Morais, Mariana

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Mariana Morais

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WZB Berlin Social Science Center
Reichpietschufer 50
10785 Berlin
Germany
www.wzb.eu

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Affiliation of the author

Mariana Morais

Guest at WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Email: moraismml@gmail.com

Abstract

Citizen Participation in Urban Policy: Lessons Based on Berlin and São Paulo Experiences

by Mariana Morais*

This paper explores how different means of citizen participation influence urban policies at the city level. The study considers four case studies in two cities, Berlin, Germany and Sao Paulo, Brazil, covering different stages of the policy cycle. Informed by the assessment of qualitative research conducted during a year-long study, the experiences illustrate that the ability to navigate between streets and institutions in participatory procedures is key to ensuring political embeddedness of citizen contributions while remaining context sensitive. By expanding the concept of participation to incorporate different fields of action, the study provides a lens to inform procedural designs while questioning frameworks that hinder the democratic urban transformation.

Keywords: Citizen participation, participatory planning, participatory design, democratic cities.

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1. Introduction

Contemporary urban struggles, accentuated by the Covid-19 pandemic, call for transformative and collective responses for our cities. While global agendas strongly emphasize the importance of participation in sustainable urban development, the participatory formulation of urban policies has proven to be a complex concept in practice considering the balance of asymmetries of power and resources. Diverse scientific disciplines have contributed theory and practice-oriented approaches that address such challenges of participation. Nevertheless, research in evaluating participatory procedures, with their limits and benefits, continues to be an expanding field.

By asking how citizen participation can serve as a means for influencing urban policies, this study explores how designing and planning citizen participation at the city level is a key political action for creating a means of democratic decision-making. In this context, I look at four case studies in two cities, Berlin, Germany and Sao Paulo, Brazil. In order to analyze these cases, I apply the framework of participation for democratic innovation (Pogrebinschi, 2016, 2021), as well as four criteria to assess participatory procedures: formalization, openness, inclusiveness, and influence. I briefly discuss the contexts, procedures, and assessments of these four case studies.

In Berlin, the first case is *Deutsche Wohnen & Co. Enteignen* (DWE), a recent citizen initiative that has been inspiring cities around the world by the massive mobilization for a socialization housing policy. The second case is the Neighborhood Councils (*Quartiersräte – QR) of the QuartiersManagement* Program. This federal program, implemented with the support of 32 councils, is a project that received the "Regio Star Award" from the European Union. In São Paulo, Brazil, the experience is the participatory formulation of the Master Plan (*Plano Diretor Estratégico* - PDE), which innovated by combining co-creation workshops around the city with a digital tool. The last case, the GestãoUrbanaSP (GU), is this digital platform implemented by the São Paulo City Hall, highlighted as an e-democracy planning tool by UN-Habitat.

By analyzing a combination of cases, I consider participation to be multidimensional. By understanding participation as both institutionalized and citizen-based, participatory procedures and different types of actor interaction and involvement expand to include negotiation and opposition, as well as cooperation. In this way, the study also introduces the concept of "movements-in-democracy" (Rubin, 2006), with the understanding that groups navigate between streets and institutions without necessarily demobilizing their purposes. The findings provide insights into citizen participation at the municipal level, and also, how participatory procedures can impact urban policies, at different stages of the policy-making cycle.

1.1 Methodology

This study presents lessons of citizen participation through an exploratory analysis of qualitative data and case studies based on four experiences. The collection of data involves a year-long study done in three stages between December 2020 to December 2021.

During the first stage, I collected perspectives from experts in Berlin and São Paulo through a round of ten semi-structured online interviews. This exploratory round involved (a) professors from the University of São Paulo, Technical University of Berlin and Humboldt University; (b) researchers from the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) and the Berlin Social Science Center (WZB) as well as; (c) practitioners from civil society organizations. In this stage I explored the complexity of participation as an interdisciplinary field with diverse meanings and methods that build upon different disciplines.

In the second stage, I reviewed literature across different bodies of knowledge, such as participatory planning, design, philosophy, political science, and sociology. Based on this review and the first round of interviews, I defined keywords and concepts, chose the case studies for analysis, and established the four criteria I would use to assess these different participatory procedures.

For the third stage, I analyzed documentation about four cases I reviewed by studying materials including: technical reports, official reports, outputs, and webpages. In order to get first-hand knowledge, I conducted a second round of semi-structured interviews both online and in-person, with:

(a) citizens; (b) activists/ practitioners; and (c) policy-makers from both cities. Likewise, I conducted participant observation in the German cases as a way of exploring local dynamics and everyday practices. For the DWE initiative, this included field notes, videos and pictures collected during the second and third step of the initiative (petition for referendum and referendum). For the QR councils, I observed an election for new members, councilors meetings, as well as community events in different regions covered by the program. Previous empirical experience in the city of São Paulo gave me access to first-hand knowledge regarding these cases, including participation in workshops and experimentation with the digital tools implemented.

The rationale for choosing this particular combination of initiatives is that they explore different stages of the policy cycle: agenda-setting, formulation, and implementation. While the DWE initiative questions current housing policy, building on agenda-setting and demanding the formulation of a new housing policy, the QR councils support the implementation of the urban program in the context of the development of existing neighborhoods. In São Paulo, the cases show how citizen participation can be a means to imagine new futures, formulating an urban policy instrument. Thus, the distinct realities explored in each of these cases generate insights concerning different disputes involved in the city-making processes.

2. Dimensions and challenges of participation in city-making

Citizen participation in urban policy, planning and practice, not surprisingly, covers diverse dimensions and a wide range of challenges hardly understood by narrow cause-and-effect assumptions. Scholars consider citizen participation an instrument for achieving higher goals, such as democratic decision-making and spatial justice (Caldeira and Holston, 2015; Pogrebinschi, 2016; Rocco, 2019). However, critics argue that participation does not address the fundamental causes of urban inequality (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Herrle et al, 2016; Franco, 2020). Instead, participation could perpetuate, rather than mitigate, injustice and exclusion, and therefore, "lead to participatory decisions that reinforce the interest of the already powerful" (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). **Understanding the context, dimensions, and challenges of participation reinforces why participatory practices should be assessed and improved.**

In the context of urban planning, Arnstein's (1969) "Ladder of Citizen Participation" metaphorically explains participation's appeal to a wide range of audiences as a graded movement upwards through eight steps (rungs) from manipulation of citizens (1) through consultation (4) to citizen control (8). According to the author, participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for those who have less power. On one hand, Arnstein (1969) expands the understanding of participation beyond purely procedural issues toward concepts of power. On the other, by reinforcing the linear and hierarchical perspective of citizen involvement, the ladder metaphor does not represent dynamic, non-hierarchical and spontaneous citizen involvement.

City-making processes require a wider concept of participation, one that considers the institutional and non-institutional dimensions. Participatory institutions such as citizen assemblies and citizen councils have expanded to government and international agencies, becoming legally institutionalized in many cities (Herrle et al., 2016). At the same time, at the local level, residents have been expanding opportunities to claim their rights based on the temporary activation of public spaces for tactical actions, place-making projects, and protest initiatives, for instance. According to Franco (2020), when institutional participation is not an effective way to solve urgent matters, citizen practices demonstrate the growing power of their actions. This is visible when actors who, having been systematically excluded from decision-making, find mechanisms to challenge dominant regimes and ensure the provision of basic services (also see Sandercock,1999; Watson, 2009; Miraftab, 2016; Sobral, 2019, Franco, 2020). Therefore, understanding city-making processes involves understanding participation as multidimensional.

Table 1 - Dimensions of participation in city-making

Institutionalized	Citizen (non-institutionalized)
Citizens assemblies, citizen councils, sectoral dialogues, participatory platforms, participatory planning, participatory budgeting, etc.	Occupation of public spaces, protests, campaigns, performances, open discussions, workshops, etc.

Multidimensional participation, a combination of institutional and citizen interactions between stakeholders, has expanded citizen practices in policymaking (also see Tatagiba, 2004; Avritzer, 2008; Gurza Lavalle, 2011). For instance, by analyzing social movements in Brazil, Gurza Lavalle et al. (2019, p. 39) summarize three characteristics involved in the relationship between movements and institutions. First, the interaction between movements and institutions can vary and includes opposition and negotiation, as well as cooperation (also see Giugni and Passy, 1998; Carlos, 2012). Second, movements creatively combine institutionalized and non-institutionalized action (also see Rubin, 2006; Serafim and Tatagiba, 2014). Finally, the use of institutionalized tools in the repertoire of movements does not necessarily convey their demobilization (Carlos, 2012).

Taking into account these characteristics, we can understand the interaction between stakeholders as mutually constitutive. This mutuality ranges from dualistic and dichotomous to the acknowledgment that democratic institutions are not alien to political disputes and social interests (Gurza Lavalle et al. 2019). In this sense, Rubin (2006, p.28) suggests the concept of "movements-in-democracy," perceiving that groups can "be on the streets and in institutions simultaneously," thus combining "inspiration, connection with daily life, creation of innovative political forms, and pressure and threat from the streets" with "negotiating and implementing legislation and policy reform". The author concludes by stating that we should "see and not see", by bringing the "complexity and messiness" that shape politics on the ground into movements and political analyses.

Identifying the limits and challenges of participation is essential for improving the design of participatory procedures. In urban contexts, despite relevant experiences that show a collective horizon of experimentation and co-governance (see also Hybrant, 2017; Sobral, 2019; Pogrebinschi, 2021), participatory processes often lose their purpose when they are not able to involve different urban actors equitably. For example, when new urban policies are approved without public discussion, residents remain unaware of their city's projects. Based on the literature review and interviews, the following two key challenges were identified: (a) reinforcing power asymmetries; and (b) neutralizing dissenting voices.

First, participation can reinforce the interest of already powerful groups (also see Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Yiftachel, 2002; Caldeira and Holston, 2015; Franco, 2020). Power structures reproduce patterns of domination (Quijano, 1966), as ethnicity and race. In Quijano's (2000, p. 342) view, this influences both material and subjective dimensions "of everyday social existence and at a societal scale." In terms of urban planning, domination has contributed to the perpetuation of ethno-racial segregation and the stigmatization of the urban poor (Hernandez, 2015, 2017). When participation ignores these structural conditions, it can reproduce social inequalities, perpetuating exclusions instead of mitigating them. According to the conceptual framework of the "tyranny of participation" (Cooke and Kothari, 2001, p.8), decision-making and control, group dynamics, and participatory methods are elements that can reinforcing the interest of the already powerful. Practices that restrain the participation of underprivileged communities, derived from the coloniality of power, have become the perfect mechanism for maintaining the status quo (Lombard, 2012) and decision-making in urban planning continues to be dominated by ruling elites. Therefore, the main challenge is how participation can redistribute power to consider sociopolitical pluralities and include groups who are maintained in an unprivileged position.

Second, participatory processes can neutralize or ignore dissident voices. In light of the post-political body, the recognition of conflict is constitutive of the social condition of debate; disagreement

and contestation are essential for democracy, even the forms perceived as unauthorized or unfeasible (Mouffe, 1993; Rancière, 2007; Habermas, 2011; Heindl, 2020; Quintana, 2020). When alternative voices are not allowed for when creating consensus, they are pushed out of the sphere of governance (Habermas, 2011). As the city is the "political scale where conflicts and new forms of governance are organized" (Roth et al, 2019:15), the plurality of voices is key to building alternative futures. However, when alternative groups' voices are neutralized or ignored, the impact they can have in the participation process is diminished and, as a consequence, "the reduction of the desire for transformation" arises (Quintana, 2020). The question is how participation can legitimize spaces of contestation, recognizing that the political process in the city is inherently conflictual.

3. Assessing Participation in Urban Policies

Participation can lead to improvements in the quality and complexity of democratic decision-making in our cities. Participation is a means for democratic innovation (Pogrebinschi, 2016) that considers a set of new institutional forms of democracy that seek to go beyond governmental structures and representation by bringing citizens back in to take part in, deliberate and even, make decisions. Considering a valuable dataset of Latin American democratic innovations Pogrebinschi (2021) proposes a framework with four forms of participation: direct voting, citizen representation, deliberative, and digital participation:

Table 2 – The means of citizen participation

Participatory means		**Examples**
Direct voting	Citizens "may vote to directly decide or express their opinion on policy issues or concrete political matters."	Plebiscite campaigns, referendums.
Citizen representation	Citizens or civil society organizations represent others in three main forms: - Selection to speak on behalf of others. - Self-appointment to stand for the interests. and values of others - Action for others.	Citizen councils, innovation labs, participatory policy implementation processes.
Deliberative	Citizens "voice their needs and demands, as well as hear the position of others," considering forms of dialogue, interaction, and mutual communication. This means is typically institutionalized and directed towards problem-solving and will-formation.	Participatory budgets, citizen councils, participatory plans, deliberative councils.
Digital participation	Citizen involvement by digital tools, "as diverse as the possibilities available to use them in boosting participation." This means usually involves deliberation or direct voting as a secondary means of participation.	Platforms, digital campaigns.

Source: Adapted from Pogrebinschi (2021).

The different participatory means have different purposes. A combination of means can complement each other, improving the quality of citizen participation and enforceability of results (Rohr et al, 2020). However, the combination can be complex, depending on the goal of the procedure. By reflecting on direct voting and deliberative, for instance, we can see that direct voting can involve as many people as possible to make substantive decisions about issues that affect them. Although broad access is one of the greatest values of direct democracy, this entails choosing but not deliberating: "majorities make decisions, even if it is not possible to hear different arguments or change their views" (Almeida and Gurza Lavalle, 2021, p. 29, my translation). In this sense, the awareness that different procedures privilege different groups has increased. In addition, access to a procedure may not ensure the inclusion of the contributions of the participants.

Depending on how participation is performed, the quality, outcomes and added value for stakeholders vary. Therefore, the effectiveness of participation cannot apply equally to all forms of citizen engagement. According to Rohr et al. (2020). Good participatory approaches can increase legitimacy by giving citizens, who are directly or indirectly affected by the outcomes of the policies, the opportunity to influence decision-making. The focal point of evaluation shifts from actual decision consequences (e.g., the policy results) to how those decisions are made (Geißel, 2008), thus, shifting from a quest for "output legitimacy" to one for "input legitimacy" (p.30).

3.1 Criteria to Assess Citizen Participation

By exploring the dimensions, challenges, and framework of participation for democratic innovations, I apply the formalization criterion proposed by Pogrebinschi (2018) to measure non-electoral participation and I propose three additional criteria to assess citizen participation in urban policies: openness, inclusiveness, and influence for different phases of the policymaking cycle at the city level. This proposal also considers the patterns for good participation indicated by Rohr et al. (2020).

First, **formalization** is the degree a procedure is embedded into a governmental program, legislation, or constitution (Pogrebinschi, 2018, 2021). Participatory practices have been increasingly transformed into more formal designs or incorporated into existing institutions of representative democracy (Pogrebinschi, 2018). In some cases, the higher the formalization, the higher the enforceability of the results; nevertheless, flexibility and room for maneuvering are reduced (Rohr et al., 2020). Some formal instruments predetermine the participant group and how decision-makers will incorporate the results. Non-institutional forms, however, have more flexibility but can lack legally binding provisions for following through with outputs and outcomes (Rohr et al., 2020). In this case, it would be easy for institutions to meet requirements but not implement the results (Caldeira and Holston, 2015). High formalization occurs when a procedure is backed by legislation and contributions are implemented by authorities.

Second, **openness** is the degree a procedure promotes opportunities for participation. This criterion has two aspects: (a) selection method of participants: open to all or restricted; and (b) dimensions of participation: institutional, such as public hearings; and citizen practices, such as protests. The combination of selection methods contributes to openness by promoting diversity and motivation. For example, a group of citizens chosen randomly through a lottery might promote diversity but also decrease motivation. Thus, a lottery can take place among those who have expressed interest in participating, in order to ensure motivation (Rohr et al., 2020). Multi-dimensional participation promotes openness by combining institutional procedures with opportunities for alternative practices. According to Quintana (2020), dissident initiatives include alternative forms of expression and aesthetics that can transform everyday practice, which is essential for democracy (also see Rancière, 2007; Habermas, 2011). A high level of openness means multiple dimensions of participation with different methods of citizen involvement.

Third, **inclusiveness** effects equitable opportunities for participation. Inclusiveness varies according to (a) how underrepresented groups take part in the democratic process (also see Pogrebinschi, 2018); and (b) how a procedure reaches vulnerable regions. Although the entire participatory procedure is inherently exclusionary, the approach taken determines whether people with different backgrounds can effectively take part. First, a lack involvement by less represented groups means a lack of diversity and therefore, a lack of a plurality of perspectives (Rohr et al., 2020). Procedures that do not consider the

asymmetrical distribution of information and resources (e.g., time, networks, communication skills) increase social inequalities (also see Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Rohr et al., 2017; Rohr et al., 2020). In this sense, the criterion also applies to urban regions. As spatial segregation contributes to social isolation, inclusiveness increases by reaching disadvantaged neighborhoods as well (also see Harvey, 1980; Rolnik, 2009; Villaça, 2012).

Lastly, **influence** determines to what extent the output of the procedure effects the outcome, as, for example, in an urban policy, plan or program. This criterion can be assessed based on (a) the output of the procedure; and (b) evidence of the implementation of participants' contributions. First, the assessment of the output determines whether the procedure generated, for example, recommendations, initiatives, decisions, guidelines, or plans (Pogrebinschi, 2021). Second, a response to citizens' contributions is evident if authorities implement the output of the procedure. Authorities should respond to participatory outputs within a suitable time frame, explaining the rationale for why or why not the input was included/accepted, as well as by providing regular public updates about implementation (Nabatachi et al., 2012). Evidence of implementation can be assessed, for instance, by bills introduced in the legislature as a result of citizen deliberations; laws passed or policies enacted and implemented by public agencies following citizen demands; indications of support by political parties and interest groups (Pogrebinschi, 2016).

Table 2 – Criteria to assess citizen participation

Criteria	**Degrees**		
	Low	**Medium**	**High**
Formalization	Procedure is not embedded in constitution, legislation nor governmental policy/ program.	Procedure embedded in a governmental program/policy.	Procedure embedded in the Constitution or legislation
Openness	Procedure does not combine recruitment methods nor participatory dimensions.	Procedure combines recruitment methods or participatory dimensions.	Procedure combines recruitment methods and participatory dimensions.
Inclusiveness	Procedure does not reach out to underrepresented groups nor vulnerable regions.	Procedure reaches out to underrepresented groups or vulnerable regions.	Procedure reaches out to underrepresented groups and vulnerable regions.
Influence	Procedure does not generate outputs.	Procedure generates outputs, without evidence of implementation.	Procedure generates outputs with evidence of implementation, partially or fully.

Source: Adapted from Pogrebinschi (2018, 2021).

According to Franco (2020), a low level of citizen participation can lead to three results. The first is a general apathy towards taking part in public discussions because of the lack of public trust (also see Fung, 2015). The second is the irrelevance of the processes when citizen participation is not legally binding since it is easy for institutions to meet the requirements and ignore the results (also see Caldeira and Holston, 2015). Finally, when the urban poor are excluded from participatory processes, such as local

planning and budgeting, insurgent forms of city-making emerge as the solution for ensuring housing and infrastructure by other means (also see Sandercock, 1999; Holston, 2008; Lombard, 2012).

4. Experiences

Over the years, due to the combined efforts of policymakers, academics, civil society and social movement representatives, numerous participatory procedures have been designed, tested and implemented in many cities. Drawing on theoretical and empirical data collected, the study presents four experiences implemented in Berlin, Germany and São Paulo, Brazil.

Table 3 – Experiences of participation in Berlin and São Paulo

	Berlin – Germany		**São Paulo – Brazil**	
	***Deutsche Wohnen & Co. Enteignen* (DWE)**	**Neighborhood Councils (QR)**	**Review of Strategic Master Plan (PDE)**	**GestãoUrbanaSP (GU)**
Means and procedures	**Direct voting:** Citizen initiative	**Citizen representation:** Neighborhood Councils	**Deliberative:** Participatory planning	**Digital participation:** Platform
Time period	April 2018 - ongoing	2015 – ongoing	April 2013 – Sep 2014	Jun 2013– ongoing
Duration	Series of events over 3 years and 5 months	2 years of institutional mandates	Series of events over 6 months	Three tools over 6 months
Purpose	**Agenda-setting / Urban policy formulation:** citizen initiative for new housing law approved by the Senate.	**Urban program implementation:** budget decision and contributions (opinions, recommendations).	**Urban policy formulation:** collective contributions (recommendations and proposals).	**Urban policy formulation:** information and contributions (opinions, recommendations and proposals).
Citizen participation	Open to all participants (German' citizens with voting rights)	Restricted: Election of 20 members on average per council (residents and local stakeholders)	Open to all participants with restriction in the evaluation step (sectorial dialogues)	Open to all participants
Main activities	**1.Launch** Campaign for petition, cost assessment by the Senate. **2. Petition for referendum** (*Volksbegehren*) Test of legal admissibility via Senate: collection of signatures, protests, signature collection rounds on the streets, permanent signature collection points. **3. Referendum** (*Volksentscheid*) Campaign for citizen voting, referendum vote.	**1. Contributions** Elaboration of development concept in workshops, neighborhood forums and community meetings. **2. Proposals** Selection of proposals submitted by residents and local actors **3. Decision** Agreement on the allocation of funds and selection of partners to implement projects by open call.	**1. Learning and evaluation** Evaluations on previous PDE with thematic activities, sectorial dialogues and the 6th Municipal Conference. **2. Proposals** Citizen proposals in face-to-face workshops and digital platform. **3. Systematization** **4. Discussion** Citizen recommendations on the project bill.	**1.Launch** Platform dissemination in social media, email marketing), online streaming. **2. Proposals** Citizen proposals by form and collaborative map. **3. Recommendations** Citizen recommendations for legislative bills.
Outputs	Citizen voting and law proposal (housing socialization).	Citizen decisions (funding allocation).	Citizen proposals and recommendations.	Citizen proposals and recommendations.

The first experience, ***Deutsche Wohnen & Co Enteignen* (DWE),** is a citizen initiative by means of direct voting to formulate a housing policy by a grassroots movement in Berlin, Germany for the implementation of a housing socialization law by the Berlin Senate. The demand is for the expropriation of real estate companies with over 3,000 apartments, and the democratic management of the repossessed dwellings through a public institution. DWE stands out for its massive mobilization and the flexibility to combine institutional and citizen instruments. One output is the initiative getting over 1 million votes

of support in the referendum (59% of the valid votes), after implementing a strong petition and socialization campaign.

The second German experience is a case of citizen representation to implement the federal program "Social Cohesion", coordinated by the Berlin Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing and local districts. The **Neighborhood Councils (Quartiersräte – QR)** that are part of the Quartiersmanagement program select projects based on funds available to resident project proposals. The elected members define the scope of projects related to areas such as health, education, and public space, taking into consideration 32 regions designated as "urban, economically and socially disadvantaged" (Berlin Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing, 2019). The main output of the councils' mandate is the allocation of four types of project funds, with support of the action fund juries.

The third case, **Review of the Strategic Master Plan (PDE),** is a deliberative experience of urban policy formulation implemented by the City Hall of São Paulo, Brazil. The aim of the participatory formulation was to involve citizens in discussing and create proposals related to twelve goals for guiding São Paulo's development. Citizens representing different groups (e.g., NGOs, housing movements) were invited to participate in sectorial dialogues, while the City Hall coordinated a municipal conference, workshops in all districts, and a digital platform — included below — open to all residents. Among the topics citizens contributed to most were: "How to improve the supply of public services, equipment and urban infrastructure in the neighborhoods," and "How to expand access to urban land for the production of social housing" (SMDU, 2014). The procedure resulted in co-created proposals for the master plan formulation.

Lastly, **GestãoUrbanaSP (GU)** is the platform launched in the participatory formulation of the master plan, coordinated by the São Paulo City Hall and co-created with civil society. The purpose was to engage civil society in urban planning using a hybrid model. The platform provided three tools that allowed citizens to comment on: strategic objectives, specific proposals to neighborhoods with a geo-referenced tool, and the final bill proposed by the City Hall. Among the ideas collected, the objectives most commented on were: "How to expand job opportunities for income distribution throughout the city"; and "How to improve mobility by public transport, better conditions for cyclists and pedestrians" (SMDU, 2014). In addition, the procedure also promoted transparency by sharing updated agendas, files, and illustrated urban guidelines.

4.1 Direct Voting: Deutsche Wohnen & Co. Enteignen (DWE) Initiative

Source: Mariana Morais, 2021

DWE is a citizen initiative run by tenants, experienced activists, civil society and political party representatives. The group's demand is that the Berlin Senate approve a citizen-written law for the socialization of housing, and the democratic management of the apartments by a public institution. The initiative is collectively funded by donations from individuals and foundations.

In Berlin, conflicts over housing have many layers. The reunification process has changed the conditions of social housing. Since 1992, with the campaign "We All Stay" (*wir bleiben alle*) Berlin has been shaping a narrative of anti-eviction based on a mix of legal strategies, actions and protests, that increases public and political awareness of the housing issue (Holm, 2021). Over the past decade, rents in Berlin have increased by 100 percent. The city is known as a "tenants' city" with more than 80 percent of the housing stock occupied by tenants. Compared to other cities, "an average tenant in Berlin has an impressive knowledge of legal terminology concerning tenant protection laws" (Kusiak, 2021). In response to rental increases, many initiatives to protect tenants and curb the excessive price escalation were implemented in the city.

The DWE initiative, started in 2018 by a group of tenants disappointed with the services provided by the commercial landlord "Deutsche Wohnen," hence the campaign's name. The group demanded expropriation based on Art. 15 of the Basic Law, Germany's Constitution, which allows the state to turn land, natural resources, and means of production into collective ownership "for the purposes of socialization" (*Vergesellschaftung*). At the municipal level[1], the institutional instruments, petition for referendum (*Volksbegehren*) and referendum (*Volksentscheid*), are based on Art. 62 of Berlin's Constitution, which allows popular initiatives to enact, change or repeal laws.

Collective action guaranteed the initiative's success. Working groups and neighborhood teams were able to organize large numbers of volunteers, and for the second phase of the initiative, more than 2,000 volunteers helped collect signatures (interview 15, activist DWE). Communication and task forces had neighborhood offices as well as an internet presence. They used open-source tools and carried out two crowdfunding campaigns, which provided resources for the communication and mobilization efforts.

The initiative generated a widespread public debate about housing access at the city level. For example, on the one hand, the initiative was criticized for not assigning construction of housing in suitable areas, which is a main concern of the social housing debate. On the other, supporters point out that, in the current market "affordable apartments cannot be produced at all, because there is no economic motive to offer rental prices below the average" (interview 17, expert). In addition,

[1] At the municipal level, the Art. 24 and 28 of Berlin's Constitution also stipulates that "everybody shall have the right to adequate housing. The State shall promote the creation and maintenance of adequate housing, particularly for people on a low income (...)," considering "any abuse of economic power is illegal." (Berlin Constitution)

"commercial landlords do not focus on developing new apartments but on buying apartments in order to increase the rent." (interview 20, activist DWE).

Participatory Procedure

The initiative was organized based on three main phases:

In September 2020, after protestors demanded the petition be acknowledged, the campaign became legally admissible by the Senate. The second petition phase took place from February to June 2021. The campaign collected over 350,000 signatures for the referendum, exceeding the number of 175,000 valid signatures required. Effective tools used during this phase were: protests, public demonstrations, and dissemination of posters spread throughout the city.

The right to vote became one of the campaign's demands, as almost a quarter of Berliners do not have German citizenship (22 percent). According to the working group R2C, "voting rights are not a separate issue from housing justice, they are part of a set of structural obstacles that people with migration backgrounds face in Germany, which also include discrimination in the housing market." In this sense, a tenant shared, in order to "to get my current home, I asked a white friend to replace me at the "interview" because I tried for months and I know some people don't want a black person living in their apartment" (interview 22, tenant).

The last stage, which began in June 2021, included four months of campaigning for the referendum and coincided with the National and Berlin State elections, which took place in September. In this phase, the initiative focused on two strategies: (a) door-to-door campaigning, including approaching residents of non-central Berlin areas; and (b) collaborative writing of the socialization law. The aim of the intense mobilization was not only reaching the majority of supporters needed for the referendum, but also activating them to demand the law be implemented afterwards (interview 15, activist DWE).

Although it is too early to fully comprehend the long-term impact of the initiative, the data at the moment of finalizing this research provides information on the successful implementation of the procedure.

Case Assessment

The case was assessed based on the four criteria:

Formalization. The case is highly institutionalized, considering the procedure is embedded in Federal legislation (Basic Law, art. 15), and also supported by Berlin's Constitution (art. 24, 28, 62). By adopting a legal argument based on federal legislation, with accessible language, the campaign achieves high political mobilization. The pro-active use of the legislation and legal imagination is fundamental: "when we saw that the term socialization was in the Basic Law, it was easier to propose something new, without being called radical" (interview 20, DWE founding member). In addition, the combination of the term "expropriation" (*Enteignung*) as a political slogan, with "socialization" (*Vergesellschaftung*), an actual

legal term, also contributes to the high mobilization of the initiative (Kusiak, 2021). According to Kusiak (2021), the group has managed to promote a positive vision of a new regime of governance (socialization), while enjoying the greater mobilizing power of a negative campaign ("expropriate" corporate landlords).

Openness. The procedure combines recruitment methods and multiple dimensions of participation to involve citizens. While the referendum is open to residents with German citizenship, activities such as door-to-door actions use random selection of citizens from non-central districts. Although social movements are recognized for using protests as a main strategy, the DWE involves several tools, organized by two main approaches: the use of direct democracy instruments (e.g., petition and referendum) and the repertoire of grassroots political actions (e.g., demonstrations, performances, social media happenings). The campaign shows that the involvement of different groups is important in overcoming barriers for participation. For instance, the voting right limitation becomes a demand for the campaign, amplifying the voice of immigrant groups.

Inclusiveness. The initiative carries out different activities to reach out to all districts and specific groups, such as immigrant communities. To overcome the language barrier (German), activities to promote greater access included the use of different languages and audio-visual content during the campaign as well as the creation of an English language working group called Right to the City-R2C. In addition, although the legislation only counts citizen signatures on petitions, the campaign collected all signatures even if not legally valid. The "political signatures" allowed non-German citizens to also express their voices.

Influence. Although there is no evidence of their implementation by the Senate in the short-term, the initiative generates two main outputs. First, the referendum vote: 1,034,709 of Berliners in favor of a law for housing socialization, which corresponds to 59 percent of valid votes. Second, a proposed bill which considers anti-discriminatory housing management by a public institution with tenant councils. Beyond a one-time voting event where citizens only participate by indicating "yes/no" to a proposal, the citizen initiative generates a meaningful and collective output. As the procedure took place on the streets and in institutions, using different languages and tools, it generated a collective learning process and high-level political debate that set an agenda for a new housing governance regime. According to Mughrabi (2021), although "success and failure are usually seen through a lens of short-term political gains, social movements and protests often occur in cycles." In this sense, the fulfillment of the DWE's purpose will also depend on how the Senate reacts to the collective output generated over the following years.

4.2 Representative: Neighborhood Councils (*Quartiersräte – QR)*

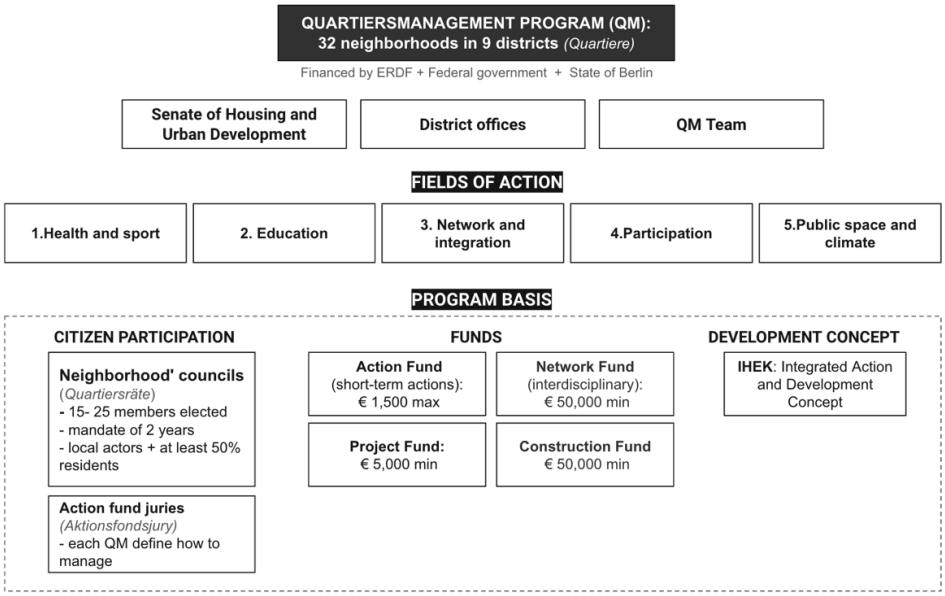
Source: QM Pankstraße, 2020.

The Neighborhood Councils (*Quartiersräte – QR)* are an essential participatory procedure of the *Quartiersmanagement* program (QM) for encouraging residents and local groups to make collective decisions. The councils give citizens a say in in selecting and prioritizing projects in their neighborhood.

Three funds support the program: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Urban Development funding from the Federal Government, and the State of Berlin.

The Quartiersmanagement is the local implementation of the federal program "Social Cohesion" (*Sozialer Zusammenhalt).* The program combines participation in implementing urban projects and the integration of policies that provide human and financial resources for improving economically and socially disadvantaged regions in Berlin (Berlin Senate, 2019). In 2001, the Senate experimented with a pilot project, "One Million for the Neighborhood (*Kiez*)," in which citizens could decide on the allocation of resources in their regions. The positive experience of this project inspired the formation of Neighborhood Councils, or *Quartiersräte* (QR). In 2005, the Berlin Urban Development and Housing Senate incorporated the Neighborhood Councils into the program, making them a permanent participatory channel.

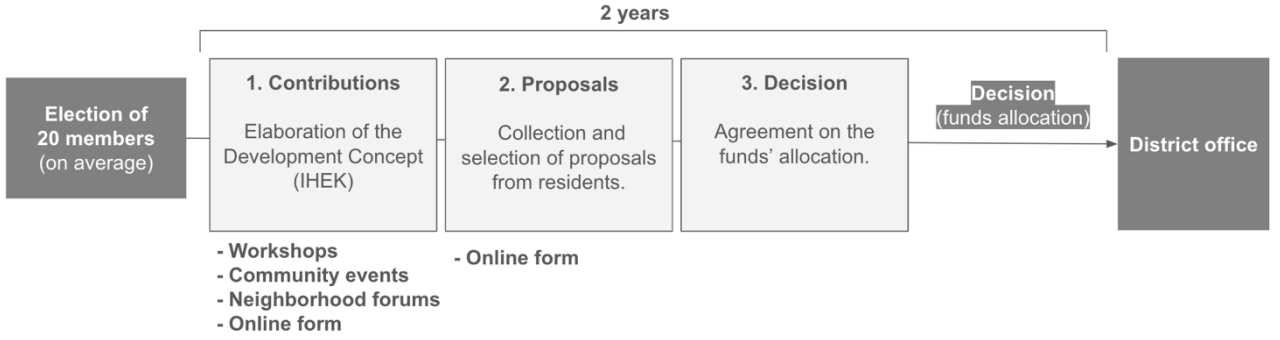
In Berlin, the Neighborhood Councils implement the project along with the Berlin Urban Development and Housing Senate and regional District offices and QM-teams. At the district level, the local offices manage the program. They connect the QM-teams with the Senate, providing technical capacity and information. They also conduct the annual evaluation based on indicators defined by the Senate. At the neighborhood level, the QM-teams (run by a technical service provider) along with residents, map and activate the local network and establish local partnerships. This work, according to a QM-teams representative, is complex, since the program takes place in each neighborhood for a specific period and needs trust to build a local network that actively engages with the program actions. (interview 27, QM-team representative).



A fundamental activity of the QM program is to write the Integrated Action and Development Concept (IHEK), a development guideline for the neighborhoods. Neighborhood Councils (QR) and the Action-fund Juries represent residents and local actors in the creation of this framework, which is implemented in the 32 regions of Berlin covered by the QM program and supported by four different funds to promote social cohesion in these territories.

Participatory Procedure

The representative procedure involves three main stages:



Members are volunteers who are elected every two years by the residents at public events. Anyone who lives in the neighborhood and is at least 16 years old can vote or be a candidate. The Councils are composed of 15 to 25 citizens. At least 50 percent are residents, and the rest are made up of local representatives from: associations, schools, religious communities, or real estate companies.

The QM-team informs citizens about the elections on the website and in public spaces; no special knowledge is required for participation. According to the Senate, the diversity of the population living and working in the area should be reflected in the council. The framework of internal regulation (*Geschäftsordnung*) establishes that gender, age, ethnicity, and time of residence in the neighborhood should be taken into consideration. Depending on the region, the QM-team does not receive many candidates, as sometimes residents "don't have time or energy to do that" (interview 25, QM-team representative).

In the first phase, members discuss the internal regulation of the mandate. Members can choose optional guidelines, for example, whether or not members want to take part in the final evaluation of the program. One of the main activities of the councils is to develop the IHEK concept, which is done through community events, taking into account guidelines and technical information provided by the Senate.

After the design of the IHEK, the second phase starts with public calls for resident projects. This process involves monthly council meetings where topics to discuss are suggested. The councilors decide on the eligibility of neighborhood projects based on four types of funding: action, project, network, and construction. A project is eligible if it is necessary and suitable for the region (Berlin Senate, 2019). The local QM-team publishes the project proposals approved for implementation with financial support provided by the district office.

Case Assessment

The case was assessed based on the four criteria:

Formalization. The case is highly institutionalized as Federal and State legislation anchor the program. At the national level, the Basic Law (art. 104b) regulates urban development funding, and the Building Code (BauGB - Section § 171e) establishes the Socially Integrative City program. At the local level, the Berlin Constitution regulates the QM program. Despite high formalization, the program provides some flexibility for the local establishment of the councils. The internal procedure Framework Procedural Rules for Neighborhood Councils (*Rahmengeschäftsordnung für Quartiersräte* – RGO) sets the main activities and election process, including some optional recommendations. These recommendations can be adapted according to the needs of each council at the beginning of the mandate.

Openness. The procedure combines institutionalized methods with citizen initiatives. This means that in addition to electing resident representatives, the procedure provides spaces for resident involvement throughout the representatives' mandate. An important element of this openness is the provision of a local office for participation in each neighborhood. A local facility demonstrates the high value placed on the participatory process (Rohr et al., 2020), which in

addition to increasing motivation, welcomes collaborative methods, such as holding workshops to co-design IHEKs.

Inclusiveness. The experience demonstrates a suitable structure for equitable participation. The QM program focuses on 32 disadvantaged regions throughout the city where, on average, 60 percent of residents come from an immigration background. In order to address this situation, the guidelines call for the hiring of at least one employee on the QM team with an immigrant background in order to promote acceptance from the residents: "I noticed some people feel more relaxed if they talk to me because I speak Turkish" (interview 25, QM-team representative). In this way, the program also helps to lower the language barrier, although it does not offer an active method to reach out to immigrants as candidates to run for election or present proposals.

Influence. The case presents a high degree, as the output is fully implemented by the QM-teams and districts when it matches the development concept (IHEK) designed by elected members and neighborhood residents. There are two fundamental elements to this process. First, the involvement of members in the development of the guiding concept help to ensure that their decisions are connected to the neighborhood's needs. Second, the clarity of the procedure guarantees a common understanding of how the output feeds into the political process.

4.3 Deliberative: Participatory Review of Strategic Master Plan (PDE)

Source: SMDU, 2014.

The Review of São Paulo's Master Plan is the participatory formulation of the municipal law that guides the future of the city of São Paulo. Citizens contribute proposals to guidelines for reorganizing the city through policies and programs. These instruments aim, for example, to propose a maximum height of buildings in consolidated areas, seeking to control real estate market. The Secretariat of Urban Development (SMDU) is responsible for the participatory process.

Brazil has a long history of struggle for urban reform, with popular participation being one of the main goals of this movement (Rolnik, 2013). In 2001, the "City Statute" (*Estatuto da Cidade*), a legal framework to strengthen local planning and equitable land management, was approved. In the context of Brazilian democratization. This federal legislation was the result of large-scale social mobilization, as well as political and legal reforms arising from the 1988 Constitution.

Participatory formulation of the master plan is highly institutionalized in Brazil. The Constitution (art. 182) defines the master plan as the "basic instrument of urban development and expansion policy." According to the City Statute, the Master Plan provides tools for municipal governments to promote the social function of properties and cities based on participation. According to Holston (1989) since master planning is the "hallmark of the developmentalist model", the idea of planning was absent from the popular amendments submitted to the Constitutional Assembly (see also Caldeira & Holston, 2015).

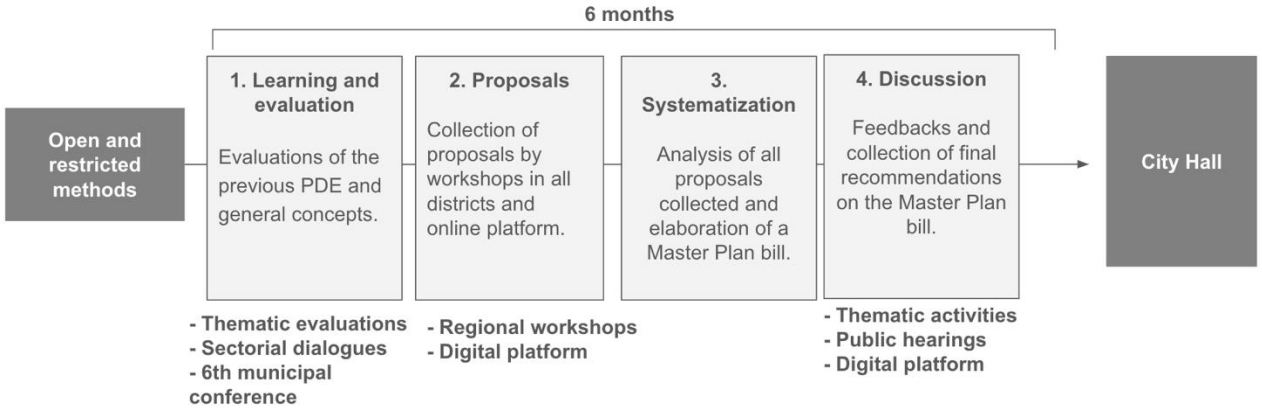
Despite this absence, the instrument was established at all the levels and later disseminated by a widespread campaign by the Ministry of Cities.

In 2012, after municipal elections and with the ruling Workers' Party approval, the City Hall announced the review of all the urban regulatory frameworks in governmental programs, starting with the Master Plan approved in 2002, one year after the consolidation of the City Statute. This process started in January 2013 and continued through the end of 2018 with the Building Code review.

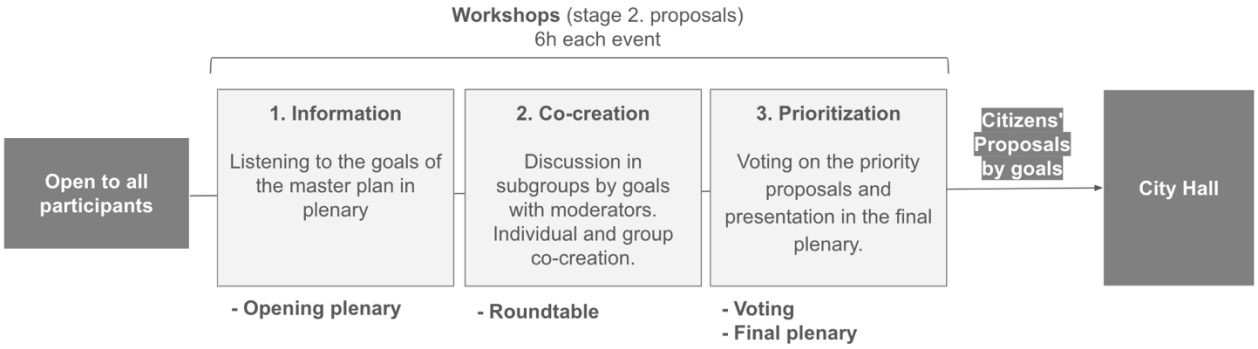
The participatory coordination of the master plan review required an institutional restructuring. The Secretariat of Urban Development created a participatory advisory board, the Technical Advisory Office for Participation. This board hired specialists, such as programmers, designers, sociologists, and architects to provide transversal support to the participatory design of urban policies. The Secretariat focused this training on promoting suitable methodologies and transparency in the process's conduction (interview 33, policy-maker). This was visibly an institution wide effort. For example, approximately 700 public servants were trained to facilitate workshops (SMDU, 2014). The restructuring also engaged the local administrations of all districts of the city in the participatory process.

Participatory Procedure

The participatory procedure had four stages that took place over five months, from April to September 2013: learning and evaluation; contributions; systematization; and recommendation.



Focusing on the deliberative process in which the collective contributions were generated, this report details the first and second stages. First, the learning and evaluation of the 2002 Master plan took place over two months. This stage included thematic discussions, the 6th Municipal conference, and sectorial dialogues. Specific groups were invited to evaluate the previous plan and discuss their needs. These "informal" events, had an opening panel, a round of speeches by all the participants, resulting in a synthesis of the guidelines generated during the conversations (SMDU, 2016). The second stage took place over two months. No recruitment method was put in place; the participatory formulation to collect contributions combined in-person and online methods open to all residents: workshops in the 31 districts, and the launch of the GestãoUrbanaSP platform, through which citizens could send proposals and suggestions for the new plan. Instead of traditional public hearings for participatory planning, one innovation of the participatory procedure was the formation of regional workshops (SMDU, 2016). They included three consecutive phases: information, co-creation, and prioritization, resulting in citizen proposals by goals:



During the first phase, citizens gathered for the opening plenary, where they attended the presentation of the 12 objectives defined by the Secretariat of Urban Development. These objectives were, for example, "expanding access to urban land for social interest housing production" or "improving the supply of services, equipment, and urban infrastructure in the neighborhoods" (SMDU, 2014). SMDU conducted the events on Saturdays, starting in the morning, with a lunch break. In the second co-creation phase, participants worked together in small groups to develop project proposals, based on the following question: "From the diagnostic presented and your experience in the city, how can we achieve this goal?" Afterward, each group presented their answers, discussing ideas, and choosing two priorities. This was "the crucial moment of this method," when participants discussed topics, identified common points and conflicts, and created the proposals together" (interview 29, policy-maker). In the third phase, participants listened to the ideas prioritized by each subgroup and then voted for the two ideas they consider most important. Finally, they gathered in the central plenary for the presentation and the finalization of the event.

The contributions stage generated 1,360 collectively constructed proposals covering all regions of the city (SMDU, 2014). After collecting this output, along with the individual and online contributions, the Secretariat conducted the third and fourth stages: systematization and recommendation. The systematization method to analyze the proposals was conducted with the development of a participatory methodology of the master plan review, "something pioneered by the City Hall" (interview 29, policy maker). The final step resulted in the collection of recommendations through online tools and public hearings which were used to draft the bill. Finally, the master plan became a law, after being passed in the legislature.

Case Assessment

The case was assessed based on the four criteria:

Formalization. The experience is highly formalized. At the federal level, the master plan is regulated by Federal Legislation (City Statute art. 39, §4). At the city level, the process is also embedded in the governmental program (*Programa de Metas* 2013-2016), which establishes municipal commitment to spatial justice and a participatory formulation of the urban development framework. This formalization allows the procedure to be carried out within the planned time frame, despite the limited space for co-creation of the procedure.

Openness. The procedure presents a medium degree of openness, considering the combination of recruitment methods and participatory dimensions. While restricted selection based on the invitation to specific groups are implemented for sectorial dialogues, regional workshops in all the districts are open to all participants. Access to these methods is transparent, based on clear communication using visual and illustrated content. This also creates spaces for learning and provides timely information. This is visible during the workshops, when proposal sheets give information about the rules for contributing, thus making the eligibility criteria visible, for instance. The request for proposals only in written form, however, makes equitable participation difficult.

Inclusiveness. The case presents a low degree of inclusiveness, which means there is a limited focus on underrepresented groups. In the first stage, among the three mobilization strategies, the municipality prioritizes the mapping of social movements and specific groups (homeless population, street vendors, indigenous people, women, LGBTQI community), for dissemination of the participatory

process. In addition, the Secretariat conducts workshops in all districts, expanding the opportunity for access for residents of disadvantaged regions. Besides these two initiatives, there is no action implemented to specifically reach these groups.

Influence. The procedure generates influential contributions, as the main output, proposals co-created by goals, is implemented by City Hall. First, the contributions stage generates valuable proposals as a result of a procedure that balances the largest number of contributions with prioritizing social dialogue. This is evident since City Hall organizes workshops in all districts (thirty-one in all regions), instead of five regions as in the organization of traditional municipal public hearings. In addition, the city extends the duration of the events (4h planned to 6h in total). Second, the procedure has a clear purpose that contributes to generating concrete output. The co-creation workshops are based on the 12 strategic objectives of the new master plan, ensuring that contributions focus on the main urban policy challenges. The City Hall then collects contributions following a systematization method which facilitates the incorporation of the proposals into the drafted bills sent to the legislature. Despite the dissemination of a report presenting all proposals, whether they are incorporated or not, the short participatory process does not include a discussion stage on how and why the final contributions were incorporated into the bills that are drafted.

4.4 Digital: GestãoUrbanaSP Platform

GestãoUrbanaSP is the platform launched during the participatory formulation of the Master Plan in 2013. The platform provided three tools for collecting citizen contributions to the Master Plan review: a proposal form, a collaborative map, and a bill comments tool *(Minuta Participativa).* The Secretariat of Urban Development (SMDU) from São Paulo City Hall coordinated the project.

During the first semester of the new elected municipal government of São Paulo, faced with the challenge of formulating a new Master Plan, the City Hall announced the inclusion of digital participation as a method as part of the participatory process. Proposed by the Secretariat of Urban Development and co-created with citizens, the experiment of a digital platform was aimed at improving the interaction between residents and the administration and increasing citizen involvement in the new urban framework formulation.

A fundamental element of this project was the cocreation approach. The initiative emerged from the digital core of the Secretariat, with support of "hacker *cafés*" events: pioneering events to brought together government representatives, communication professionals (e.g., journalists, programmers, researchers) and citizens interested in data and information. The goal was to have open conversations about tools, websites, systems, as well as public policy data and information. "During the design period of the platform, we opened the doors of the City Hall every day in the evening, inviting people to participate in a platform development lab" (interview 35, activist and City Hall advisor).

Digital procedures can expand possibilities for citizen participation, compared to traditional forms. The platform innovated involving citizens by "giving them a voice" in different ways: designing and improving upon the procedural design; contributing proposals; monitoring and assessing both the Master Plan participatory process and its outputs (Sutti et al., 2015). The pilot project started by sharing information, including all the content about the Master Plan formulation: materials, news, live events, design procedural stages and events. By using visual content, such as videos, photos and infographics, as well as accessible language, the platform promoted a collective learning process.

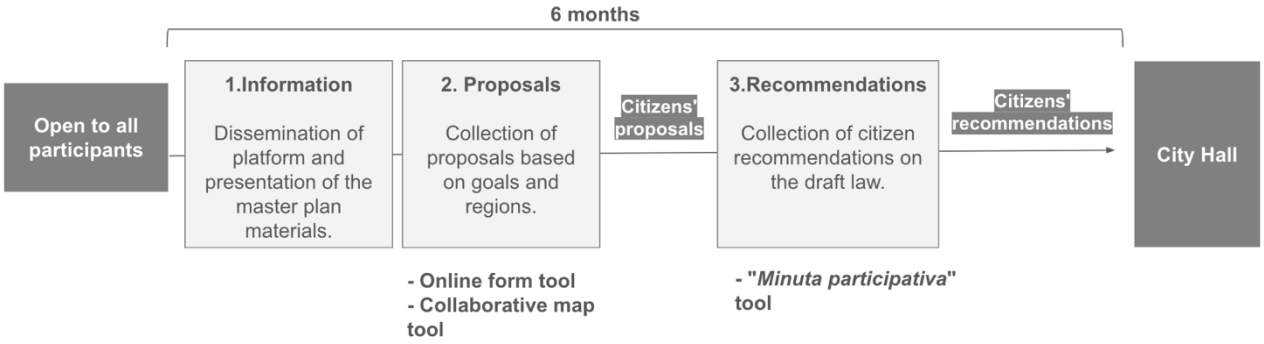
The platform used an open-source code, which means users could see how the tool worked and how the results were processed on the platform. In this way, the platform could inspire other municipalities and also receive improvements by collaborators (interview 34, City Hall advisor). According to SMDU (2018), in the first five years, this instrument collected more than 20.000 contributions (e.g., comments on bills, opinions on urban projects, recommendations to urban policies) through different tools. Half of the residents who used the platform were young people and adults, ranging in age from 18 to 34 (SMDU, 2018).

Since 2018, many changes have been made to the platform and its purpose. In 2018, the Secretariat of Urbanism and Licensing, formerly SMDU, developed an API (Application Programming Interface) connected to GestãoUrbanaSP, for better distribution of data, as well as to include more visual resources such as maps, interactive illustrations, and images in the platform. More recently, after the approval of the 2nd Action Plan on Open Government of the Municipality of São Paulo, the City Hall decided to integrate the municipal participatory system, incorporating the GestãoUrbanaSP tools, for instance, into

a new instrument called "Participa+[2]". Currently, GestãoUrbanaSP remains an important channel of communication for the city's urban development, despite no longer including participatory tools. The platform also provides valuable lessons, especially from its initial phase.

Participatory Procedure

During the Master Plan review, the GestãoUrbanaSP introduced three tools during different stages of the participatory formulation: information, proposals and recommendations.



After the dissemination of the platform, the contributions stage aimed to collect ideas using an online form and collaborative map. Citizens submitted proposals through the online form linked to the 12 strategic goals defined by City Hall without having to identify themselves by name or organization, The tool's accessible design, with all the information available on the first click, was intended to attract a large number of users. Alternatively, residents could also contribute in person using off-line forms available in the districts and workshops.

The collaborative map enabled citizens to share geo-localized contributions. This procedure made the government aware of the daily challenges as perceived by citizens. For example, the interactive map enabled residents to attach photos that illustrated concerns the Master Plan should address. As a result, the City Hall collected 901 geo-referenced contributions, which inspired other initiatives, such as the valuable collaborative map for a social function of property.

By requiring specific skills from residents (e.g., digital navigation, mapping reading, written language, reflection), the platform expanded alternatives to involve citizens. Instead of limiting the possibilities to complaining or dismissing a proposal, the three tools asked for proposals and recommendations. As a result, the overall process encouraged reflection and meaningful debate. For instance, the possibility of seeing previous comments and differing opinions promoted the "democratic skills" of the participants.

After systematizing the digital contributions and the proposals co-created in person, the City Hall drafted a bill for further recommendations by the "*minuta participativa*" tool. Using this tool, citizens could share opinions about the bill, locate their contributions in the corresponding articles, and read previous comments. The tool has also been used for dozens of subsequent city policy issues and urban projects.

Case Assessment

The case was assessed based on the four criteria:

Formalization. The platform is low institutionalized, as the case is not anchored in legislation. However, the first main purpose of the platform, Master Plan review, is highly formalized (City Statute and governmental program), as the previous section presented. In addition, since the municipality does

[2] Participa+ is a digital instrument based on the open-source software CONSUL, created by the City Hall of Madrid. The Government Secretariat coordinates the project in partnership with UNESCO. See more: https://participemais.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/

not differentiate between how online and offline contributions are collected at the systematization stage, the digital outputs are highly valued, even with the limited degree of institutionalization.

Openness. The procedure demonstrates a high degree, considering the combination of recruitment methods and participatory dimensions. The institutional platform is open to all participants, but each tool has different modes of access: while the form tool is open to all citizens, the collaborative map and the "*minuta participativa*" tool request authentication to take part (login dependent process), which determines different groups of audiences (Zeeuw and Pieterse, 2020). Furthermore, the institutional design also combines a non-formal dimension through the co-creation of the procedure during "hacker cafés" events using open-source code. In this way, the procedure is not only organized and designed by the government, but created with citizens. This also helps the mobilization of a user community from the beginning of the process. As a result, the platform increases citizen motivation, acceptance of the procedure, and mutual trust.

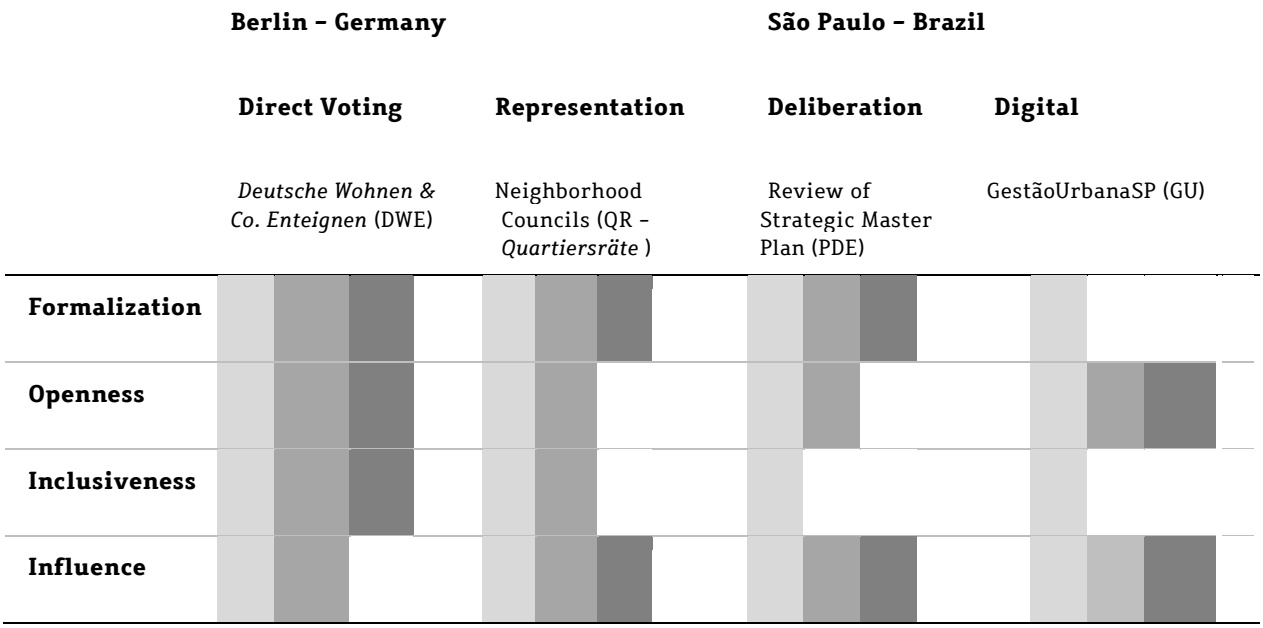
Inclusiveness. The project demonstrates a low degree, which means there is a limited focus on underrepresented groups. The procedural design does not reach out to underrepresented groups or focus on including digitally vulnerable regions. As an alternative, the City Hall proposes off-line forms in all districts to collect contributions in-person.

Influence. The platform generates outputs implemented by the City Hall, indicating a high degree of influence. GU generated two outputs: proposals (submitted by form and collaborative map) and citizen recommendations ("*minuta participativa*" tool). The municipality partially considered both outputs, according to the systematization and the participatory process feedback report. Because it is embedded in the participatory planning framework, the clarity of the platform's purpose increases, amplifying the outputs' influence on the main outcome: master plan law.

5. Findings to Inform Participatory Procedures

The analysis is based on the four criteria, which aims to answer the main question: **how can citizen participation serve as a means for influencing urban policies?** These findings also aim to shed light on addressing the challenges summarized in this study: (a) how participatory procedures can redistribute power when considering sociopolitical pluralities and the inclusion of underrepresented groups; and b) how participation can legitimize spaces of contestation, recognizing the political process in the cities as inherently conflictual. By analyzing each criterion according to the different participatory means, the study summarizes the following findings:

Table 4 - Findings of participatory means analyzed based on the four criteria



While the direct voting, representation, and deliberation cases are highly **formalized**, the digital experience presents low degree of formalization as this experience is not embedded in legislation. On the one hand, the low degree of institutionalization of the *GestãoUrbanaSP* (GU) generates flexibility for the co-creation of the procedure. The consideration of "every feature (in the platform) is a political decision" (interview 35, activist and City Hall advisor), that amplifies the conditions for a higher influence of the citizens from the beginning, during the procedural design. On the other hand, the high degree of formalization of the representative and deliberative cases, also generates a greater influence. This means that the legal argument of both procedures contributed to the implementation of the citizens' contributions, despite the low degree of inclusiveness for both of them.

The GU platform, like the DWE initiative, shows a high degree of openness. The greater opportunity to participate in both procedures results from two aspects: the combination of formal instruments and the random selection of participants with methods such as door-to-door actions (DWE initiative) and authenticated access (GU platform). On the other hand, the representative case, which elects 20 *Quartiersräte* (QR) members, has limited openness. The election requires a balanced selection of members, ensuring that they represent the plurality of residents and institutions in their districts.

The assessment of the cases suggests that a high degree of openness does not result in equitable opportunities for participation and greater inclusiveness. Despite the city government's effort, neither the Master Plan formulation or GU platform include specific activities to engage underrepresented groups in the procedural design. As a result, it is difficult to establish a democratic procedure, since the lack of underrepresented groups affects the quality of the process. On the other hand, the DWE initiative implements activities to include the voices of immigrant groups, for instance, and the QR representation case focuses on disadvantaged regions, which amplify opportunities to listen to groups that are far from discussions that take place in central areas or groups that are restricted from participating by some barrier, such as the right to vote in the case of DWE.

All the procedures result in at least a medium degree of influence. This means that they all generate valuable outputs, such as expressive voting with the DWE initiative, co-created proposals and recommendations in urban policy for the *PDE deliberative formulation* and GU platform, and decisions for urban program implementation in the *Quartiersräte* (QR). Nevertheless, the outputs are implemented differently by the authorities, varying from complete consideration of decisions in the case of representation, partial implementation in the cases of deliberation and digital, to no implementation of the results in the direct voting case by the Berlin Senate in the short-term.

Based on these points, four main findings are highlighted:

Formalization of Outputs Response Increases Citizen Influence on Urban Policies
The analysis of the cases suggests that high institutionalization provides: a) a legal basis for the procedure; b) the definition of groups entitled to participate; c) as well as a means for decision-makers to manage the results. When formalization defines a basis for the procedural design, it can promote meaningful participation as an output, as the DWE voting case and the PDE experience illustrate. However, it does not ensure that it will be reflected in urban policy. Based on the analysis, two elements of formalization stand out for amplifying citizen influence on urban policy: First, institutionalization of how the outputs will be responded to by decision-makers. This is visible in the digital case: although it has limited formalization, the commitment of decision-makers to the participatory formulation is ensured by the governmental plan. Second, institutionalization that considers flexible instruments that promote cooperative interaction between government and citizens from the initial step. The QR councils illustrates this flexibility since the internal regulation specifies how citizen decisions will feed into the program and has space for adaptation.

Openness Does Not Mean Greater Inclusiveness
When the design of the procedure considers asymmetries between the groups entitled to participate (motivation, skills, time), the opportunities for participation increase. The cases show that the inviting specific groups to participle increases motivation, for instance, the sectorial dialogues of the PDE formulation. Similarly, the invitation to co-designing the procedure ensures the involvement of groups throughout the process, as with the café-hackers from GU platform. Actions carried out in neighborhoods, with communication in different languages and forms, including illustrations and performances, also broadened citizen participation. This is most visible during the DWE initiative petition campaign. Inclusiveness, however, is not guaranteed with a high degree of openness in participatory methods.

Inclusion of Underrepresented Groups Increases by Lowering Barriers for Participation
Overcoming barriers to participation is key to promoting equal opportunities for participation. The experiences show barriers to including underrepresented groups and vulnerable regions in two moments: a) at the point of access to the procedure, and, b) its implementation. First, alternatives that work to involve groups that have restricted access the procedure by making the barriers invisible, ensures their mobilization. By moving from who is present to who is missing, groups that do not have their voices heard in the process are identified. This is visible in one case: The collection of political signatures from DWE illustrates shows how the identification of these barriers can become a fundamental claim in the agenda during the participatory procedure. Similarly, the adoption of guidelines for parity for gender, different backgrounds, and age promote the election of a more plural representative group, as in the experience of the QR councils. Second, the creation of a working group in a common language to include immigrants, as with the Right to the City – R2C (DWE), allowed for a collective learning process and mobilization of this group throughout the process. The identification of barrier contributes to understand difficulties for participation and guides the design of strategies to reach out groups in situation of disadvantages.

Citizen Influence Expands When the Procedure is Embedded in the Political Process
The analysis shows that for each of the experiences/cases, all of the procedures generated outputs, delivered to the authorities. Therefore, the ability to influence, either partially or fully, does not depend only on the generation of outputs, but on how these outputs feed into the political processes. When a legal instrument or procedure ensures the commitment of decision-makers, there is a higher degree of implementation of the contributions. In this sense, either the framework of internal regulation - *Geschäftsordnung* from QR councils, or the governmental program from PDE formulation are good examples. On the other hand, when a citizen initiative is not foreseen in the political procedure, its ability to influence urban policies in the short-term decreases, since the commitment of decision-makers is not guaranteed, as the direct voting case illustrates. The non-consideration of the result does

not mean that the participatory procedure was not significant, but it indicates that it did not directly influence urban policy in the short-term. Nevertheless, it may be expected to contribute to changing agendas, public structures, and policies in the long term.

6. Forward-looking Reflections

By exploring four different means of citizen participation grounded at the city level, this paper demonstrates how the embedding of carefully designed procedures promotes the fulfillment of the purpose, despite difficulties in ensuring inclusiveness. This section introduces reflections on improving participatory procedures, without the intention of providing a comparative conclusion.

In **Berlin**, Germany, the experiences suggest that political mobilization and organizational structure are key to greater citizen influence on urban policies. While the DWE initiative strengthens the housing agenda through massive citizen mobilization based on legal argument, the QR councils demonstrate the combination of a highly formalized program with space for supporting citizen decision-making. This is most visible in three elements:

a) Provision of a resource base, for instance, local offices and supplies enabling working conditions while giving citizen initiatives recognition. The autonomy of citizen groups seems greater when the funding, whether provided by government funds or from a crowdfunding campaign, preserves flexibility for citizen decisions on procedure.
b) The combination of participatory dimensions—when citizen practices are embedded in or combined with institutional structures—generate political impact while remaining context sensitive. In this sense, citizen initiatives allow flexibility to embrace dissident voices, and institutionalized participation contributes to feed the outputs into the political process.
c) Implementation of collaborative methods means that citizens work together in a variety of languages based on a common understanding of the purpose and overcoming barriers for participation.

This reflection reinforces the historical context of social mobilization around housing in the city of Berlin, while recognizing the importance of German institutionalized instruments for citizen participation.

In **São Paulo**, Brazil, the case analysis highlights the combination of participatory media, online and onsite, to strengthen the interaction between citizens and government. The PDE case shows an institutional restructuring to ensure participatory formulation of the plan. In this way, the GU platform reinforces the importance of co-creating procedures from the initial step. By exploring this context, this study reflects on three points:

a) Clarity about purpose helps mobilize groups around specific issues. This contributes to connecting the specific purpose to people's lives or thematic interests, thus defining the expected output from the beginning of the process.
b) Open-source tools along with face-to-face events. In this way, selected groups can understand how the digital tool and results work, thus promoting trust.
c) Collective learning, with space for exchanges among people with different perspectives and experiences. This involves providing adequate time and opportunities to have dialogue in an atmosphere that can accommodate conflicts and generate mutual understanding.

By bringing citizens closer to institutional decision-making, the combination of participatory methods highlights the innovative character of Brazilian democracy.

To conclude, the findings and reflections aim to overcoming difficulties for citizen participation. Mapping who is missing in the procedural design can help the identification of access barriers, for instance. In the same sense, the clear definition of a purpose can mitigate the challenge of generating a concrete output. There are limitations to this the study which possibly simplifies contextual dynamics

and nuances, as it was not possible to include the plurality of perspectives present as they deserve. However, the study provides a lens to consider the plurality of existing groups and needs in our societies, valuing citizen contributions towards the democratic urban transformation, according to existing resources in our cities.

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List of abbreviations

API	Application Programming Interface
DWE	Deutsche Wohnen *Enteignen* & Co (Expropriation of Deutsche Wohnen & Co)
EFRE	European Funds for Regional Development
GU	*GestãoUrbanaSP* platform (Urban Management SP platform)
IHEK	*Integrierte Handlungs und Entwicklungskonzept* (Integrated Action and Development Concept)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
PDE	*Plano Diretor Estratégico* (Strategic Master Plan)
PT	*Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Worker"s Party)
QM	*Quartiersmanagement* (Neighbourhood Management)
QR	*Quartiersräte (*Neighborhood Councils*)*
RGO	*Rahmengeschäftsordnung für Quartiersrät* (Framework of procedural rules for Neighborhood Councils)
SMDU	*Secretaria Municipal de Desenvolvimento Urbano* (Secretary of Urban Development)
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Program
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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