejia and Wahba (1999), in a study that estimated the treatment impact of a labor-training program on post-intervention earnings, claim that

there may be covariates, for which the propensity score method cannot account. However, rather than giving up, or relying on assumptions about the unobserved variables, there is substantial reward in exploring first the information contained in the variables that are observed... [as doing so] offer(s) both a diagnostic on the quality of the comparison group and a means to estimate the treatment impact. (p. 1062)

⁶⁹ Please note that this study is based on survey data. That is, the unobservables problem comes up because the surveys cannot capture personality traits. It is likely, that with different type of observations (e.g., through a more ethnographic style of investigation and spending significant time with them), it could be possible to interpret the minds of the studied units. I would never know for sure what are their motivations to participate or not; in fact, they could deceive me for social desirability purposes.

Moreover, Altonji, Elder and Taber (2005), establish that selection on observables is equivalent to selection on unobservables as long as the set of observables selected is chosen randomly from a full set of variables that explain the outcome of interest, and the number of both, observables and unobservables, is large enough so that none of the covariates dominate the relationship.⁷⁰ Regardless of Dejehia and Whaba and Altonji et al.'s point and practice, since I cannot confirm these statements rigorously in this study, I choose to be conservative and leave causality assertions for future research.

Albeit not being able to isolate the PB effect, since I do have data on non-PB cities, I will use quasi-experimental methods to conduct a rigorous associational analysis. If the causality exercise were possible, it would be necessary to identify a counterfactual in order to establish causality by empirically testing to what extent participation, and nothing else, contributes to differences in reported agency values.

$$\alpha = (agency | PB = 1) - (agency | PB = 0)$$

This formula establishes that the causal impact (α) of participation in PB (PB) on the outcome of individual/collective PB agency ($agency$) is the difference between the outcome ($agency$) with participation (i.e., when $PB=1$) and the same outcome ($agency$) without participation (i.e., when $PB=0$). Gertler, Martínez, Premand, Rawlings and Vermeersch (2011) explain that in an all-things possible world, one would be able to observe each unit of analysis under both situations at a given point in time. But given that

⁷⁰ I assume that some of the unobservables traits are indirectly captured in some observed measures. For example, different motivations to participate in PB may be captured by membership in CSOs. Also, given the number of personality traits that could affect participation or agency, it could be expected that no single trait dominates. Nonetheless, it is safe to assume that the selection on unobservables is not zero, as the OLS or logit models assume, and therefore the estimates presented later may be upper-bound.

observing an individual simultaneously in two different states is not possible, and knowing that at each point in time an individual is either a participant or not, a valid counterfactual (*agency* / $PB=0$) becomes necessary to be able to tease out the likely effect of participation. In other words, this counterfactual represents what the *agency* outcome would have been in the absence of participation. The analysis that follows takes on this design, and presents a comparison group; but again, given that this counterfactual is built only from observable factors, it is not valid for establishing causality.

Taking only observable factors into account for the comparison group design, I use a combination of propensity score matching (PSM) with difference-in-differences to show to what extent the differences in outcomes (levels of reported agency) are associated with being a participant in PB.⁷¹ In a quasi-experimental language, for Q1a and Q1b the treatment is participation in PB (a yes/no question in the survey in reference to the community assembly of Fall 2012). The treatment (participation) groups contain 52 observations from participants in SDE and 82 in STI, my two PB cities. The respective controls are the complete populations of SDO (248 observations) and LVG (265 observations), my two non-PB cities.

The propensity score is defined as “the probability of assignment to treatment, conditional on covariates” (Dehejia & Whaba, 1999, p. 1053). This method focuses on the comparability of the PB and non-PB municipalities respondents in terms of variables (the

⁷¹ Although I can only use them for finding significant correlations, this combination of causal inference techniques has been used before. For example, Heckman, Ichimura and Todd (1997) evaluated the impact of an employment program by using matching estimators of differences in differences and replicate their results with random information. van de Walle and Mu (2008) combined PSM and differences in differences to evaluate the impact of rural road improvements on local markets at the commune level in Vietnam. Applied to the PB context, the World Bank has used PSM to evaluate the impact on the budgetary assignments and final fiscal positions of PB and non-PB municipalities in Peru. Different from this latter case, I do not match municipal observations, but instead those of individual respondents.

covariates) that should not be influenced by participation in PB, but that theory suggests they impact participation and/or the outcome. With data matching, it is possible to assign to each treated observation (defined as a participant in a PB municipality) one observation from the control group (defined as all respondents in a non-PB municipality) that is as close as possible when it comes to the observable variables that could potentially produce the bias between the treated and the control groups. Similarly, it is possible to match each non-treated unit in the PB city with a similar individual in the non-PB city across the same covariates. For better inference, the idea is to make the treatment and control groups as identical as possible based on time-invariant characteristics.

With such objective in mind, at the municipal level, the site selection has been made in a way that pairs of municipalities are as close as possible along some characteristics that are and likely to be relatively stable over time. Therefore, the life conditions (social, economic and political) under which individuals in both municipalities lived before PB were also likely to be similar. At the individual level, which is the one that matters for estimating the propensity score, the observable factors to be taken into consideration for the matching are measureable, relatively stable and exogenous to PB. These factors include age, gender, employment, marital status, education, subjective income, participation in CSOs, trust in fellow municipality inhabitants, perceptions of corruption, and role in household.⁷² Nonetheless, as stated before, participation in PB, being voluntary in nature, may still be driven by unobservable personality traits, which are in turn probably related to

⁷² Choosing the right covariates/observables prevents the propensity score model from losing efficiency due to the inclusion of irrelevant covariates.

the agency question and cannot be adjusted for by only using PSM.⁷³ For example, a high-energy “can do” person may choose a local PB to exercise her abundant agency rather than gaining enhanced agency from the PB experience. Regardless, the matching technique does assist me in generating a data structure suitable for a difference-in-differences approach, albeit without resolving the latent selection bias problem. Table 8 summarizes the quasi-experimental design. The matched observation in the non-PB municipality for each group (participants and non-participants) will be used as pseudo pre-treatment observations for the original units in the PB cities, which are considered as post-treatment. For example, individual *a* in STI is matched with individual *b* in LVG, and *b* is considered as *a* before PB.

Table 8. Data Design

PB Observations (SDE/STI)	Matched Non-PB Observations (SDO/LVG)
Participants <i>(post-treatment of the treated)</i>	Matched individuals to participants <i>(pseudo pre-treatment of the treated)</i>
Non-participants <i>(post-treatment of the controls)</i>	Matched individuals to non-participants <i>(pseudo pre-treatment of the controls)</i>

Once the data is organized in such form, difference-in-differences are then calculated, which allows me to cancel out the effect of selection bias related to the observables by taking the difference in outcomes of matched participants versus matched

⁷³ These unobservable characteristics of individuals are not expected to interact in any particular systematic fashion with aggregate level ones (at the level of the municipality).

non-participants across the two types of municipalities (or across the real and pseudo times).⁷⁴

Besides the selection on observables versus unobservables problem, the approach has other limitations, one of which is not being able to account for the dosage or amount of the “treatment,” since participation/exposure is only a binary variable. It could be expected that different degrees, quality, or length of involvement in PB would influence agency measures differently; but this study does not account for such variations.

3.3.2 Initial Evidence

Before testing association with the quasi-experimental design, it is useful to explore the data in its simplest form. As an initial step in examining the empirical relationship between participation and PB agency scores, three kinds of regressions have been conducted: (a) logistic (with a dichotomous dependent variable of high or mid/low PB agency),⁷⁵ (b) ordered logistic (with the 5 point PB agency scale variable as the dependent

⁷⁴ Heinrich, Maffiolo and Vázquez (2010) explain that even if participating units are in many ways different from those in the comparison group, insofar as what makes them different influence agency equally across the two localities, this specification then takes away bias produced by such differences between participants and non-participants.

⁷⁵ The logistic regression model has the following structure: There are k independent observations $agency_1, \dots, agency_k$, and the i -th observation can be treated as a realization of a random variable $Agency_i$. This variable takes the value of 1 when the reported PB agency score is either 4 or 5 (a high score), and zero when it is 1, 2 or 3 (mid or low). Assuming that $Agency_i$ has a binomial distribution

$$Agency_i \sim B(n_i, \pi_i),$$

where n_i is the binomial denominator and π_i the probability, with $n_i=1$ for all i .

The logit of the underlying probability π_i is a linear function of the independent variables

$$\text{logit}(\pi_i) = x_i'\beta,$$

where x_i is a vector of covariates and β is a vector of regression coefficients, each of which represents the change in the logit of the probability associated with a unit change in the j -th independent variable, ceteris paribus.

variable),⁷⁶ and (c) ordinary least squares (with the 5 point PB agency scale as the dependent variable, but assumed as continuous).⁷⁷ These models have been run to grasp the potential for a statistical difference among the scores reported by the different groups and the magnitude of such difference. The following covariates have been selected as determinants of PB agency based on previous findings and context specificity: respondents' age, self-reported health, perceived relative wealth, social trust⁷⁸ measured (as noted above) as expectations of getting back a lost wallet, age, education, gender, participation in other CSOs, and perceptions of corruption in the local government⁷⁹ (Bekkers, 2005; Easterlin, 1995, 2003; Graham 2009, 2011; Helliwell & Putnam, 2004;

⁷⁶ The ordered logistic regression model has the following structure: Taking the cumulative probability C_{ij} as the probability that the i th individual is in the j th or higher category:

$$C_{ij} = Pr (agency_i \leq j) = \sum Pr (agency_i = k)$$

This cumulative probability can be then turned into a cumulative logit

$$logit (C_{ij}) = \log (C_{ij} / (1 - C_{ij}))$$

The ordered logit then models the cumulative logit as a linear function of a set of predictors

$$logit (C_{ij}) = \alpha_j - \beta x_i$$

where each α_j represents the logit of the odds of being equal to or less than category j for the baseline group. Such intercepts increase over j and are called cutpoints. The β represents how one unit increase in the x of interest increases the log-odds of being higher than category j ; the increase is assumed to affect the log-odds the same way regardless of the cutpoint being considered.

⁷⁷ The ordinary least square regression model has the following structure: there are n observations $\{agency_i, x_i\}$, and each observation includes a scalar response $agency_i$ and a vector of regressors x_i . The outcome variable is a function of the regressors, so that

$$y_i = \alpha + x_i' \beta + \varepsilon_i$$

where α is the constant, β is a vector of regression coefficients, and ε_i are unobserved random variables (errors) which represent the difference between the observed agency scores and the predicted values.

⁷⁸ Helliwell and Putnam (2004) explain that social trust—"the belief that others around you can be trusted"—is a significant part of social capital, and the expectation (and the previous evidence) is that individuals who believe themselves to be living among others who they can trust on, are more likely to report higher levels of perceptions of well-being.

⁷⁹ While it could be argued that PB influences perceptions of corruption, I am not overly worried by this, as from the groups of non-participants in the PB city who were aware of the assemblies and chose not to go, only 3 individuals in SDE said that it was because of disappointments with the process (which could be linked to perceptions of corruption caused by PB), and none in STI.

Helliwell & Wang, 2010).

Tables 9 and 10 present the models for SDE (PB) and SDO (non-PB) for individual and collective PB agency, respectively. Tables 11 and 12 do the same for the pair of STI (PB) and LVG (non-PB).

Consistent with the histograms shown earlier, the tables below show that the coefficient for participation is positive and statistically significant across specifications and for both outcomes—individual and collective PB agency. That is, PB participants (who happen to reside in SDE) do report higher levels of PB agency than non-participants, *ceteris paribus*. Interestingly, the city parameter (SDE) has different signs in the individual and collective agency models. In the case of individual agency, the negative coefficient suggests that living in SDE is associated with lower perceptions of agency. However, when participation is considered, the larger size of participation's positive parameter when combined with the city parameter, corroborate the previously told story that while participants are reporting higher levels of PB agency, non-participants in SDE report lower levels of agency than non-participants in SDO, holding all else constant. In the case of collective agency, for which the city parameter is positive, the data then suggests that living in SDE is related to higher perceptions of collective agency, regardless of participation. This result, which I return to later, may be an indication of spillover effects from participants to non-participants in that same municipality.

Although younger and married individuals are likely to report lower scores of individual agency, participants in other CSOs, heads of household, and people who placed themselves high in the economic ladder report higher levels of individual PB agency. Additionally, people who believe their fellow residents are trustworthy also report higher

individual agency. People who believe that corruption is high feel less PB agency, but it is important to note that there might be an endogeneity issue in this relationship: less agentful individuals might already feel that corruption is high. No significant correlation was found with gender or employment. In the case of collective PB agency, all previous relationships prevail, with the exception that employment becomes statistically significant in such models; its positive sign implies that employed individuals report higher levels of collective PB agency.

Table 9. Determinants of Individual PB Agency (SDE vs SDO)

Independent Variables	Logit 1	Logit 2	Logit 3	Ologit 1	Ologit 2	Ologit 3	OLS 1	OLS 2	OLS 3
	(high/mid-low agency)			(1-5 ordinal agency)			(1-5 continuous agency)		
Constant	-0.0735 (0.1279)	2.8403* (1.4835)	2.1998 (1.6381)				2.3700*** (0.1514)	4.168*** (0.6818)	3.5979*** (0.7712)
Participation (1=yes)	3.5471*** (0.4715)	3.4877*** (0.5856)	3.6486*** (0.6331)	4.2573*** (0.3859)	3.7066*** (0.4117)	3.6840*** (0.4352)	-0.9371*** (0.1217)	1.6592*** (0.1669)	1.6124*** (0.1781)
SDE (1=yes)	-1.4367*** (0.2242)	-0.7137** (0.3131)	-0.4164 (0.3554)	-1.4462*** (0.1859)	-0.1532*** (0.0483)	-0.1364*** (0.0517)	3.1633*** (0.0741)	-0.4213*** (0.1334)	-0.3080** (0.1498)
Male (1=yes)		0.2084 (0.2545)	0.1237 (0.2653)		0.2270 (0.1736)	0.1894 (0.2501)		0.0583 (0.0965)	0.0414 (0.0969)
Age		-0.2149*** (0.0670)	-0.2499*** (0.0752)		-0.1532 (0.0483)	-0.1364*** (0.0517)		-0.0807*** (0.0302)	-0.0729** (0.0315)
Age²		0.0028*** (0.0007)	0.0032*** (0.0008)		0.0020*** (0.0005)	0.0019*** (0.0006)		0.0011*** (0.0003)	0.0010*** (0.0004)
Participation Other Org (1=yes)		0.7050** (0.3244)	0.7582** (0.3423)		0.2004 (0.2117)	0.2719 (0.2211)		0.2507** (0.1229)	0.2776** (0.1259)
Corruption		-0.3423*** (0.0567)	-0.3607*** (0.0596)		-0.1946*** (0.0334)	-0.2141*** (0.0346)		0.1223*** (0.0189)	-0.1302*** (0.01957)
Wallet		0.3078*** (0.0556)	0.2781*** (0.0608)		0.2790*** (0.0462)	0.2430*** (0.0449)		0.1376*** (0.0235)	0.1243*** (0.0262)
Head of Household (1=yes)			0.4270 (0.2743)			0.3031* (0.1848)			0.1870* (0.1016)
Employed (1=yes)			0.5207 (0.5121)			0.4934 (0.3231)			0.2243 (0.1878)
Economic Ladder			0.1572* (0.0957)			0.1286* (0.0723)			0.048 (0.0430)
Married (1=yes)			-0.2261 (0.2992)			-0.4895** (0.2024)			-0.2555** (0.1124)
n	496	475	455	496	475	455	496	475	455
Pseudo/Adj R²	0.1558	0.3773	0.3895	0.1080	0.1990	0.2036	0.2596	0.4750	0.4828

Standard errors in parenthesis. For OLS, robust standard errors.

*** Significant at 1%; **significant at 5%; * significant at 10%

Table 10. Determinants of Collective PB Agency (SDE vs SDO)

Independent Variables	Logit 1	Logit 2	Logit 3	Ologit 1	Ologit 2	Ologit 3	OLS 1	OLS 2	OLS 3
	(high/low agency)			(1-5 ordinal agency)			(1-5 continuous agency)		
Constant	-1.9694*** (0.1949)	-1.8438 (1.5380)	-2.0995 (1.7779)				2.5265*** (0.0603)	2.9306*** (0.6368)	2.7087*** (0.6756)
Participation	2.6672*** (0.4158)	2.1661*** (0.4543)	2.4305*** (0.5169)	2.8460*** (0.3258)	2.0446*** (0.3442)	2.1541*** (0.3676)	1.5338*** (0.1556)	1.0323*** (0.1628)	1.0277*** (0.1655)
SDE	1.0070*** (0.2512)	1.6420*** (0.3416)	1.9806*** (0.3985)	0.2919* (0.1739)	1.1983*** (0.2221)	1.4981*** (0.2540)	0.2473** (0.1052)	0.5947*** (0.1190)	0.7196*** (0.1293)
Gender		-0.2168 (0.2591)	-0.3126 (0.2729)		-0.0733 (0.1720)	-0.1133 (0.1773)		-0.3460 (0.0894)	-0.0560 (0.0888)
Age		-0.0378 (0.0663)	-0.1154 (0.0767)		-0.0610 (0.0470)	-0.1229** (0.0511)		-0.0280*** (0.0275)	-0.0551** (0.0283)
Age²		0.0007*** (0.0007)	0.0016* (0.0008)		0.0008*** (0.0005)	0.0015*** (0.0006)		0.0004 (0.0003)	0.0007** (0.0003)
Participation Other Org		0.3243 (0.3123)	0.2050 (0.3323)		0.4394** (0.2100)	0.3771* (0.2188)		0.2215* (0.1149)	0.1783 (0.1170)
Corruption		-0.1968*** (0.0497)	-0.2146*** (0.0536)		-0.2302*** (0.0342)	-0.2296*** (0.0354)		-0.1089*** (0.0184)	-0.1060*** (0.0185)
Wallet		0.1396** (0.0558)	0.1285** (0.0617)		0.1680*** (0.0394)	0.1521*** (0.0434)		0.0832*** (0.0212)	0.0717*** (0.0921)
Head of			-0.1575 (0.2733)			0.1432 (0.1822)			0.0337 (0.0921)
Employed			1.0760** (0.5475)			0.8777*** (0.3111)			0.4353*** (0.1504)
Econ Ladder			0.1248 (0.1006)			0.0951 (0.0675)			0.0497 (0.0344)
Married			0.5029* (0.3106)			0.3504** (0.1954)			0.1822* (0.0981)
n	496	475	455	496	475	455	496	475	455
Pseudo/Adj R²	0.1884	0.2730	0.2965	0.0707	0.1500	0.1650	0.1975	0.3602	0.3881

Standard errors in parenthesis. For OLS, robust standard errors.

*** Significant at 1%; **significant at 5%; * significant at 10%

In the case of STI and LVG, Tables 11 and 12 show that participation is also statistically significant, presenting a positive association with both outcome variables. The city variable (STI) is negative and significant, suggesting that people in the control municipality of LVG, on average and with all else constant, report higher levels of PB agency than STI residents. Moreover, given that the absolute value of the city coefficient is almost always larger than that of participation, for this pair of municipalities the data suggests that LVG residents feel on average more agency, all else constant. This result both alerts us that there may be some agency deficiencies in STI's PB process and reminds us that there are ways other than PB in which citizens can exercise and experience agency within the municipal budget planning context.

Male, older, employed individuals, as well as participants in other CSOs and people who placed themselves low in the economic ladder report higher levels of individual PB agency. Additionally, people who believe that corruption is high feel less agency. No significant correlation was found with being the head of the household, marital status, or social trust. In the case of collective agency all previous relationships prevail, with the exception that being married and not being the head of the household become statistically significant and associated with higher feelings of agency, although not robustly, since such correlations only appear in one of all nine specifications.

It must also be noted that STI/LVG models are not as powerful as those for SDE/SDO, and again, I argue that this is likely the case—at least, partly—because of the subpar organizational and democratic characteristics of the PB process in STI, making it less conducive to participation being translated into stronger feelings of agency. Nonetheless, given that the analysis without counterfactuals is pointing to a statistical

difference between participants and non-participants, let us then explore how such relationship holds (either getting stronger or weaker) when analyzed using a quasi-experimental design.

Table 11. Determinants of Individual PB Agency (STI vs LVG)

Independent Variables	Logit 1	Logit 2	Logit 3	Ologit 1	Ologit 2	Ologit 3	OLS 1	OLS 2	OLS 3
	(high/low agency)			(1-5 ordinal agency)			(1-5 continuous agency)		
Constant	0.6989*** (0.1319)	-1.7302* (0.9612)	-1.4051 (1.1967)				3.7954*** (0.1066)	2.7734*** (0.6383)	3.1357*** (0.7095)
Participation	1.2893*** (0.2790)	0.8950*** (0.3198)	1.0228*** (0.3405)	1.1111*** (0.2268)	0.8093*** (0.2637)	1.0155*** (0.2793)	1.1578*** (0.1743)	0.8928*** (0.2098)	0.9941*** (0.2173)
STI	-1.4577*** (0.2057)	-1.3840*** (0.2315)	-1.1756*** (0.2590)	-1.6381*** (0.1877)	-1.5403*** (0.2038)	-1.3731*** (0.2265)	-1.2494** (0.1494)	-1.1011*** (0.1622)	-0.9725*** (0.1828)
Gender		0.6129*** (0.2131)	0.5557** (0.2324)		0.5926*** (0.1838)	0.4737** (0.1967)		0.5079*** (0.1546)	0.3967** (0.1598)
Age		0.1130*** (0.0005)	0.0756 (0.0486)		0.0612* (0.0360)	0.0210 (0.0400)		0.0386 (0.0274)	0.0093 (0.0303)
Age²		-0.0012*** (0.0005)	-0.0008 (0.0005)		-0.0006 (0.0004)	-0.0002 (0.0004)		-0.0004 (0.0003)	-0.0001 (0.0003)
Participation Other Org		0.3294 (0.2208)	0.4081* (0.2416)		0.1881 (0.1921)	0.1852 (0.2048)		0.2003 (0.1512)	0.1883 (0.1559)
Corruption		-0.0778** (0.0331)	-0.0758** (0.0352)		-0.0499* (0.0291)	-0.0464 (0.0308)		-0.0460* (0.0240)	-0.0438* (0.0253)
Wallet		-0.0329 (0.0405)	0.0102 (0.0434)		0.0032 (0.0342)	0.0340 (0.0362)		0.0019 (0.0271)	0.0266 (0.0282)
Head of Household			-0.2287 (0.2262)			-0.0583 (0.1910)			-0.0849 (0.1521)
Employed			1.2272* (0.7003)			0.9219** (0.4576)			0.7621*** (0.2745)
Econ Ladder			-0.2440*** (0.0607)			-0.1971*** (0.0517)			-0.1337*** (0.0398)
Married			0.2805 (0.2421)			0.1564 (0.2070)			0.1419 (0.1630)
n	525	491	448	525	491	448	525	491	448
Pseudo/Adj R²	0.1884	0.1243	0.1504	0.0545	0.0715	0.0814	0.1224	0.1670	0.1877

Standard errors in parenthesis. For OLS, robust standard errors.

*** Significant at 1%; **significant at 5%; * significant at 10%

Table 12. Determinants of Collective PB Agency (STI vs LVG)

Independent Variables	Logit 1	Logit 2	Logit 3	Ologit 1	Ologit 2	Ologit 3	OLS 1	OLS 2	OLS 3
	(high/low agency)			(1-5 ordinal agency)			(1-5 continuous agency)		
Constant	0.7278*** (0.1321)	-1.4080 (0.9349)	-1.9453 (1.1845)				3.8084*** (0.1050)	3.0412*** (0.6288)	3.0611*** (0.7134)
Participation	1.3167*** (0.2782)	1.0008*** (0.3159)	1.1102*** (0.3343)	0.8386*** (0.2192)	0.5925** (0.2507)	0.7405*** (0.2650)	0.8779*** (0.1563)	0.6603*** (0.1800)	0.7320*** (0.1872)
STI	-1.4945*** (0.2056)	-1.5600*** (0.2315)	-1.3923*** (0.2574)	-1.4758*** (0.2192)	-1.5488*** (0.2033)	-1.4361*** (0.2261)	-0.9912*** (0.1403)	-0.9918*** (0.1489)	-0.8800*** (0.1657)
Gender		0.2563*** (0.2123)	0.1891 (0.2288)		0.3420** (0.1777)	0.2104 (0.1898)		0.2417* (0.1411)	0.1324 (0.1447)
Age		0.0888** (0.0420)	0.0605 (0.0473)		0.0412 (0.0355)	-0.0014 (0.0394)		0.0239 (0.0271)	-0.0091 (0.0284)
Age²		-0.0008* (0.0005)	-0.0006 (0.0005)		-0.0003 (0.0004)	0.0001 (0.0004)		-0.0002 (0.0003)	0.0002 (0.0003)
Participation Other Org		0.1710 (0.2175)	0.1754 (0.2345)		0.1250 (0.1878)	0.0728 (0.1983)		0.1157 (0.1466)	0.0826 (0.0231)
Corruption		-0.0409 (0.0324)	-0.0464 (0.0344)		-0.0407 (0.0280)	-0.0448 (0.0295)		-0.0324 (0.0226)	-0.0355 (0.0231)
Wallet		0.0382 (0.0402)	0.0691 (0.0431)		0.0561* (0.0333)	0.0842** (0.0351)		0.0479 (0.0249)	0.0685 (0.0246)
Head of Household			-0.0064** (0.2196)			0.1047 (0.1866)			0.0484 (0.1451)
Employed			1.6210** (0.7045)			1.2469*** (0.4578)			1.0176*** (0.3453)
Econ Ladder			-0.1435** (0.0578)			-0.1418*** (0.0491)			-0.0950** (0.0383)
Married			0.1893* (0.2356)			0.2205 (0.2003)			0.1386 (0.1530)
n	529	491	451	529	494	451	529	494	451
Pseudo/Adj R²	0.0822	0.1243	0.1218	0.0421	0.0565	0.0659	0.0894	0.1188	0.1438

Standard errors in parenthesis. For OLS, robust standard errors.

*** Significant at 1%; **significant at 5%; * significant at 10%

3.3.3 Characterizing the Participation Model

After this initial evidence, let us explore more deeply the relationship between participation and subjective agency (individual and collective PB agency). My first step is to estimate the propensity score, which I then use to match individuals across PB and non-PB municipalities. To do so, it is necessary to choose a set X of conditioning variables that should not be influenced by PB. The participation model predicts the probability of participation in PB. It is characterized by variables that likely determine not only participation, but also agency. Because, as we have noted, it is possible that unmeasured factors affect participation decisions, we must relax the assumption of conditional independence (selection into participation is based *only* on observable characteristics) required to be present in PSM models.

There is no list of clearly relevant variables that will allow me to come up with the least biased estimate based on the accuracy of the matched control group. But, after considering different factors, I have chosen as covariates most of the same control variables used in the preliminary models shown earlier. The differences are that: (a) instead of using the wallet question as the social trust variable, I have now incorporated a measure of trust in neighbors and trust in the mayor, both of which takes ascending values of trust from 1 to 3; (b) I have also included health, education and an interaction term for education and gender; and (c) I considered adding indicators of employment, being the head of household, and marital status, but I concluded they were irrelevant as they added no power to the models. It is important to note that although this participation model has included trust and perception variables, very similar results were obtained when they were excluded (which may be an indication that results may not be all endogenous to pre-existing individual traits/attitudes). Table 13 below shows the results for the participation logit models for Q1,

from which the propensity score was predicted for each pair of municipalities (i.e., SDE/SDO & STI/LVG).

$$\begin{aligned}
 e(x) &\equiv Pr(PB = 1 | X = x) \\
 X &\perp PB | e(X) \\
 (agency1, agency0) &\perp PB | X \text{ and } 0 < e(X) < 1 \\
 &\Rightarrow (agency1, agency0) \perp PB | e(X)
 \end{aligned}$$

where PB is the treatment indicator of participation in PB, $agency$ is the outcome, and X a set of observed characteristics of each individual.

Table 13. Participation Model

Variable	Coefficient (SDE)	Coefficient (STI)
Gender	.1542 (.4372)	.9728** (.4900)
Age	.0290* (.0152)	0.0322** (.0151)
Educated	.7588 (.5626)	-0.0159 (.5301)
Educated * Gender	-1.3035 (.8643)	-1.1122 (.7211)
Corruption	-.1799*** (.0698)	-.0427 (.0594)
Trust in Neighbors	.7899** (.3994)	.5929* (.3538)
Trust in Mayor	.0549 (.3175)	.4632* (.2796)
Economic Ladder	.2409* (.1366)	.1916** (.0964)
Participation/Membership in other CSOs	1.1962** (.4921)	2.9496*** (.7719)
Health	.2428 (.2768)	.5186** (.2255)
Constant	-6.8002*** (1.6636)	-9.5422*** (1.8272)
N	239	231
Pseudo R ²	.1922	.2609

Standard errors in parenthesis

*** Significant at 1%; **significant at 5%; * significant at 10%

Looking at the standard errors (in parenthesis) from SDE's participation model, it can be seen that participation in PB is related to age (the older the individual, the higher the probability of participating), perceptions of corruption (the higher the perception of corruption in the government, the lower the probability of participating), trust in neighbors and the mayor (the more trust, the higher the probability of participation), participation in other CSOs (members of other CSO are more likely than non-members to participate) and the interaction of education and gender (educated men are less likely to participate). Gender, perceptions of wealth,⁸⁰ education, or health are not significant in explaining participation in PB. In the case of STI, participation in PB is positively and significantly correlated with age, being male, trusting neighbors and the mayor, perception of wealth, being a member or participant in other CSOs, and being healthy.

3.3.4 Assessing the Association of Participation and PB Agency

Using Stata's *psmatch2* plug-in developed by Leuven & Sianesi (2003), four matching exercises were conducted using the nearest neighbor algorithm, without replacement. Because the treatment group was oversampled when compared to its

⁸⁰ Although ideally I would have controlled for objective income, the problem is that self-reported income data tends to suffer from tremendous measurement error. Moreover, after looking at the data meticulously, I have strong suspicions that many respondents reported their personal income, rather than the household income, as the survey asked. Furthermore, 8% of the income observations are missing. Because of this, I have decided to use the economic ladder question to account for a measure of wealth. Although there is less incentive to misreport in this exercise than in the income question, using the economic ladder question also has its limitations. Graham and Chattopadhyay (2008) find that "happier, wealthier, and educated people are likely to place themselves higher on the ladder...These findings reflect more optimistic people ranking themselves higher. Yet they also reflect realistic assessments related to income and status." (p. 9). In sum, on the one hand, is the finding that happier and more optimistic respondents will put themselves high up the wealth ladder. On the other hand, some would argue that people with more agency also would likely put themselves higher in the ladder, but a counter argument would suggest that people with more agency are more realistic about factors constraining their agency.. With these two competing ideas, it is not clear if using the economic ladder question would bias the result in a particular direction.

frequency in a random population, Heinrich et al. (2010) explain that matching should be done on the log-odds ratio $\log (P (X_i) / 1-P (X_i))$, instead of directly on the estimated propensity score.⁸¹ Doing so assures that results are invariant to the sampling method.

In the first (SDE/SDO) case, the input was to match participants in the PB municipality, SDE, with similar individuals in the non-PB city, SDO (across the chosen observables captured in the participation model). Fifty observations were used and matched with the log odds ratio of the propensity score. In the second (STI/LVG) case, the same was done for participants in STI, who were matched with similar individuals in the non-PB city, LVG. Sixty-three observations were used and matched with the log odds ratio of the propensity score. These pairs became the treatment units—SDE/STI figures serving as the post-treatment measure for the treated, and SDO/LVG as the pseudo pre-treatment for SDE/STI participants. In the third case, the input was to match non-participants in SDE with similar individuals in SDO. As a result, 187 observations of non-participants were matched with similar individuals in SDO. Finally, the same was done for non-participants in STI, who were matched with similar individuals in LVG. In this case, 166 observations for individual agency and 167 for collective agency of non-participants were matched with similar individuals in LVG. These pairs became the control units. Once again, SDE/STI figures served as the post-treatment measures for the control group, and SDO/LVG as the

⁸¹ “With choice-based sampling [where the treated are oversampled relative to their frequency in the population] the number of treated and comparison cases does not reflect the likelihood that an individual with given characteristics participates in the program in the full universe, but rather is determined by various factors outside the control—and knowledge—of the researcher. Matching on the log odds of the propensity score has the advantage that it “spreads out” the density of scores at very low or very high propensity scores. Use of the log odds also allows for a consistent bandwidth to be used. In addition, since the logit is used to predict propensity score, the log odds are a linear combination of the independent variables, and a constant radius is expected to translate into the same metric at different propensity score levels” (Heinrich et al., 2010, p. 26).

pseudo pre-treatment. Annex 5 presents the outputs of the matching exercises, both for individual and collective PB agency.⁸²

To assess the association of participation with PB agency, and assuming that the differences between treatment and control groups are the smallest possible over real and pseudo time (which is believable given the way in which municipalities were selected), it is necessary to introduce some post-matching notation.

Let us define $agency_{it}$ as the mean of the outcome in group i at the time t . $i=0$ for the control group (SDE non-participants and their matches) and $i=1$ for the treatment group (SDE participants and their matches). Define $t=0$ as the pre-treatment period (values of matched observations) and $t=1$ to be the post-treatment period (values of SDE's observations; note that only the treatment group gets the treatment—participation). The assumption under a quasi-experiment with no unobservable and endogeneity issues would be that any difference in the change in means of agency between treatment and control units is the *result* of participation in PB. However, more cautiously, I will take such estimator as a stronger evidence of correlation (vis-à-vis the preliminary findings), rather than established causation. I estimate the estimator $(agency_{11}-agency_{10}) - (agency_{01} - agency_{00})$, which is the change in agency for the treatment group minus the change in agency for the control group. One can then run the model:

⁸² While performing these matching exercises, given that PSM is a data hungry technique and given that the size of this dataset is modest, a given individual from a non-PB city could be matched both, with a participant and non-participant from the PB city.

$$\Delta agency_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i + \varepsilon_i;$$

where $\Delta agency_i = agency_{i1} - agency_{i0}$ and X_i is a dichotomous variable that takes the value of 1 if the individual is in the treatment group and 0 in the control group.

Table 14. Empirical Association between Participation and PB Agency

	Average difference in agency between participants and their matches – average difference in agency between non-participants and their matches
Individual PB Agency SDE (237 obs; Adj R ² =.2047)	1.9649*** (.2501)
Individual PB Agency STI (229 obs; Adj R ² =.0612)	1.2564*** (.3153)
Collective PB Agency SDE (237 obs; Adj R ² =.1051)	1.1354*** (0.2118)
Collective PB Agency STI (230 obs; Adj R ² =.0495)	1.0149*** (.2822)

*** Significant at 1%; **significant at 5%; * significant at 10%

Standard errors in parenthesis

It must be pointed out that the dependent variables are ordinal in nature. Hence, the outcome of interest has categories in a meaningful order, but for which a score of 2 in agency does not mean double the agency than a score of 1. However, due to the similarity in the coefficients yielded by OLS and ordered logit models, the former are here presented for easier interpretation (ordered logit outputs are shown in Annex 6).⁸³ In all cases, the effect of participation is positive and significant; but again, I take this as evidence of a significant relationship between both variables. The association with individual PB agency is larger than with collective PB agency. Moreover, the coefficient for individual PB agency is larger in magnitude in the city of SDE vis-à-vis STI, but the coefficient for collective PB agency is greater in STI vis-à-vis SDE. Nonetheless, comparison across both

⁸³ Although ignoring that agency is ordinal and treating it as a nominal variable causes a loss of efficiency, the estimates are still unbiased.

cases are not appropriate, since there are many structural differences in the way the PB process has been carried out in each city.

As Table 14 shows, the main results are: (a) PB participants in SDE, on average, report individual and collective PB agency scores 2 and 1.3 points higher, respectively, than do non-participants in SDE; and (b) PB participants in STI on average report individual and collective PB agency scores 1.3 and 1 points higher, respectively, than do non-participants in STI.

3.4 Agency and Awareness of PB

3.4.1 Context

I have already considered the correlation between participation and agency. I now examine the possible association between having some sort of knowledge about PB, rather than directly participating, and once again having feelings of agency (within the PB/municipal budgeting context). Doing so allows me to obtain suggestive evidence (for future causal evaluation) of whether the potential sphere of influence of PB may go beyond those who attend the assemblies.

The specific question (Q2) tested in this section asks whether non-participants who live in a PB municipality and are aware of PB are more likely to report higher levels of collective agency vis-à-vis unaware individuals in that municipality, or residents of non-PB municipalities. In testing this claim, the independent variable of interest is whether an individual is aware or not of PB defined as having heard about the process before the interview. This is the variable previously introduced as *awareness*. The idea under

examination is whether or not people who are aware of PB in a PB municipality, although not themselves participants in PB, feel—albeit, indirectly—like agents through a social network externality. What of possible awareness of PB in a non-PB municipality? Interestingly, it could be argued that people who are aware of something perceived as good (e.g., PB) but they cannot enjoy, feel more frustrated and disempowered than those who simply have no awareness of its existence. Or, on the contrary, it could be argued that residents of non-PB cities who are aware of PB in another cities may report enhanced agency (at least agency freedom, if not agency achievement) believing that what residents of PB cities can do, they can also do. Because of the indirect road to agency explored in this section, which comes through the action of one’s social networks, rather than direct personal action, collective, rather than individual agency, becomes the outcome of interest.

In this case, the non-PB municipality is considered purely on its own terms, rather than as a pseudo PB city (as it was employed in the quasi-experimental setting). To test this claim a straightforward regression analysis without a comparison group design is informative, given that no problems of selection bias are suspected in this case: First, I assume that people do not choose to live in one municipality or the other based on the local government’s decision to conduct PB or not. Second, I assume that whether an individual in SDE becomes informed or not about PB does not directly depend on either internal traits related either to motivation to participate or the propensity to enjoy agency, for the local government uses mass advertising strategies, such as radio spots and street signs, that more or less reach all individuals alike. On the contrary, in STI, most of the information about PB is transmitted through neighborhood councils; and, hence, it is less likely that an individual becomes informed about the process of PB unless he/she is already involved in

such matters. Although the calendar of assemblies is indeed published in the website of STI's local government, it is suspected that for an individual to decide to look for the schedule on the website, he/she is already aware. Thus, because of the potential of obtaining biased estimators for the STI/LVG's case, for Q2 only SDE and SDO are included in the analysis.

To better control for the potential problem (even in SDE) that those who are aware of PB may know of the process precisely because they have a motivation to find out about the process and its respective assemblies, I have dropped from the sample two groups of respondents who could have been placed into the "suspect" category of agency-motivated individuals: (a) participants, and (b) non-participants who skipped their community assemblies because of a reported "lack of time". It may be the case that respondents informed about the community assemblies when asked why they did not go responded—due to a social desirability effect—because "I had no time", rather than along the lines of "I was not interested." However, for the present at least, there is no way to control for such measurement error; and in any case, such measurement error is being omitted since that data is being dropped and, hence, is irrelevant for the rest of the analysis. In sum, for SDE the only respondents who are being considered are those who have heard of PB, but have not participated, and have declared a reason different than a "lack of time" to justify their lack of participation. From the non-PB municipality of SDO all respondents are being considered, and for them it is also known whether an individual there has or has not heard about PB (i.e., is aware or not aware). Once these filters are applied, the number of eligible observations in SDE is 182 and the number of observations in SDO remains the same at 265.

Figure 4 shows the percentage of respondents divided by *awareness* and municipality that reported each score of collective agency. The graphic evidence suggests that the percentage of aware individuals in SDE reporting high levels of PB agency (score of 4 or 5) is double (31%) than that of unaware individuals in the same locality (16%). In SDO, there is not much difference in these percentages, as individuals reporting high scores represent around 12% of either aware or unaware individuals in that city. As hinted earlier, there are different potential explanations behind these results for SDO: (a) it may be the case that being aware of something that is not available may not empower you (on the contrary, it might make the individual feel frustrated for a lack of access to it, if he values it as good, as nearly all the sample did); (b) being aware of PB enhances your agency, since you know that you have the freedom and/or ability to do it; or (c) people in the non-PB cities feel that they were different in some way than residents of the PB cities (we are always stuck in the mud, with more-corrupt officials or more-selfish citizens than others). This conundrum is worth investigating further in the future.

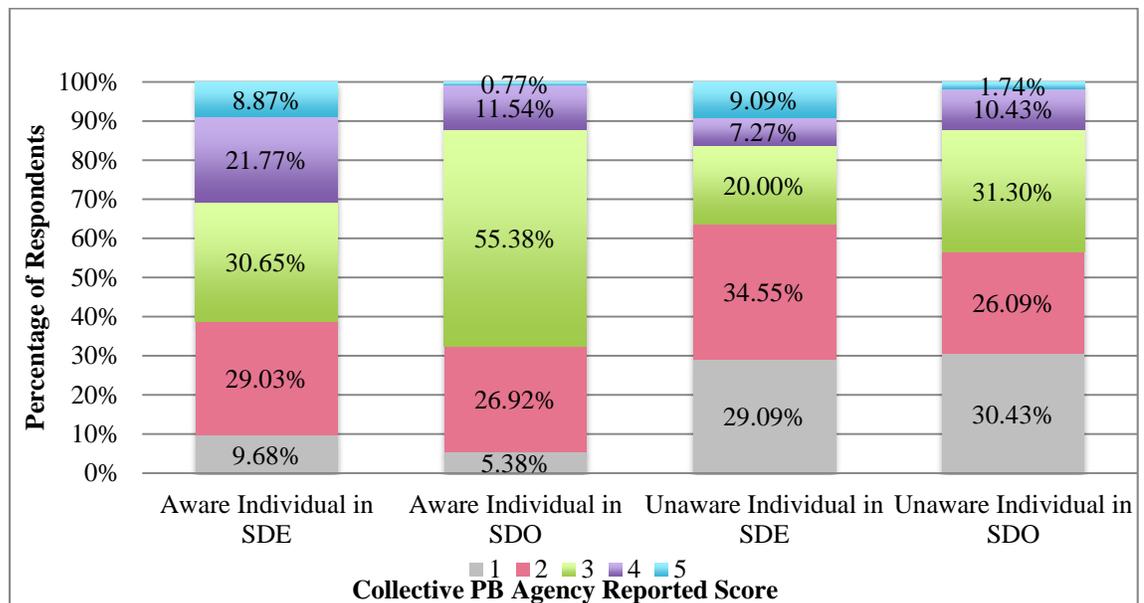


Figure 4. Collective Agency and Awareness in SDE/SDO

3.4.2 The Model and Results

Let us specify the model:

$$agencycol_i = \beta_1 + \beta_2 awareness_i + \beta_3 pbcity_i + \beta_4 awareness*pbcity_i + \beta_5 X_i + \varepsilon_i;$$

where $agencycol_i$ is the collective PB agency score for unit i , $awareness$ is a dichotomous variable that takes the value of 1 if the individual has heard of PB and 0 otherwise, $pbcity$ is a dichotomous variable that takes the value of 1 if the individual is from SDE and 0 if the individual is from SDO, $awareness*pbcity$ is an interaction term between the latter two variables, and X_i is a vector of controls. Table 15 below presents the main results for SDE/SDO.

Figure 5 shows how the PB non-participant from SDE, but who is aware of PB reports higher feelings of agency than the PB-aware individual in SDO, who would not have access to the process. Although these differences in levels do not account for control variables, it speaks of the possibility of a spillover effect. The figure below also shows what could be considered as a municipality effect—the SDE individual reports higher level of collective PB agency regardless of his/her awareness condition. Another interesting pattern is that aware individuals, regardless of their place of residence, report higher levels of PB collective agency. This is interesting, as it tends to rebut the argument that an individual who is aware of PB in SDO is frustrated due to the lack of access to it. But, when we turn to the regression results (Table 15), there is not enough support for the indirect link to agency argued, as the coefficients of interest are not statistically significant. This finding goes in line with Crocker's idea that for one being an agent one must

contribute—or have the freedom to contribute—to the realization of the goals.⁸⁴

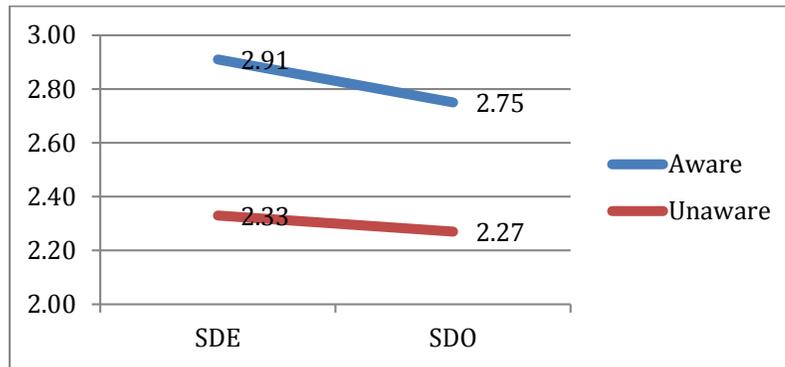


Figure 5. Awareness and Agency in SDE & SDO

Table 15. PB Awareness and Collective PB Agency (SDE vs SDO)

	OLS (1)	OLS (2)	OLS (3)
Constant	2.2696*** (.0953)	.8079* (.4590)	.6437 (.4741)
Awareness	0.4843*** (.1309)	.0185 (.1411)	.0601 (.1417)
PBcity	.0577 (.1676)	.3351* (.1760)	.3751** (.1746)
Awareness*PBcity	.0997 (.2111)	.0035 (.2082)	-.0266 (.2071)
Gender		-0.1012 (.1001)	.1333 (.2968)
Age		.0034 (.0045)	.0025 (.0045)

⁸⁴ In the interest of framing future research, it is interesting to note that a person may live in a non-PB city and be aware that other cities have a PB (which gives them more agency and control over their city). Although this person does not have agency freedom right now with respect to PB in her city (for it does not exist), she does have agency freedom to “agitate, educate, and organize” (B. R. Ambedkar in Dreze and Sen 2013) to bring about PB in her city. There are different sorts of freedom to contribute to the realization of one’s goals (and shorter and longer-term goals).

Economic Ladder	.0993***	.0946***
	(.0352)	(.0350)
Participation/Membership in CSO	.2316**	.2895**
	(0.1183)	(.1184)
Educated	-.1885*	-.4376***
	(.1127)	(.1424)
Employed	.4491***	.7009***
	(.1625)	(.2120)
Health	-.0080	-.0204
	(.0921)	(.0912)
Corruption	-.0870***	-.0844***
	(.0188)	(.0187)
Trust in Neighbors	.2280**	.2444***
	(.0988)	(.0979)
Trust in Mayor	.2578***	.2726***
	(.0875)	(.0869)
Educated*Gender		.5785***
		(.2014)
Employed*Gender		-.6203**
		(.3150)
N	424	388
Adj R²	.0606	.2429
		.2594

Standard errors in parenthesis

*** Significant at 1%; **significant at 5%; * significant at 10%

For sensitivity purposes, let us now turn to the stronger measure of awareness—*awareness of community assembly*. This measure is generated from the specific question in the PB city instrument that asked residents if they were informed of the scheduling of their respective community assemblies. I call it a stronger measure since it implies not only having ever heard about PB, but specifically knowing that the discussions and voting were scheduled. Hence, it is interesting to compare collective PB agency scores of non-participants in SDE who were aware of the scheduled assemblies vis-à-vis those also in SDE who were not but had a general idea of the city’s PB. Note that this model does not

involve the SDO residents at all.

The models on Table 16 (below) do provide support for the argument of possible spillover effects, which, I believe is this dissertation’s most interesting empirical finding. The coefficients for *awareness of scheduled community assembly* are positive and statistically significant across specifications, suggesting that people who were aware of the assemblies but did not participate do feel more like agents vis-à-vis other residents of the municipality that may or may not have heard about PB before, but for certain did not know of assemblies scheduled events. The third model shows that on average, individuals aware of the scheduled community assemblies report a collective agency score that is, on average, 0.81 points higher than the unaware, all else constant. This result speaks of the existence of strong social networks and a vibrant civil society that may be effectively and satisfactorily working through channels of representation. Moreover, it also touches upon the importance of knowledge of the *opportunities* available for political decision-making, which citizens can translate into feelings of agency freedom.

Table 16. PB Awareness of Community Assemblies and Collective Agency (SDE)

	OLS (1)	OLS (2)	OLS (3)
Constant	2.5374*** (.0915)	1.1154** (.4768)	1.1273 (.7735)
Awareness of CA	1.0876*** (.2165)	.8723*** (.2052)	.8083*** (.2179)
Gender		-.3002** (.1522)	-.0823 (.4203)
Age		-.0013 (.0064)	-0.0024 (-.0074)
Economic Ladder			0.0298 (.0671)
Participation/Membership in CSO		.0811 (.1582)	.2056 (.1709)
Educated			-.6871***

			(.2407)
Employed			.5366*
			(.2845)
Health			-.1122
			(.1355)
Corruption		-.0546**	-.0564**
		(.0274)	(.0286)
Trust in Neighbors		.3417***	.3331***
		(.1244)	(.1284)
Trust in Mayor		.4947***	.4462***
		(.1450)	(.1540)
Educated*Gender			.8714**
			(.3524)
Employed*Gender			-.5862
			(.4489)
n	179	174	164
Adj R²	0.1198	0.3224	0.3335

Standard errors in parenthesis

*** Significant at 1%; **significant at 5%; * significant at 10%

3.5 Conclusions & Implications

From the perspective of the agency-oriented capability approach that I introduced in Chapter 2, citizen participation in PB assemblies, as an exercise of direct democracy in which people have an opportunity to influence decision-making and make a difference, is theorized to have an impact on people's feelings of agency. Although I have been unable to test for such causal link due to data limitations, I have performed an associational evaluation of the link between participation in this local level affair that PB is, and individual and collective reports of agency. Specifically, this chapter showed that participation in PB assemblies is positively associated with higher levels of perceived

agency in the PB context. Participating in SDE is associated with an average increase in the reported individual and collective agency scores of 1.97 and 1.14, respectively, when compared to non-participants, *ceteris paribus*. Participating in STI is associated with an average increase in the reported individual and collective agency scores of 1.26 and 1.01, respectively, when compared to non-participants. Note, however, I surmise that the relationship between both measures of interest is not as strong and powerful in the case of STI as in the case of SDE because of the problems with the way in which the process is carried out in the former city—problems that affect the association of participation and perception of agency.

It is appropriate, given the normative interest behind this research, to highlight the normative implications of these varying results. Although PB is clearly associated with higher levels of agency freedom and achievement, the mere offering of PB is not enough to achieve full realization of the normative ideal, for we observe significant differences between STI's and SDE's results. I argue that to produce agents in this context, power sharing designs like PB must be fully democratic and “work well.” The conditions for this notion of “working well” are discussed in the following chapter.

The other key and more novel finding presented in the preceding pages is the evidence of a significant correlation between collective agency scores and being aware of PB but not participating in the assemblies. I found that the non-participants who are aware of the assemblies in SDE report a collective agency score that is 0.83, on average, higher than that of unaware non-participants in the same city, which can be argued is suggestive of the existence of a spillover effect.

Once again, this result of an awareness externality also has normative implications:

knowledge and trust in representatives matter. From the capability approach lens this means that in a PB municipality, someone who is aware of PB, and of her freedom to participate in it, will feel like an agent (indirectly) even if she does not participate, because she knows she has the freedom to participate and possibly, because she also knows that others may be already faithfully representing her interests. A person in a non-PB municipality may be aware of the PB in other cities, but the lack of freedom to participate in her own PB takes away the capability of experiencing agency freedom, let alone agency achievement. Equally important is the case that a resident in a non-PB city can become an (indirect) agent by hearing about PB in another city for she sees how residents in that city exercise their power to participate in PB—and, depending on the willingness of the mayor and other citizens to conduct PB after citizens' demands for the process, this resident may be empowered to do the same in her city. Due to a lack of PB in her city, this person does not have agency freedom for now, but she does have *potential*—or a different kind of—agency freedom (unless she lives in city dominated by a non-responsive mayor or tyrant). Future research should focus on exploring the enabling conditions for this indirect link to agency.

Finally, I do believe that there is promising work to be done in the future to move beyond correlations to causal relationships between participation in or awareness of PB and subjective measures of agency. I hope to have provided sufficient reason to inspire such future research.

Thus far, I have shown the existence of an associational link between participation in and awareness of PB and measures of agency. Differences in results between STI and SDE might be driven by intrinsic differences across the localities, but also may be an

indication of how the characteristics of each PB can produce varying outcomes. As a result, in the next chapters I move on to studying in more detail possible structures, patterns and enabling conditions within PB assemblies that likely have diverse outcomes in the realization of our normative ideals of interest. The analysis that follows allows me to tease out possible determinants in the success or failure of a PB, when viewed as a driver of people's feelings of agency, and other group-, community- and local-level outcomes.

Chapter 4. Participatory Budgeting in the Dominican Republic: A Qualitative and Normative Methodological Framework

Exploring different normative features of PB within the DR context, and focusing on PB's second stage of public consultations, in this chapter I introduce a methodological framework with which I will later attempt to move beyond mere correlations to possible causation. I do so by identifying and describing enabling conditions that explain how participation in PB can drive outcomes such as feelings of agency. Without arguing normatively or ethically that the conditions of the PB process are intrinsically good or that the many intended consequences of PB are intrinsically or instrumentally good, I offer a

hypothesis that if certain conditions are met, then, the intended results are likely to occur. More specifically, using two case studies, applying the methodology of “process tracing,”⁸⁵ and basing the analysis on the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2, I present the complex hypothesis: if the following conditions of the PB process take place—assemblies are fair, effective, inclusive, deliberative, and civil society actors have at least minimal initial functionality⁸⁶—the following PB’s intended (and alleged) consequences are likely to occur: participants of winning communities feel like agents of their own change, are able to increase their cooperative group functioning, become witnesses to more and better local democracy, as well as protagonists of authentic development.

I argue that these outcomes are achieved to different degrees depending on the presence and robustness of such enabling conditions. I test the previous hypothesis in Chapter 5. As a claim to be tested in future research, I also propose that if certain conditions prevail during the third (execution) stage of PB (not observed in this study), then individuals are likely to reinforce the previous outcomes or make them more durable. Moreover, with observations from the third stage, well-being results can be analyzed, which would be relevant for teasing out whether participation is leading not only to higher feelings of agency, but also of empowerment.

The chapter is organized as follows: Section 4.1 presents the research context; 4.2, my qualitative methodology and 4.3 the conceptualizations of the variables and conditions.

⁸⁵ In sum, this methodology differs from the quantitative one used in Chapter 3 in that it uses observational and interview data, rather than survey data, and in that its objective is not only to look at the relationship between the dependent and independent variables, but to also understand the different mechanisms that plausibly connect the two sets of variables.

⁸⁶ I go into more detail about what I mean by these conditions in Section 4.3.

4.1 Research Context

4.1.1 Theoretical Background

As adumbrated in Chapter 2, the research context for this chapter stems from capability approach and its normative principles that exercising agency is a good thing and includes active deliberation, decision-making, and the implementation of processes in which individuals and collectivities make differences in the world with respect to greater individual and communal well-being. The contrast is with contexts in which an individual's or group's decisions are made and actions performed by what Robert Dahl calls "guardians":⁸⁷ scientists (for example, economists), technocrats (for example, development experts), bureaucrats, or politicians. In PB, individuals have great access to political life and democratically forge political consensus through dialogue. Their consequent decisions have various positive impacts, such as: (a) enhanced individual well-being and agency achievements; (b) better (more inclusive, deeper) democracy, in which citizens can act together to shape public policy; and (c) enhanced communal well-being and agency.

The main idea examined is that in PB—insofar as assemblies are fair, inclusive, deliberative, and groups have a certain cooperative and strategic functioning and capacity for effective change—participants are likely to feel they are PB agents, experience strengthened group functioning, witness more and better democracy, and become protagonists of authentic development.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ See Chapter 7 of Robert Dahl's *On Democracy*, 2010.

⁸⁸ It is pertinent to point out, as it will be discussed in more details later, that there are likely other impacts of PB—beyond those of empowerment, agency, group functioning, authentic development and more and better democracy. However, in this study I restrict my attention to the ones just listed.

4.1.2 Data

The data used for the qualitative analysis that follows consists of direct observations of public assemblies, interviews, and archival data (written documents). I use the survey and quantitative data from Chapter 3 when pertinent and in a complementary manner. Table 17 below summarizes the information gathered from the field over three research trips: Fall 2012 (trip 1), Winter 2013 (trip 2), and Spring 2013 (trip 3).

Observing the public consultations of SDE and STI, the two PB municipalities, was the primary research activity in which I engaged.⁸⁹ I observed two kinds of processes, one kind at the community level and other at the block level, where diverse communities competed to insert their projects in the municipality PB of 2013—in which some communities win, and some communities lose. As I mentioned previously, and as I will analyze later, these two types of meetings had very different dynamics, and although both were democratic, the kinds of democracy displayed in the assemblies differed significantly. At the same time, the block-level consultations also varied considerably among themselves depending on factors such as number and years of experience of attendees, location, and the character of the facilitator, all of which I will explain and analyze subsequently.

Table 17. Research Data

Quantity	Type of data	Research Trip No.
10	Observations of community assemblies in SDE	1
17	Observations of block assemblies (6 in SDE and 11 in STI)	1
56	Interviews of ordinary citizens, local leaders, reporters, local governments staff, SDE's vice-mayor, STI's mayor, staff from local	1,2,3

⁸⁹ I prepared for this research activity by following guidelines about qualitative evaluation, research, and reporting that scholars such as Cloutier et al., (1987), Platon (1990), and Wholey et al., (1994), have developed.

	NGOs, FEDOMU and The World Bank	
50+	Documents	1,2,3
532	My surveys in PB municipalities of SDE and STI (used for analysis in Chapter 3)	2,3
507	My surveys in non-PB municipalities of SDO and LVG (used for analysis in Chapter 3)	2,3

Due to the simultaneity in date/time of some of the meetings, I was not able to physically attend all meetings and a research assistant recorded some meetings. (I also video-recorded most of the assemblies that I attended) Annex 7 presents a table that summarizes the details of the meetings observed, assigning an alphabetic or numeric code to each assembly, which I use in the next chapter when referring to specific events.

In general, attending the public consultations allowed me to observe and later describe several characteristics of the PB participants and processes: (a) diversity in participants' observable characteristics, such as gender or my perception of their age; (b) power asymmetries;⁹⁰ (c) general level of participation and interest/distribution of interventions; (d) the procedure by which decisions were made (e.g., consensus versus majority vote); (e) how much and/or what kind of deliberation takes place; (f) indications of whether deliberation occurred in an environment of trust, where honest and open dialogue took place; (g) the way in which disagreements were handled; (h) how much consideration was given to different points of view and values; (i) appropriateness of the physical setting for the meeting and the amount of time assigned to deliberations; (j) the likelihood of participants changing their views during deliberation, making trivial or deep compromises, finding common ground, taking on board some of the views of those with

⁹⁰ The idea was to observe how inclusive the process was. Did everybody have a reasonably equal chance to voice his or her opinions? Or, rather, did a single individual or a group dominate the proceedings?

whom they disagree, or offering proposals that others could accept; (k) the kind of leadership displayed in the sessions; and (m) level of respect among deliberators, leaders and facilitators.⁹¹

As specified earlier in Table 17, I supplemented my direct observations by interviewing local leaders, municipal authorities and/or employees, and ordinary citizens. Of the latter group, some were participants in the PB meetings while many others were just inhabitants of the communities under study. The interviews gave me a broader understanding of the situation in each municipality and enabled me to collect information about certain aspects that my direct observation of the public assemblies could not reveal. In addition, interviews enabled me to gather information about varying community dynamics, such as negotiation strategies, that occurred before the meetings.

As part of the qualitative portion of this study, these interviews were not structured. Although I did have a set core of questions that I always was careful to ask, I did not follow a script expecting concise or direct answers. Instead, these interviews were more relaxed and conversational, which ultimately allowed me to better connect with the respondents and, thereby, obtain a deeper understanding of their views and interests. Annex 8 presents a list of topics/questions frequently employed in the interviews and specifies those that were more relevant for each type of municipality—PB or non-PB. None of the interviewees requested anonymity. Should any further researchers have an interest in the content of these interviews (most of which were either audio or video-recorded), they are available and can be accessed for any additional information.

⁹¹ As evidenced by this long list, this is a big agenda; ethnographic methods and longer stays in the cities could enhance the depth and breadth of my research.

The archival data includes FEDOMU PB reports from chosen municipalities, reports from follow-up committees, booklets, PB methodology guides, books, legislatures, DVDs, financial statements, newspaper articles, Power Point presentations used in conferences, Office of National Statistics Province profiles, and others.

4.2 Methods: Process Tracing

Baiocchi et al. (2011) use the method of analysis called “process tracing” to document and evaluate “the entire participatory input chain, from the first articulation of a demand to the actual budgetary allocation” (p. 65). Inspired by their approach, I also use this methodology for a detailed analysis of the PB processes observed. The process to be traced is participation in PB (independent variable), as a potential means to more agency, increased cooperative group functioning, more and better democracy (dependent variables), and so forth.

Before describing my methodology in detail, it is important to point out the similarities and differences between this approach and that of Baiocchi et al. Although I use their PB and non-PB pairing structure for the quantitative analysis presented in Chapter 3, they used the pairing approach for a qualitative evaluation. In this and the next chapters’ qualitative assessment, I use their same process tracing, but only focusing on data from PB cities, because data from the non-PB cities is still limited. The main reason why I was restricted in investigating citizen mechanisms in the non-PB municipalities is that they do not have these formal forums, and hence, it was very hard in the time I had available to determine with whom to meet, where to meet them, and the timing of any informal

meeting.⁹²

So, what is process tracing? Collier (2011) defines process tracing as “an analytic tool for drawing descriptive and causal inferences from diagnostic pieces of evidence—often understood as part of a temporal sequence of events or phenomena” (p. 823).⁹³ Although the diagnosis pieces are often called *causal process observations*, due to the complexity of the causal mechanisms⁹⁴ embedded in this social and political phenomena of PB, I will refer to them as evidence of the presence /absence of *enabling conditions*.⁹⁵

Collier argues that two of the many effective uses of process tracing are (a) identifying novel political and social phenomena and systematically describing them, and (b) gaining insight into causal mechanisms⁹⁶ as a way to add leverage to quantitative analysis, especially to small-N design, as employed in this study. Thus, process tracing becomes an appropriate tool of analysis to complement the findings of Chapter 3. It allows me to identify enabling conditions that link participation in PB with outcomes normatively

⁹² In the last section of Chapter 6—“The Way Forward”—, I suggest that more ethnographic-type investigation in the non-PB cities could provide substantial information about the way in which residents of non-PB cities interact among each others, with leaders, with the local government and about the means they find available to come up with solutions for their community or block needs.

⁹³ According to Collier (2011), while process tracing sometimes relies on quantitative data for description, it is fundamentally a key tool of qualitative analysis; moreover, he posits that even though it is often used as a qualitative tool, it is only rarely applied adequately or rigorously.

⁹⁴ Just as was the case with the quantitative methodologies employed in the previous chapter, with process tracing it is also impossible to ascertain conclusively whether a given mechanism is the only cause of an outcome; rather, it only indicates whether it has contributed to it or not.

⁹⁵ As Bennett (2010) states, performing a process tracing analysis “is also analogous to a doctor trying to diagnose an illness by taking in the details of a patient’s case history and symptoms and applying diagnostic tests that can, for example, distinguish between a viral and a bacterial infection” (para 5).

⁹⁶ Beach (2012) defines causal mechanisms as factors that are individually necessary parts of a mechanism, composed of entities that engage in activities producers of change or transmitter of causal forces. For George and Bennett (2005), causal mechanisms are “ultimately unobservable physical, social, or psychological processes through which agents with causal capacities operate, but only in specific contexts or conditions, to transfer energy, information, or matter to other entities” (p. 137). J. L. Mackie (1965) defines causes as INUS conditions: “Insufficient but Necessary parts of a condition which is itself Unnecessary but Sufficient” for their effects.

favored by the capability approach but based on evidence gathered from the field. I do this by making within-case inferences about the presence (or lack thereof) of enabling conditions founded in the PB processes of SDE and STI.

Beach and Brun Pedersen (2013) distinguish three versions of process tracing: explaining-outcome, theory-building, and theory-testing.⁹⁷ I will be using the latter, which is schematized in Figure 6 below. For the application of theory-testing PT, I follow what George and Bennett (2005) called *analytic explanation*: “an analytical causal explanation couched in explicit theoretical forms” (p. 211), which, as specified earlier, is derived from the capability approach. The causal processes reflect the complexity of the several conditions embedded in the PB systems of SDE and STI, which, as it will be shown, manifest themselves in significantly different ways in each locality.⁹⁸ The analysis of these conditions entails looking at the different activities and entities that play an intervening role throughout the stages observed during the 2013 PB cycle. That is, the inductive logical process under analysis is that there is one *X* (participation) assumed *likely* to cause different outcomes *Ys*, given the presence of certain conditions (to be discussed next).

⁹⁷ Beach and Brun Pedersen (2013) explain the differences between the three versions of process tracing by detailing the purposes of each. The purpose of theory-testing process tracing is to tease out if a causal mechanism is present and whether it functions as the theory suggests. The purposes of theory-building process tracing is to find out what is the causal mechanism between *X* and *Y*. The purpose of explaining outcome process tracing is to establish what mechanistic explanation accounts for a given outcome (Beach & Brun Pedersen, 2013).

⁹⁸ Since process tracing does not allow for cross-case inferences, the cases of both PB municipalities will be assessed independently; however, in Chapter 5 I derive policy implications from comparative analyses of both cases.

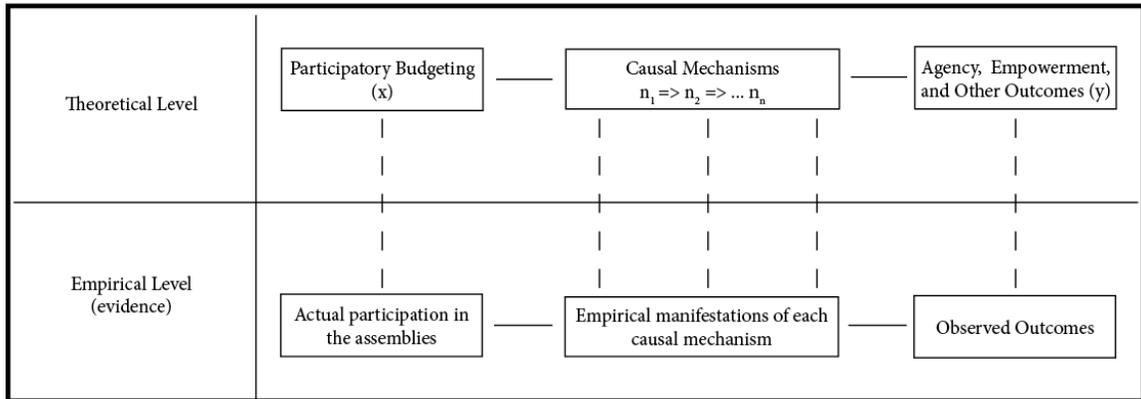


Figure 6. Theory-Testing Process Tracing - The PB Case

To use process tracing effectively and to be able to unfold the PB cycle, it is first necessary to describe and understand the plausible relationships between participation in PB and the probable outcomes in the present context. As a starting point, a timeline is presented (Figure 7) with the objective of summarizing and reminding the reader of the different stages of the PB process as described in Chapter 2. Subsequently, a modified version of a “logic” model/theory of change helps to depict the potentially causal relationships. This logic model can be viewed from the points of view of both the local governments (based on their stated intentions and legislature), and the individuals and their communities. Because the units of analysis in this study are ordinary citizens who participate in PB, I present the logic model from the community’s point of view in Table 18 below, and direct the reader to Annex 9 for the logic model from the government’s point of view.



Figure 7. Timeline of PB

Since process tracing it is not only theorizing about *X* and *Y*, but also theorizing about the possible causal mechanisms linking them, theoretical concepts for all of the parts between *X* and *Y* must also be introduced before applying PB. Beach and Brun Pedersen (2013) explain that by doing so, it becomes possible to seize the theorized process by which causal forces manifest through a causal mechanism to produce a certain result. But, once again, given that PBs are complex social phenomena,, instead of claiming to have identified “causal mechanisms” through process tracing analysis, conservatively, what I do is identify and evaluate conditions that enable the possible relationship between participation and the normative outcomes theorized. The logic model below shows how different types of outcomes relate to each other and what I understand should ultimately happen at each stage as a result of the initiatives and strategies that takes place. Table 18 also shows how some outcomes are independent and how others occur simultaneously as a result of one particular event. The following presentation of concepts captures these relationships formally. I argue

that as is common to social phenomena, the outcomes of interest are the result not of one enabling conditions, but of multiple conditions acting simultaneously and/or sequentially. Furthermore, when analyzing these set-theoretical relationships, only the presence or absence of the conditions will be investigated. Hence, I only define the positive variation of each concept, disregarding its negation, since differences in degree are not tested in process tracing.⁹⁹

Table 18. Logic Model from Community's Point of View using SDE and STI's PB Experiences for 2013

Inputs	Activities/Process	Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts
Existence of neighborhood councils and other community groups eligible for participation in PB	First degree meetings at community level (in SDE these meetings include the local government participation and are part of the official PB process; in STI, these meetings occur without involvement of the government and are not officially part of the PB cycle)	(a) Community agreement (identification of main needs and strategizing with neighboring groups) (b) Increased awareness of pressing issue in the community and motivation to take action by supporting a project in the PB assemblies that would provide its solution	Action plan (specific projects to be requested) to present in the PB assembly and neighborhood partnerships established
Identified needs based on action plan	Participation in the PB block assembly to formally voice such need and democratically	437 projects proposed (SDE) Unknown number of projects proposed (STI)	(a) Communities are empowered due to their capability of raising issues of high priority and bringing desired change; (b) Individuals and communities exercise agency in

⁹⁹ An example of this is that I posit that one of the conditions that enables the relationship between participation in PB and agency is that participation is of the deliberative kind. The most contrasting pole of this condition, following Crocker's modes of participation, would be nominal participation. For process tracing, however, it is sufficient to conceptualize deliberation, and anything but deliberation as the opposite pole (any mode of participation that is *thinner* than deliberation).

	submit it to the government's consideration with a vote		realizing their well-being goals; (c) Communities improve their group functioning due to an increased ability to articulate a shared purpose and jointly implement actions towards goals ¹⁰⁰ ; (d) More and better democracy is attained; (e) Authentic development is attained
Document sustaining approval and commitment of government to execute voted projects	Active follow-up in the execution and maintenance of projects by elected delegates	Approved projects done in agreed-upon time and according to the characteristics established	Desired change is achieved

4.3 Conceptualizations: Variables and Enabling Conditions

Before concepts are introduced, it is necessary to define the context.¹⁰¹ The PB processes of SDE and STI are a case of PBs in the DR, and the population of cases refer to democratic institutions that enable open-ended democratic participation as a tool for decision-making regarding issues that are valued by and that affect the subjects who participate. With this context in mind, and since most concepts have been addressed in depth in the literature review of Chapter 2, I will proceed briefly to define and/or explain each of the variables and conditions.

4.3.1 Main Independent Variable

¹⁰⁰ Such goals represent a shared definition of a specific problem or condition that ought to be addressed by the municipal government.

¹⁰¹ "Context can be defined as the relevant aspects of a setting where the initial conditions contribute to produce an outcome of a defined scope and meaning through the operation of a causal mechanism" (Falleti & Lynch, as cited in Beach and Brun Perdesen, 2013, location 1038 of Kindle e-version).

Participation in PB: This variable represents whether an individual who lives in SDE or STI, and who is aware of PB, has chosen to participate in PB assemblies or not. This variable makes no distinction in the type/mode of participation within the PB process.

4.3.2 Outcome Variables

As explained earlier, the literature presents a wide array of definitions of empowerment and agency, and different views on the relationship between these two concepts.¹⁰² The objective of this study is not to contribute directly to the conceptual debate, but instead to choose what I see as one of the many adequate definitions/relationships and utilize these concepts to analyze the measures of interest. For my purpose, I assume great similarity if not synonymy between empowerment and agency.

Agency: “individuals and communities are agents to the extent that they scrutinize reasons for various courses of action, decide for themselves, and have an impact in the world” (Crocker, 2012, p.48). A person would perceive him/herself as an agent in the domain of municipal budget planning, as long as he/she examines reasons for selecting one proposal over others in PB assemblies, decides for him/herself, and is able to influence the results of PB.

Increased Cooperative Group Functioning: this variable refers to social mobilization that enables (a) people collectively to demand change and (b) groups to increase their ability to articulate and embrace a shared purpose and to engage in collaborative, respectful, and strategic relationships with other groups.

Local (Municipal) Democracy: local democracy (in this context) is attained insofar

¹⁰² For example, recall that Drydyk sees agency as a component of empowerment, whereas Alkire sees empowerment as a subset of agency.

as spaces for open public participation and deliberation are offered to the citizens as a way for the local government to obtain citizen input for policy-making purposes.

Alkire and Ibrahim (2007) have argued that empowerment and good governance are mutually reinforcing (I here extend this reasoning to empowerment's component of agency). Good governance can come about from the open channel of participation that PB theoretically is—a process, democratic by definition, that is fair, transparent, fosters information flows, and provides a forum for an active civil society to become agents of change. I argue that deliberation is one important facet of good governance that matters particularly for *agency*, both at the individual and community levels.

Authentic Development: social development, I assume, is authentic change as long as groups at whatever level become subjects who deliberate, decide, and act in the world with respect to their goals, means, and decision processes, rather than being either victims of chance or objects of other people's decisions (Crocker, 2008). Such authentic development becomes good development in so far as self-determined change also promotes, protects, and restores well-being and agency for all affected.

Ibrahim and Alkire (2007) argue that local participation (the main independent variable in this study) is theorized to exert a significant impact on national and even global development outcomes. However, this development outcome is most likely when there is *agency*. I argue that, because of this relationship, authentic and good development is a dependent variable of second degree, being attainable only after the first-degree outcome of *agency* has been reached.

4.3.3 *Enabling Conditions*

The following paragraphs define and describe the main and enabling conditions

that I propose in fact play a role in citizen participation having the outcomes just listed.¹⁰³

Fairness of the PB Process: this condition refers to assemblies occurring without foul play from either the municipal government team or a manipulative leader/elite group introducing power asymmetries that disrupt the transparency, impartiality and objectivity of the assemblies and their results. It requires a “level playing field,” an open and potentially equal sharing of PB knowledge among participants. For example, the government and experienced local leaders should make sure that every participant, new or old, is equally aware of the rules of the game and equally free to propose, criticize, question, and vote. As a necessary condition for all outcomes, the implication is that the fairer the PB process, the more likely it is that all outcomes become attainable.

Inclusiveness of the PB Process: this condition refers to assemblies being attended by a wide and diverse audience. It links to Crocker’s *breadth* dimension, which establishes that an inclusive democracy is one in which there is wide participation from various groups and individuals, especially those previously and unfairly excluded. Fairness has to do not only with the procedure followed, but also with who can take part in the procedure. It must be noted that when outcomes like PB agency are analyzed from an individual’s point of view, inclusiveness becomes, in a sense, irrelevant because the concept matters for

¹⁰³ Although for the purposes of this study I employ capability approach and deliberative democracy norms, this list of conditions is derived from Przeworski’s (2010) work and has been adapted to the context under study. Even someone with a minimalist/aggregationist view of democracy, like him, sees that is it important to use moral norms to evaluate democratic process. He argues that a system of collective decision-making that does a good job in reflecting and aggregating individual and heterogeneous preferences must satisfy four criteria: (a) *equality* all participants must be able to influence collective decisions equally); (b) *participation*: participants must be able to influence effectively collective decisions; (c) *representation*: elected officials must implement collective decisions; and (d) *liberty*: the law should ensure that no event interferes with this process.

collectivities.¹⁰⁴ However, when analyzed from the community's point of view, inclusiveness becomes a necessary communal condition for the members of communities to feel they are PB agents. Thus, as a condition contributing to all outcomes, the more inclusive the PB meetings are, the more likely that the outcomes are attained.

Effective Change (Capacity and Actuality): this condition refers to (a) individuals who through participation either already have or acquire a real capacity to produce a certain type of outcome (a project selected and won through PB for a participant's community or another one which she may be supporting, which need not be her own), and (b) participants truly bringing about desired change and making a difference in their own communities or in one they have chosen to support (which entails the government's actual execution of the citizen-chosen project). These two aspects need to be separated since you can have (a) – the capacity / citizen freedom to effect change) without (b) – realized / citizen achievement of that change.

Let us define these aspects further: (a) *capacity of effective change* aligns with Crocker's democratic dimension of *control*, that is, the extent to which individuals can influence decisions and make a difference. I also tie this capacity to the dimension of *range*, that is, the kinds of questions about which citizens have a say on. I argue that as long as *capacity of effective change* prevails in every PB cycle it is more likely that the outcomes of interest can be attained. However, when comparing an individual or group that has actually won a PB project, with an individual or group that exercised their capacity but failed to win a project (since not all can win), I argue that an outcome like agency

¹⁰⁴ Of course, exclusion matters to an individual when that person believes he or she has been unfairly discriminated against (on the basis or morally irrelevant considerations such as gender or education.)

achievement does not necessarily fade away fully, but is certainly diminished. (It becomes what I designate as *partial agency*).¹⁰⁵ My hypothesis is that if year after year an individual or group consistently fails to have its reasons and proposals selected for implementation in the PB process, then it is not likely that the final outcome will be agency enhancing. *Actual effective change* (b) is observed during the third stage of PB, which corresponds to project execution; the implication is that if *actual effective change* is achieved by the project being in fact executed, then more well-being and authentic development is brought to the recipient community.

In sum, part (a) implies that the more able individuals are—or become through the process—to effect change, the more likely the outcomes become attainable, and the more change is likely to be brought about in the world.¹⁰⁶ Part (b) implies that only if participants are able to be successful in producing actual change, is full agency (and other normative goals, as in Drydyk’s notion of empowerment) likely to be attained. Given the inter-temporal characteristic of this mechanism and the lack of longitudinal data, the analysis of this condition is currently inconclusive and calls for future research.

Effective Deliberation in the PB Process: this condition refers to deliberation being the prevalent mode of participation in PB assemblies. This condition captures Crocker’s *depth* dimension, and the “thickest” of his seven modes of participation. The implication

¹⁰⁵ The concept of *partial PB agency* I am proposing alludes to an individual who has participated in the PB process, has not won a project, but thinks that the process is just and democratic and therefore keeps hope alive and expects for the group project eventually to “win” and be implemented in a future PB cycle. I further develop this concept on Chapter 5.

¹⁰⁶ Although with the condition of capacity to effect change I am referring to the idea of having agency freedom, there is an important related aspect of citizens’ political functioning through PB that is worth considering in future research. The ability to effect change is likely conditioned on certain capacities or skills (in addition to agency freedom) that contribute to citizens being able to deliberate, decide, and act. See David Crocker’s “Sen and Deliberative Democracy,” in Alexander Kaufman, ed., *Capabilities Equality: Basic Issues and Problems*, 2006, pp. 155-97.

is that the more deliberative participation is (as opposed to any of the thinner modes), the more likely the outcomes of agency, local democracy, and group functioning become.

Prior Cooperative Group Functioning: this condition refers to supportive patterns of associations among participating units (civil society actors)—benign patterns that at least minimally characterize the group by the time PB assemblies are convened.¹⁰⁷ Specifically, *prior cooperative group functioning* refers to how groups function in regards to mutual and strategic cooperation, respect, trust, and the sharing of the same values and purposes. A group can become more cooperative and solidary in and through the PB process—just as citizens can become more complete agents through the process. Nonetheless, if groups start with citizens who hate each other and refuse to work together or respect each other—or if citizens start as hopelessly passive or incurably damaged individuals—the alleged good consequences of PB are highly unlikely. In sum, this part of the enabling condition implies that the more the actors and groups function in the ways just mentioned, and the fewer groups try to block, undermine, “game,” co-opt, or capture PB, the more likely group functioning will increase with participation, and the more likely it is that PB’s outcome will result in more agency, better democracy and authentic development. Confronting and at least partially overcoming power asymmetries, as adumbrated in the condition of *fairness* above, is also relevant to healthy group functioning.

It is important to note that I have set different degrees of *cooperative group functioning* both as an outcome (*increased cooperative group functioning*) and as an enabling condition (*prior cooperative group functioning*). Although Goertz (2006)

¹⁰⁷ In this regard, Baiocchi et al. (2010) argue that “the actual impact of institutional reform is conditioned by the nature of preexisting civil society, a point established by studies in which PB practices are either facilitated by or come into conflict with existing civic practices” (p. 14).

cautions scholars to eliminate *potential* causes of a phenomenon from the concept itself, so as to avoid self-fulfilling prophecies, there is no way around this risk here. I must to some extent “hardwire” the condition into the outcome, for without some antecedent or initial cooperation the PB process cannot proceed, let alone have the desired outcomes.

The following example, comparing the outcome of agency with that of increased functioning during the PB process, helps me make my point. Take an individual who just moved to SDE, a PB city, around time t (time of PB assembly) from SDO, a non-PB city, where she used to live (in $t-1$). This individual seizes her new opportunity to participate in PB and becomes an agent in t from being pretty much a non-agent in $t-1$. Now consider a group of individuals who have always been in SDE but lack what I have called *cooperative group functioning*, that is mutual relations based on cooperation, respect, trust and the sharing of the same values and goals. In this depressing situation, group functioning cannot just magically emerge at t . Social relationships of this kind are too complex to be nurtured within minutes or hours preceding an assembly. A relevant analogy: a kid does not learn to run (the outcome) before learning to walk (the initial condition). Hence, once again, I propose *prior cooperative group functioning* as the condition, and *increased cooperative group functioning*, as the outcome.

The conditions I now have presented are individually insufficient to fully explain how PB is likely to deliver all the hypothesized and normatively desirable outcomes. But, each is necessary parts of a whole causal structure, which is likely to issue in the desired outcome.¹⁰⁸ Table 19 below depicts all relationships, summarizing the interactions

¹⁰⁸ Together these conditions, although sufficient, are not necessary to explain or generate the normative consequences for they might come about due to alternative sorts of democratic practices (which may account for LVG’s relative high agency scores).

between the independent and dependent variables, and the enabling conditions. This chart serves for registering the expected process predictions.

It is difficult to assign a weight to each of the enabling conditions as a way to theorize which one is more important in leading up to the outcomes, for it is likely that each participating unit puts a different weight on each condition. For instance, a participant might be bothered by a lack of deliberation if he thought that more discussion was needed for arriving at the decision as to which project to support. On the other hand, another participant may not care about deliberation, be satisfied with a majority vote rule, but be upset by the fact that very few non-leaders attended the meetings.

Table 19. Plausible Causal Relationships in PB

	The Enabling Conditions (<u>Units</u> and <u>Activities</u>)
Context	Participation in PB is likely to lead to more agency, more and better group cooperative functioning, more and better local democracy, and authentic development
Independent Variable(x)	Participation in PB
Enabling Condition 1 →	If assemblies are fair <u>Citizens</u> , through <u>government</u> , <i>establish and openly share the rules</i> of the game for free and equal members <i>and monitor the transparency of the process</i> , and <u>local leaders</u> <i>facilitate the process without resorting to manipulation or coercion</i> And
Enabling Condition 2 →	If assemblies are inclusive <u>Residents</u> from assembly's geographic area <i>participate widely without restrictions</i> such as gender, age, socio-economic status, ideology. The <u>government officials</u> <i>foster such wide, unrestricted and open-ended participation</i> And
Enabling Condition 3 →	If assemblies nurture a credible capacity for effective change <u>Participants</u> <i>develop or acquire a real capacity to produce desired change and actually bring about the desired change</i> as a result of “winning” a project and the <u>government</u> <i>provides a credible platform for participants to be capable of influencing policy-making and delivers the project</i> in a timely manner and in accordance to the specifications agreed during the feasibility

	study And
Enabling Condition 4 →	If assemblies are deliberative <u>Participants</u> <i>engage in deliberations</i> (formally during the assemblies, and/or informally before the assemblies), <u>local leaders</u> <i>do not eclipse deliberations</i> but facilitate the hearing and critical give and take of all voices and the making of decisions in an orderly way And
Enabling Condition 5 →	If there exists prior cooperative group functioning <u>Participants</u> <i>in t-1 build on their antecedent mutuality and shared purpose and decide on plan of action</i> towards the PB process Then, it is likely that
First Degree Dependent Variables	a) Participants feel more like agents b) Participants increase their group cooperative functioning c) More and better democracy is attained Then
Second Degree Dependent Variable	d) More authentic and better development is attained

Thus far, I have introduced the PT methodology, described the different stages and characteristics of PB as carried out in the DR, and defined the independent (enabling conditions) and complex (normative) dependent variables to be examined. Following the steps of the PT approach, in the next chapter I continue with a detailed and analytical narrative and a critical examination of the events observed, and subsequently, a presentation of the diagnostic evidence that will serve as the foundation for descriptive inferences (Collier, 2011). Such identified evidence conforms to the presented enabling conditions and/or the desired and expected outcomes. In the following steps, as patterns recur across individuals, communities, and municipalities, my aim is to interconnect different pieces of evidence with the potential outcomes of the PB process.

Chapter 5. Participatory Budgeting in the Dominican Republic: Results and Implications

In the previous chapter I introduced the hypothesis that if assemblies are fair, effective, inclusive, and deliberative, and civil society actors have at least minimal cooperative functionality, the following intended (and alleged) consequences of PB are likely to occur: participants of winning communities feel like agents of their own change, they are able to increase their cooperative group functioning, become witnesses to greater and better local democracy, as well as protagonists of authentic development. In this chapter, instead of arguing what is likely to happen (given the enabling conditions), I now

observe and analyze to what extent the two PB cities under analysis have in fact fulfilled the antecedent enabling conditions.

Based on the application of the methodological framework presented in Chapter 4, I find that the presence of the PB conditions varies drastically across assemblies, therefore affecting the attainment of outcomes on a case-by-case basis. The most frequent and likely causes of process disruption that impede the realization of the desired consequences were elite manipulation, uneven representation, proneness to corruption, misguided cooperation, uneven knowledge, limited deliberation, and limited capacity to effect change.

A novel result of my research is that even if a PB fulfills all ideal conditions, given that not all communities can win in PB, it is possible that the participants will fail to bring about desired change and after repeated cycles of losing in PB will fail to feel that they are agents of change. However, I argue that this group cannot and should not be equated to non-agents (i.e., individuals who choose not to participate in PB or who wish to participate but have no access to it). Rather, these individuals, I argue, find themselves in a transitional state that I call *partial PB agency*. Exerting effort and having partial success is the exercise of at least partial agency. Moreover, as adumbrated above, an interesting finding is that most of the deliberation occurs informally and outside of the official PB assemblies, This result confirms Wampler's (2007) findings for the Brazilian case.

The rest of the chapter is organized as follows: Section 5.1 describes the PB process in detail based on my observations. Section 5.2 presents the results and policy implications.

5.1 Process Description

I now proceed to narrate and critically examine more than 25 specific observations

of PB assemblies for the 2013 cycle.

5.1.1 Community Assemblies in SDE

In SDE, a PB municipality, a municipal government facilitator leads and supervises assemblies. These meetings were divided among SDE's three urban planning zones (*circunscripciones*): 99 community assemblies took place in zone one, 85 in zone two, and 253 in zone three, for a total of 437 community assemblies. All assemblies were held during the period between October 1 and October 28, 2012, taking place from Monday to Thursday during afternoon hours. I was able to observe ten of these community assemblies.¹⁰⁹

All community assemblies that I observed in SDE were conducted in a causal environment. Their length ranged from thirty minutes to an hour, and they took place in all sorts of locations, such as the middle of a street closed to vehicular traffic, a sidewalk, the driveway of house, and a church. The format for these meetings was basically the same. First, the facilitator from the municipal government meets the president of the neighborhood council or community organization at the agreed location. The local leader, accompanied by his/her fellow group members, either waits for the facilitator or else the leader invites neighbors over after the facilitator arrives. Meetings rarely start at the agreed upon time, due to the facilitator being late or the long time that it takes the president of the group to gather everybody. This informality, customary in Dominican life, did not seem

¹⁰⁹ I was not able to observe more assemblies due to the simultaneity of the events and an overlap with other research activities. Although ten assemblies may seem like a non-representative sample, comments from facilitators Daniel Merán and Lucía Bello about other community assemblies, which they had directed, lead me to believe that the assemblies were relatively similar and that I have captured both similarities and relevant diversity.

to bother any of the attendants (a different scenario occurred with SDE's substantially delayed block assemblies, as I will explain later). In fact, "hanging out" and waiting provided an agreeable kind of social interaction.

After greeting the community members and giving someone the opportunity to say a prayer before the meeting starts, the facilitator explains the purpose of the assembly—to officially record in writing (a certificate) the three main needs of the community, which would be decided after discussion and by vote. The facilitator hangs a wall sign presenting the menu of eligible projects, so that the participants might be reminded that only projects from this list can be selected. Subsequently, time is allocated for participants to speak out. In the majority of cases, the president of the neighborhood council or organization speaks first, making the case for one or more of such needs. Afterwards, brief deliberation ensues. Almost always, as a result of *previous* talks that led to a consensus, the president's fellow neighbors are in agreement, and such public discussions are characterized by an easy and affable tone that displays group cohesion.

To complete the trio of selected projects,¹¹⁰ more deliberation continues as other group members take turns to present other needs that also merit the municipal government's attention. Once the favored projects and the reasons for supporting such projects are made public, the voting follows. This voting occurs in different ways: In some communities, there is such a high degree of agreement (even unanimity) regarding the three projects to be included in the document (and their order of priority) that after announcing the selection a simple count of hands is sufficient to conclude that the majority—if not

¹¹⁰ It is important to point out that since former participants know that only the first project (the one of highest priority) is defended in the block assemblies, as only one project per community can be accepted at the block assembly, the amount of importance given to the selection of projects two and three is considerably smaller.

everyone—agrees with the proposal, In other cases, the vote count is done by reading each item from the menu list and asking people to vote for their three preferences by raising their hands.¹¹¹

After the voting brings closure, the facilitator asks the crowd to nominate four delegates who will be in charge of attending the block meeting the following Saturday or Sunday, in accordance to the official schedule. The facilitator reminds the group members that there is a gender quota that ought to be respected, and, hence, two male and two female delegates should be elected. The common scenario is one where the president of the neighborhood council or organization is nominated, and then more names are publicly suggested for the selection of three other delegates. Typically, these individuals are local leaders or individuals highly involved in community affairs, and they have been chosen as delegates in previous PB cycles. Before finalizing the selection of delegates, the facilitator clarifies that no substitute delegate can attend the block assembly, so whoever is selected should make sure of his/her availability to participate in the block meeting, otherwise the community's chances to secure a project would be severely hurt. The facilitator then collects the names, national identification numbers, and contact information of the delegates, and writes their names on the certificate, which also states the three selected projects. The newly elected delegates sign the certificate, the facilitator gives the president of the group a copy, and the facilitator takes the original agreement with him to the municipal government offices. The meeting ends with the facilitator thanks the people for

¹¹¹ From my observation, this voting style sometimes led to counting issues, as some individuals would raise their hands more than three times, without being asked not to do so by the facilitator (this happened, for example, in assembly K, where I noticed individuals favoring more than three projects); however, I never got the impression that this resulted in the selection of something different than what the majority already supported.

their participation, stresses the importance of their participation in the block meeting to win a project, informs them of the location and timing of their corresponding block assembly, and (typically) wishes them good luck.

5.1.2 Block Assemblies in SDE

I was able to attend six out of the eighteen block assemblies held in SDE during my period of research. Each block assembly occurred during the Saturday or Sunday after the respective community assemblies. A regular block assembly begins when the municipal government facilitator¹¹² and a team averaging four assistants enter the chosen location. Some facilitators ask delegates to remain outside until they are ready to start the meeting, while others do all organizational tasks with the delegates inside the premises. The facilitators who keep delegates outside, let them in by calling them one by one and verifying everyone's national identification documents. Once inside, a large sheet of paper is hung on the wall, and an assistant writes with a marker the highest priority project for each community, as stated on the certificates. (Below I explain why only one project—rather than three—is listed for each community). For easier voting, each project on the wall sheet is accompanied by a number and the name of the community/organization to which it belongs. While the wall sheet is being prepared, some facilitators ask their assistants to organize chairs in lines of four, so that the delegates representing each community can be easily identified; other facilitators permit the delegates to arrange their chairs and sit as they please.

¹¹² In most cases, the local government employees who serve as facilitators of community-level assemblies work as assistants for the facilitator of block-level assemblies.

Once the facilitator is ready to start the meeting, a delegate volunteers a prayer. Then the facilitators (with more or less clarity and organizational skill) explain the process that is about to unfold. First, each delegate receives a blank card in which his/her vote will be cast. Second, delegates are given 30 minutes for deliberation and negotiation, so that they can make agreements with fellow communities regarding which projects to support besides their own. Third, the voting process starts and each delegate fills out his/her voting card by writing down the reference numbers of five projects. Fourth, an assistant collects all the cards and gives them to the facilitator, who then counts them out loud to verify that the number of cards matches the number of delegates present. Fifth, the facilitator reads the results to the audience, and two assistants help him record the votes on the wall sheet. Finally, the five communities with the highest number of votes earn or “win” projects that are included in the 2013 PB budget. The delegates from each winning community receive a certificate stating the results, and they become the follow-up committee (unless a change is requested later).

In the days following the block assembly, the municipality’s engineering department visits the sites of the projects to produce feasibility studies, accompanied by one or more of the follow-up committee members. If the project is deemed not viable for the PB (for example, if it will be more expensive than the budgeted amount), then the project that received the second-most votes in the *community* assembly (but which was not under consideration in the block assembly) is evaluated. If this second project passes the feasibility test, then this alternate project becomes the one to be executed. It is precisely for this reason that more than one project is selected at the community assemblies.

5.1.3 Block Assemblies in STI

Although in SDE a municipal government facilitator leads the community assemblies, in STI, the second of our PB municipalities studied, these meetings are private, without the involvement of any municipal figure, and it is left to the community groups to decide whether or not to conduct them. I observed none of these private community meetings. STI's municipal government conducted 29 block—in contrast to community—assemblies (September 17-27, 2012), from which I collected observations from eleven. STI's block assemblies differ from those of SDE in a number of ways. First, instead of block assemblies requiring the presence of delegates from community assemblies, the meetings are open to the public. They are forums of direct or face-to-face democracy rather than representative democracy. Second, different facilitators use different organizational strategies when leading the meetings. Some check identification documents, register the data of attendees, and only ask assistants to hand out voting cards for the number of people registered. Others hand out cards more carelessly, even giving them to a local leader to distribute among his or her fellow community members. Third, gender quotas for the selection of delegates, although always suggested, are not binding as they are in SDE. Fourth, each group is asked to vote for one instead of five projects. Fifth, only one winner, based on majority vote, is selected even though communities that end up in second and third place are announced in the event that the municipality becomes able to execute more than one project for the block. (Such would be determined at the municipal assembly, which takes place in December). Sixth, attending members vote by written ballot to elect delegates—from both winning and losing communities—to be part of the municipal assemblies, and the latter are selected for the experience such service will provide. Each attendee only votes for one individual (from his or her own community or group). Like the

SDE meeting, the STI assembly concludes rather formally and even solemnly: prior to the facilitator's official dismissal, delegates provide their national identification documents and contact information, sign the certificate, and obtain a copy. In STI, many facilitators add a nice touch by telling the participants "You have been empowered."

5.2 Diagnostic Evidence (Results) and Implications

Once observations have been put in narrative context and assessed for accuracy, the next step is to examine the evidence with respect to the presence or absence of the enabling conditions relevant for this study. I do this new task by using case-specific contextual knowledge. Instead of presenting exclusively positive evidence regarding the presence of the enabling conditions, my main—although not exclusive—strategy is to look for both confirming and disconfirming evidence of the enabling conditions. The logic behind this approach is that for PT only the presence or absence of the condition matters (rather than variations of it). After each examination, I also summarize the main normative and policy implications of the presented evidence. To facilitate the reading of this portion of the study, Annex 7 shows the codes used for each assembly—a letter A-Q for assemblies in SDE and a number 1-11 for assemblies in STI—which I use when making references to specific events within each assembly. What, then, do we find or fail to find with respect to the SDE and STI PB assemblies?

5.2.1 Fairness: Assessing the Evidence

With respect to the issue of a fair procedure, in both STI and SDE I observed some non-equitable voting/representation, leader manipulation and disruptive presence of

outsiders, as well as the voting process's vulnerability to being corrupted. These factors reduce the fairness of the PB process, hence weakening the likelihood of the beneficial impacts.

(a) Non-equitable Voting and Representation

The potential fairness of PB was most compromised by non-equitable representation in the assemblies and consequently communities and groups having non-equitable chances of having a project selected. This issue appears both in STI and SDE, but in different ways.

I start out with STI. Given STI's model of block assemblies open to the public, rather than being attended by the same quota of delegates from each community, the number of participants per community depends on the location of the assembly and, hence, unfairly favors the host community. Gregoria Díaz,¹¹³ a leader from STI's *Comité de Desarrollo Comunitario Nordeste*, explained that the community that wins a PB project is the one able to bring more people to the assembly site.¹¹⁴ Such an arrangement does not lead to equal representation and is likely to discourage effective collective action and cooperation among communities. This issue was common to each of the assemblies observed in STI, and a source of disappointment for losing communities in assemblies such as 3, 7 and 9. Juan Castillo, from *Fundación Solidaridad*, claims that assembly 10 was only one example of a community illicitly bringing people from other localities to represent them in order to get more votes.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Interview on 10/30/12.

¹¹⁴ Wampler (2007) finds something similar in Brazil, where the rules of PB seem to favor with a greater level of PB funds those groups that are able to mobilize the greatest number of supporters.

¹¹⁵ Regardless of the veracity of the claim, the risk remains, so the point is valid.

Narciso Almonte,¹¹⁶ a local leader from the *Centro de Formación y Acción Social Agraria*, based in Gurabo (STI), highlighted one of the unjust implications of non-equitable representation. Almonte argued that the community with the greatest need is not necessarily the one with the capability of moving the largest number of people to the assembly site. Angelita Villamán,¹¹⁷ another local leader from STI's southern zone, claimed that many people do not get involved in PB because it is difficult to mobilize them, and even more difficult when meetings are held in a distant locality, which forces participants to incur transportation costs.¹¹⁸ Leivan Díaz, a municipal government staff member, explained that to solve this problem, the local government started rotating assembly sites in 2012. Hence, different communities now can benefit from the location selection each year.

As a result of the non-equitable representation arrangement just described, the following scenario could take place: a STI community can win a PB project with 18 votes in a small/poorly-attended block assembly, whereas, in a highly-attended assembly a community can lose with 120 votes due to another community winning with 130. Some participants see as a drawback that the project that is executed is that for which a community is able to bring more people per block assembly, without considering the sizes of other block assemblies in the rest of the municipality or at least in each unit of zonal planning. Whether the community with 18 votes is in greater need of the project than the

¹¹⁶ Interview on 10/23/12.

¹¹⁷ Interview on 10/30/12.

¹¹⁸ With a similar argument, local leader Rhadamés Gómez (interviewed on 10/29/2012), now selected for the 2014 follow-up committee of municipal control, claimed that “the municipal government of STI has no control over the invitation to organizations to PB assemblies and there is no participation that covers the whole territory equitably; instead, projects are won based on who can take more people”.

community with 120 may not be easy to determine and, in any case, would vary from case to case, just as would the number of people that would actually benefit from the project. Nevertheless, this sort of inequitable representation does warrant a complaint of representative or procedural unfairness on the part of those who do not manage to secure a PB project.

Several questions are pertinent: Is it fairer that big communities have a greater chance of winning PB projects? What if the community with 120 votes is actually smaller, but with a higher civic sense that translates into more involvement in the execution, maintenance, and sustainability of the project itself? In either case, which parameter should be used to judge which one of the two proposals is of higher need? Would a process entailing more deliberation (and consideration of community size and distance from the meeting location) help overcome many of these problems? In due course, I answer. However, there remains much room for improvement in institutional and procedural design to approximate more fully level playing fields.

Another issue with respect to representation is that of *geographical over-representation* in the sense that—a community may have more democratic clout because several organizations represent the same or overlapping interests. This problem is not exclusive to STI, as I also observed it in SDE. STI local leader Radhamés Gómez explains that in cases like this, organizations should elect a speaker, instead of having members from many groups introducing what turns out to be redundant proposals to the same assembly. Equally problematic is that dominance by the same interests creates “self exclusion,” for some organizations do not participate at all because they judge the model to be unfair: their odds of winning a project, they believe, are minimal when competition is not one against

one, but one against many.

A similar problem is seen in SDE with its block assemblies. All blocks throughout SDE's three zones get an equal number of projects (5), but not all blocks have an equal number of communities/groups, population size, or income level. For example, block assembly E, which represents a relatively wealthy community, is composed of only 18 communities and had 5 projects selected (27.7% chance of winning). In contrast, assembly J, a poor block, involved 34 communities but selected only 5 projects (14.7% chance of winning). From a justice-oriented point of view, this distribution could be considered unfair based on the grounds that it is usually the poorer blocks that have more needs, more people underserved, and more groups registered.

(b) Local Leader Manipulation and Disruptive Presence of Outsiders

When addressing participatory development in India, Menjor Singh (2008) establishes that participation depends a lot on leadership, and the best leadership must come out of local communities—"persons having vision, tolerance and all qualities of sincerity, honesty, transparency and accountability. Above all, they should be fine human beings. Such right leadership will help build confidence of the villagers as also their accountability for promotion of their common interests and objectives" (p.72). In the presence of patronage networks, local leaders may serve as "agents of political mobilization for those above them in the party hierarchy and as brokers for the demands and needs of their constituents below them" (Selee, 2006, p. 105). However, in the present case, the evidence suggests that some leaders misuse their public office and manipulate crowds for personal

gain, hence reducing fairness. This manipulation usually takes the form of leaders coercively pushing their fellow group members to vote for a particular project. Drydyk would call this a “democratic dysfunctionality” in the community. Through clientelism, local elites use personal networks to get favorable treatment from the state or to use the state to advance their personal interests.¹¹⁹ Assembly 6 (STI), for instance, provided extensive evidence of the existence of such power asymmetries. There, Ariel Acosta, a local leader from one of the participating communities, loudly, repeatedly, and openly asked his peers to vote for a clubhouse to be named after him. It was clear that many of his fellow neighbors worked against the selection of this project, but they remained silent when he confronted them, passively going along with his decision (perhaps lacking in valor to do otherwise). Acosta even proceeded to write up the votes for some of his people, especially for those who appeared more vulnerable to his influence, such as the elderly and those who seemed to have limited writing skills. Whether previous community deliberations had driven participants towards that project or not is unknown to me,¹²⁰ but it is clear that at the time of the block assembly consensus did not yet exist (even if votes would suggest that it did).

More serious than these isolated events, is the underlying problem with local leadership in STI, namely, its lack of independence from the local government. Almonte explained that in STI there are four federations of neighborhood councils, which comprise

¹¹⁹ Clientelistic politics is not exclusive to the Dominican municipal governments. For example, when analyzing municipal political institutions in Mexico, Selee (2006) finds that “citizen participation in municipal affairs, though frequent, was mediated through clientelistic channels and permitted little citizen engagement in deliberation about public affairs. In fact, the entire political system was predicated on a series of patronage networks that mediated between citizens and their elected authorities” (p. 105).

¹²⁰ After the assembly ended, I wish I had been able to interview members from this community, but such was not possible given my limited time in the area.

all councils in the municipality. Leaders from these federations are on the government payroll. The problem is that given their ties to the government and the conflicts of interest, it is unlikely that their community associations allow for an objective and effective job of counterbalancing and holding the government accountable.¹²¹

Yet another power asymmetry became apparent in assembly I (SDE). Municipal councilor Edita Sandoval's involvement (an outsider¹²² for the assembly's purposes) upset many losing organizations. Participants who failed to win projects declared that councilor Sandoval's community won because of her position of power that allowed her to acquire votes from everybody who either had a hard time telling her that they would not support her or wanted to gain favors by being on her good side. This event also highlights the

¹²¹ Baiocchi et al. (2010) highlight different scenarios across the municipalities they study in regards to degrees of civil society independence. On the one hand, they find that in municipalities like Sapucaia and Timoteo civil society was too attached to the government—presidents of community councils, with strong political connections with mayors, largely controlled the respective PBs. In the more successful and effective case of Joao Monlevade, on the contrary, there was a strong and autonomous civil society. As a result, the PB stimulated broad and deep civic participation. This “separation of power” illustrates one of Crocker's democratic dimensions.

¹²² Although not considered in relation to any of the key causal mechanisms presented in this model, outsiders can hurt the PB process in several ways. First, consider the consultation phase of a PB. When I interviewed her, local leader Gregoria Díaz made clear that political leaders also become “pseudo” or “faux” community leaders with the dominant—if not, sole—objective of obtaining personal benefits and pursuing their political agendas. Similarly, local leader Radhamés Gómez said that some community leaders are linked to political parties and see community organizations as platforms from which they can develop a political campaign for partisan or personal gain. I suspect that these sorts of leaders tarnish the transparency of the PB process. One instance occurred in assembly H (SDE), during which a public attorney took the meeting as an opportunity to work on his public image by delivering a speech completely unrelated to PB. The other was in assembly 9 (STI), where a councilor spoke for about twenty minutes at the end of the meeting, telling “losing” communities to “empower” themselves by going to the offices of the municipal government to demand the change they need. He also stressed to the “winning” communities how urgent it was to put pressure on the government, because otherwise the government would not execute the project. Although such an opinion may prove to be helpful for the follow-up committees, it is embedded in a political discourse (in this case from the opposition), and may diminish enthusiasm and trust in the process even before things actually go wrong. According to Díaz' accounts, the problem with the involvement of leaders like these two, is that they tend to use their power to get their communities first in line in the PB projects execution schedule. Note, however, that my observations correspond to the consultation stage and have not been confirmed to be a problem during the execution phase. Hence I refrain from labeling this as diagnostic evidence in order to avoid introducing measurement error to this process tracing analysis. I should also note a topic for further research—whether communal outsiders may sometimes play a democratically positive role in the DR PB process. Informative to this future analysis is Crocker's (1991) “Insiders and Outsiders in International Development Ethics,” *Ethics and International Affairs* 5: 149-73.

underlying problem of not disallowing participation in PB by municipal councilors (or other local government employees). Their presence is likely to be accepted due to the facilitator's fear of losing the councilor's goodwill, since the latter holds an influential position in the municipal government. It is politically prudent for the facilitator to avoid publicly humiliating the councilor by requesting him/her to leave the premises.

Let us step back and reflect on the significance of the evidence we have presented. Drydyk (2005), as we saw in Chapter 2, has a concern relevant to DR and its PBs: "participation schemes are inevitably dominated by socially and economically more powerful groups within communities, who thereby seize the greater share of benefits" (p. 262). "Inevitably" seems too strong, and Drydyk himself would argue that PBs and participation in them are still valuable if and when ways can be found to mitigate the danger of elite capture. However, democrats must be constantly vigilant of the ways in which an elite may use the rhetoric of PB to camouflage elite control of local decision-making.

This point also links with Henry Richardson's enabling condition of *procedural fairness*: "the process of democratic debate and decision must itself be structured so as to allow each person a fair chance to participate and to counteract to a degree that potential influence of disparities in economic and political power" (Richardson, 2002, cited in Crocker, 2008, p. 318). Even when valued options are available, citizen agency is compromised by the interference of authoritarian leaders or the shortcomings of democratic leaders. That is, the existence of a non-equitable distribution of power¹²³ diminishes what

¹²³ Using the case of Kerala, India, Mandira Kala (2009), makes a point relevant to the evidence just presented. She explains that "power dynamics between elite and marginal groups...in the deliberative setting of the *gram sabha* are likely to affect the outcomes of deliberation, the extent to which participating citizens can steer decisions on redistribution of development resources and also which of the two groups interest are advanced in the outcomes of the deliberation. If such inequalities are a starting point for participation and

Crocker calls democracy's moral equality dimension, explaining that "we have reason to value democracy as inherently good because it assumes that all adult members of the group are equal with respect to their worth or dignity, and this worth is related, among other things, to their agency" (2008, p. 302). The fact that there are manipulative leaders making decisions for the group means that agency is being sacrificed, as citizens or group members are not effectively in charge of their own lives. A democratic leader would not be an elite guardian imposing expert views and telling participants what to vote for. Rather, a democratic leader facilitates the forging by group members of a consensus that at least a majority could accept: "[Such a leader] empower(s) the agency of others as free and equal group members" (Crocker, 2012, p. 55), and empowers them to also be leaders themselves when appropriate.

(c) Vulnerability of the PB Process to Corruption

In some SDE assemblies and in all STI assemblies, I found evidence that PB voting itself is susceptible to corruption. One of such cases has to do with the handing out of voting cards. In most assemblies, the municipal team handed out the cards without much care and at different times (some participants got them at the beginning of the assembly, while other latecomers would get them later in the process), therefore decreasing transparency. Another questionable practice in this regard, and seen in both cities, was that of giving the president of a neighborhood council the voting cards to distribute and collect, rather than giving such responsibility to someone from the municipal government team. This caused losing communities to question whether a neighborhood association president

deliberation, it is argued that deliberative politics cannot be an instrument for justice, democracy or redistribution" (pp. 26-7).

had violated the assembly's procedural fairness.

The exceptions are those SDE's assemblies that Edward (last name unknown) led. In these assemblies voting went on without a hitch thanks to Edwards's public articulation and monitoring of very transparent voting guidelines. Delegates from each community sat in lines of four, and each participant, one by one (and line by line) received a voting card. In the same organized way, an assistant collected the votes, which were then counted out loud to verify that they matched the number of delegates present (which the assistant publicly announced at the beginning of the meeting).¹²⁴ Another exception were assemblies that that facilitator Angela Tavaréz led in STI. In assembly 9, Tavaréz was able to keep both order and transparency. However, assembly 9 was rather small, easy to handle, and in a middle-income neighborhood. She did not have the same results in assembly 10, which was a large assembly in an extremely poor neighborhood where people's misbehavior pushed the local government to redo the assembly.¹²⁵

(d) Uneven Knowledge

Finally, the fact that many participants lack full knowledge of PB affects different aspects and stages of PB and injects unfairness into the process. As a "school of democracy," which a PB aspires to be, it is expected that a learning curve exists.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Some participants suggested, during interviews, that when the number of cards is counted to verify if it matches the number of delegates, a delegate (randomly chosen) should verify such count, rather than asking a municipal team member to do so.

¹²⁵ Participants conduct in this assembly was, to say the least, problematic. In fact, I had to leave the premises before the process ended because some participants turned violent, and I was also afraid someone might steal my camera or smart phone. Yes, democracy can be messy!

¹²⁶ Wampler (2007) suggests that "as a [PB] program is consolidated, it is expected that the average participants' political knowledge will expand" (p.62). This increased knowledge helps lessen the risk that the most well informed activists become the ones who try to lead and dominate the PB discussions. According to Wampler, this non-egalitarian result is more likely to occur during the first years of any PB program—a time when most participants find themselves at the beginning of the learning curve.

Nonetheless, observations suggest that at times, lack of information affects new participants who are unaware of the way in which voting sections could be strategized to achieve success. Although the facilitator could make such details explicit before deliberations, negotiations and the voting process start, this does not always happen. As a result, some participants seemed upset to see communities making strategic alliances, thinking that it was an inappropriate move, without knowing that strategizing in such manner is a justifiable practice. As Crocker recognizes, bargaining exercises agency and may supplement deliberation. Bargaining and alliance formation may also reflect solidarity, cooperative group functioning, and long-term vision.

Another sort of asymmetric information concerns the responsibilities of the follow-up committee. A handful of delegates expressed their frustration during the execution stage of the projects, because of the often-slow rate of responses from the municipal government to their questions and demands. The issue is that the follow-up committee may not be aware of the kind of pressures they legitimately can put on the government, nor the mechanisms that they can use, as established by the law. This lack of knowledge benefits the government that is lucky to avoid legitimate pressures from the “politicking” groups.

Based on the previous analysis of the evidence, I reluctantly conclude the enabling condition of fairness, when viewed in all its aspects, is at best uneven and partial.

5.2.2 Inclusiveness: Assessing the Evidence

To what extent, if any, were the assemblies inclusive? There are several different aspects of this enabling condition to consider. One is that participation in the assemblies observed seemed to be inclusive in terms of gender and age. Unfortunately, although I was easily able to distinguish men from women, I had no hard data to confirm my casual

perceptions, for no record exists with respect to the exact age of participants.¹²⁷ Although participation seemed to be balanced in these two regards, on a closer look STI did present an exclusion problem when selecting delegates. In fact gender quotas were not always observed, for there was a selection bias in favor of male representatives. Although this imbalance may just be a reflection of the customary prominence of male community leaders, it does raise the question of whether women are not trusted to handle public affairs. Survey data helped to clarify this question.¹²⁸ (Note, however, that the survey respondents were not necessarily participants in the same assemblies that I evaluated.) Nonetheless, this result, without being direct evidence, may shine light on the predominant cultural view in STI (and SDE) towards women in public life. From the group of SDE respondents who were participants in PB, 75%, 19.2% and 5.8% thought that women should have more, equal, and less participation in public life, respectively, vis-à-vis men. When this variable is analyzed for participants in STI, then the percentages are 85.54%, 8.43% and 6%, respectively, for more, equal and less participation of women vis-à-vis men. These numbers suggest that the bias favoring male delegates in STI is not a reflection of *machismo* in Dominican society.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Although surveys were not necessarily conducted using the same pool of individuals who attended the meetings that I observed, such data suggest that the average age of participants in SDE was 52 years with a standard deviation of 11.8, and in STI the average age was 49.75 with a standard deviation of 11.3.

¹²⁸ Question 3.4 reads: How much participation do you think women should have in public life, as opposed to men: More participation than men, equal participation than men, less participation than men, or no participation?

¹²⁹ It must be noted, however, that it is possible that these survey responses merely reflect what the respondents believe the researchers want to hear, namely, fairly egalitarian views, when in fact machismo is the operative norm. This possible scenario of distorted communication resonates with Robert Chalmers' notion of "inadvertent ventriloquism." For more on such notion and its dangers see Chalmers' "All Power Deceives," *IDS Bulletin*, 25, 2 (1994), cited in Crocker (2008), 347-48.

Let us now turn to a different aspect of inclusiveness. The DR is beset by widespread and deep poverty, a reality that affects many people within SDE and STI. However, most of the people whom I observed in the assemblies do not belong to the poorest of the poor. (Exceptions that prove the rule were participants from assembly 10 in STI and assembly K in SDE who, generally, were indeed very poor.) The fact that invitations to participate are extended to all communities in the municipalities is intended to insure that the process is inclusive. Regardless of the economic condition of a community, if located within the territory of the municipality, such community should have an assembly assigned and, hence, an “equal” chance—when compared to more affluent communities—to win a project. This expectation especially holds if a poor community has a neighborhood council or other type of civil association. Nonetheless, it must be pointed out that while I have no evidence of any *intention* to make PB exclusive in either of the municipalities, some poor residents inadvertently and structurally probably were left out of the process. For example, in STI, and as it was discussed earlier, due to the structure of its block assemblies, residents of non-host communities, if poor, might have had a hard time paying for transportation to get to the location site.¹³⁰ The pertinent question is whether the government’s decision to site an assembly might in fact be responding to some kind of favoritism. Without evidence of favoritism, there are no grounds for claiming intentional exclusivity. This question is on my agenda for future research.

Owing to my unavoidably subjective observation, the potential of measurement error is high regarding exclusion by economic or social status. Hence, it is relevant to

¹³⁰ Based on their reporting, this seems to be what happened for residents of *Respaldo Manhattan* when participating in assembly 9 in STI.

examine once again the information obtained from the surveys. Answers to two questions, which I introduced in Chapter 3, are helpful for understanding two concepts/characteristics. First, “Do participants in PB perceive themselves to be at the bottom of the economic ladder;” and, second, “Is the PB process perceived as exclusionary?”¹³¹ Just as with the statistics concerning women in public life, these poverty figures should be considered only as indirect diagnostic or suggestive evidence. In regards to *relative* wealth, participants from both SDE and STI, on average, perceived themselves wealthier than non-participants (deriving this result from the economic ladder variable introduced in Chapter 3).¹³² Because of the differences in the SDE and STI block assemblies, participants’ (and non-participants’) perceptions of whether or not the process is inclusive are worth looking at separately for each municipality. In SDE, 86.54% of participants and 97.52% of non-participants said that PB was exclusive, rather than inclusive, and these two figures are statistically different. In STI, it was only 29.63% of participants and 62.43% of non-participants who found PB to be exclusive.

From this data, the first observation is rather obvious and expected: participants saw the process as more inclusive than those who did not participate. But interesting implications can be further derived from these figures. One such implication is that regardless of the practical issues embedded in the open-ended structure of the assemblies in STI, that same feature—which is absent in SDE—might be contributing to the relatively

¹³¹ Moreover, note that although the survey did include an income question, there were many missing responses, and hence, it is not justified in making strong inferences with respect to whether or not the PB excluded the (most) poor.

¹³² Recall the question that teases out relative economic status: “Imagine a ladder with 10 steps, in which the poorest people are standing in the first step and the richest in the tenth step. Where would you place yourself in this ladder?” For all respondents in SDE and STI, the mean was 4.85. The mean for non-participants was 4.69, and the mean for participants was 5.31, and the latter figure is statistically different at the 1% than the former.

positive perceptions of inclusion in STI. That is, because everybody can take part in the final voting, instead of only delegates, feelings of inclusion in the decision-making process are high in STI.

On the other hand, SDE's case is more worrisome, as perceptions of exclusion are very high even for those who participate. I argue that this may happen due to SDE's structure of equal representation in block assemblies. The issue is that while such arrangement seems reasonably fair in terms of an equal number of voters per community/group, it is also the case that only those elected as delegates—an selective/exclusive group and not everyone in the assembly—are involved in the final decision-making process, as it is the case in STI. Although delegates in SDE are democratically chosen representatives in community assemblies precisely to vote in the block assembly, this arrangement might make non-delegates feel excluded from the later and decisive decision-making process (recall that community assemblies only serve as a step to formalize the preferences of communities, but at this stage the three selected projects are not yet part of PB). For those who do not participate as delegates but happen to know which group of four delegates attended the block assembly—and knowing that being a delegate correlates highly with leadership (and economic) status—, it is fairly easy to make the assumption that only those from a higher social or economic group participate.

Another implication is that given the 24.4% of respondents in SDE who claimed not to know about the PB process, it is fair to expect that if there were more awareness about the first open-ended assembly and the logic behind the selection of delegates for restricted assemblies, the process could be regarded as less exclusive—given my initial assumption that people feel excluded due to their belief that final decisions are made only

by a few persons (four individuals in each community). Moreover, people may only feel like agents as long as they are active players in directly deciding on and bringing about desired change; thus, even participants of community assemblies might not feel as agents because they do not take part in the final selection or implementation of PB projects. And, evidence exists that the community members may not have a strong bond with their leaders—in spite of the fact such leaders are supposed to represent them.

In sum, the preceding arguments raise the issues of: (a) whether representation always runs the risk of reducing the agency of the represented; and (b) whether efforts have to be made to reduce this democratic deficit through ongoing relationships between delegates and those represented. The problem, however, is that PB is by definition a hybrid approach to democracy, one which combines features of participatory and representative democracy. I support the view that after looking at the advantages and disadvantages in context; no other arrangement can work better at the communal level than that of electing representatives to make decisions at the block level. In order to secure fairness and inclusiveness with open-ended block assemblies, as those in STI, logistics would be too complicated because not all communities can host assemblies, and because population sizes vary among communities within a block. As long as the selection of such delegates is done without coercion and democratically, and insofar as communities have leaders whom they admire and trust and have opportunities to influence, then such selection of representatives should not undermine inclusiveness.

Based solely on my observations of the assemblies, PB does reasonably well in passing the test of Crocker's *breadth* dimension. However, given the survey results that reflect an unfavorable degree of inclusiveness at SDE's PB, and of a conservative estimate

of the same variable in STI, no claims with respect to inclusiveness can be made with full confidence. For now, I conclude that inclusiveness is only partially realized.

5.2.3 Deliberative Democracy: Assessing the Evidence

The official assemblies that I observed showed little, if any, evidence of a purely deliberative democracy approach to the transformation of preferences. Instead, for the most part, a mere aggregation of written votes determines which are the winning groups and projects. Even though for strictly PT purposes this is all that would need to be known in order to conclude that the deliberative causal mechanism is nonexistent, doing so would lead to a spurious conclusion. Context is key here, and, thus, I move on to discuss some interesting—often neglected—patterns of democratic activity.

Let us examine more closely than we have so far occasions for democratic deliberation. In all SDE's community assemblies I observed a high degree of uniformity in the stated preferences of the community members. It could be argued that such homogeneity, if authentic and not coerced, would decrease the need for much, if any, deliberation. It seems as if the community assemblies were little more than an exercise of majority rule that aggregated—without the give and take of deliberation—private preferences. This aggregative process might be supplemented if and when a facilitator sensed that there was some disagreement and opened up discussion. However, such would be a narrow view of the entire process for real deliberation did occur, but did so largely *prior to* the PB assembly. From local leaders I learned that community organizations would meet days and even weeks prior to the community assembly in order to deliberate and

decide on the projects that they planned to support in the formal meeting.¹³³ By the time the government facilitator came to lead the community public consultation, little deliberation was needed because through informal deliberation group members have forged an agreement concerning their high priority needs. During these previous group assemblies, most of which happen at an informal setting in someone's home, more deliberation—as well as negotiation and bargaining—actually may have taken place.¹³⁴

Unfortunately, these meetings were impossible for me to observe given the timing, structure and policy-oriented (non-ethnographic) nature of my research. By the time I started my field research and met with local leaders, such internal group sessions had already occurred. Note, as well, that it was these leaders, whom I met during the community assemblies (after possible internal deliberations), who would have provided information on—and an invitation to—such internal meetings times and places.

Clear evidence exists with respect to deliberative participation in SDE's block assemblies but, once again, this deliberation is informal and occurs prior to SDE's official PB assembly. My first encounter with this happened in assembly E, where participants from some communities (though not all) met for about an hour before the assembly to engage in plenty of deliberation and negotiation. During this time, each community presented the case for their proposed project to fellow participants with the intention to gain their sympathy and, consequently, their vote. The most common scenario is an exercise of reciprocity, in which community *a* supports community *b* and vice versa.

¹³³ Miguel Arias, local leader from Punta Torrecillo, Los Mameyes (Interview on 10/3/12.), Doña Rojita (last name unknown), local leader from Barrio Felicidad II, Los Mina (Interview on 10/10/12) and local leader Alison Mateo, El Brisal, Bello Campo (Interview on 10/06/12).

¹³⁴ This finding is similar to that of Wampler (2007), who claims for the Brazilian case that “[PB participants] hold their own pre-and post-community meetings to analyze the current political environment, map out strategies and solidify their intra-CSO alliances” (p.71).

Highlighting another scenario, local leader Alison Mateo¹³⁵ explained how communities that have no pressing needs are still willing to participate and provide their vote to a fellow group in need. I also observed in assembly E the transformation of a view about communal needs from a narrower community view to a block point of view. In other words, when communities have similar needs in adjacent places, they can deliberate and reach the decision of combining projects and votes, presenting them as a unified proposal based on respectful cooperation.¹³⁶ This informal agreement is converted into an official decision minutes later during the actual assembly. When these agreements are decided before the formal PB assembly, the thirty minutes allocated by the facilitator for deliberation/negotiation, are instead used for confirming that the antecedent agreements still hold, and to write up the votes. Assemblies E, I, and P all had successful cases of such joint efforts.

From the totality of this evidence with respect to conditions prior to or during the PB processes, it is useful to make the following positive and, hitherto, unnoticed points. First, deliberation can and perhaps sometimes should take place in informal venues prior to official, formal deliberation. Although such informality might contribute to frankness and openness, there is also the danger that some members who should be involved would be excluded. Richardson does distinguish four phases of one deliberative process;¹³⁷ the third phase is “coming to an informal agreement” and the fourth phase is “converting the

¹³⁵ Interview on 10/06/2012.

¹³⁶ Similar outcomes following deliberation have been found elsewhere. In his (2012)’s essay “Participatory Budgeting: Core Principles and Key Impacts” Wampler explains how his empirical research and that of others show how participants in PB are “often willing to delay their short-term needs to support the interests of other communities that have more pressing needs” (Wampler 2007; Baiocchi 2005; Marquetti et al 2008). (p.3, citations in original).

¹³⁷ Omitted in the text are phases 1—formulating proposals—and 2—arguing the proposals’ merits.

informal agreement into an official decision” (Richardson, 2002, cited in Crocker, 2008, 325-27). Different from Richardson’s model, which assumes that these phases take place in the same venue, in one PB context they occur in different venues and are separated in time; nonetheless, something like Richardson’s two phases still holds. A second point is that these informal deliberations might not be only about which project to support (and why) but also about strategic thinking and planning about how to win. The balance between strategy and deliberation is not always clear-cut and, in any case, in the real world decisions are not just the result of an “exchange of reasons and decision based on reasons most can accept.” Such a situation would be unfortunate, democratically speaking, if subgroup self-interest dominated and there was little give and take of proposals and mutual compromise. An example helps me illustrate this scenario.

In SDE’s assembly Q, I observed one incident in which a group’s narrow self-interest prevailed over the block’s democratically motivated collective action. In such assembly there appeared to be a well-intentioned negotiation and bargaining if not deliberative participation of the various communities. However, on closer inspection it was clear that one group engaged in unseemly strategic (purely self-interested) and not communicative (fair) action. After making informal agreements with more communities than the group could actually support with their votes, said group used one side of their ballots to show four organizations how they had placed their project number as one of their five votes (their own plus those four), and then used the same tactic with another group of four other communities (this time using the other side of the ballot). The maverick group’s design was that all eight communities would reciprocate and also vote for it. This group’s members, clearly lacking minimal civic integrity, later deleted what was written on one

side of the voting card, so that their votes were actually admissible, but injustice had occurred: The greedy group succeeded in gaining double support and winning a project through a rigged majority vote.

It is pertinent to discuss the negative impact that an excessively self-interested and unfair action, just like the one described above, can have in relation to the goals set forth in Crocker's ideal of deliberation. On the one hand, the *publicity* principle of deliberation and collective agreements—which entails a transparent process in which each unit involved knows exactly what is being agreed or disagreed—is violated when a party to the process is falsely led to believe that their project is being supported by a certain community (in seeming fair exchange for supporting that community's own project). On the other hand, the principles of *accountability* and *reciprocity* also fail to be realized. *Accountability* is lacking in the sense that a democratic process does not legitimate the decision since the “decision” was just foul play perpetrated by a group organization operating in opposition to democratic norms and governmental authority. And *reciprocity* is absent in the sense that all justifications given to the misled groups for them to support the cheating group's project are based on a manipulative lie. It is reasonable to assume that the agreement would not have been mutually acceptable, had all the information been public.

5.2.4 Effective Change (Capacity and Actuality): Assessing the Evidence

Recall, from our earlier discussion of this condition, that effective change has two aspects: (a) an individual's capacity and freedom to effect change and (b) the actual realization of such change. When studying the participatory institutions of Kerala, Kala (2009) remarks:

Applying the capability approach to the evaluation of the campaign in

Kerala requires an assessment of what intrinsically matters for the well-beings and agency of participating citizens. This implies that the campaign and its local deliberative body of *gram sabha* should present effective opportunities for citizens to undertake actions and redistribute valued resources that enhance their multidimensional capabilities and agency. (p. 42)

Following this guideline, it is pertinent then to discuss that although evidence shows that deliberative democracy in our two PB communities does not fully realize the PB (deliberative democracy) ideal, the process of majority voting that takes place in each assembly does display participants' capacity for and some achievement of effective change. Such process shows at least some transfer of authority from government officials to ordinary citizens. While many residents of these two cities who are aware of PB, therefore having the freedom for effective change, choose not to seize that opportunity, within certain limits participants do show that they can influence decision-making. In Crocker's terms, people have at least some *control*.¹³⁸ It must be noted, however, that the degree of control for those participants who win projects is higher than that for those who participate in the shaping of the budget, but lose in PB. The fact that all block assemblies conclude with the *selection* of a number of projects to be taken before the municipal assembly for final approval show that participants have some freedom for and achievement of effective change. For the 2013 PB SDE approved 90 projects, and STI approved 31.

In the present case, I hypothesize that if the *capability to effect change* has been realized in solely voting and deciding but not in "winning," then individuals or subgroups who "lose" through several PB cycles find their subjective agency fading away.

¹³⁸ One crucial implication for *control* is that the opportunity to bring about *actual* change and the achievement of such change should not be narrowly equated with the capability to vote, the act of voting, or with the mere approval of the projects.

Participants may tolerate not winning in PB at the beginning of the learning curve—the first years of participation. But repeated failure to get one’s proposal accepted or even embodied in the final decision may have a negative impact on one’s feeling of being an agent. This idea is what sustains my concept of *partial PB agency*.

A *partial agent* is an individual who has participated in the PB process, has not won a project, but thinks that the process is just and democratic and therefore keeps hope alive and expects for the group project eventually to “win” and be implemented in a future PB cycle.¹³⁹ In other words, *partial PB agency* exists when a person is not an agent at time t , since she—regardless of having agency freedom—has not succeeded in achieving her ultimate goal and making a difference for her community, but has undergone the deliberation and decision-making process, consequently building expectations of becoming an PB agent in $t+1$ should the PB process continues and should she choose to participate again.¹⁴⁰

What about the *range* of options, defined as the scope of the options open to democratic choice? As we have seen, democratic range concerns the number and variety of options open for democratic choice. In the two PB cases under consideration, the number of projects from which a community can choose is very limited and under the control of

¹³⁹ Wampler (2007) claims that it is likely that individuals who fail at having their proposals approved in PB will eventually stop participating, since they see no use of devoting their time to a process that does not enable them to achieve their goals.

¹⁴⁰ Two further clarifications regarding PB agency are worth making: (1) A partial PB agent does not fully lose his agency freedom, as valued goals can yet be achieved in a future PB cycle, but his agency achievement is null for the present time, unless the individual or community realizes their goal through means of empowerment other than PB, in which case agency achievement remains. However, since such realization would not be the result of PB, then it is community agency rather than PB agency that is exercised. (2) Recall that, at least in STI, losing communities still chose delegates to oversee the rest of the PB process, regardless not having had a project selected. This procedure can be seen as a way for “losers” to continue to participate in more or less deliberative ways and, hence, compensate for the *partial agency* of deciding on a project that fails to be realized.

government officials. The government presents a menu to communities and typically permits no additions or exceptions. When admitted, exceptions are not to amplify democratic choice but rather respond to the municipal government's desire to avoid conflict with peculiar sectors (at least in STI). One example of an exception is that the standard menu does not include building temples or chapels for churches, but if a community asks for a temple or chapel under PB, then the government typically complies.¹⁴¹ This specific case derives from the Dominican reality that the Catholic Church is deeply involved in politics. No mayor or highly ranked politician can afford to have the Church for an adversary. I would argue, however, that allowing for the discretionary approval of projects outside the standard menu—although it increases options—decreases the fairness of the municipality-wide process and opens the procedure to bias and corruption. Influential sectors or actors get their way, whereas the less powerful are told that “only that which is in the menu can be accepted.”

One of the issues of an adequate democratic range of options is whether basic community necessities, such as streets, should even be part of the PB menu. To be on the menu implies that at this juncture the communities are being given the right to decide issues. But, what if a necessity should not be up for democratic choice—not when they are so essential that the government (theoretically) has the obligation to take care of them regardless of any input from the community. Although I favor ample citizen control, the range (menu) restrictions pose the danger that PB becomes nothing more than a political exercise that municipal governments conduct to claim that “the people have spoken”, when

¹⁴¹ A local government official (name concealed) explained how in such cases, the funding for churches comes from general capital investment funds and not from PB funds.

all that “the people” have end up doing is vote for things that the government had already planned for anyway and merely wants a halo of populist support. This risk of PB becoming politicized (giving participants a false sense of *control*) should not be taken as a reduction in the intrinsic value of PB or citizen participation/deliberation in general. Given the limited resources of municipal governments, which make it impossible for them to cover all needs—including those that are their mandated responsibilities—it is valuable and important to allow ordinary citizens to provide an input on how to proceed with the allocation of such limited resources, even if their options are a restricted set of less than basic needs. With this power in the hands of the people, there is a possibility that citizens will choose wrongly or be forced to choose something that may not be what they most desire, given the menu exclusions. However, such danger is preferred over that of an unaccountable government (beyond citizen control) choosing wrongly and misusing public resources. And even if some basic necessities are left off the menu, it may be that a robust PB can have a role in weighing in on how important these “necessities” are in relation to other apparent necessities. Moreover, citizen agency also can be exercised in bringing to power government officials with what the majority of citizens consider to be better priorities.

Let us now turn to the second part of this plausible causal mechanism—the enabling condition of attaining desirable *actual change*. The realization of this part of the mechanism is attached to the third stage of PB, that of project execution. As indicated earlier, I was not able to observe project success or failure during my research trips.¹⁴²

¹⁴² Given that this study is cross-sectional and not longitudinal, only making observations from September 2012 to May 2013, the conclusions for this part of the *effective change* condition are only tentative. Future analysis over the medium- and long-terms is pending.

Thus, it must be emphasized that given the timing of data collection, and the time in which this causal mechanism plays its role in the process, this condition is not observable in this study. Hence, I present only claims based on expectations, rather than factual evidence.

The approval of PB projects prompts the government to respond—in some way or other—to the demands of the communities, but evidence suggests “slippage”. Electronic communications from PB contact persons from SDE and STI municipal governments indicated that 85% and 44%, respectively, of the PB projects for 2013 had been completed by February of 2014. These numbers cast doubt on the governments’ ability to meet the deadline of completing 100% of the projects by the end of the first trimester of 2014, especially in STI. Nevertheless, interview data based on previous PB cycles suggest that typical government behavior does not deliver many PB projects in a timely manner, if at all. With such unreliable rate of project execution, *actual change* becomes not only contingent on winning a project in an assembly but also on having the government execute it at the agreed-upon time and according to the agreed-upon characteristics. Because this third PB stage occurs later in time, *actual change* does not affect the initial reported perceptions of agency, for instance, derived directly from participation (stage 2); instead, what it does is measure the degree to which such outcome would vary should it be achieved in or after stage 3. If the impact of the group’s decision is delayed or fails to materialize, participants may feel they are, at the end of the day, not in control and hence are not full agents. Since project success may not occur, if at all, until well after “winning,” perceptions of agency may need to be reviewed at a significantly later time.

To further illustrate the previous point, let us consider an example. A community wins a project and its members feel like agents. If the project is, indeed, executed later, the

group would have succeeded in bringing about change and strengthening those—now justified—earlier feelings of agency, becoming more complete protagonists of authentic development. If, on the contrary, the government fails to implement the project, *actual change* does occur (or occurs only with respect to deliberation and choice of the project). After a time the initial feeling of agency might weaken or completely evaporate and be replaced with a feeling of powerlessness. When the government does not deliver on the projects approved, PB assemblies turn into a merely non-empowering consultative body. However, if the governmental delay was not unreasonable and/or the community found ways to pressure the government to act, agency feelings might not fully erode, especially in the Dominican context where citizens are used to expect to governmental delays and inefficiencies.¹⁴³

This governmental delay or failure to implement PB projects at least partially violates Gutmann and Thompson's view that deliberative democracy's decision should be binding on governments rather than merely optional or advisory. As Crocker (2012) remarks, "in a deliberative democracy, what happens before (and after) balloting is equally or more important" than balloting itself (p. 53). While it could be argued that deliberative democracy takes place even if citizens are involved only in policy-making and not in policy executing or implementing, more and better citizen agency and democracy is reached only if the chosen and desired change is attained. That is, not only does it matter that preferences are deliberatively transformed and decisions are made, but also that the content of the decisions is implemented in the world. And through pressuring the government to honor

¹⁴³ An interesting further research topic would be to study the DR threshold for reasonable governmental delays as well as channels through which citizens might pressure the government to make good on its commitments.

its commitment, citizens may be involved indirectly in implementation as well.¹⁴⁴

In conclusion, although participants do have *capacity to effect change* and exercise control in stage 2 of the PB process, this control is limited to choice from a small *range* of options because governmental officials define the menu and restrict the options available for citizen choice. Moreover, due to the unreasonable delay or failure in project implementation, citizen agency achievement is at best partial and a fuller assessment awaits future evidence.

5.2.5 Prior Cooperative Group Functioning: Assessing the Evidence

Recall that *prior cooperative group functioning* refers to how groups function in regards to mutual and strategic cooperation, respect, trust and the sharing of the same or overlapping values and purposes. Moreover, I have claimed that some such communal relations help enable PB participation and agency. Evidence for group functioning, without a doubt, varies from community to community. In general, there seems to be more desirable group functioning in SDE than in STI. Such good functioning is partly due to the way in which block assemblies are conducted. With equal representation in SDE, it is easier for groups of delegates of neighboring communities to make strategic alliances, deliberate, and negotiate votes prior to the block assembly. But, in STI, the process does not provide the right incentives for fostering mutual respect and concern, because voting alliances give no guarantees if adequate numbers of group members do not attend the block assembly. A group can invest time and energy in deliberations and negotiations prior to the block

¹⁴⁴ An important breakthrough in institutionalizing the binding character of deliberative decisions occurs when the binding character of a representative deliberative body's decision is contingent on the decisions being ratified through a democratic referendum. See Mark E. Warren and Hilary Pearse, eds., *Designing Deliberative Democracy: The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly*, 2008.

assembly and as a result come up with a voting strategy that both groups mutually support. However, if one of the groups fails to bring community residents / group members in sufficient numbers to the block assembly, then a majority of votes may be impossible to secure. In STI, conducting open assemblies—rather than assemblies in which each group is equally represented—is what tends to decrease the success of alliances and collective action. In SDE, the strategizing of votes can be planned with better statistical prospects, since communities know that there are a fixed number of competing votes that they can expect, which they can factor in when negotiating amongst each other.

The best examples of successful group functioning that I observed correspond to the SDE assemblies J and P. In these assemblies communities effectively formed alliances for the achievement of their goals. Satisfaction was evident: members from different communities shared laughs, hugs and handshakes after the assemblies ended (as opposed to the yelling of phrases of frustration and disappointment that I saw in less successful cases). Assemblies J and P evidenced the existence of what Crocker (2012), following Josiah Ober, calls “inclusive social networks,” where knowledge is aggregated, shared and codified by collaboration among various groups—in contrast to situations where groups are always at odds with each other or where elite guardians take charge. In these cases groups and alliances of groups attended the assemblies with more or less shared visions and strategies, which had been defined prior to the assembly. The PB meeting, for them, was nothing more than an exercise for making official the agreements they had already worked on collaboratively (and that were part of a long-term reciprocal relationship among allied groups). A typical sentiment was: “this year we support community *a*, next year we will support community *b*, and we will expect their support in turn.” These observations

echo Abers (1998) finding that PB fosters an increase in associational activities. The evidence also shows that where a sort of prior *cooperative group functioning* exists, participation in PB (and the experience that results from it) may increase *cooperative group functioning* in the future, as groups see the benefits of cooperation.

Not all group relationships, however, were so positive. Some communities ended up feeling betrayed, deceived, and disillusioned after their block assemblies because other communities promised support and failed to deliver the votes. For instance, in the same assembly P, *Viñas del Mar* voted only for itself as retribution for what it considered another group's dishonest negotiations in the previous year. The delegates from *Viñas del Mar* chose not to use its three extra votes to support another community, in spite of knowing that doing so would result in its receiving no support from others and, hence, certainly losing. Perhaps, their self-defeating action could be viewed as a protest deigned to restore integrity to the process. One must wonder, however, whether the rest of the community they represent would not have scorned this irrational and anti-democratic act.

STI seems to have had even worse intra-community and inter-communal divisions and conflicts. According to Gregoria Díaz, communities in STI are not clear regarding the needs of neighboring communities, nor of the needs that they share with other communities. Instead, in STI, inter-community relations seem to be contentious rather than collaborative. It seems clear, however, that in order to achieve successful joint action among neighboring groups, dissension needs to be overcome at the neighborhood council level. Díaz posits that at least in her community, some of those who do not get their way in the community assemblies prior to the official block assemblies often choose to not go to the block assemblies to support their communities. As a consequence, this reduces the

community's numerical participation and, hence, hurts the community's chances of winning through majority vote. Díaz claims that this is what happened to her group during the assemblies of the 2013 PB.

Explaining and, perhaps, attempting to justify the absence of *prior cooperative group functioning*, Radhamés Gómez claimed that the likely reason why CSOs and neighborhood councils do not tend to create strategic alliances¹⁴⁵ among themselves is due to the co-existence of two very different sorts of community members. On the one hand, are those community leaders whose real interests are less those of the community and more linked to political parties as vehicles for their own political ambitions. On the other hand, there is another group of individuals who work with members of other groups to choose leaders dedicated to the common good. These persons are chosen for their admirable personal qualities and their willingness to work voluntarily without a monetary incentive or partisan political agenda. Given the differences in motivation and commitments between these two kinds of citizens, Gómez seems correct in recognizing that sometimes there are—perhaps, insurmountable—barriers to cooperation.

Consider some additional evidence from STI that *intra- and intergroup cooperative functioning* is weak if not altogether absent. Two PB attendees from the community *Respaldo Manhattan* reported that the president of their neighborhood council was on a trip on the date of the PB meeting and neglected—out of a lack of concern—to convey to his fellow group members that to win they needed to attend the assembly in large numbers so as to enhance their chance of winning a majority vote. This negative judgment coincides

¹⁴⁵ Gómez went further and suggested that STI communities have not yet begun to think about making alliances, let alone more robust kinds of inter-communal collaboration evident in SDE.

with that of Alfredo Matías¹⁴⁶ from *Fundación Solidaridad* who believes that STI's neighborhood councils are, for the most part, inoperative due to leaders who lack the willingness to inform their fellow group members about the assemblies.

How should we assess this evidence with respect to whether PB presupposes or is a likely factor in bringing about collaborative and reciprocal group functioning? Participation in PB brings to light the status of social relationships at the community level at the time of the assemblies, and its intra- and inter-group implications. As a "school of democracy," participation in a PB is likely to lead to *increased cooperative group functioning* but only where some initial positive relationships already exist. This result may happen because members of community groups gradually become more experienced and able to create a *modus operandi* that helps them to better achieve their collective goals. This also implies that the better the groups function cooperatively, the more likely it is that their members can become better agents (or more effective agents) because the change in the world that can be brought about with PB are attained not solely with individual action but also with collective action. The opposite scenario is that PB and other innovations in democratic deliberation are likely to fail when individuals hate each other, seek revenge for past crimes, or are so diverse that they cannot forge common values.

Furthermore, and perhaps more interestingly, is the fact that PB (as structured in the DR) appears to foster inter-group cooperation. Namely, someone may participate in PB and exercise agency but also be seeking the well-being of others, rather than merely her own. For the block process involves supporting a project that does not affect her community directly but benefits another group. Based on the observations of the dynamics

¹⁴⁶ Interview on 10/24/2012.

during the negotiations, as well as on the opinions expressed in the interviews, I argue, however, that even a participant who supports a different project than her own might very well also be seeking more well-being for herself and her group. This altruistic goal need not be just in terms of the directly intended consequences brought about by the PB project, but may also occur because a foreseen—if not intended by-product—is the betterment of wider social relationships and community networks. The other side of the coin is that even when *prior cooperative group functioning* exists, if the PB participation lacks collaboration and cooperation fails and self-interest and distrust prevail, the principles of reciprocity, publicity and accountability are inoperative and enhanced group cooperation is not likely to be attained. PB can then result in acrimony and egoism rather than solidarity.

In order to better understand deliberative failures as well as successes, future research (which I lay out in Chapter 6) should focus on analyzing to what extent, if any, deliberative success benefits from prior intra-group cooperation and how that might be brought about.

After having assessed all possible conditions, a more general point is pertinent: there may well be other features and enabling conditions of a PB arrangement and process—punctuality, location, duration, facilitator’s leadership skills—which may contribute to the realization of PB’s normative goals. Research on these and other organizational aspects is reserved for future work but are adumbrated in Annex 10.

The current chapter helped to answer the question of whether PB in fact does (or is likely to) have the good consequences that its defenders claim it does (i.e., does it deliver the goods it claims to deliver?) and what are some of the conditions that might enable those normative results. I found that there are a number of conditions that are likely to play a role

in enabling PB to result in more agency, more and better democracy, more group cooperative functioning, and more and better development. Specifically, I conclude that *fairness, inclusiveness, capacity for and actuality of effective change, deliberative democracy, and prior (and concurrent) cooperative group functioning* are likely enabling conditions that explain why some assemblies are more successful than others in achieving PB's theorized good consequences. Nonetheless, this list of conditions should not be thought to be either sufficient or necessary for the normative consequences. On the one hand, there may be other enabling conditions in the PB process that we have not yet uncovered. On the other hand, non-PB modes of civic engagement may be additional and even better ways to promote agency and well-being for all.

Finally, it is pertinent to point out that results of this examination with respect to two PBs in DR cannot be generalized uncritically to other PBs in DR, let alone in other parts of the world. Indeed, I have discovered that the two PB processes analyzed differ among themselves and from PB in other countries. However, as Baiocchi et al. (2010) argue about differences among the four Brazilian PB processes that they study, this heterogeneity may be a strength, for it may attest to human creativity and agency as people freely adapt a general idea to unique contexts, make mistakes, and learn how to do better. Regardless of DR's very unique approach to PB, after further assessment, lessons learned might be applied to similar participatory institutions in other countries, especially in regards to aspects that may be common to both processes.

Chapter 6. Conclusions, Policy Recommendations and Future Research

Participatory budgeting is a process designed to drive beneficial change through the input of ordinary citizens and the selection of a well-being- and agency-enhancing projects. Ideally this innovative democratic process realizes its aim and thereby achieves authentic development. Included in these likely and normatively desirable outcomes are valuable subjective states and objective outcomes. Citizens who participate in PB feel like agents, community groups function more cooperatively, and the community exhibits more and better democracy.

In Chapter 3 I argued and found support for the claim that participants in PB report higher levels of individual and collective agency vis-à-vis non-participants. More surprisingly, I also found that non-participants who were aware of the PB assemblies of their respective communities, reported higher levels of collective agency than those who were not aware of the meetings. My methodology was to use survey data pertaining to four municipalities in the Dominican Republic (SDE and STI as the PB cities, and SDO and LVG as the non-PB cities) and apply diverse forms of regression analysis.

Trying to move from correlations of PB and desirable outcomes to an analysis of the enabling conditions that may be leading to such results, in Chapter 4 I argued that participation in PB is likely to translate into a number of good outcomes, as long as certain conditions and circumstances prevailed in the process. These conditions include *fairness*, *inclusiveness*, *capacity for* and *actuality of effective change*, *deliberation*, and *prior cooperative group functioning*. Using process tracing analysis for the PB cases of SDE and STI, I found that, in general, PB more or less increases democratic deliberation and other forms of participation but due to certain democratic deficits, PB has a mixed record with

respect to improvements in the other desired outcomes. Given case-by-case variation across assemblies regarding the presence and character of the putative conditions that would enable such valuable outcomes to be realized and until further evaluation is made about their comparability to other cases, these conclusions should not be generalized for all PB processes beyond the municipalities of SDE and STI. To address these democratic deficits and make the PB cases studied more relevant for other contexts, I make several policy recommendations, including citizen action to both incentivize informal citizen deliberation and improve the formality and democratic dimensions of PB procedures. The ultimate goal, of course, is PB assemblies that generate—or do so more fully—the desired outcomes.

The rest of this chapter is organized as follows: Section 6.1 presents a final summary of the PB “diagnostic,” the probabilistic tracing of causal mechanism that result in our normatively assumed outcomes; Section 6.2 covers the policy recommendations; and Section 6.3 identifies some fruitful topics for future research.

6.1 Final Normative Assessments

In order to summarize further this study’s findings, circle back to this essay’s normative framework, and provide a final assessment of PB in the DR, I evaluate the evidence through the lenses of Crocker’s four normative principles of an agency-oriented version of the capability approach:

Does PB enable individual and communal agency?

PB enables communal agency for the participants who—after reasoned thought and action—win PB projects in an honest and non-coerced manner facilitated by the conditions discussed above, namely, *fairness, inclusiveness, capacity and actuality of effective change, prior cooperative group functioning and deliberative democracy.*

The PB assemblies enable a type of agency-freedom that can be understood as non-domination, since not only authorities are responsible for the decision-making, but ordinary citizens can choose to participate and have the freedom to be agents. We have also seen, however, that non-democratic leadership and local elites can in fact more or less violate this idea of agency equality (more on equality later on).

Chapter 3 showed that not only PB participants feel like agents but so do many individuals who do not participate and yet are informed of a PB. This evidence implies that these informed non-participants are aware of their agency freedom even though they do not exercise it with the result of agency achievement. That is, agency freedom contributes to being empowered. Even if a person chooses not to vote in a democracy, having the freedom to vote is a part of being empowered (even if the person is unaware of what day the election will be held). In an authoritarian system, people have neither agency freedom or agency achievement with respect to voting (and other modes of participation), except in the potential sense of the freedom (sometimes) to bring about a system change.

What about those communities that participate yet do not win projects? Participants know of this possibility, of course, before they decide to attend the assemblies. Just as not winning a baseball game does not empty the players of individual and group agency, so not winning a project does not drain all agency from losing participants. Rather, I believe,

trying to secure a project through participation in the assemblies has agency value in itself. Although the losing participant may not be able to reach the intended goal for the community (or the community with which a strategic alliance has been made), she will be (and might feel like) an agent for having cooperated in deciding on the values, goals, and means as well as in making efforts to achieve those goals. Among the agency “lessons” from this “school for democracy” is that a future PB might very well be more successful or that processes other than PB may be more effective in achieving the community’s goals. Among the strategies might be citizen pressure on a current government or electing a more responsive and effective one.

And what about those who live in non-PB municipalities? The agency freedom of residents in non-PB municipalities is restricted due to the absence of PB and its process of deliberation as a decision-making tool and as a stepping-stone to influencing outcomes of their interest. There seems to be other means of exercising agency freedom and reaching agency achievement (which need to be studied further), but they are not as structured as an official PB. Yet, it may be that a non-PB community hears of PB and increase citizen agency in other communities and realizes that it may have agency freedom to establish its own version of this democratic process.

Does PB provide real opportunities (capabilities) for well-being?

In Chapter 3, I compared the PB cities of SDE and STI to the non-PB cities of SDO and LVG. With PB, the residents of SDE and STI acquire a capability (a real opportunity) that the residents of SDO and LVG do not have that enables the former citizens to achieve what they value within an urban planning context, and to gain decision-making power. If

participants in SDE and STI are successful in bringing about desired change, then they realize a dimension of well-being. These achievements are well-being enhancements: less garbage, better sanitation; local health clinics, better health; better roads, improved mobility; better trained police, improved human security. Given the chance, citizens are apt to choose projects that improve their beings and doings.

However, the PB decision-making process can be a closed and exclusive meeting with only a few participants. Hence it might be an opportunity for agency achievement of only a few people (and a target for elite capture). One must be careful not to conclude that the mere practice of PB in SDE and STI promotes agency and well-being achievement or empowers all inhabitants. My evidence shows that participation in a PB—let alone non-participation—does not necessarily translate into the power of individuals or even of the whole community fully to shape their own lives or feel they are doing so. Such failures occur because either a community loses out in the block vote or a winning community's project fails to be executed by the local government. Since these obstacles to full realization have not been overcome, as a result, well-being achievement is enhanced partially, if at all. Hence, Crocker notion of agency is partially realized but greater empowerment does not occur because the “goods” (well-being achievement) are not delivered. Even when the means are available, as I showed in the previous chapter, barriers may block the full democratic quality of the process. The unfortunate possibility is that only partial agency and partial well-being achievement will result in long-term disempowerment. PB is promising and often helpful in improving citizen agency and well-being; but this is no silver bullet.

Also noteworthy is that participants in a PB might become dissatisfied with the

experience and exit from the process. Why might they do so? They might feel that they were not being treated as free and equal members. They might be dissatisfied that their group's project was not a winner. They might be dissatisfied that the government failed to implement the project. They might be dissatisfied because the project was done incompletely, poorly, wastefully, or with corruption. In all these cases, dissatisfaction may lower well-being.

Exiting from a PB, for whatever reason, indicates a failure of PB to promote agency. It should not, however, be taken as a criticism of the ideal of agency, for to exit a PB is an exercise of individual agency, a free society should not coerce its citizens to participate, and numerous exits of PB participants may spur the PB to be more democratic or more effective, for example, by giving more voice to the dissatisfied.¹⁴⁷

Does PB promote equality (as a threshold for agency achievement and well-being achievement)?

In what sense, if at all, does PB promote equality? In principle, all members of the community are viewed and view themselves as free and equal citizens. This does not mean that they are equal economically or in political power; but it does mean that they have the equal freedom to participate in the PB process and in proposing, assessing, arguing, compromising, deciding, and implementing. However, it must be noted that even in PB cities, some individuals may have more well-being freedom than others. This inequality in political power has many causes, including economic ones, but one explanation is that

¹⁴⁷ For the classic statement of the values and disvalues of exit and voice, see Albert Hirschman's *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Organizations, Firms, and States*, 1970.

some citizens are already involved in community matters and may be more aware of the PB option. Although some of the hitherto unaware individuals, upon hearing about PB, may still self-select out of participation, more awareness could reduce citizen inequality to be able to effect change.

Equality also shows up differently in SDE and STI due to the structure of block assemblies. SDE promotes equality among competing communities, since they are all represented by an equal number of delegates. However, SDE fails to promote equality when chances of winning a project vary by the number of communities convened in each block assembly. Recall that some block assemblies might have, say, 18 communities participating, whereas another might have 30, and in both cases only five projects are selected. In STI the open-ended structure of the block assemblies promotes equality in the sense that anybody, regardless of their position and status in the community, can be a part of the decision-making process. But at the same time, this same open-ended feature reduces equality because host communities have an uneven advantage to secure more votes due to how easy and convenient it is for their community members to show up at the assembly site. Thus, the result of our PBs, once again, is mixed.

Does PB advance democracy?

The existence of PB, when politically operational rather than merely a matter of rhetoric or propaganda, both exemplifies democracy and promotes other venues or forms of democracy. PB makes local governance more democratic in that rule by the people becomes more inclusive, treats more questions, is deeper, more balanced, and more progressively impactful than governance by one or more “guardians.” The kind of

democratic activities in which participants engage occur in a broad spectrum that extends from mere consultation or “input” to deep deliberation. And when PB fails, there is evidence that active citizens turn to other means to realize their goals. Regardless of its success in changing the world in the ways its citizens desire, the PB process still has intrinsic value that merits support. PB’s deficiencies call not for less democracy and more elite guardianship, but for more and improved democracy. Ways must be found to have better direct and representative self-government in the presence of a limited amount of resources as well as asymmetries of economic and social power. The more that PB is done, the more that citizens practice democracy and get a chance to choose what they most need and want, hopefully also achieving the goals of equality and just distribution.

With respect to social and economic development, with a PB in place, it is citizens themselves who are protagonists of authentic development, rather than mere recipients of the actions of others or the mere effects of impersonal forces. Instead of a small group of men and women controlling the local government apparatus, ordinary citizens start existing politically and become capable of influencing the management of public affairs.

In sum, the social creativity and innovation found in DR’s PB make it unique because, among other things, of its system of competitive deliberation. The kind of deliberation normally characteristic of PBs and other democratic forums features competition among proposals, but in the DR groups (of individuals or delegates) competitively propose their projects, rank them, and deliberate (mostly informally) and vote (formally) about which should the block accept. There are a few winners and many losers. Although PB in the DR still has its dangers and is in need of substantial improvement, I remain optimistic about the potential of this different alternative.

6.2 Policy Recommendations

Given the mixed results of PB presented earlier, I suggest that we build on PB's achievements and propose ways in which its deficits can be reduced.¹⁴⁸ We should give PB a chance for self-improvement because while the most successful PB cases in the literature have been doing PB for over two decades, the DR has only been officially conducting PB since 2007. It takes time for a society's government to learn how to facilitate a PB adequately and for its civil society to learn how to participate democratically and effectively.

McNulty (2012) explains that there are only a few countries' national governments—including Peru, Bolivia, and the DR—that have mandated a PB process to take place annually in the local governments. If such top-down ruling is understood as a genuine concern on the part of the government to support and advance the process, then I here suggest a number of specific tasks that policy-makers, who value the PB process, should focus on. To avoid excessive emphasis on recommendations for top down action, may recommendations include recommendations for bottom-up action and joint bottom up-top down efforts.

- a) Improve the structure of the PB assemblies to make them more inclusive and

¹⁴⁸ Solutions to PB issues might involve some important trade-offs. For example, expanding Crocker's breadth dimension by involving more individuals and groups in PB may decrease the depth of democracy that each one of these individuals or groups can exercise. For example, given a fixed time allocated to assemblies, the larger the group the smaller the proportion of individuals or groups that are able to make individual contributions to a deliberation. How should these trade-offs be decided and who should decide? Although scholars and social critics can and should weigh in, the final decision on such trade-offs should be made democratically (or so I would argue).

representative. Doing so would reduce the risk that vulnerable and marginalized groups will be neglected and underserved in relative terms, as a result of their diminished chances of securing a PB project. Moreover, to ensure that the selection of representatives does not undermine inclusiveness, efforts from involved civil society members should be made to assure that communal PB participants have opportunities for ongoing interaction with their delegates and follow-up committees.

b) Ensure that community leader/authority facilitate deliberation and refrain from manipulation and compulsion. Leaders should facilitate citizen deliberation and decision-making rather than, as Przeworski (2010) argues, merely preventing people from doing some things they want to do and forcing them to do things they do not want to do. Positive freedom is as important as negative freedom. All citizens and not just leaders—always tempted to abuse their power—should safeguard orderly democratic processes. If this is done, the principle of communal *self-determination* (from the evaluation criteria introduced in Chapter 2) is more likely to hold. Where leader manipulation occurs, agency is restricted. It might be the case that these participants will benefit from a project they believe they need, but benevolent action from above robs them of agency freedom they could have enjoyed had they participated in the assemblies without pressures from the top. The solution, then, partially depends not only on active citizens, but also on government facilitators guiding the assemblies in a way that maximizes inclusive and deep participation.

Given the evidence of coerced participation and manipulated voting, a simple step that can be taken is always open up “give and take” deliberations during the assemblies, so that the real voices can be heard, and all views publicly presented. While a manipulative

leader may exert pressures on people to remain quiet or get on his bandwagon, opening up genuine deliberations may bring to light repressed social divisions and unpopular ideas. With the right sort of democratic leadership and facilitation, assemblies can be more integral to the reality of the communities, rather than the reflection of an ambitious leader's perspectives. They also can deter domination by governmental officials or powerful citizens.

Implementing this policy recommendation would help make important—if not binding—the principle of *reason orientation and deliberation*. Such a principle and one's participation in a PB seems to be motivated by certain beliefs, such as what Sen (2014) calls “social deliberation, in an atmosphere of mutual respect” (p.19); moral commitments, such as one's obligations and rights as a good citizen and neighbor; and enlightened self-interest, which understands that PB promotes both personal well-being and communal cooperation. However, we have also seen times in which the PB process has been abused; leaders or elites dominate citizen choice and reduce citizen agency. Implementing the present recommendation would reduce this danger.

c) Make it binding for government to implement assembly decisions. Participants in PB deliberate, decide, and take direct *action* with the objective to *alter their world*. However, if the government ignores the results of PB, temporizes, fails to deliver, or delivers in a partial or unacceptable way, then citizen agency is truncated and individual and communal well-being is less likely.¹⁴⁹ According to the law, the local government

¹⁴⁹ In reference to the Brazilian experience with PB, Wampler (2007) finds that “PB programs flourish when citizens discover that the specific that the specific decisions they make in regional meetings will be implemented. The message is clear: when the government values participants' time and energy by implementing specific projects participation rates will increase and public debates will flourish” (p. 63).

authorities are accountable for the execution of PB projects, but citizens have no real channels to apply pressure or hold authorities accountable. No legal sanctions for non-compliance have been effective so far. That PB decisions are non-binding suggests that policy-makers do not care about the whole causal chain of the process. The fact that PB meetings are scheduled is due, at least to some extent, to governmental actions; but, when projects are not executed, participants' decisions and actions come to naught. If assembly decisions were legally binding on governments for execution, the citizen agency would be more fully exercised and the world would be progressively altered. Governmental respect for the third stage of the PB process would guarantee participants' agency achievement. A partial solution, in this regard, would be to increase the length of the PB cycle to 18 or 24 months, so that governments have more time to prepare for and comply with a project's timetable. Finally, and in the interest of enhancing local governance and making the municipal government more responsive, participant communities and civil society in general should seek more actively to exercise their right to demand accountability of their local public officials (i.e., more social accountability through enhanced space and opportunity for civil society to engage the government beyond the assemblies).

d) Transform social visions. PB can and should serve as a platform for communities to articulate a block- or city-wide vision of social responsibility and strengthen positive social networks, rather than acquiesce to conflicting communities solely seeking unfair advantage over each other. This degree of integration from participant communities is likely to come about more organically once the PB system is restructured to make collective action more attractive (SDE is more advanced in this goal than STI, where cooperation and solidarity among groups was less apparent). To improve democratic

quality, STI should change their PB structure so that block assemblies are only attended by an equal number of representatives from each group, which, besides the obvious advantage of ensuring equal community representation, would facilitate symmetrical negotiations among them. Although some may argue that representation should be proportional to the population of each community or group, as things stand now, this would be difficult to arrange. The problem is that within one geographical space, there might be several groups registered at the municipal government (all eligible to participate). In order to factor in such proportional representation, a block or city-wide restructuring of the system would be necessary. I would support such restructuring in the future, so as to avoid over-representation, and arrive at an even more balanced system of representation at the block-level.

Furthermore, the local governments while planning each PB cycle, could take steps that help mitigate current tensions: (a) forbid the presence of outsiders, especially when they are in positions of power that place their groups in an unfair advantage; (b) regularly and fairly rotate the assembly sites, so as to impartially distribute the benefits of hosting (this is especially pertinent to STI and its open block assemblies); and (c) ban—at least temporarily—from the PB process those groups who intentionally and clearly abuse community cooperation agreements.

e) Transform the model of PB assemblies so that deliberation has even greater scope and importance. Majority voting, while important, should only be something done for closure, accountability, and transparency purposes. As a closure device, voting and majority rule can be importantly democratic. But pre and post-voting deliberation, founded on a cooperative and rational discourse, should be the main means for the transformation

of preferences and the achievement of a common view with which most can concur. Based on normative grounds set out in Chapter 2, carrying out this recommendation would be valuable in many ways, among which are the following: bringing more legitimacy to the political system, widening knowledge, acquiring reasoning skills, tolerating different views, promoting the common good, endorsing human dignity thanks to the expression of individual and collective agency across groups of people, and reducing initial diversity to a agreement with which at least a majority can concur.¹⁵⁰

f) Revise the PB menus. Given that PB menus excessively restrict community options, local governments and citizen groups, should jointly revise them—through inclusive deliberation. Debate among both the citizenship and the government, in this regard, will deepen democracy in a meaningful way. Specifically, such revision of the PB menus would expand real opportunities for well-being (capabilities) as well as for agency freedom. Excluded from current menus are projects that people may care about and might wish to execute through a PB, such as a community pool, or a health clinic. I suggest that communities should be involved not only in the revision of the menu, but also in the decision of dates, locations, distribution of assemblies, review of the rulings, and so forth. Furthermore, with opening up the discussion of the expansion of the menu to the assemblies, the citizenry, with deliberation, has an opportunity to deal with the root causes of the problems, rather than with mere cosmetic solutions.

g) Improve system design. There are many other practical and simple steps that can and should be taken for the improvement of the PB system: (a) Based on the potential

¹⁵⁰ Policy-makers should consider conducting citizen and high school workshops to practice and enhance deliberative capacities and virtues, as a possible way of realizing this recommendation.

benefits of the spillover effects found in Chapter 3, efforts should be undertaken to make citizens more aware of the process by, for example, more advertising (so that ordinary citizens have a higher chance of becoming informed about the meetings). Moreover, a better explication of the process before the meetings start (so that all participants are on the same page) could prevent conflicts during the voting stages or during the selection of delegates. (b) Facilitators should follow a standard protocol to ensure that all meetings are conducted under the same conditions. (c) Meetings should start punctually and be held at an appropriate location in order to reduce the risk that people feel frustrated even before the process starts. (d) Gender quotas should be mandatory in the selection of delegates.

With these recommendations and the earlier chapters in mind, I proceed to sketch a list of research tasks that extend the current study and, once performed, will hopefully generate both better data and more specific ways forward with respect to both research and civic engagement.

6.3 The Way Forward

There is a lot to be done as a follow up on the present study. One research activity would be to take further steps with respect to my work in Chapter 3 and examine—more rigorously and in ways that complement Chapters 4 and 5—the likelihood of a *causal* relationship between citizen participation and agency outcomes. To do so, better experimental data is needed. In a more ideal scenario one would have data on the respondent both before self-selecting into PB, and after PB. But, this would imply finding a city that has not yet started doing PB but which will do so in a next cycle.

Furthermore, advancing the works of Graham and Pettinato (2002), an interesting analysis would be to test whether the well-being freedom and achievement as well as the agency freedom and achievement that arguably comes through PB, and its outcomes, contribute to overall life satisfaction. To what extent would enhanced life satisfaction as a result of PB participation be an additional reason for valuing such participation?

Another researchable question has to do with the spillover effect of PB awareness. In light of the empirical evidence found of such an indirect effect, it would be interesting to explore in depth, through interviews, if non-participants in other PB cities confirm or disconfirm what we have found, namely, that people claim that their own agency goals have been realized or their own sense of agency has been enhanced even though others have been responsible for the achievements in question. Even though passionate baseball fans may have nothing directly to do with their team's achievement on the field, the fans' agency (and sense of it) may be enhanced by the agency that others exercise. Once talking to non-participants, it also will be interesting to investigate in more depth the reasons why aware residents of PB cities choose not to participate.

Likewise, it will be interesting to look at the significance of PB awareness in non-PB cities. Particularly, future work should evaluate the implications for a resident of a non-PB city who has heard about PB implemented in other cities. Questions of interest are: (a) Does knowledge of other PBs increase agency (at least agency freedom, if not agency achievement) because of a belief "that I can do what others can do"? Or (b) does such knowledge decrease agency because of frustration and passivity when one realizes that PB is unlikely in one's city? (c) Do people in non-PB cities just feel intrinsically different from

residents of other cities due, for example, to the fact that they have experience benevolent or repressive local government?

There are also other aspects of what goes on in non-PB cities that need further examination and assessment. One is learning more about the informal ways in which non-PB cities and residents might be exercising agency. Recall that survey data in Chapter 3 suggests high civic engagement in at least one non-PB city as well as the two PB cities. Given the lack of a formal participatory system with scheduled and advertised meetings in non-PB municipalities, an ethnographic-style research would be appropriate.

Yet another way would be to investigate whether citizens in non-PB cities exhibit “adaptive preferences” in the sense that they have reduced their aspirations for social change because they have little hope of success. Are the subjective measures providing reliable estimates with respect to these normative assessments? Or is habituation implicit in peoples’ reported scores? For example, have people adapted their preferences to accept a local government of guardians? If so, should we cavalierly disregard self-evaluations on the grounds that such reports just reflect the habituation effects of not having PB or any other official participatory process that involves the residents and the government? Should we uncritically accept these perceptions, whether or not they are “adapted” as part of the person’s identity? Or is there a third way in which some adaptive preferences can be challenged without demeaning the person who has them? Investigating these questions would not only help to understand further the normative aspects of PB, but also potentially

contribute to the literature (presented in Chapter 3) of subjective agency measures and adaptive preferences.¹⁵¹

We have shown that DR's PB has had some democratic deficits and that the outcomes have not always resulted in more adequate well-being or full agency. But the democratic faith is such that the solution to shortcomings in democratic process or results is not less democracy but, rather, more and better democracy along one or more of its dimensions. With this commitment in mind, and following the recommendations above, a next step would be to examine in more detail ways in which PB's democratic deficits (in procedure or results) could be repaired and whether those repairs can and should always be democratic.

One particular task is to evaluate whether PB's vulnerability to corruption can be reduced democratically and, more generally, whether broader and deeper democracy can and should play a role in combatting various types of corruption.¹⁵²

It would be interesting to analyze further the deliberation that goes on informally inside groups prior to the formal assemblies and its relation to formal deliberation. Specifically, is this informal session sufficiently inclusive and deliberative? Are potential dissenters excluded? Do those opposed to the emerging consensus merely go along or do they have a chance to challenge the group? Under what conditions could the informal pre-group meeting either contribute to or diminish the formal meeting's overall democratic quality? Similarly, under what circumstances and why should the publicity criterion for

¹⁵¹ Consulting Serene Khader's *Adaptive Preferences and Women's Empowerment*, 2011, will be particularly useful when taking on such a task.

¹⁵² Consulting Michael Johnston's *Corruption, Contention, and Reform: The Power of Deep Democratization*, 2013, will be particularly useful when taking on such a task.

deliberation be relaxed in either informal or formal deliberation? Would closed deliberations bring about less transparency and, if so, how bad would that be? Are there ways in which public deliberations can and should put limits on transparency? How does cooperative functionality among groups vary depending on the kind of deliberation practiced in their interactions?

In order to better understand deliberative failures as well as successes within PB, it would be interesting to evaluate to what extent, if any, deliberative success benefits from prior intra-group cooperation and how that might be brought about. For example, what role might different sorts of leaders play? What role might group deliberation play with respect to the group's basic goals (rather than addressing concrete problems)? What are the main differences in outcomes based on differences in patterns of group relationships (e.g., strategic negotiation vs. cooperative deliberations)?

It also will be important to return to our DR municipalities and observe PB during one entire cycle and beyond. Recall that this study focused exclusively on analyzing whether participating individuals and communities or groups had the freedom or capability to make certain decisions and actually selected certain projects. Such actions, and our observations of them, relate only to the second stage of PB (public consultations). Future research should investigate the first and third stages of PB. During the planning and origination (first) stage, there is a knowledge gap to be filled, namely, understanding and evaluating of the way the idea of an planning for a PB evolved. (Here Baiocchi et al. (2010) have done good work for the Brazilian case). Important questions include the following: (a) How are resources allocated for PB? (b) How are resources divided among blocks? (c) How are communities assigned to blocks? (d) What is the logistical process for the

selection of locations and times for the assemblies? (e) Who does and should answer these questions and what methods should they use? And (f) Should citizens be involved and, if so, how?

In regards to stage three, in the future it will be of the utmost importance to assess whether the government has executed the selected projects (which translates into more extensive impact in the world and enhanced well-being through tangible improvements in people's lives). This will be an important task since to my knowledge no empirical studies have been made to study people's perceptions of increased well-being once a PB's decisions have been executed.¹⁵³ While performing this task, Drydyk's briefly aforementioned vision of empowerment will be of relevance for it includes well-being achievements. Other questions of research interest related to stage three of PB would be: (a) What role, if any, might citizen groups play in ensuring, monitoring, and assessing implementation of projects? And (b) What role might citizens play in bringing about a change of government such that PB process and results are normatively better and more successful? Progressive changes depend on top-down, bottom-up, and joint governmental-grassroots action.

Finally, and with hopes of developing a more comprehensive research concerning the Dominican case, an important future research project involves an historical narrative and political economy of the DR, its government, municipalities, and civil society, as well

¹⁵³ Having conducted an empirical study of PB and well-being, Boulding and Wampler (2010) find, for the Brazilian case, that the presence of PB is not significantly associated with increased well-being, except for lower poverty rates. But again, my objective in future research would be to add value to this literature taking the relationship between participation and well-being forward by looking not at aggregate-level social indicators of well-being and comparing them across PB and non-PB municipalities, but continue looking at individual perceptions of well-being enhancement (or lack thereof) as a result of direct or indirect involvement in PB.

as their interaction and relevance for local governance. Such historical and systematic investigation, among other things, should examine: (a) How PB has evolved over the last decade? (b) Who have been key political and non-political actors in promoting (or restricting PB)? And (c) what have been their actions, successes, and failures?

While we wait for answers to these and many more research questions, I believe I have given reason to believe that governments—at least in certain contexts—can and should promote PB and other forms of direct democracy. Although the challenges of doing PB right are many, the initial DR successes, added to longer-term PB successes in other countries, and other democratic innovations, show that if enough time and effort is given the benefits can be many. Among these benefits are those analyzed from the perspective of interest for this study—the enhanced well-being and agency of citizens and their communities.

Annexes

Annex 1. Definitions of Crocker’s Modes of Participation

Definitions are based on Crocker (2009), and organized from the weakest to the strongest mode of participation. Relative strength is related to degree of agency exercised.

1) *Nominal Participation*: This mode refers to: a) an individual who is a member of a group or organization but does not participate in the decision-making meetings, or b) an individual who is not a member of a group or organization and is unable to attend the meeting.

2) *Passive Participation*: This mode refers to an individual or group of individuals (non-elite) who attends the decision-making meeting but does nothing else than listening, reporting about the decisions that the elite makes, and making comments or questions (if at all).

3) *Consultative Participation*: This mode refers to an individual or group of individuals (also non-elite) who is permitted to provide input to the decision-making but who does not make decisions.

4) *Petitionary Participation*: This mode refers to an individual or group of individuals (also non-elite) who petition authorities to provide a solution to a particular problem; the elite/authorities have the responsibility to hear them and consider their petition but have no obligation to grant the petition.

5) *Participatory Implementation*: This mode refers to a situation in which non-elites establishes the goals and means to achieve such goals, and the non-elites individuals implement the goals and may decide the tactics used to achieve them.

6) *Bargaining*: This mode refers to non-elites bargaining with elites when both are motivated by self-interest and the result is affected by the power imbalances between them.

7) *Deliberative Participation*: This mode refers to individuals or groups of individuals (non-elites) who cooperatively deliberate with each other (or with elites), making proposals and offering reasons in order to made a decision that most can accept.

“The further we go down the list, the “thicker” is the participatory mode in the sense of more fully expressing individual or collective agency” (Crocker, 2009, p. 344).

Annex 2. Santiago’s PB Positive/Negative Menu for the 2013 Participatory Budget

Type of Project	Yes	No	Repair	Construction	Expansion	Buying
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						Equipment
Public School	√		√			
Electrification		√				
Latrine	√		√	√		
Sanitation of <i>cañadas</i>	√		√			
Library	√		√	√		√
Community Center	√		√	√		√
Public High School		√				
Clinics		√				
Dispensary		√				
Hospital		√				
Pavement Maintenance	√		√	√		
Sport Court	√		√	√		√
Baseball Field	√		√	√		√
Municipal Park	√		√	√		√
Playground	√		√	√		√
Bridge for Vehicles	√		√	√		
Bridge for Pedestrian	√		√	√		
Sewer	√		√	√		
Gutter	√		√	√		
Cemetery	√		√	√		√
Street Signs	√		√	√		
Housing		√				
Aqueduct		√				
Well		√				
Fire Station	√		√	√		√
Sidewalk and Curb	√		√	√		
Local Road	√		√	√		
Irrigation Canal		√				
Market	√		√	√		√
Highway		√				
Police Station		√				
Cockfighting Arena		√				
Club	√		√	√		√
Church		√				
Productive Infrastructure	√		√	√		√
Civil Defense		√				
Red Cross		√				
Jail		√				
Solar Panel		√				
Political Party Branch		√				

Annex 3a. Questionnaire for PB cities

1.1 Imagine the best possible life. Think of a ladder with 10 steps: step 1 symbolizes the

worst possible life, and step 10 the best possible life. Where, in this ladder, would you place your life today?

Worst Life 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Best Life

1.2 Think about the freedom you have to make decisions about things that affect your life. Please indicate in a ladder from 1 to 10 how much control you think you have to make decisions. The first step in this ladder means that you have no control to make decisions, and the tenth step means that you have total control.

No Control 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Total Control

1.3 Please think now about your life in this community. Please indicate in this same ladder, how much control do you think the members of this community, in a collective manner, have in the decision-making of things that affect your life as a community. One in this ladder means that the community has no control in making decisions, and ten that it has total control.

No Control 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Total Control

1.4 In general, how would you qualify the current situation of this municipality?

5) excellent 4) good 3) average 2)bad 1) very bad

1.5 Compared to this date last year, would you say that the current general situation of this municipality is:

5) much better 4) somewhat better 3) the same 2) somewhat worse 1)much worse

1.6 In the next 12 months, do you think that the general situation of the municipality will be:

5) much better 4) somewhat better 3) the same 2) somewhat worse 1)much worse

1.7 How would you describe your current economic situation and that of your family?

5) excellent 4) good 3) average 2)bad 1) very bad

1.8 In the next 12 months, do you think that your economic situation and that of your family will be:

5) much better 4) somewhat better 3) the same 2) somewhat worse 1)much worse

1.9 “Imagine a ladder with 10 steps, in which the poorest people are standing in the first step and the richest in the tenth step. Where would you place yourself in this ladder?”

Poorest 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Richest

2.1 How do you feel about the following statements:

3) Agree 2) Partially agree 1) Disagree

a) Democracy is always preferred to any other system of government ____

b) Some individuals or groups are excluded from political activity in this municipality ____

c) This municipality’s local government is responding very well to the basic needs of the communities ____

2.2 Do you think there is freedom of speech in this municipality?

1) Yes 0) No

2.3 How do you perceive the relationship between the local government and your community?

5) excellent 4) good 3) average 2)bad 1) very bad

2.4 Imagine there was a total of 10 public servants in this municipality. Of those 10, how many would you say are corrupt?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3.1 Do you like living in this community?

3) I like it 2) I do not care 1) I do not like it

3.2 Do you belong to or do you participate in a civil society group or organization, whether it is related to politics, culture, sports, religion or any other theme?

1) Yes 0) No

3.3 Imagine that in this municipality live only 10 individuals. Now imagine that you lose your wallet and someone finds it. From these 10 individuals, how many do you think would return it?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3.4. How much participation do you think that women should have in public life compared to men?

4) More participation than men

3) Same participation as men

2) Less participation than men

1) No participation

3.5 How much trust do you have in:

a) The Mayor: 3) a lot of trust 2) some trust 1) no trust

b) The president of your neighborhood council: 3) a lot of trust 2) some trust 1) no trust

c) Your neighbors: 3) a lot of trust 2) some trust 1) no trust

4.1 Generally speaking, in your opinion, what is the most important problem that your community faces? _____

4.2 Do you know how the decisions are made about the way in which the money transferred from the presidency is allocated and spent by the local government?

1) yes 0) no

4.3 Have you ever heard about Participatory Budgeting?

1) yes 0) no *If yes, skip to 4.5*

4.4 Participatory Budgeting is a system that allows ordinary citizens to help decide how the municipality's annual budget is spent. This is currently done in this municipality with

the public assemblies that are carried out during September/October of each year. During these assemblies, citizens have the right to voice their needs and vote for projects that they want to be executed in their communities. Now that you know this, do you think that you really knew of the process but you didn't know that it was called Participatory Budgeting?

1) yes 0) no

4.5 Regardless of whether you knew or not about Participatory Budgeting, do you support the initiative of the local government to consult communities about how to invest a portion of the resources of the municipality?

1) yes 0) no *If yes, skip to 4.61*

4.6 Which of these options justify better your reason not to support Participatory Budgeting?

1) Budgets are too complicated for people like us

2) Our voice would not make a difference

3) I do not trust that the local government is going to execute the projects that the community votes for

4) Other _____

4.61 Did you hear about the assemblies that were done in your community in the month of September (or October) of 2012?

1) yes 0) no *If yes, skip to 4.63*

4.62 If you would have heard, would you have gone?

1) yes 0) no

If yes, skip to 4.7

If no, ask why and write answer here _____

Now skip to 4.7

4.63 Did you participate in your community's assembly?

1) yes 0) no *If yes, skip to 4.65*

4.64 Which of these options justifies better your reason not to have gone to the assembly?

1) You forgot

2) You did not have time

3) You were not interested

4) You trusted that your neighbors could represent your views faithfully and thus it was not necessary for you to be there

5) You participated in a previous year and you ended up disappointed with the process

6) Other _____ *Skip to 4.7*

4.65 Were you selected as a delegate at the end of your community assembly?

1) yes 0) no

4.66 Did your community win a project through Participatory Budgeting this year?

1) yes 0) no

4.67 Did you want to voice your opinions during the assembly?

1) yes 0) no *If no, skip to 4.610*

4.68 Were you given the chance to do so?

1) yes 0) no *If yes, skip to 4.610*

4.69 Why?

3) You did not have much to say

2) You had something to say but were afraid to talk in public

1) Another person said the same thing you were thinking of

4.610 How satisfied are you with:

a) The voting process?

4) very satisfied 3) satisfied 2) not very satisfied 1) not at all satisfied

b) The list of projects allowed?

4) very satisfied 3) satisfied 2) not very satisfied 1) not at all satisfied

c) The way in which the facilitator from the local government led the assembly?

4) very satisfied 3) satisfied 2) not very satisfied 1) not at all satisfied

4.7 Have you participated in another year's assembly, prior to last year?

1) yes 0) no *If no, skip to 4.72*

4.71 Compared to previous years, you would say that last year's assemblies were:

4) better 3) the same 1) worse

4.72 Do you think that all kinds of individuals participate in the assemblies, or only a select group?

1) select group 0) everyone

4.8 Do you think that participatory budgeting brings more transparency to the management of local governmental resources?

1) yes 0) no

4.10 In a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you think you as a citizen are contributing to making a difference in the way that the local government manages and uses its resources? One means that you are making no difference, and five it means that you are making a profound difference.

No difference 1 2 3 4 5 Profound difference

4.11 The collective version reads: Now think about your community. In this same scale, how much do you think that the community collectively is contributing to making a difference in the way the local government manages and uses its resources? One means that the community makes no difference, and five means that the community is making a profound difference.

No difference 1 2 3 4 5 Profound difference

4.12 Have you done anything lately for the betterment of your community, something that you feel proud of?

1) yes 0) no *If no, skip to 5.0*

4.13 What did you do? _____

5.0 Gender (do not ask)

1) Male 0) Female

5.1 Where were you born? (write town, province, country) _____

5.2 For how many years have you and your family lived in this municipality? _____

5.3 For how many years have you and your family lived in this community? _____

5.4 What is your age? (write in the document)

5.5 What is your civil status?

4) married/co-habiting 3) single 2) separated/divorced 1) widowed

5.6 Are you the individual in the house who most contributes to the family income?

1) yes, is the head of household 0) no

5.7 Have you and your family had difficulties paying for food or other basic necessities in the past 12 months?

1) yes 0) no

5.8 Who lives in this house? (write in the document the number and relationship to respondent of adults and children in the house)

If there are no children, skip to 5.10

5.9 Are you able to send all of your children to school?

1) yes 0) no

5.10 What kind of education have you completed to date?

1) None 2) primary school 3) high school 4) technical degree
5) college education or more

5.11 What is your current occupational situation?

1) independent/self-employed
2) salaried, public sector
3) salaried, private sector

- 4) housewife
- 5) student
- 6) unemployed

If respondent answers 6 "unemployed", skip to 5.13

5.12 How worried are you of losing your job in the next 12 months?

- 1) very worried
- 2) worried
- 3) a bit worried
- 4) not worried at all

5.13 In the past six months how would you say your physical health has been?

- 1) very good
- 2) good
- 3) average
- 4) bad
- 5) very bad

5.14 Do you have a leadership position in the community?

- 1) yes
- 0) no

5.15 What is the average monthly income of your household? _____

Describe the house _____

Annex 3b. Questionnaire for non-PB cities (PB section only (4))

4.1 Generally speaking, in your opinion, what is the most important problem that your community faces? _____

4.2 Do you know how the decisions are made about the way in which the money transferred from the presidency is allocated and spent by the local government?

- 1) yes
- 0) no

4.3 Have you ever heard about Participatory Budgeting?

- 1) yes
 - 0) no
- If yes, skip to 4.5*

4.4 Participatory Budgeting is a system that allows ordinary citizens to help decide how the municipality's annual budget is spent. This is currently done in this municipality with the public assemblies that are carried out during September/October of each year. During these assemblies, citizens have the right to voice their needs and vote for projects that they want to be executed in their communities. Now that you know this, do you think that you really knew of the process but you didn't know that it was called Participatory Budgeting?

- 1) yes
- 0) no

4.5 Regardless of whether you knew or not about Participatory Budgeting, do you support the initiative of the local government to consult communities about how to invest a portion of the resources of the municipality?

- 1) yes
 - 0) no
- If yes, skip to 4.61*

4.6 Which of these options justify better your reason not to support Participatory Budgeting?

- 1) Budgets are too complicated for people like us

- 2) Our voice would not make a difference
- 3) I do not trust that the local government is going to execute the projects that the community votes for
- 4) Other _____

4.7 Have you previously participated in a Participatory Budgeting assembly?

- 1) yes
- 0) no

4.8 Do you think that Participatory Budgeting would bring more transparency to the management of the local government resources?

- 1) yes
- 0) no

4.9 If this municipality started doing Participatory Budgeting assemblies, would you participate in the one corresponding to your community? Consider that you would have to invest approximately three hours of your time once or twice a year.

- 1) yes
- 0) no

4.10 In a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you think you as a citizen are contributing to making a difference in the way that the local government manages and uses its resources? One means that you are making no difference, and five it means that you are making a profound difference.

No difference 1 2 3 4 5 Profound difference

4.11 The collective version reads: Now think in your community. In this same scale, how much do you think that the community collectively is contributing to making a difference in the way the local government manages and uses its resources? One means that the community makes no difference, and five means that the community is making a profound difference.

No difference 1 2 3 4 5 Profound difference

4.12 Have you done anything lately for the betterment of your community and that you feel proud of?

- 1) yes
- 0) no *If no, skip to 5.0*

4.13 What did you do? _____

Annex 4. Meta-Data

Variable	Municipality	No. Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mdn	Min	Max	Comment
Personal Agency "agenciaper"	SDE	250	8.99	1.87	10	1	10	1 means no control, 10 means full control over life's decisions one cares about
	STI	278	7.97	2.10	8	1	10	
	LVG	259	5.80	2.95	5	1	10	
	SDO	245	8.64	1.28	9	1	10	
	Total	1032	7.83	2.47	9	1	10	
Collective Agency "agenciacol"	SDE	248	5.59	2.52	5	1	10	1 means no control, 10 means full control (collectively) over community decisions
	STI	274	5.94	2.81	6	1	10	
	LVG	258	3.95	2.51	4	1	10	
	SDO	245	6.52	2.28	7	1	10	
	Total	1025	5.49	2.72	5	1	10	
General Situation at Municipality "sitmuni"	SDE	253	3.13	0.59	3	1	5	1 very bad, 2 bad, 3 average, 4 good, 5 excellent
	STI	277	2.97	0.68	3	1	4	
	LVG	259	2.82	0.53	3	1	4	
	SDO	245	3.00	0.47	3	1	4	
	Total	1034	2.98	0.59	3	1	5	
General Situation at Municipality Compared to Previous Year "sitant"	SDE	251	3.51	0.79	4	1	5	1 much worse, 2 a bit worse, 3 the same, 4 a bit better, 5 much better
	STI	272	3.27	0.92	3	1	5	
	LVG	255	3.17	1.04	4	1	5	
	SDO	243	3.31	0.62	3	1	5	
	Total	1021	3.31	0.87	3	1	5	
Expected General Situation at Municipality in Next 12 Months "sitfut"	SDE	250	4.21	0.81	4	2	5	1 much worse, 2 a bit worse, 3 the same, 4 a bit better, 5 much better
	STI	266	3.49	0.90	4	1	5	
	LVG	260	3.41	0.95	4	1	5	
	SDO	242	3.59	0.73	4	1	5	
	Total	1018	3.67	0.91	4	1	5	

Current Personal (and Family's) Economic Situation "sitecon"	SDE	252	3.17	0.51	3	1	5	1 very bad, 2 bad, 3 average, 4 good, 5 excellent
	STI	276	3.08	0.72	3	1	5	
	LVG	260	2.97	0.52	3	2	5	
	SDO	245	3.43	0.65	3	1	5	
	Total	1033	3.16	0.63	3	1	5	
Expected Personal (and Family's) Economic Situation in 12 Months "siteconfut"	SDE	250	4.48	0.70	5	2	5	1 much worse, 2 a bit worse, 3 the same, 4 a bit better, 5 much better
	STI	265	3.69	0.82	4	1	5	
	LVG	260	3.77	0.66	4	2	5	
	SDO	243	4.05	0.49	4	1	5	
	Total	1018	3.99	0.75	4	1	5	
Economic Ladder "escaleraecon"	SDE	250	4.64	1.26	5	1	10	1 the poorest - 10 the richest
	STI	273	5.04	2.09	5	1	10	
	LVG	259	3.82	1.88	4	1	10	
	SDO	245	6.41	1.49	6	2	10	
	Total	1027	4.96	1.97	5	1	10	
Democracy is Best "democracia"	SDE	249	2.97	0.21	3	1	3	1 disagree, 2 partially agree, 3 agree
	STI	275	2.77	0.55	3	1	3	
	LVG	260	2.93	0.34	3	1	3	
	SDO	244	2.82	0.53	3	1	3	
	Total	1028	2.87	0.44	3	1	3	
Political Exclusion in the Municipality "exclusion"	SDE	249	2.50	0.60	3	1	3	1 disagree, 2 partially agree, 3 agree
	STI	261	2.15	0.85	2	1	3	
	LVG	260	2.83	0.53	3	1	3	
	SDO	245	1.47	0.66	1	1	3	
	Total	1015	2.24	0.84	3	1	3	
Municipal Government Responsible with Basic	SDE	248	2.37	0.81	3	1	3	1 disagree, 2 partially agree, 3 agree
	STI	272	1.68	0.70	2	1	3	

Needs "ayuntresp"	LVG	260	1.31	0.65	1	1	3	
	SDO	245	1.61	0.62	2	1	3	
	Total	1025	1.74	0.79	2	1	3	
Freedom of Speech "libopinion"	SDE	253	0.95	0.22	1	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	STI	276	0.91	0.29	1	0	1	
	LVG	258	0.83	0.37	1	0	1	
	SDO	243	0.99	0.09	1	0	1	
	Total	1030	0.92	0.27	1	0	1	
Relationship Local Government - Community "ayuntcom"	SDE	254	3.54	0.70	4	1	5	1 very bad, 2 bad, 3 average, 4 good, 5 excellent
	STI	274	3.08	0.79	3	1	5	
	LVG	258	2.68	0.75	3	1	5	
	SDO	243	3.15	0.73	3	1	5	
	Total	1029	3.11	0.81	3	1	5	
Perceived Number of Corrupt Local Government Officials "corrupto"	SDE	253	4.90	3.30	5	0	10	0-10 corrupt politicians out of 10
	STI	276	5.97	3.02	6	0	10	
	LVG	258	6.42	3.14	7	0	10	
	SDO	244	4.73	2.66	4	0	10	
	Total	1031	5.52	3.12	5	0	10	
Feeling of Belonging to Community "agradocom"	SDE	252	2.92	0.28	3	2	3	3 I like it, 2 I do not care, 1 I do not like it
	STI	276	2.82	0.46	3	1	3	
	LVG	260	2.93	0.30	3	1	3	
	SDO	243	2.80	0.42	3	1	3	
	Total	1031	2.87	0.28	3	1	3	
Membership / Participation in CSO "partorg"	SDE	253	0.64	0.48	1	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	STI	277	0.71	0.46	1	0	1	
	LVG	257	0.66	0.48	1	0	1	
	SDO	244	0.77	0.42	1	0	1	

	Total	1031	0.69	0.46	1	0	1	
Solidarity / Honesty "cartera"	SDE	254	2.66	2.44	1	0	10	0-10 people who return wallet out of 10
	STI	275	3.25	2.69	2	0	10	
	LVG	256	2.59	2.08	2	0	10	
	SDO	243	5.30	2.52	5	0	10	
	Total	1028	3.42	2.68	3	0	10	
Women's Participation in Public Life "mujeres"	SDE	254	3.16	0.43	3	2	4	4 more than men, 3 same as men, 2 less than men, 1 none
	STI	277	3.12	0.42	3	1	4	
	LVG	259	3.15	0.44	3	2	4	
	SDO	242	2.95	0.43	3	2	4	
	Total	1032	3.10	0.44	3	1	4	
Trust in Mayor "confsindico"	SDE	254	2.13	0.74	2	1	3	3 a lot of trust, 2 some trust, 1 no trust
	STI	270	1.83	0.63	2	1	3	
	LVG	260	1.57	0.66	1	1	3	
	SDO	244	1.77	0.58	2	1	3	
	Total	1028	1.83	0.68	2	1	3	
Trust in President of Community Group "confjv"	SDE	249	2.22	0.75	2	1	3	3 a lot of trust, 2 some trust, 1 no trust
	STI	258	2.22	0.73	2	1	3	
	LVG	252	2.08	0.75	2	1	3	
	SDO	239	2.08	0.53	2	1	3	
	Total	998	2.15	0.70	2	1	3	
Trust in Neighbors "confvecinos"	SDE	254	2.44	0.58	2	1	3	3 a lot of trust, 2 some trust, 1 no trust
	STI	275	2.43	0.57	2	1	3	
	LVG	260	2.59	0.60	3	1	3	
	SDO	245	2.15	0.49	2	1	3	
	Total	1034	2.41	0.59	2	1	3	
Knowledge of Budget	SDE	253	0.13	0.34	0	0	1	1 yes, 0 no

Decision-Making of Local Government "dineroayunt"	STI	273	0.17	0.38	0	0	1	
	LVG	260	0.02	0.12	0	0	1	
	SDO	245	0.05	0.23	0	0	1	
	Total	1031	0.10	0.29	0	0	1	
Heard of PB "escuchadopp"	SDE	254	0.76	0.43	1	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	STI	277	0.49	0.50	0	0	1	
	LVG	260	0.07	0.25	0	0	1	
	SDO	245	0.53	0.50	1	0	1	
	Total	1036	0.46	0.50	0	0	1	
Knowledge of PB after Definition "defpp"	SDE	63	0.30	0.46	0	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	STI	135	0.35	0.48	0	0	1	
	LVG	110	0.09	0.29	0	0	1	
	SDO	113	0.00	0.00	0	0	0	
	Total	421	0.18	0.39	0	0	1	
Support for PB "apoyaspp"	SDE	252	0.99	0.09	1	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	STI	274	0.97	0.18	1	0	1	
	LVG	261	0.98	0.12	1	0	1	
	SDO	243	0.97	0.17	1	0	1	
	Total	1030	0.98	0.14	1	0	1	
Heard of September Assemblies "enterado"	SDE	254	0.39	0.49	0	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	STI	278	0.37	0.48	0	0	1	
	Total	532	0.38	0.49	0	0	1	
Hypothetical Participation "hubierasido"	SDE	152	0.94	0.24	1	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	STI	171	0.86	0.35	1	0	1	
	Total	323	0.90	0.30	1	0	1	
Actual Participation in PB Assembly	SDE	100	0.52	0.50	1	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	STI	99	0.84	0.37	1	0	1	

"participaste"	Total	199	0.68	0.47	1	0	1	
Selected as Delegate "delegado"	SDE	53	0.47	0.50	0	0	1	
	STI	83	0.51	0.50	1	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	Total	136	0.49	0.50	0	0	1	
Community Winning PB Project "ganoobra"	SDE	53	0.68	0.47	1	0	1	
	STI	82	0.62	0.48	1	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	Total	135	0.64	0.48	1	0	1	
Wanting to Speak Out Loud "vozalta"	SDE	53	0.74	0.45	1	0	1	
	STI	83	0.45	0.50	0	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	Total	136	0.56	0.50	1	0	1	
Turn to Speak "palabra"	SDE	40	0.95	0.22	1	0	1	
	STI	37	0.54	0.50	1	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	Total	77	0.75	0.43	1	0	1	
Satisfaction with Voting Process "votacion"	SDE	53	3.08	0.51	3	2	4	
	STI	82	2.65	0.87	3	1	4	4 very satisfied, 3 satisfied, 2 not very satisfied, 1 not at all satisfied
	Total	135	2.81	0.77	3	1	4	
Satisfaction with Projects Menu "listaobras"	SDE	52	2.94	0.42	3	2	4	
	STI	82	2.48	0.84	3	1	4	4 very satisfied, 3 satisfied, 2 not very satisfied, 1 not at all satisfied
	Total	134	2.66	0.72	3	1	4	
Satisfaction with Facilitator's Leading Skills "representante"	SDE	52	3.17	0.51	3	2	4	
	STI	81	2.72	0.79	3	1	4	4 very satisfied, 3 satisfied, 2 not very satisfied, 1 not at all satisfied
	Total	133	2.89	0.73	3	1	4	
Participation in Previous Assembly "asamant"	SDE	254	0.30	0.46	0	0	1	
	STI	274	0.29	0.46	0	0	1	
	LVG	258	0.02	0.14	0	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	SDO	245	0.25	0.43	0	0	1	
	Total	1031	0.22	0.41	0	0	1	

Comparison with Previous Assembly "asamcomp"	SDE	49	2.51	0.58	3	1	3	3 better, 2 the same, 1 worse
	STI	71	2.45	0.69	3	1	3	
	Total	120	2.48	0.65	3	1	3	
Selectivity in Participation "selectivo"	SDE	192	0.95	0.21	1	0	1	1 selective, 0 everyone
	STI	133	0.44	0.50	0	0	1	
	Total	325	0.74	0.44	1	0	1	
Participation in Construction of PB Project "construccion"	SDE	77	0.23	0.42	0	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	STI	80	0.41	0.50	0	0	1	
	Total	157	0.32	0.47	0	0	1	
PB Assemblies Bring More Transparency "transparencia"	SDE	251	0.93	0.26	1	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	STI	262	0.79	0.41	1	0	1	
	LVG	260	0.97	0.16	1	0	1	
	SDO	241	0.98	0.14	1	0	1	
Individual Agency Local Budgeting "agenciapbind"	Total	1014	0.92	0.28	1	0	1	1 no difference - 5 profound difference
	SDE	251	2.72	1.59	2	1	5	
	STI	272	2.88	1.48	3	1	5	
	LVG	259	3.80	1.72	5	1	5	
	SDO	245	3.16	1.16	3	1	5	
Collective Agency Local Budgeting "agenciapbcol"	Total	1027	3.14	1.56	3	1	5	1 no difference - 5 profound difference
	SDE	251	3.09	1.32	3	1	5	
	STI	274	3.07	1.30	3	1	5	
	LVG	261	3.81	1.69	5	1	5	
	SDO	245	2.53	0.94	3	1	5	
Action for Community that Brings Pride "agenciaact"	Total	1031	3.13	1.42	3	1	5	1 yes, 0 no
	SDE	252	0.37	0.48	0	0	1	
	STI	270	0.44	0.50	0	0	1	
	LVG	260	0.55	0.50	1	0	1	

	SDO	245	0.16	0.37	0	0	1	
	Total	1027	0.38	0.49	0	0	1	
Gender "sexo"	SDE	253	0.48	0.50	0	0	1	1 male, 0 female
	STI	259	0.46	0.50	0	0	1	
	LVG	259	0.77	0.42	1	0	1	
	SDO	233	0.47	0.50	0	0	1	
	Total	1004	0.55	0.50	1	0	1	
Years Living in Municipality "vividomuni"	SDE	254	25.79	10.05	25	2	55	number of years
	STI	269	30.66	16.12	30	1	70	
	LVG	248	44.61	17.74	44.5	1	90	
	SDO	244	32.50	14.84	33.5	1	74	
	Total	1015	33.29	16.45	30	1	90	
Years Living in Community "vividocom"	SDE	254	19.19	11.66	15	1	55	number of years
	STI	275	21.53	15.09	19	1	67	
	LVG	249	43.06	18.45	43	1	90	
	SDO	153	27.58	17.68	27	1	62	
	Total	931	27.64	18.44	25	1	90	
Age "edad"	SDE	251	41.84	12.88	40	19	75	number of years
	STI	276	44.71	13.20	43	19	80	
	LVG	260	40.20	13.90	40	18	75	
	SDO	245	40.91	11.45	39	19	74	
	Total	1032	41.97	13.01	41	18	80	
Estado Civil "casadovivi"	SDE	253	0.60	0.49	1	0	1	1 married or living together, 0 otherwise
	STI	277	0.74	0.44	1	0	1	
	LVG	256	0.52	0.50	1	0	1	
	SDO	245	0.65	0.48	1	0	1	
	Total	1031	0.63	0.48	1	0	1	

Head of Household "jefehogar"	SDE	245	0.50	0.50	1	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	STI	274	0.68	0.47	1	0	1	
	LVG	238	0.64	0.48	1	0	1	
	SDO	244	0.66	0.48	1	0	1	
	Total	1004	0.62	0.49	1	0	1	
Difficulties to Cover Basic Needs "dificultades"	SDE	251	0.21	0.41	0	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	STI	271	0.27	0.45	0	0	1	
	LVG	230	0.24	0.43	0	0	1	
	SDO	239	0.20	0.40	0	0	1	
	Total	991	0.23	0.42	0	0	1	
Education "educacion"	SDE	248	3.35	1.12	3	1	5	5 college or higher, 4 associates degree, 3 high school, 2 elementary, 1 none
	STI	277	3.59	1.25	3	1	5	
	LVG	244	3.34	1.20	3	1	5	
	SDO	240	4.08	0.99	4	1	5	
	Total	1009	3.59	1.18	3	1	5	
Highly Educated "educado"	SDE	248	0.31	0.46	0	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	STI	277	0.46	0.50	0	0	1	
	LVG	244	0.41	0.49	0	0	1	
	SDO	240	0.72	0.45	1	0	1	
	Total	806	0.59	0.49	1	0	1	
Employment "empleado"	SDE	248	0.84	0.36	1	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	STI	270	0.93	0.26	1	0	1	
	LVG	259	0.97	0.16	1	0	1	
	SDO	244	0.93	0.25	1	0	1	
	Total	1021	0.92	0.27	1	0	1	
Worry of Losing Job Within Next Year	SDE	206	2.81	1.32	4	1	4	4 not worried at all, 3 a little bit worried, 2 worried, 1 very worried
	STI	198	3.17	0.96	3	1	4	

"preocupado"	LVG	120	2.25	0.81	2	1	4	
	SDO	178	3.38	0.85	4	1	4	
	Total	702	2.96	1.10	3	1	4	
Health Status "salud"	SDE	254	2.31	0.72	2	1	5	5 very bad, 4 bad, 3 regular, 2 well, 1 very well
	STI	273	2.38	0.87	2	1	5	
	LVG	256	2.30	0.72	2	1	5	
	SDO	245	2.07	0.53	2	1	4	
	Total	1028	2.27	0.73	2	1	5	
Leadership Position in Community "liderazgo"	SDE	249	0.71	0.46	1	0	1	1 yes, 0 no
	STI	266	0.61	0.49	1	0	1	
	LVG	256	0.46	0.50	0	0	1	
	SDO	240	0.88	0.33	1	0	1	
	Total	1011	0.66	0.47	1	0	1	
Average Household Income "ingreso"	SDE	248	22258	13180	20000	2000	75000	Amount in Dominican Pesos
	STI	244	23941	23325	18000	1500	150000	
	LVG	252	18988	12950	15000	1000	80000	
	SDO	211	28314	15290	25000	8000	120000	
	Total	955	23163	17049	20000	1000	150000	

Annex 5. Outputs for Matching Exercises

SDE (participants above, non-participants below), Individual PB Agency

```
. psmatch2 sde if (participaste==1 |sde==0), pscore (logorpsmscore) outcome (agenciapbind)
There are observations with identical propensity score values.
The sort order of the data could affect your results.
Make sure that the sort order is random before calling psmatch2.
```

Variable	Sample	Treated	Controls	Difference	S.E.	T-stat
agenciapbind	Unmatched	4.58	3.14666667	1.43333333	.175080422	8.19
	ATT	4.58	3.46	1.12	.233853259	4.79

Note: S.E. does not take into account that the propensity score is estimated.

psmatch2: Treatment assignment	psmatch2: Common support	
	On suppor	Total
Untreated	225	225
Treated	50	50
Total	275	275

```
.
: psmatch2 sde if (participaste==0 |sde==0), pscore (logorpsmscore) outcome (agenciapbind)
There are observations with identical propensity score values.
The sort order of the data could affect your results.
Make sure that the sort order is random before calling psmatch2.
```

Variable	Sample	Treated	Controls	Difference	S.E.	T-stat
agenciapbind	Unmatched	2.24064171	3.14666667	-.906024955	.125771488	-7.20
	ATT	2.24064171	3.0855615	-.844919786	.16657706	-5.07

Note: S.E. does not take into account that the propensity score is estimated.

psmatch2: Treatment assignment	psmatch2: Common support	
	On suppor	Total
Untreated	225	225
Treated	187	187
Total	412	412

SDE (participants above, non-participants below), Collective PB Agency

```
. psmatch2 sde if (participaste==1 | sde==0), pscore (logorpsmscore) outcome (agenciapbcol)
There are observations with identical propensity score values.
The sort order of the data could affect your results.
Make sure that the sort order is random before calling psmatch2.
```

Variable	Sample	Treated	Controls	Difference	S.E.	T-stat
agenciapbcol	Unmatched	4.28	2.52444444	1.75555556	.149674756	11.73
	ATT	4.28	2.92	1.36	.217006536	6.27

Note: S.E. does not take into account that the propensity score is estimated.

psmatch2: Treatment assignment	psmatch2: Common support	
	On suppor	Total
Untreated	225	225
Treated	50	50
Total	275	275

```
. sort _id
```

```
. psmatch2 sde if (participaste==0 | sde==0), pscore (logorpsmscore) outcome (agenciapbcol)
There are observations with identical propensity score values.
The sort order of the data could affect your results.
Make sure that the sort order is random before calling psmatch2.
```

Variable	Sample	Treated	Controls	Difference	S.E.	T-stat
agenciapbcol	Unmatched	2.79144385	2.52444444	.266999406	.107178819	2.49
	ATT	2.79144385	2.56684492	.22459893	.140890706	1.59

Note: S.E. does not take into account that the propensity score is estimated.

psmatch2: Treatment assignment	psmatch2: Common support	
	On suppor	Total
Untreated	225	225
Treated	187	187
Total	412	412

STI (participants above, non-participants below), Individual PB Agency

```
. psmatch2 sti if (participaste==1 | sti==0), pscore (logorpsmscore) outcome (agenciapbind)
There are observations with identical propensity score values.
The sort order of the data could affect your results.
Make sure that the sort order is random before calling psmatch2.
```

Variable	Sample	Treated	Controls	Difference	S.E.	T-stat
agenciapbind	Unmatched	3.66666667	3.81938326	-.152716593	.231265324	-0.66
	ATT	3.66666667	3.77777778	-.111111111	.36263896	-0.31

Note: S.E. does not take into account that the propensity score is estimated.

psmatch2: Treatment assignment	psmatch2: Common support On suppor		Total
Untreated	227		227
Treated	63		63
Total	290		290

```
. sort _id
```

```
. psmatch2 sti if (participaste==0 | sti==0), pscore (logorpsmscore) outcome (agenciapbind)
There are observations with identical propensity score values.
The sort order of the data could affect your results.
Make sure that the sort order is random before calling psmatch2.
```

Variable	Sample	Treated	Controls	Difference	S.E.	T-stat
agenciapbind	Unmatched	2.54216867	3.81938326	-1.27721459	.161745069	-7.90
	ATT	2.54216867	3.90963855	-1.36746988	.208787157	-6.55

Note: S.E. does not take into account that the propensity score is estimated.

psmatch2: Treatment assignment	psmatch2: Common support On suppor		Total
Untreated	227		227
Treated	166		166
Total	393		393

STI (participants above, non-participants below), Collective PB Agency

```
. psmatch2 sti if (participaste==1 lsti==0), pscore (logorpsmscore) outcome (agenciapbcol)
There are observations with identical propensity score values.
The sort order of the data could affect your results.
Make sure that the sort order is random before calling psmatch2.
```

Variable	Sample	Treated	Controls	Difference	S.E.	T-stat
agenciapbcol	Unmatched	3.63492063	3.84649123	-.211570593	.222816397	-0.95
	ATT	3.63492063	3.79365079	-.158730159	.351628167	-0.45

Note: S.E. does not take into account that the propensity score is estimated.

psmatch2: Treatment assignment	psmatch2: Common support	
	On support	Total
Untreated	228	228
Treated	63	63
Total	291	291

```
. sort _id
```

```
. psmatch2 sti if (participaste==0 lsti==0), pscore (logorpsmscore) outcome (agenciapbcol)
There are observations with identical propensity score values.
The sort order of the data could affect your results.
Make sure that the sort order is random before calling psmatch2.
```

Variable	Sample	Treated	Controls	Difference	S.E.	T-stat
agenciapbcol	Unmatched	2.81437126	3.84649123	-1.03211997	.153522271	-6.72
	ATT	2.81437126	3.98802395	-1.17365269	.195871002	-5.99

Note: S.E. does not take into account that the propensity score is estimated.

psmatch2: Treatment assignment	psmatch2: Common support	
	On support	Total
Untreated	228	228
Treated	167	167
Total	395	395

Annex 7. Details of Meetings Observed and Assembly Codes

Date	Municipality	Location of Assembly	Type	Code	Observed by
09/17/12	STI	Club de los Choferes, Padre Las Casas	Block	1	Bryan Tolentino
09/18/12	STI	Casa Club Reparto Kokette, Reparto Kokette	Block	2	Bryan Tolentino
09/20/12	STI	Salón de Reuniones CEFASA, Gurabo	Block	3	Alina Reyes
09/21/12	STI	Colegio Padre Emiliano Tardiff – Jardines del Yaque	Block	4	Bryan Tolentino
09/23/12	STI	Casa Club Villa María, Villa María	Block	5	Alina Reyes
09/23/12	STI	Escuela Juan Ovidio Paulino, Reparto Peralta	Block	6	Marie C. Vasquez
09/25/12	STI	Club AUG, Gurabo	Block	7	Marie C. Vasquez
09/25/12	STI	Templo Bíblico R. J. Carter, Savica	Block	8	Marie C. Vasquez
09/26/12	STI	Casa Club Las Américas, Las Américas	Block	9	Marie C. Vasquez
09/26/12	STI	La Gallera, Cienfuegos	Block	10	Marie C. Vasquez
09/27/12	STI	Club Fernando Garrido, Ensanche Espailat	Block	11	Marie C. Vasquez
09/28/12	SDE	Centro de Integración Familiar Juan Pablo II	Account Rendition PB 2012 and Launching of PB 2013	A	Marie C. Vasquez
10/03/12	SDE	Punta Torrecilla, Los Mameyes	Community	B	Marie C. Vasquez
10/05/12	SDE	Villa Faro	Community	C	Marie C. Vasquez
10/05/12	SDE	El Pescador, Villa Duarte	Community	D	Marie C. Vasquez
10/06/12	SDE	Club Bello Campo	Block	E	Marie C. Vasquez
10/07/12	SDE	Club Eduardo Brito, Los Mameyes	Block	F	Marie C. Vasquez
10/09/12	SDE	Catanga, Los Minas	Community	G	Marie C. Vasquez
10/10/12	SDE	Felicidad II, Los Minas	Community	H	Marie C. Vasquez
10/13/12	SDE	Club de los Billeteros, Las	Block	I	Marie C.

		Frutas			Vasquez
10/14/12	SDE	Multiuso Los Tres Ojos, Los Mameyes (reposition)	Block	J	Marie C. Vasquez
10/17/12	SDE	Brisas del Este	Community	K	Marie C. Vasquez
10/18/12	SDE	Los Almirantes I, Los Almirantes	Community	L	Marie C. Vasquez
10/18/12	SDE	Los Almirantes II, Los Almirantes	Community	M	Marie C. Vasquez
10/18/12	SDE	Los Almirantes III, Los Almirantes	Community	N	Marie C. Vasquez
10/18/12	SDE	Los Almirantes IV, Los Almirantes	Community	O	Marie C. Vasquez
10/21/12	SDE	Escuela Patria Mella	Block	P	Marie C. Vasquez
10/21/12	SDE	Club La Moneda, San Isidro	Block	Q	Marie C. Vasquez

Annex 8. Questions/Topics Covered in Interviews

- a) Are there neighborhood councils holding frequent meetings throughout the year? If so, what are the topics discussed and how are people notified of the meetings?
- b) Are consultations public or by invitation? Which means of communication is used for advertising or inviting?
- c) How and when are citizens' preferences gathered?
- d) Is there deliberation and reasons given about proposals before decisions are made?
- e) What have been the identified priorities of the community for the last couple of years?
- f) How satisfactory have the experiences in previous cycles been, both in terms of budgetary decisions and in terms of disbursement of funds for the execution of the chosen projects?
- g) How can the relationship between the municipal authorities and the community be characterized?
- h) Who initiates contact?
- i) Who are the main stakeholders?
- j) Have any groups or sorts of individuals been left out?
- k) Have any activities to bolster transparency and accountability been taken?
- l) Do citizens have direct control over the full process of developing options, deciding on action, raising funds for, and implementing projects or policy, as in social fund and community-driven development projects or do they only control a small part of the budget, enabling the mayor to raid the rest of it?
- m) What is the local government's financial capacity to respond to the multiple needs of the citizens?
- n) How well connected is the exercise of PB with the medium- and longer-term development plans of the municipality?

Annex 9. Logic Model from Municipal Government’s Perspective using SDE and STI’s PB Experiences for 2013

Inputs	Activities/Process	Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts
Budget allocation for PB projects: RD\$264,498,129.49 (SDE) ¹⁵⁴ & RD\$66,668,195.40 (STI)	Establishment of permitted projects menu, and distribution of funds per blocks based on budget (SDE and STI)	90 projects approved (SDE) 31 projects approved (STI)	a) Policymakers fund and maintain legislation that supports community priorities (SDE & STI) b) Attention to communities’ demands (SDE & STI)
Social Planning and Development Assistants for the planning and public consultation stages and staff from the Municipal Government (SDE & STI)	Planning, organization and hosting of PB community and block assemblies (SDE) Planning, organization and hosting of PB block assemblies (STI)	437 PB community assemblies and 18 block assemblies held (SDE) 29 PB block assemblies held (note: one assembly was a reposition) (STI)	a) Increased knowledge among neighborhood residents of resources available from the local government for the solution of community issues (SDE & STI) b) Unknown number of participants from 437 communities (18 blocks) empowered for having been consulted (SDE) c) 5,021 participants from 28 blocks empowered for having been consulted (STI)
Acquisition documents for the design, planning and execution of projects (SDE & STI)	Execution of 90 projects; 15% remain in construction or to be started (SDE) ¹⁵⁵ Execution of 31 projects; 38% remain under construction,	77 projects (85%) completed 14 projects (44%) completed ¹⁵⁶	Diverse solutions to community high priority issues (increased well-being) according to the purpose of each project (SDE and STI).

¹⁵⁴ When considering the allocated amount to PB for 2013 it must be noted that while such year’s PB cycle only approved 90 projects, there are 126 PB projects budgeted for 2013, which includes delayed projects from previous years.

¹⁵⁵ In the absence of exact percentages of project execution stages, these estimates are based on the SDE mayor’s declarations (Juan de los Santos) to the newspaper *El Nacional* on July 22nd, 2013 (<http://elnacional.com.do/construyen-700-obras-en-santo-domingo-este/>). The status of the missing 5% was not alluded to in the article.

¹⁵⁶ As of report sent to me directly by the municipality on date Feb 20th, 2014.

	19% will start soon, and 10% present legal or origin difficulties (STI)		
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Annex 10. Condition/Causal Mechanism: Organizational Health of PB

The following is a summary of evidence pointing out organizational problems that affect the overall quality of the PB meetings:

a) Chosen locations are not always appropriate: some assembly sites were either too small, too dark, too hot, or too open for enabling comfortable discussions and voting. For example, for Assembly 7 (STI), held at the clubhouse AUG, it was difficult to carry on the assembly because next to the open room where people were meeting, there were teenagers playing basketball in a court, and their noise interrupted the assembly. Assembly 6 (STI), held at the public school *Juan Ovidio Paulino*, was supposed to occur in the multi-use room of the local school. However because the facilitators did not procure the key to the room ahead of time, the meeting ended up being carried out in the school yard with everybody spread across a large space. Similarly the block assembly P (SDE), held at a public school, was also supposed to use the school's multi-purpose room, but a double-booking issue prevented the municipal government from using the room. The meeting occurred instead in an elementary grade-level room, which was too small for the number of delegates, who had to sit in tiny chairs intended for third graders. Other inappropriate locations were the cock-fighting arena for Assembly 10 and the basketball court of *Club Fernando Garrido* for Assembly 11 (both STI). The assemblies E and J met in the club of *Bello Campo* and the multi-purpose room *Los Tres Ojos*, respectively, (both SDE) suffered from loud nearby music, since they were located next to *bodegas* that had high volume *bachatas* all afternoon. Although these communities are accustomed to something similar in daily life, such noise during an assembly can be disrupting.¹⁵⁷ Assemblies F and I (SDE) had also a temperature problem. People were suffocating due to an extremely hot weather, and so, wanted to hurry up the process to be able to leave as soon as possible.

b) Registration process too tortuous: The registration process was too slow and unnecessarily disorganized in most assemblies in both municipalities. In SDE, the

¹⁵⁷ Although I wonder if it bothered me, the outsider, more than it did bother anybody else.

exceptions were the assemblies in which Mr. Edward was one of the facilitators. This leader employed a system of calling individuals one by one as their name appeared in the certificates, checked their IDs, and directed them to a specific chair. Other assemblies in SDE and STI did the registration after letting people inside the premises, and without asking people to get in a line or wait to be called. Due to the “open to all public” characteristic of STI’s assemblies, there was the problem of people trying to get in to vote after the registration process had closed. This effort brought lots of complaints and controversies. In another case, all participants from one community were late, supposedly due to a malfunction of the bus in which all were being transported to the assembly site. By the time they got to the meeting place the registration process had ended (voting had not yet started), and they were not allowed to participate, which generated a lot of complaints since the lack of flexibility made this community lose its chance to win a PB project. Another registration problem, particularly worrisome for STI’s model of open assemblies, is that it is impossible to verify if participants belong to a particular community; thus, some losing participants complain that other communities have won because they brought in residents from other locations so as to be able to attain the majority of votes that would enable them win.

c) Meetings inexcusably delayed: None of the assemblies I attended in either of the municipalities started on time. Many communities complained and were outraged, about how the municipal government had no respect for their time (especially in SDE assemblies, all of which kept people waiting for over an hour). One positive upshot from the delays is that delegates used this time to negotiate and strategize with fellow communities/organizations.

d) Facilitators lacked proper training to lead assemblies effectively: facilitators without good leadership skills and proper training were not able to facilitate meetings effectively. This was evidenced in different ways: participants complained about facilitators starting the process without even introducing him/herself and his/her team; some facilitators were not able to keep the crowd quiet, and in order, and even needed to restore to preschool tactics used to make young children quiet down, remain seated, or wait for a turn to speak out. Some facilitators completely skipped detailed explanations of the processes, which only led to confused participants during the voting, as well as deliberation

and negotiation stages. Such instructions would have been particularly helpful for first-time participants. Some facilitators had no patience to deal with participants' frustrations and confusions; rather than answering their questions, they rudely ignored them. Some facilitators, reluctant to opening up the meeting to public discussions, undermined the democratic process.

e) Other organizational problems (miscellaneous): 1) While some assemblies in STI did use microphones, all in SDE did not, and facilitators often times had to scream in order to be heard or to be able to control a disorganized crowd. 2) Wall signs for SDE assemblies, which include the list of candidate projects and communities could have been prepared prior to each assembly, instead of making people wait for about 20 minutes until an assistant finished writing it up (I was even asked to help with this in two assemblies in SDE). 3) In STI no control over the entrance of individuals to the assemblies was put in place, which therefore led to the presence of teenagers and children, who regardless of being ineligible to vote, ended up causing controversy at different times due to some participants' beliefs that they had indeed voted (to the detriment of their own vote count). 4) There is no mechanism to invalidate the community assemblies if quorum is not met, or if the level of desired representativeness is not reached. 5) Not allowing for substitutes delegates seems like a too strict rule. A suggestion would be to elect some alternate delegates in the community meeting in the event that one of the main four delegates cannot attend the block assembly; otherwise, the community is doomed to lose.

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