

Krzysztof Jurek

Participatory Budgeting as a Contemporary Tool of Organisational Listening to the Needs of Residents

Abstract

Objective: The aim of the article is to analyse participatory budgeting as a tool of organisational listening to the needs of residents in Polish cities with county rights. The study focuses on how this mechanism enables local government institutions to obtain feedback from citizens and use it in decision-making processes. The article formulates three research questions aimed at understanding the impact of civic budget on social dialogue, city development, as well as its role and prospective growing influence in urban policies.

Research Design & Methods: The study involved an analysis of the functioning of participatory budgeting as an organisational listening tool in Polish voivodeship (provincial capital) cities that hold the status of cities with county rights. This analysis was supplemented by an evaluation of the contents of communications published by city offices in digital media, as well as a review of available data on resident participation. The research was comparative in nature, which allowed the identification of variations in participatory practices as well as of the degree of the institutionalisation of the citizen listening process in individual local government units.

Findings: The analysis indicates significant differences in the level of institutionalisation of civic (participatory) budgets and the effectiveness of their use as organisational listening tools. In all the local government units examined, the civic budget is a formally implemented instrument of public consultation; however, the role of this mechanism in communication with residents and the actual degree of citizens' influence on public decisions vary greatly. In cities characterised by a limited openness to social dialogue, civic budget is treated as a formal obligation, which results in lower levels of residential engagement. The results suggest that the effectiveness of participatory budgeting as an organisational listening tool depends not only on its formal existence, but above all on the quality of institutional communication, the transparency of processes, and the availability of genuine co-decision channels. The analysis also shows that projects implemented under the civic budgets of voivodeship cities are more focused on local initiatives rather than on broad city development processes.

Implications / Recommendations: Participatory budgeting, as a tool for involving citizens in decision-making processes, can effectively serve an organisational listening function provided it is appropriately embedded in the structures of local government administration. To increase the mechanism's effectiveness, it is recommended to intensify actions supporting social dialogue, including the implementation of deliberative tools, the development of civic education programmes, and the provision of diverse communication channels with residents. Another important condition for success is ensuring the transparency of procedures and a real influence of citizens on decisions regarding the allocation of public funds.

Contribution / Value Added: This article makes a significant contribution to the literature on civic participation by analysing participatory budgeting as an organisational listening tool in the context of public management. The presented empirical research allows the identification of various models of implementing civic budgets as well as an analysis of the advancement level of participatory processes in Poland's voivodeship cities. The added value of the work lies in its interdisciplinary approach, which combines aspects of organisational communication with local government practices. As a result, the article deepens the understanding of mechanisms for involving

Krzysztof Jurek (corresponding author) – M.A., Doctoral School in the Social Sciences, Jagiellonian University; Rynek Główny 34, Kraków; e-mail; Krzysztof.jurek@doctoral.uj.edu.pl; ORCID: 0000-0003-4154-6416.

residents in local decision-making processes. Furthermore, the research findings provide practical guidance for local government units, supporting the development of effective and transparent forms of social dialogue.

Keywords: participatory budgeting; organisational listening; civic participation; local government; social dialogue

Article classification: research paper

JEL classification: H11; H72; D70

Introduction

Participatory budgeting, as a modern public management instrument, is an important element in the processes of democratisation and strengthening civic participation at the local level (Quandt, 2018). Its fundamental feature is that it allows residents to have direct influence on decisions regarding the allocation of public funds, which translates into increased transparency of local government actions and the building of mutual trust between citizens and public institutions. In an era of growing public expectations for transparency and efficiency in public governance, participatory budgeting serves as a modern organisational listening tool that enables the systematic identification and consideration of residents' needs in the planning and implementation of local policies (Macnamara, 2018).

Through this process, it is possible not only to increase the legitimacy of decisions made, but also to activate local communities and strengthen the sense of civic responsibility. Participatory budgeting thus becomes a space for dialogue and collaboration, where residents can initiate, consult on, and co-create projects that address their real needs, which fosters the development of social capital and improves the quality of public governance (Stein, 2021). In the context of the challenges faced by contemporary civil society, its role as an organisational listening tool becomes particularly important, enabling effective responses to the dynamically changing needs of local communities (Marinakis et al., 2017). Accordingly, three research questions and two hypotheses were formulated in this study:

Q1: How does participatory budgeting in voivodeship cities in Poland affect social dialogue and decision-making processes?

Q2: How do projects implemented under the civic budgets of voivodeship cities in Poland influence the development of these cities?

Q3: What role does the civic budget play in urban policies at present, and how might it evolve in the future?

H1: Participatory budgeting in voivodeship cities in Poland influences social dialogue and decision-making processes through the institutionalisation of the process, the quality of communication, and the availability of co-decision channels.

H2: Projects carried out under the civic budgets of voivodeship cities in Poland contribute to city development by implementing innovative initiatives, improving local infrastructure, and increasing the engagement of local communities in city life.

Literature review

The civic budget (participatory budget) can be defined as a mechanism in which the residents of a given territory, such as a city or a village, actively participate in the decision-making process regarding the distribution of public funds. The concept of engaging citizens in budgetary decision-making, known in its modern form as participatory budgeting, was first introduced in 1989 in Porto Alegre (Brazil), and at that time it was an innovative solution (Pereira & Roder Figueira, 2021). In the early 21st century, this instrument of citizen participation began to be implemented in European countries as well, such as Spain, Germany, France, Portugal, and Switzerland. Moreover, the idea of participatory budgeting also found application in selected African countries, for example in Cameroon (Jurek, 2023). According to Daria Rybińska (2018), the term 'civic budget' does not have a uniform, universally accepted definition. In Poland, the civic budget is perceived as an

innovative management instrument at the local level (Kudłacz & Zhebchuk, 2019). A key element of its operation is systematic monitoring, which enables the control and evaluation of gradually introduced changes. The engagement of residents in participatory processes is an important indicator of a positive evaluation of local authorities' actions.

It is worth noting that the civic budget not only serves as an effective tool for social participation but also promotes an increase in civic activity, which should be regarded as one of its fundamental goals. In addition, this instrument offers broad opportunities for initiators and social activists, who have the chance to actively participate in the shaping of local policy (Bhusal, 2020). Residents of a given area obtain a certain level of autonomy by being able to submit their own projects, which are then subject to a vote by the local community that decides on their acceptance or rejection. The implementation of selected initiatives, however, is subject to financial constraints defined by the regulations in force in individual local government units.

Since its introduction, the civic budget has gained significant popularity among residents, which can be explained by the natural need of local communities to actively participate in the shaping of public space and deciding on investments carried out with public funds. Despite these positive aspects, the implementation of participatory budgeting encounters numerous difficulties and barriers. The most important of these include concerns among local authorities about a potential reduction of their influence on the allocation of budgetary funds, the necessity for increased involvement of both politicians and public administration officials, and the requirement of preparing budget plans in advance, which generates additional organisational and procedural burdens. These challenges affect the effectiveness and scope of civic budget implementation, forming an important context for analysing its functioning in Polish local government units (Ostachowski, 2020).

The nature of how civic budgets are implemented has been aptly described by Agnieszka Sobol (2017), who noted that the civic budget is an integral element of the co-governance mechanism, understood as a management process carried out in cooperation with various social partners. According to Sobol (2017), the civic budget serves as an invitation from local authorities intended to encourage residents to actively participate in making decisions regarding the allocation of budget funds at the local level. In this way, it becomes a tool of civil dialogue – a process of growing importance both in social science analysis and in political practice (Sobol, 2017). An essential aspect of the civic budget is the requirement of active involvement from the residents of a local government unit. As a consultative process, it enables constructive dialogue between public administration and the local community, which aids the mutual understanding and consideration of residents' needs and expectations.

The civic budget serves a multi-dimensional function in local governance – it not only enables residents to actively participate in decisions regarding the allocation of a portion of their municipality's financial resources, but also acts as a mechanism that legitimises local authority. Furthermore, it promotes innovation and entrepreneurship, and constitutes an important tool supporting the process of the decentralisation of power, responding to the growing distance between local government bodies and the local community. In this light, the civic budget should be considered an instrument serving both residents and local authorities.

Despite this theoretical value, the question arises about the actual course and effectiveness of the civic budget's functioning in practice. Literature data indicates a dynamic increase in the implementation of this mechanism in Poland – in 2014, participatory budgeting was implemented in 35 cities, whereas in 2016, this number rose to 210 administrative units. In 2019,

the civic budget procedure was carried out in 320 cities. Such growth suggests the popularity of this solution (Radzioch & Scheffs, 2024).

Based on the above considerations, it can be stated that it is through listening practices that one can effectively identify community priorities and shape budget decisions in a way that meets the real needs and aspirations of local communities. In this way, organisational listening becomes an indispensable element of the participatory process, strengthening the transparency and legitimacy of actions undertaken within the civic budget and, importantly, fulfilling the need for social belonging (Baumeister, 1995).

Research methodology

Up until 2018, Polish legislation did not regulate the principles of how civic budgets functioned, and, as a result, it was the cities that decided on the scope and conditions of their implementation (Kalitta, 2020). New regulations, introduced in 2018, brought a significant change, transforming the character of civic budgets from optional to mandatory in cities with the county status. In Poland, 66 cities have this status, and the size of the civic budget in each cannot be lower than 0.5% of the expenditures incurred by the municipality, calculated on the basis of the last submitted budget report. The first city in Poland to implement a civic budget was Sopot, which took place in 2011. In subsequent years, civic budgets were introduced in all 18 voivodeship (i.e. provincial capital) cities and in the majority of county-level cities (Marczewska-Rytko, 2024).

The very first edition of the civic budget after the 2018 legal changes faced a serious challenge, as the implementation of projects coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Poland, which negatively affected the financial situation of local governments. Constraints resulting from the pandemic significantly hindered the implementation of budget projects and the organisation of the entire process, leading to a decline in the number of civic budgets carried out. Nevertheless, cities with the county status could not abandon implementing civic budgets, since they were legally obliged to conduct them. Despite numerous appeals – including from the authorities of some cities – to suspend the participatory budget procedure, this proposal was rejected by the Polish Parliament [Pol. *Sejm*]. In response, local government authorities adjusted the regulations, introducing solutions such as e-consultations and electronic voting. Some local governments decided to reduce the funds allocated to the civic budget, but cities with the county status were still required to allocate the minimum amount of 0.5%. Another challenge arose from the impacts of the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, migration issues, and the ongoing consequences of the pandemic. In the light of these difficult circumstances, a proposal to temporarily suspend the implementation of civic budgets was put forward once again – and this time it was successfully adopted by the Polish Parliament.

This legislative change made it possible for cities to postpone the civic budget procedure scheduled for 2022 to 2023 and to skip conducting it in 2023 in favour of implementing projects in 2024. Six cities with the county status took advantage of this option, including two voivodeship cities, namely Olsztyn and Zielona Góra (Baciak, 2024).

Discussion of the results

Results

The procedure for implementing the civic budget in Polish voivodeship cities is similar in general outline, although it is difficult to point to a single universal model. In many cases, the functioning of civic budgets builds on already existing models, adjusted as needed to the specificity of a given locality (Kalisiak-Mędeńska, 2016). One of the differences lies in the amount of funds that voivodeship cities allocate to their civic budgets, as illustrated in Figure 1.

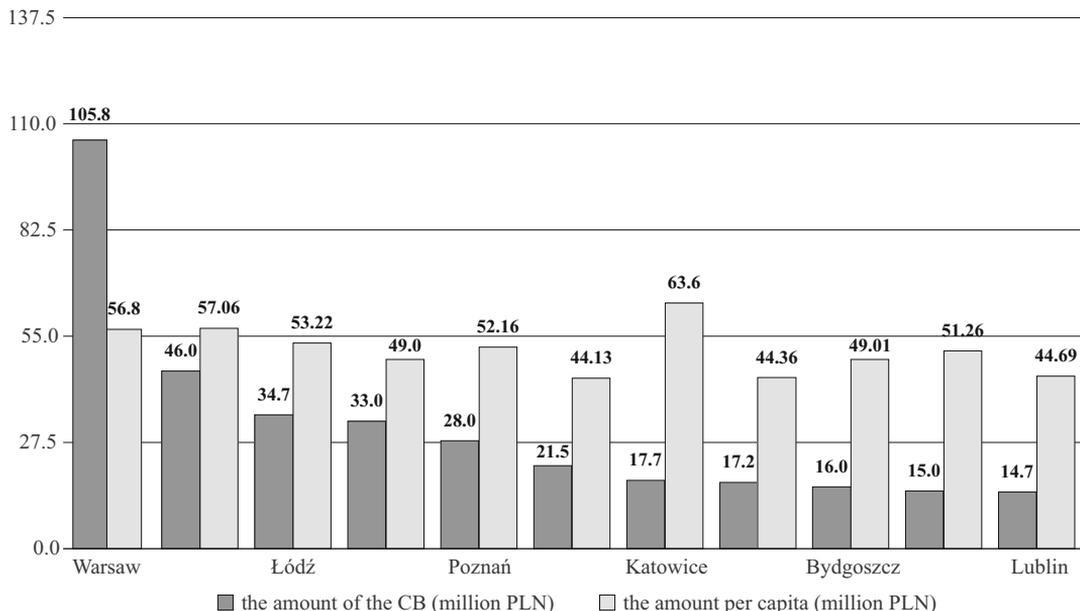


Figure 1. The amount of the Civic Budget (CB) in selected voivodeship cities in Poland (in million PLN) and the amount per capita (million PLN) in 2024

Source: Own elaboration based on: Ginejko, 2024.

The amounts allocated to civic budgets in the voivodeship cities show a significant variation. The highest total allocation was in Warsaw (105.8 million PLN), followed by Kraków (46 million PLN), Łódź (34.7 million PLN), Wrocław (33 million PLN), Poznań (28 million PLN), Gdańsk (21.53 million PLN), Katowice (17.3 million PLN), Szczecin (17.2 million PLN), Bydgoszcz (16 million PLN), and Białystok (15 million PLN). The voivodeship city with the smallest civic budget was Lublin (14.7 million PLN). The highest per capita value was recorded in Katowice (63.6 PLN per resident), followed by Kraków (57.06 PLN) and Warsaw (56.8 PLN). Other cities' per capita allocations included Łódź (53.22 PLN), Poznań (52.16 PLN), Białystok (51.26 PLN), Bydgoszcz (49.01 PLN), Wrocław (49.0 PLN), Lublin (44.69 PLN), and Szczecin (44.36 PLN), with the lowest one occurring in Gdańsk (44.13 PLN per resident).

The lack of certain standardised regulations by the national legislature leads to significant differences in how civic budgets are carried out. Differences appear in the project submission stage – for example, in some cities there is a requirement to attach a list of supporters and a specified

number of supporting signatures. There are also differences in voting rules, such as the number of projects one can vote for, scoring systems, and the rules for selecting winning projects. Additionally, there are varying exclusions concerning which projects cannot be implemented under the civic budget (Mituś, 2022).

In Warsaw, the civic budget was introduced in 2014, following the example of cities such as Kraków, Sopot, and Łódź (Pietrusińska, 2017). This budget is implemented in all 18 districts of the capital, and the rules governing it have been standardised citywide. Nevertheless, depending on the specificity of individual districts, differences in technical infrastructure and socioeconomic conditions mean that a variety of local needs and expectations are addressed through the budget (Laskowska, 2017).

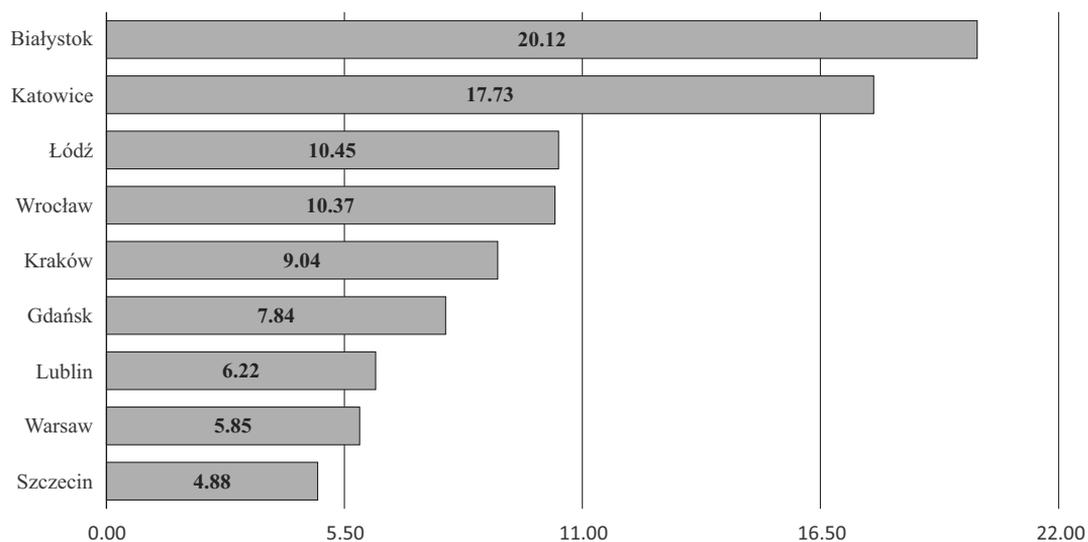


Chart 2. Resident turnout in voting for participatory budget projects (%) in selected voivodeship cities in Poland in 2024

Source: Own elaboration based on: Ginejko, 2024.

The highest voter turnout in civic budgets was recorded in Białystok (20.12%), followed by Katowice (17.3%), Łódź (10.45%), Wrocław (10.37%), Kraków (9.04%), Gdańsk (7.84%), Lublin (6.22%), and Warsaw (5.85%). The lowest turnout was noted in Szczecin (4.88%).

Another difference among the voivodeship cities concerns the method of verifying votes cast by residents. For example, in Kraków, residents must provide their PESEL identification number to cast a vote, and in the absence thereof – a special identification code issued by the Kraków City Office. To make use of electronic voting, it is necessary to provide a telephone number to which an SMS message is sent requiring the confirmation of the vote. In Poznań, by contrast, a mobile phone number suffices; a special code is sent to that number, authorising the voter to cast a vote on the Poznań Civic Budget website – there is no need to provide the PESEL number. In Lublin, residents may choose verification either by SMS message or by email (Radzioch & Scheffs, 2024). The age of eligible voters also differs by area, since the legislature has not specified the minimum age threshold. The literature indicates that the lack of clear regulation on this issue may distort outcomes, for example through parents voting on behalf of their underage children.

In Zielona Góra, participatory budgeting was introduced in 2013; however, the rules governing its operation have been modified several times, *inter alia* with regard to the division of the city into auxiliary units and districts, as well as concerning the age of eligible voters. In 2019, it was established that the amount allocated to the civic budget initiative would be at least 0.6% of the city's expenditures, as reported in the most recently submitted financial statement. This change resulted in an increase in the budget amount compared to previous years. The division into districts was also abandoned, leaving only the division into auxiliary units, because Zielona Góra does not have a formal subdivision into neighbourhoods. Additionally, in 2019, the City of Zielona Góra merged with the surrounding commune, which made it possible to include the residents of the Nowe Miasto district (the former commune) in active participation in voting on civic budget projects. Alongside the implementation of projects and initiatives under the civic budget, the most frequently emphasised success is encouraging residents to participate in public life and to co-decide on the allocation of public funds (Dubicki, 2021). Lublin, in turn, was the originator of 'green' civic budgets, introducing such a solution in 2016, which was later replicated by, among others, Gdańsk and Poznań. In addition to these cities, Szczecin also operates a green civic budget. When casting votes on civic budget projects, residents receive an additional vote entitling them to select one project from the so-called pool of green projects. These projects concern issues related to, first, green spaces, such as creating new green areas, planting and maintaining vegetation, renovating and modernising nature-related facilities, constructing rain gardens, as well as, second, environmental activities, including informational, cultural, infrastructural, and investment initiatives (Radzioch & Scheffs, 2024). In Gdańsk, as part of the Green Civic Budget, series of meetings are organised for the residents who are planning or preparing projects concerning public spaces. These workshops are informational in nature and support the residents in properly developing their proposals. The sessions are conducted by experts in architecture, urban planning, and landscape design (Śwital, 2024). Such initiatives not only enable better spatial design but also increase residents' ecological awareness and enhance their engagement in decision-making processes.

The literature also points to the problem of treating the civic budget as an instrument for advancing the interests of narrow groups of stakeholders. Although not predominant, this phenomenon may occur where projects supported under the civic budget address the needs of only a specific subset of residents. It should therefore be emphasised that, in line with the civic budget's premise, it is intended to serve all residents, not merely selected groups. Favouring certain projects through the prism of specific interests may lead to the marginalisation of social groups and, consequently, to a decline in interest in the civic budget process and reduced engagement in public life (Zawadzka-Pąk, 2019).

Accordingly, a key issue in the implementation of the civic budget is accessibility for all residents. In cities such as Poznań, Zielona Góra, and Lublin, particular attention has been paid to all residents, regardless of their status, age, or place of residence. Examples include projects such as sports fields, playgrounds, or municipal parks, which are open and accessible to everyone. In response to projects that previously concerned only narrow groups (e.g. purchasing books for libraries or refurbishing school classrooms), the cities under scrutiny have introduced changes aimed at increasing accessibility for a broader group of residents. The goal of such measures is to eliminate unnecessary barriers to access and to ensure their universal character, which also contributes to greater resident engagement (Radzioch & Scheffs, 2024). Poznań stands out with the 'Neighbourhood Coach' and 'Senior Coach' projects, which enjoy considerable resident interest, demonstrating a concrete need reflected in annual participation. These initiatives address the needs

of diverse social groups by offering free sports and recreational activities for children, youth, and seniors. Activities are held in urban spaces such as school playing fields and 'Orlik' pitches, and include regular training sessions, tournaments, fairs, dance classes, rehabilitation exercise, and aqua aerobics. The aim of these projects is not only to improve the residents' health and well-being, but also to foster social integration (Śwital, 2024). Given the current era and widespread Internet access, the cities studied here maintain special, dedicated websites devoted exclusively to activities related to the civic budget. One can find there information on, *inter alia*, the rules of the civic budget, projects up for voting, information on project implementation, events and trainings, as well as public consultations. In addition, cities conduct active digital campaigns to reach the broadest possible audience. Gdańsk conducts activities both through traditional media such as radio and television and through social media (Gdańsk, 2025). Beyond social media posts and radio or television spots, Warsaw also informs residents about civic-budget matters via the dedicated '19115' mobile application (Warsaw, 2025). Kraków, in turn, commissions an external company to run social-media advertising campaigns (Kraków, 2025a, 2025b).

A study conducted in Białystok in 2024 showed that for nearly 40% of respondents, traditional media and social media were the sources of information about the civic budget (Białystok, 2025). The results of a survey carried out in Katowice are also noteworthy: according to 68% of the respondents, the most visible promotional communications concerning the civic budget appeared on social media (Katowice, 2025).

4.2. Discussion

In Poland, the civic budget became mandatory for cities with county rights in 2018, undergoing significant evolution both formally and organisationally. The introduction of nationwide regulations aimed to increase transparency and civic participation in the management of local government finances. However, it should be noted that despite numerous challenges, research shows strong public interest in civic budgets, and the implementation of new solutions – such as electronic voting – has contributed to the improvement of the accessibility of this process.

An important aspect of introducing civic budgets in voivodeship cities is the variation in the amounts allocated for this purpose. For example, in 2024, Warsaw, with a civic budget of 105.8 million PLN, allocated a significantly higher amount than Lublin, whose budget amounted to 14.7 million PLN. These differences result not only from the city size, but also from local socioeconomic conditions. Furthermore, calculating the budget per capita shows that in Katowice, each resident accounted for 63.6 PLN – the highest value among the voivodeship cities studied – while in Gdańsk, the amount was 44.13 PLN, which may suggest differences in approaches to local investment priorities.

Differences between cities are also visible in the procedures for organising voting and submitting projects. There are various forms of vote verification procedures which, although allowing adjustments to local realities, may create difficulties in comparing results and assessing the effectiveness of civic budgets across cities. Accessibility – both physical and formal – is crucial to ensure equal opportunities for residents participating in the participatory budget. The lack of standardised statutory regulations may lead to situations in which only a portion of residents have full access to the voting process, thereby limiting the genuine character of local democracy.

The varied approach of residents to the civic budget is also reflected in differences in voter turnout across cities. In Białystok, voter turnout reached 20.12%; in Katowice, it was 17.3% –

both these values are noticeably higher than that recorded in Szczecin (4.88%). This suggests that in some cities, residents are more actively engaged in decision-making processes, while in others, despite substantial financial allocations, public involvement remains low. Moreover, although the majority of votes are cast electronically – indicating the growing role of digitalisation – it is still important to consider citizens who prefer the stationary form of voting. In Kraków, for instance, the popularity of in-person voting was higher in two districts, which may constitute a significant factor influencing turnout.

Focusing on projects submitted to civic budgets, many cities have introduced innovative solutions aimed at meeting specific resident needs (Jurek, 2025a, 2025b). A good example is the introduction of the green civic budget in Lublin, later adopted by Gdańsk and Poznań. Projects related to green spaces are gaining popularity, reflecting growing ecological awareness and the desire to improve the urban quality of life. It should also be emphasised that such initiatives contribute to increased social engagement while simultaneously enhancing the quality of urban environments.

Another important issue concerns the marginalisation of participatory budget projects that respond only to the needs of selected social groups. For the civic budget to fully achieve its goals of transparency and equality, it is crucial that the implemented projects be accessible to all residents, not merely to a chosen few. The development of projects such as sports fields or parks can be a key element in ensuring inclusivity and increasing civic engagement.

Based on the research results, it can be clearly stated that the civic budget plays a crucial role in organisational listening processes; however, the effectiveness of incorporating resident activity into decision-making depends on many factors. On the one hand, the formal legal framework governing civic budgets introduces a degree of universality; on the other, the lack of uniform regulations results in significant differences in how civic budgets are implemented across voivodeship cities.

This study discussed the functioning of civic budgets in Polish cities primarily after the 2018 legal amendments, which made this form of participation mandatory. The findings point to significant variation in the amounts of allocated funds and the organisation of project implementation processes, including issues related to initiative submission and voting methods. These changes were particularly relevant during challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic or the war in Ukraine, which affected the implementation of civic budgets. Despite these difficulties, cities adapted their operations by introducing e-consultations and electronic voting.

The practical implications of the study indicate the need for further standardisation of legal regulations related to civic budgets, especially in areas concerning project submission, vote verification, and the age of eligible voters. It is also essential to increase the accessibility of processes for different social groups, particularly older people who do not use new technologies. Furthermore, enhancing transparency and providing greater support for residents could significantly improve voter turnout and civic engagement.

Regarding research limitations, it should be emphasised that the results are strongly dependent on specific local socioeconomic conditions, which makes any generalisation difficult. Moreover, the changing regulations and the influence of external crises limited the comprehensive assessment of the civic budget's effectiveness.

Future research directions should include evaluating the long-term impact of civic budgets on residents' quality of life. In addition, particular attention should be paid to innovative budget models, such as green civic budgets and other innovative solutions, which may become an important component of urban policy (Jurek, 2025a).

In the context of urban policies, the civic budget serves as a tool for strengthening local democracy, providing residents with the opportunity for active participation and influence over the allocation of public funds. Although it usually does not directly affect large municipal investments – such as the expanding transport infrastructure or water systems – it contributes to the increase of social integration and civic engagement. Projects implemented under the civic budget focus primarily on local initiatives such as building playgrounds or organising cultural events. However, their impact on broad city development policy remains limited, as they are point-specific rather than systemic in nature.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the civic budget may gain importance in future urban policies. It must be remembered that this is still a relatively new tool which may, in the future, be subject to further legal refinements to improve its transparency and its impact on urban policy development. Initiatives such as environmental and revitalisation projects – which are gaining popularity – as well as the integration of digital technologies, such as electronic voting, may greatly contribute to reaching a larger number of residents and increasing their engagement in urban initiatives. In the long term, well-developed and institutionalised civic budget processes may allow this instrument to assume a more strategic role in urban policy.

Conclusions

Participatory budgeting plays an important role in strengthening local democracy by enabling residents to actively participate in financial decision-making. The introduction of mandatory participatory budgeting in cities with county rights in 2018 contributed to an increase in transparency and social engagement. An analysis of the amount of funds allocated to participatory budgets shows significant variation, which results from both the size of the cities and the local socioeconomic conditions. Per capita expenditure calculations indicate a diversity of investment priorities, reflecting the specific needs of residents in individual cities. The diversity of project submission procedures and voting methods shows that there is no complete standardisation in the implementation of participatory budgets, which makes a comparison of effectiveness between cities difficult. The accessibility of the process, both physical and formal, is crucial to ensuring equal participation and the representativeness of residents' votes. Differences in voter turnout show that the level of citizen involvement in the decision-making process varies, regardless of the amount of funds allocated. The growing importance of electronic voting indicates the increasing role of digitalisation in participatory processes, but over-reliance on digital solutions may exclude those who prefer or require stationary voting. The introduction of innovative solutions, such as green participatory budgeting, responds to the growing environmental awareness of residents and contributes to the improvement of the quality of urban space. Projects aimed exclusively at selected social groups may limit the inclusiveness and fairness of processes, undermining the democratic goals of participatory budgeting. The implementation of projects accessible to all residents is essential to strengthen transparency and public trust.

The effectiveness of participatory budgeting in organisational listening processes depends both on the legal framework and on how the individual stages are implemented in different cities. External crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, have affected the functioning of participatory budgets, forcing the introduction of new forms of consultation and e-voting. Further standardisation of legal regulations concerning the submission of projects, voting procedures, and the age of those eligible to participate in the process is essential to ensure

equal participation. Providing support and information to residents can contribute to an increase in turnout and the deepening of civic engagement. The current nature of participatory budgeting prioritises mainly local initiatives, which limits its impact on broader urban development policy. The long-term institutionalisation of processes may enable the strategic use of participatory budgeting in urban policy planning. Future research should focus on assessing the impact of participatory budgeting on residents' quality of life and the sustainability of the implemented projects. The integration of innovative solutions and digital technologies into budgetary processes can increase resident participation and strengthen local democracy. In the long term, well-developed and institutionally established participatory budgeting processes can contribute to better urban policy planning and more informed use of public funds.

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Data Availability Statement

All data will be available and shared upon request.