

## ABSTRACT

The period of political system transformation in Poland coincided with the stage of intense changes in the perception of the mode and principles of shaping public policies in democratic countries. The specificity of the new paradigm in this matter, defined as new public governance refers to the engagement and the will to participate of the wide range of institutions and non-public entities in the development of methods of participation and cooperation in making decisions leading to shaping specific fragments of public policies. As a result of the change of the essence of functioning of rulers-ruled relationship, instruments were created that were the answer to this co-governance, the so-called instruments of public participation. An extremely crucial element of each of them is the cooperation between the rulers and the ruled.

One of such instruments of public participation is the participatory budget (PB), the idea of which was born in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre. Under this instrument, the inhabitants are co-decision-makers of what the money is spent on from the local government unit, and the projects they propose, after thorough verification, are then implemented. The experiment that turned out to be a success, gained in popularity over the years and after several years it also reached Poland. One of the Polish cities, which played a pioneering role in the implementation of the participatory budget was the city of Płock. In these circumstances, due to the importance of this problem for the science of politics, and from the perspective of the author's own interests, it became necessary to carry out an in-depth analysis of how the local community of the city of Płock reacted to the new instrument of participation. Moreover, it was also necessary to consider whether it would be possible to create a certain point of reference - a model of the ideal mechanism of participatory budget implementation, against which one could analyse the editions of the Płock model of the participatory budget implementation mechanism implemented in subsequent years.

In connection with the above, the main scientific goal of the doctoral dissertation entitled "The ideal mechanism for the implementation of the participatory budget and the case of Płock in the years 2012-2018" was to determine what features an ideal mechanism for the implementation of the participatory budget would have to have to ensure a high level of public participation, as well as to determine whether subsequent editions of the implementation of this instrument in the city of Płock in the years 2012–2018 approached this proposed model. The detailed objectives consisted of: creating a model of a mechanism of a perfect implementation of a participatory budget; an indication of the level of participation in the area of the city of Płock before the introduction of the participatory budget; an analysis of subsequent editions of the participatory budget in the city of Płock in the context of the created model of the ideal mechanism for the implementation of this public participation instrument. The final boundary of the study was the moment of entry into force of the provisions regulating the mechanism of civic budgets in cities with powiat status by the Act of January 11, 2018 amending certain acts in order to increase the participation of citizens in the process of selecting, functioning and controlling some public authorities. However, an in-depth analysis of the research assumptions put forward by the author (and especially the issue of studying the long-term effects of the implementation of the participatory budget on the

participatory attitudes of Płock residents under other instruments), prompted him to shift the temporal final boundary of the cognitive process. In this regard, according to the adopted assumption, the cut-off date for this extended research field was March 4, 2020, when the first confirmed case of COVID-19 infection in Poland was reported. Then all attitudes and participatory actions were disrupted (and thus further observations made would be burdened with a significant error).

Owing to the presented main scientific goal, the research problem was presented in the form of two questions. Firstly, is it possible to define what features an ideal mechanism for the implementation of a participatory budget would have to have in order to ensure a high level of public participation? Secondly, did the subsequent editions of the implementation of this instrument in the city of Płock in the years 2012–2018 come closer to the established model?

Thanks to the preliminary cognitive activities undertaken by the author, it became possible to define the main research hypotheses. The first of them stated that it is possible to define what features an ideal mechanism for the implementation of a participatory budget would have to have in order to ensure a high level of public participation. The second of the adopted research hypotheses stated that the subsequent editions of the implementation of this instrument in Płock in 2012–2018 approached the model established in this way.

As part of the research, the author used a number of research methods, i.e. content analysis, critical discourse analysis, process tracing and explicit participant observation. In addition to a set of qualitative methods, the author also used quantitative analysis to determine development trends resulting from the implementation of individual participation mechanisms.

The effects achieved as a result of the study were both theoretical and empirical. The main effects of the research carried out include the creation by the author of the model of the ideal PB implementation mechanism, as well as the analysis, in the context of this model, of subsequent editions of PB in the city of Płock. At the same time, thanks to the analysis, the author was able to put forward his own proposals for changes in the implementation mechanism of the participatory budget in Płock in order to bring it closer to the ideal model.

Ultimately, the conducted research process allowed the author to verify the research hypotheses. And so, the author managed to indicate whether it is possible to define what features an ideal mechanism for the implementation of a participatory budget would have to have to ensure a high level of public participation. The author also managed to verify the second hypothesis that the subsequent editions of the implementation of this instrument in Płock in the years 2012–2018 approached the model established in this way.

The results obtained throughout the research process may constitute a source database for both academics and communities dealing with the issues of public participation and the process of shaping public policies within the domestic political system. On the other hand, the author's proposals for changes in the current legal status regarding PB can be treated as a voice in the discussion about the direction of the development of the mechanism of public participation in the city of Płock, but also within the entire Polish political system.

13.05.2021

Daniel Urbanski