Conceptual Elements of Participatory Budgeting: Proposing a Framework that Integrates Technology and Nonprofit Organizations as Important Considerations

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Abstract

How has participatory budgeting been conceptualized? What are its core elements? A process that is practiced in over 1,700 cities around the world has yet to be systematically analyzed in a way that encompasses all the different areas of literature that have discussed it and all the steps and intricacies of the process. After an overview of the history, spread, and effects of participatory budgeting, this paper proposes a new analytical framework. The first three elements of this framework are more familiar to public administration scholars: collaborative governance, deliberative participation, and co-prioritization. Two elements, technology and nonprofit organizations, remain overlooked in the participatory budgeting literature from a public administration perspective, but have been clearly identified as important in other academic disciplines and research fields. Variables are identified from the existing literature and combined in this new analytical framework designed specifically for participatory budgeting studies, evaluations, and initiatives.

Keywords: participatory budgeting, nonprofit organizations, e-government, new governance
1. Introduction

Participatory budgeting (PB) “is about engaging community members in discussions about spending priorities and in the development and choice of spending proposals” (Demediuk, Solli, & Adolfsson, 2012, p. 185). Participatory budgeting processes are meant to better services and infrastructure, as well as connect citizens to each other and local government (p. 186). Demediuk et al. (2012) argue participatory budgeting processes exist along a spectrum: on one end is a service delivery focus, where the local government uses participatory budgeting to make better decisions about policies and programs; on the other end is a democracy focus, where local government uses participatory budgeting to connect the community with the local government and strengthen civil society (p. 186). A given local government can be at one end of the spectrum while working towards the other end (p. 187), which demonstrates a normative preference for democratic practices.

Participatory budgeting is an innovative process that continues to evolve faster than scholars can study it. Changes continue to be made to the process that scholars and practitioners will find interesting, useful, and illuminating in various ways. It piques interest as one of the cutting-edge practices of what Bingham, Nabatchi, & O’Leary (2005) call “new governance:” including the public through empowering facilitated deliberation, the conclusion of which turns into policy (p. 552-53). It is useful because it results in uncontroversial policy, since policy is made directly from citizen requests. Most importantly, it is illuminating as an ongoing mechanism of participation that is arguably feasible to both citizens and government managers.

Therefore, given the current relevance of participatory budgeting as a government process, this paper is guided by two research questions: (1) How has participatory budgeting been conceptualized? and (2) What are its core elements? The next section presents the
beginning of the answer to the first question by describing the process in practice and discussing the history, spread, and effects of participatory budgeting. The second section answers the research questions by developing an analytical framework with five elements: collaborative governance, deliberative participation, co-prioritization, technology, and nonprofit organizations. Participatory budgeting is a relatively new, unique, and complex process, so having a guiding framework to analyze it can be useful. The discussion section covers what this framework means in the context of wider literature, some applications of the framework, as well as possible directions for future research using the framework.

2. Background

This literature review began as an endeavor to assess the state of the field in research on participatory budgeting. Since participatory budgeting is a relatively new phenomenon (less than 30 years old), I did not limit myself in how far back in years I went in the search. I began with a wide search using Google, Google Scholar, and university library databases such as Academic Search Complete. I also conducted targeted searches in top journals in public and nonprofit administration: Public Administration Review, Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, Government Information Quarterly, Electronic Journal of Electronic Government, VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, and Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly. Sources were only read in detail if they directly discussed “participatory budgeting”. Sources where participatory budgeting was only mentioned in passing were not included.

The literature provides a picture of what participatory budgeting looks like in practice. Definitions and implementations of participatory budgeting processes vary by city and country
(New York City Council, n.d.; The Participatory Budgeting Project, 2016; Community Development Project, n.d.; Miori & Russo, 2011; Demediuk, Solli & Adolfsson, 2012), but it is a unique process distinct from what is otherwise known in the public budgeting and finance field as “participation in budgeting” (Franklin, Ho, & Ebdon, 2009; Franklin & Ebdon, 2006). Participation in budgeting is an umbrella term that encompasses the different participatory mechanisms that can be used as part of the traditional local budgeting process, while participatory budgeting is a separate process in and of itself. The other pieces of this picture of participatory budgeting painted by the literature are its history, spread, and effects.

2.1. Defining Participatory Budgeting

A significant portion of the literature is composed of scholars directly studying participatory budgeting processes in practice using a case study approach. Certain elements of the participatory budgeting process transcend context and idiosyncrasies in implementation. These elements define “participatory budgeting” as a process that often uses some of the participatory mechanisms discovered in studies on “participation in budgeting” in a different way than the traditional budgeting process.

2.1.1 Participatory Budgeting versus Participation in Budgeting: Understanding the Differences. The first thing many public administration scholars think of when they hear “participatory budgeting” is the traditional budgeting process. The field of public budgeting and finance has been studying participation in budgeting for about a decade which reflects the innovative nature of these participatory mechanisms, similar to participatory budgeting.

The public budgeting literature focuses on theorizing and studying the mechanisms and legal context of citizen participation in the traditional budgeting process: 1) a preliminary budget
is prepared; 2) the finance department develops a revenue forecast; 3) the mayor sets guidelines for departments to craft their requests with; 4) department requests are reviewed; 5) the mayor makes final decisions; 6) the city council reviews the proposed budget, including meetings with administrators and citizens (Franklin & Ebdon, 2006, p. 89). For example, Franklin, Ho, & Ebdon (2009) have pioneered in studying the mechanisms of participation in budgeting in Midwestern states. They place these mechanisms on a macro (surveys, budget simulations, citizen budget committees, focus groups, special budget meetings) to micro (citizen interaction and neighborhood/district meetings) spectrum where public hearings and televised public hearings with call-ins are in the middle (Franklin, Ho, & Ebdon, 2009, p. 56). The macro participation mechanisms focus on more community-wide issues “and are more likely to cover a wide range of policy questions,” while micro participation mechanisms “are more individually or single-issue oriented” (p. 56).

Participation in budgeting focuses on using and developing mechanisms to include citizens in the traditional budgeting process (Franklin & Ebdon, 2006, p. 89). Participatory budgeting, on the other hand, is a unique process that invites citizens to suggest projects for the city to spend money on using a previously allocated pot of money. It occurs separately from the traditional budgeting process. In other words, in participatory budgeting citizens have more control over decisionmaking. Since they have the pot of money allocated for that purpose, citizens get to decide how it is spent, on the other hand participation in budgeting is often used as a feedback mechanism for decisions already made by public officials. Citizens participate in the participatory budgeting process from beginning to end, while participation in budgeting mechanisms are often used at the end of the process (as described in the above description of the traditional budgeting process). Participatory budgeting often includes (and is not limited to) a
suite of the participatory mechanisms that Franklin & Ebdon have outlined in their work, i.e. surveys, focus groups, and neighborhood/district meetings.

The outcomes of participatory budgeting likely do not impact the entire city budget, but rather how participating councilmen spend their discretionary budget (for example, in the New York City case discussed below). It is unclear what impact participation in budgeting may have on a city’s budget, given the timing of when these mechanisms are usually employed in the process (usually after decisions are final). In sum, participatory budgeting is a unique phenomenon that is similar to but distinct from the use of participatory mechanisms in the traditional budgeting process, otherwise referred to as participation in budgeting.

2.1.2 Defining Participatory Budgeting in Context. The previous section established participatory budgeting as a process similar but distinct from what is otherwise known as “participation in budgeting”. This section focuses on participatory budgeting, often referred to as “PB” for short, expanding on how it is defined in different places. Definitions of participatory budgeting vary, but there are some similarities across contexts. What follows are some examples (chosen for the amount of detail available on each case) of definitions that come from participatory budgeting in practice in three different cities. These examples are not the only or exemplary instances of participatory budgeting in practice, as we will see in the next section, but they provide a foundation with which to discuss the variations and similarities in defining participatory budgeting as a process across contexts.

In New York City, participatory budgeting is a process where government officials and nonprofits collaborate and use technology to recruit people who cannot participate in traditional political activities like voting (people younger than 18, undocumented immigrants, people who have gone through the criminal justice system, etc.) to suggest and vote on ideas on how to spend
the local government’s discretionary budget (New York City Council, n.d.; The Participatory Budgeting Project, 2016). In the 2014-15 cycle, Cycle 4, over $31.8 million in funds were allocated to the projects that came out of the process (Community Development Project, n.d., p. 2). The annual process has six stages that participants move through, from brainstorming ideas in neighborhood assemblies, to selecting the delegates who will review and present the finalized project proposals, ending with voting on which projects to fund (p. 2). Participants evaluate the process and oversee the implementation of the funded projects (p. 2). In New York City, participatory budgeting is defined as a six-step process that emphasizes recruiting non-traditional participants to spend councilmen’s discretionary budgets.

In Rome, participatory budgeting was done electronically (referred to as e-participatory budgeting or ePB) using a software platform called eDem1.0 (Miori & Russo, 2011). The community participated in the decisionmaking process by discussing spending priorities, making proposals, voting on them, and “scrutinizing and monitoring the process and outcomes” (Miori & Russo, 2011, p. 41). Miori & Russo (2011) describe participatory budgeting as an innovative process where citizens can “voice their opinions on resource allocation and social policies,” and “monitor actual spending. The fact that the population is included in the policy-making process stimulates administrative reform…Overall, the aim of PB is to increase transparency, accountability, understanding and social inclusion in local government affairs” (p. 41). In Rome, participatory budgeting is defined as a multistep process where participants use a software platform to decide spending priorities and discuss policy.

In Sweden, a participatory budgeting initiative called You Decide, brought the community “into the decision-making process around formal resource allocation plans” and enabled them to have a direct say in the service and infrastructure expenditures that mattered to
Demdiuk, Solli & Adolfsson (2012) argue that “PB provides an opportunity space where—at least in a layer of a local government’s activities—the public’s role shifts from merely being a service “user” towards being an involved “maker and shaper”” (p. 185-86). In Sweden, participatory budgeting is defined as a process that allowed participants to have a direct say in service and infrastructure expenditures.

While each example was in a different city and conducted in somewhat different ways, a definition emerges that ties all of them together. Participatory budgeting is essentially a process that gives participants direct control over a portion of local spending (Sintomer, Herzberg, & Rocke, 2008, p. 168). Each piece of this definition can vary across contexts. The process can have differing numbers of steps, can be ongoing or canceled after one or more cycles for a variety of reasons, can be longer or shorter. How much control is given to participants can vary, but participatory budgeting is about improving decisions on allocating funds by including and enabling citizens, giving them a voice in the process. It is about empowering citizens to track the government’s implementation of its decisions. This is an “active” rather than “passive” view of the citizen that is meant to make government more accountable. The types of activities used to facilitate the participatory budgeting process can vary as well, i.e. from neighborhood assemblies, to voting, to software. Finally, the amount of money available to spend can differ as well as what projects the money can be spent on (service, infrastructure, education, parks, etc.). Now that we have an overview of the process, we can discuss its development and travel throughout the world over time.
2.2. History, Spread, and Effects of Participatory Budgeting

Despite its relatively recent and emergent status in the literature, one is able to trace a trajectory of participatory budgeting from its inception in Brazil, to its spread across the globe, and finally to some ideas about its effects.

2.2.1 History and Spread of Participatory Budgeting. Participatory budgeting began in Porto Alegre (Bergh, 2011), “the capital city of the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul” (Miori & Russo, 2011, p. 42) in 1990 (Almansi, 2010, p. 178). Now it is in cities in Latin America, Sweden, Canada, Spain, Portugal, Germany, France, Australia, China and Taiwan (Demediuk, Solli, & Adolfsson, 2012; Sintomer, Herzberg, & Rocke, 2008; The Participatory Budgeting Project, 2018; Cabannes, 2015), totaling up to well over 1,700 cities around the world, including Chicago, New York, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., and Rome (Altschuler & Lerner, 2011; Baiocchi & Gauza, 2014; Bergh, 2011; Bingham, Nabatchi, & O’Leary, 2005; Miori & Russo, 2011; Sintomer et al., 2008; Cabannes, 2015).

In Brazil and Latin America, participatory budgeting spread partially due to the informal knowledge networks of nongovernmental entities: nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), unions, and social scientists who described the process and how it occurred (Almansi, 2010, p. 180). Almansi describes how “region, municipality size, and political party,” contributed to the “state and regional diffusion effect” of the participatory budgeting process (p. 178). Almansi also discusses factors that may influence the adoption of participatory budgeting: “higher standards of living,” "a greater number of unions, deeper support for policy reforms initiated by center and leftist parties, denser civil society organizations (CSOs), a broader range of CSOs, CSO-employed political strategies, and greater support from high-capacity nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)" (p. 179).
The spread of participatory budgeting in European cities was partially due to the World Bank and the United Nations, which both analyzed Porto Alegre as an example of best practice (Sintomer, Herzberg, & Rocke, 2008, p. 168). In Porto Alegre, participatory budgeting was built on three principles: grassroots democracy, social justice, and citizen control (p. 167). These three principles directly and indirectly influenced how participatory budgeting was developed in Europe, ranging from adaptations of the Porto Alegre example to variations, such as the use of independent community funds, the participation of organized interests in political discussions, and proximity participation (also referred to as “selective listening”) (p. 169-73). Depending on where it is implemented, nonprofits organizations such as associations, interest groups, and NGOs have a core place in the participatory budgeting process (p. 171).

Participatory budgeting was able to travel from Brazil to Germany to Australia and to the United States for a variety of reasons. According to Ganuza & Baiocchi (2012), participatory budgeting spread differently in Latin America than it did in Europe because in Latin America it was just one of a suite of administrative reforms which were adapted as a political strategy, while in Europe participatory budgeting was seen as a single, neutral, policy device (p. 1-2). Ganuza & Baiocchi argue that it is this decoupling of participatory budgeting from its complementary administrative reforms that accounts for the differences in how it was adapted in Latin America versus Europe (p. 2). As we have just discussed, participatory budgeting also spread because of support from political parties and nongovernmental actors. Part of the reason it was able to diffuse among different countries is that administrators around the world were inspired by its principles of including and empowering active citizens who can hold the government accountable for community outcomes.
2.2.2. Effects of Participatory Budgeting. In Brazil, participatory budgeting broadened democratic practices and the access of the poor to public goods, improved the living conditions of the poor, and renewed the composition of the political elite (Almansi, 2010, p. 172; Avritzer, 2010). It “created a venue for the new practices emerging in the neighborhood associations movement” (Almansi, p. 173). It significantly diminished regional inequality in 10 years by providing water and sewage systems as well as access to housing and land to poor dwellings and neighborhoods (p. 174). It also created "a process for social movement representatives to access the political system": important participatory budgeting leaders were integrated into local, state, and political systems and new leaders were created (p. 177). While participatory budgeting was successful in Porto Alegre, it “had very different political, social and administrative outcomes” in other Latin American cities (Sintomer, Herzberg, and Rocke, 2008, p. 168; Cabannes, 2003).

In Europe, participatory budgeting can result in greater transparency, the improvement of public services based on citizen proposals, better cooperation between administrative departments, faster operations, and great responsiveness; Sintomer, Herzberg, & Rocke (2008) call these developments the five “trends of administrative modernization” (p. 174). On the other hand, participatory budgeting in Europe does not often result in cost reduction or structural reform (p. 174). Sintomer et al. find that the modernization effects introduced above mainly occur in the participatory budgeting processes where good deliberation takes place (p. 174). While many participatory budgeting cases have resulted in better communication between citizens, administrators, and politicians, only one European city has experienced the fundamental social improvements that were observed in Porto Alegre (p. 174).

Miori & Russo (2011) discuss the effects of participatory budgeting specific to citizens versus government managers. For citizens, some of the effects are access to information such as
budgetary forecasts and expenditures, and a greater sense of citizenship and democracy (Miori & Russo, 2011, p. 42). Miori & Russo argue that “PB furthers understanding between the various population segments present in a neighborhood and social cohesion among them” (p. 42), making the recruitment phase the most important for participatory budgeting, since participants need to be representative of the neighborhood the process is being done for. For government managers, some of the effects are (1) support for decisions made by elected representatives through the participatory budgeting process, (2) improvements to budget targeting, (3) encouraging redistribution of spending to poorer neighborhoods, and (4) promoting good governance (p. 42). “PB encourages community cohesion and brings people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds together to make decisions about their neighborhoods. It is lastly an opportunity for everyone to meet and discuss the needs and aspirations of the community as a whole” (Miori & Russo, 2011, p. 42).

Bingham, Nabatchi, & O’Leary (2005) say that participatory budgeting and processes like it enhance the individual exercise of voice, empower citizens and stakeholders differently than traditional governance processes, focus on interests rather than rights, seek to involve citizens and stakeholders in dialogue about conflict, and connect people to the policy process (p. 553). Participatory budgeting challenges participants to consider multiple points of view, think critically about problems and potential solutions, and reach collective decisions that best meet the public good (Bingham, Nabatchi, & O’Leary, 2005, p. 553). For example, multistep participatory budgeting processes often turn all the ideas suggested by participants into the proposals which the community votes on (New York City Council, n.d.; Miori & Russo, 2011); this process allows participants to see what their neighborhood needs, which may or may not match their proposal. In Brazil, it showed the poor "that politics is a process that is accessible to
them” and allowed them "to see the role of democracy as opening up new methods to solve" problems (Almansi, 2010, p. 183). It “enables ordinary people to directly decide budget spending. Citizens receive training, identify and prioritize local needs, develop spending proposals, and vote on the proposed projects” (Altschuler & Lerner, 2011, n.p.). Baiocchi & Ganuza (2014) find that participatory budgeting is “a platform for learning” that opens political institutions “to a direct involvement of citizens, with tools and methodologies to facilitate this” (p. 45).

Participatory budgeting has similar positive effects across contexts. It has improved the physical infrastructure of participating neighborhoods as well as the relationships between the people in those neighborhoods. People are able to learn interpersonal, conversational, and analytical skills as well as improve their relationship with the local government. In a global study of 20 cities, Cabannes (2015) finds that participatory budgeting “has contributed significantly to improving basic service provision and management, with projects that are usually cheaper and better maintained because of community control and oversight… in most cases PB improves governance and the delivery of services” (p. 257). These effects have helped correct negative perceptions that more socially excluded citizens may have about their government, allowing empowerment to occur. In turn, government managers have been able to make decisions about allocating funds that reflect what the public needs.

On the other hand, participatory budgeting “does not often fundamentally change existing power relations between governments and citizens” (Cabannes, 2015, p. 257), which might reinforce negative stereotypes that government may not know how to “do participation.” Cabannes lists some of the challenges to implementing effective participatory budgeting processes: lack of resources, lack of integration of participatory budgeting with planning, lack of
participant autonomy, lack of awareness and support of the process in local government, lack of scale and scope, and high maintenance costs for public works projects (p. 280-81). For some questions regarding the impact or effect of participatory budgeting, the data is either lacking or unavailable (Cabannes, 2015, p. 271-72).

This concludes the overview of the background information in the literature on participatory budgeting. Next, an analytical framework is proposed that will help academics and practitioners analyze participatory budgeting through its five salient elements.

3. Proposing an Integrative Analytical Framework

When studying participatory budgeting, it would be very useful to have an analytical framework that illustrates the different elements of the process and can be used as an “ideal” type with which to benchmark case studies of real participatory budgeting processes. In this review of the literature, no such framework has been found. Theoretical discussions of participatory budgeting do not explicitly include the ubiquitous elements that are nonprofit organizations and technology with the same consideration that they discuss more well-known concepts (collaborative governance, deliberative participation, co-prioritization). Theoretical discussions of participatory budgeting also do not look at the entire process from beginning to end and consider how certain elements may impact each step, in addition to process outcomes. The framework presented below reflects the primary elements of participatory budgeting discussed widely in the literature as well as those elements under-discussed in the literature. Such a framework can provide perspective, areas to focus on, as well as generate research, survey, and interview questions. For a process like participatory budgeting which often involves multiple steps and uses multiple mechanisms of deliberation and participation, such a framework can
convey the complexity of the process as well as provide a way to do a focused study without ignoring important aspects of the process. This framework (see Figure 1) is also a good way of mapping the existing literature on participatory budgeting and allowing the researcher to see what the state of literature is in each respective element.

This framework is a visual representation of the five core elements that can be integrated to effectively study participatory budgeting. The first three elements are relatively well-known in public administration: collaborative governance, deliberative participation, and co-prioritization. Each of these areas in the literature have their own focus which is related to and intersects with the study of participatory budgeting processes. Collaborative governance is focused on describing, defining, and analyzing the tools and practices of collaboration and citizen empowerment. It intersects with participatory budgeting because participatory budgeting has been labeled one of the tools of collaborative governance in the literature. Deliberative participation is focused on describing, analyzing and making normative judgments about the direct involvement in of citizens in government agencies for the purpose of decisionmaking. It intersects with participatory budgeting because participatory budgeting is a process that is often initiated to reach better decisions at the local level, and deliberative participation is often one of its mechanisms. Co-prioritization is a type of co-production that is focused on describing, defining, and analyzing the role of active citizens in contributing to the processes of setting priorities in organizations. It intersects with participatory budgeting because participatory budgeting has been labeled a form of co-prioritization since the projects citizens decide are needed and then choose to be funded are what government managers are turning into official funded projects.
The last two elements are not as widely discussed in the public administration literature despite their significant roles in the participatory budgeting process in practice. These elements, even if they are described as part of a participatory budgeting process under study, are not studied in their own right as important lens of analysis through which to study the process. These neglected elements are technology and nonprofits. Technology literature has two areas of focus: one is the digital divide, which is the disparity in internet access and literacy between people; the other is how technology can be harnessed to improve existing processes or innovate new ones to achieve better outcomes for the public. It intersects with participatory budgeting because participatory budgeting has been used to bridge the digital divide and e-participatory budgeting has been used to increase civic engagement. Theoretical considerations of how the use of technology (i.e. social media, text messaging, etc.) may impact a participatory budgeting process are lacking in the literature. Nonprofit literature is focused on defining, describing, and analyzing the role of nonprofit organizations in society. It intersects with participatory budgeting because participatory budgeting processes often include the collaboration of nonprofit organizations as a matter of practice. Theoretical considerations of how collaboration with nonprofit organizations and the role of nonprofit organizations as stakeholders or facilitators in the process may impact a participatory budgeting process are lacking in the literature.

What follows is an in-depth explanation of each element of the analytical framework. This analytical framework illustrates how certain areas of literature are related, intertwined, and can provide another dimension of analysis that may have not been considered before.

3.1 Collaborative Governance

Participatory budgeting is occurring in the context of collaborative governance, which is one piece of what Bingham, Nabatchi, & O’Leary (2005) call “new governance”. Kettl describes
the forces transforming governance as “the diffusion of administrative action, the multiplication of administrative partners, and the proliferation of political influence outside government’s circles” (p. 548). New governance differs from its predecessor new public management; new public management was focused on disaggregation, competition, and incentivization, (Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow, & Tinkler, 2006, p. 470) while new governance is focused on openness, citizen empowerment, and collaboration.

According to Bingham et al., new governance “seeks to share power in decision making, encourage citizen autonomy and independence, and provide a process for developing the common good through civic engagement” (p. 548). New governance is a framework that recognizes the need for public management to “emphasize collaboration and enablement rather than hierarchy and control” (p. 549). Citizens previously assumed to be passive are now encouraged not only to be active but to be an ideal “virtuous” citizen, a person that knows their country’s founding history, their rights, and believes in the notion of civic duty (p. 549). New governance has specific principles that are covered in Bingham et al. (2005): openness in government, active citizens, and collaboration. Each of these principles is both a descriptor and a normative standard that describes what practitioners are doing and what they should be striving for. The active citizen standard might cause problems for the representativeness of the participants (only citizens with the time and effort to spare may participate, which may cause participants to be unrepresentative of the community), but that issue is often addressed with flexible scheduling and training.

Within the new governance framework, participatory budgeting falls under the category of a “quasi-legislative” process, or one that is a democratic process “entailing dialogue and deliberation among citizens” (Bingham et al., 2005, p. 547, 551, 552). During quasi-legislative
processes, government includes the public in genuine and empowering deliberation where they consider multiple points of view and try to reach decisions that best meet the public good (Bingham et al., 2005, p. 552, 553). “Most facilitated deliberations require a public space and entail interest-based negotiation, consensus building, active listening, and conflict-resolution skills to be successful and productive” (p. 553). The idea of these quasi-legislative processes is focused on the interpersonal relationships among citizens and between citizens and local government managers. Citizens are to be empowered in a way that allows them to express their voice and government managers are to be equipped with the skills to take these voices in stride and turn them into policy. It can be argued that since participatory budgeting occurs outside of traditional government processes it may be open to manipulation, but since citizens know what changes they want to see in their community, it may be difficult for a few people to control a process that encourages the creation of multiple ideas.

According to Bingham, Nabatchi, & O’Leary (2005), processes like participatory budgeting “promote increased collaboration among government, business, civil society, and citizens; enhance democratic decision making; and foster decisional legitimacy, consensus, citizen engagement, public dialogue, reasoned debate, higher decision quality, and fairness among an active and informed citizenry” (p. 554). Such “processes promote individual liberty while maintaining accountability for collective decisions; advance political equality while educating citizens; foster a better understanding of competing interests while contributing to citizens’ moral development; and orient an atomized citizenry toward the collective good” (Bingham, Nabatchi, & O’Leary, 2005, p. 554).

The salient questions that can be generated using this conceptual element cover the following topics: achieving the objectives of new governance; the quality of the process; equality
and representation; impact, implementation, and institutionalization. Some research questions derived from these topics include: Does participatory budgeting achieve the objectives associated with quasi-legislative processes? Does participatory budgeting increase collaboration between government and nongovernmental entities? Does participatory budgeting foster effective dialogue? Does participatory budgeting advance political equality? How effectively are the decisions made through participatory budgeting implemented? These are considerations central to the field of public administration and relevant to each step of the participatory budgeting process.

Collaborative and new governance provide what can be considered the administrative environment in which participatory budgeting processes occur; this includes legal structures, sociodemographic factors, and political culture (Franklin, Krane, & Ebdon, 2013, p. 125). Since new governance is a framework in and of itself, it intersects with some of the other elements in the model. Through the collaborative piece, one wonders if public managers are collaborating with nonprofit organizations to facilitate the process and how that impacts the process and its outcomes. Through the participation piece, one wonders whether public managers provide the recommended space and facilitation with which participants can deliberate effectively.

### 3.2 Deliberative Participation

Deliberative participation is the participatory mechanism often used in participatory budgeting. It is used as the normative standard, often as a proxy for the “democraticness” of the process as well as more traditional participatory processes. According to Lune (2002), democracy is “an almost but not quite fulfilled promise” (p. 204). Democratic countries are experiencing a decline in participation by citizens in traditional political processes, a baffling
phenomenon that does not have one easy explanation (Griffin, Trevorrow, & Halpin, 2006, p. 63; Oates, 2003, p. 31). This includes citizen “attendance at public meetings, political party membership and participation in political fundraising activities” (Oates, p. 32). This decline might be because some of those traditional processes, like voting, are not true participation because they do not include deliberation; participants need to feel like they have a voice in the process (Lune, 2002, p. 204). This lack of participation by citizens poses a unique challenge for government managers: they must figure out “how to interest and engage people, especially young people, in political communications and the democratic process” (Oates, 2003, p. 31).

Miori & Russo (2011) argue that government needs “to go beyond the traditional structures of representative democracy” in order to fulfill its “obligation to promote citizens’ participation” (Miori & Russo, 2011, p. 41). Citizens can participate at three levels: “information, consultation and active participation” (p. 41). “In consultation processes, government institutions take the initiative to open a dialogue with its citizenry. In “active participation”, instead, citizens take the initiative to make their own proposals heard and therefore seek a dialogue with institutions” (p. 41).

Two of the main concerns in this element, that scholars continue to study, are equality and representation (Bingham et al., 2005, p. 554-555; Cabbanes, 2004, p. 42; Fung & Wright, 2001, p. 26-27). Depending on how much of an impact participatory budgeting has on the wider government, maybe the only sure way for underrepresented or historically marginalized groups to be heard and make a significant political impact is for “pro-poor” political parties to gain power, as they did in Brazil where participatory budgeting was one of the processes that emerged out of a country-wide shift to democracy (Brautigam, 2004). Public officials who manage some participatory budgeting processes do go out of their way to include traditionally marginalized

There is a debate in the literature about how “democratic” participatory budgeting is and should be in different countries. Some argue that participatory budgeting may be unnecessary in countries that are already democratic: “where there is the rule of law, Participatory Budgeting can be a costly repetition of institutions of representative democracy…Only in the absence of democratic participation” do people need “to have some sort of participatory process to hear the voices that have not been heard” (Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2014, p. 43). The extension of this argument is that participatory budgeting may not be as empowering or democratic as it appears to be, especially if it “becomes linked to small discretionary budgets, bound by external technical criteria” that leave the rest of the city budget “untouched” (p. 32). In that case, participatory budgeting becomes what Baiocchi & Ganuza (2014) call “a process of one-sided democratization that brings greater transparency and social justice up to the point where demands are delivered to state officials” (p. 32). It could be argued that in Latin America participatory budgeting is part of a “participatory democracy” while in the United Kingdom it is “controlled inclusion” in a “participatory governance” that selectively includes and fosters “relationships which accommodate…rather than challenge, decision makers” (Bergh, 2011, p. 551).

In the context of participatory budgeting, the quality and effectiveness of participatory processes is subject to the analysis via the complementary concepts of participatory and deliberative democracy. Considerations of participatory budgeting scholars looking at the process through the lens of participatory democracy are: the scope of participation (whether it stays at the neighborhood level or expands to the city level) and whether the participation is direct or indirect (mediated by delegates) (Cabbanes, 2004, p. 28, 37; Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2014).
Deliberative democracy scholars look at the quality of the discussion itself: whether it is inclusive, whether participants are autonomous (can take whatever position they like), and if participants are power neutral (only swayed by better arguments or ideas) (Wiklund, 2005, p. 707; Hendriks, 2006, p. 491-92). Fung & Wright (2001) place participatory budgeting under a “reform family” they call Empowered Deliberative Democracy (EDD) (p. 7). The three principles of EDD are: practical orientation (the process is aimed at concrete concerns), bottom-up participation (participants are people directly affected by the targeted problems) and deliberative solution generation (participants reach decisions they can accept) (p. 18-19).

Baiocchi & Gauza (2014) provide some criteria for evaluating the quality of participatory budgeting as a democratic practice: “the intensity of the participation,” the inclusiveness of the deliberation, the “primacy” of the forums, the “degree of actual participatory power over the budget,” and how “self-regulating or constitutional” the participatory budgeting process is (p. 36, 39). Bergh (2011) considers what conditions in participatory budgeting “make participation feasible, self-generating, meaningful and progressive and which do not” (p. 550). Another important aspect of deliberative participation is enabling disengaged and traditionally excluded citizens to meaningfully engage in the process (Bergh, 2011, p. 551; Griffin, Trevorrow, & Halpin, 2006, p. 67; Lune, 2002, p. 205; Cabbanes, 2004, p. 42, Fung & Wright, 2001, p. 26-27). One last consideration is how managers encourage future participation in citizens (Griffin, Trevorrow, & Halpin, 2006, p. 67; Fung & Wright, 2001, p. 26-27).

The focus here is on how government managers can develop, improve, and evaluate participatory budgeting processes to work towards better and more participation. Participatory budgeting processes can be analyzed through this conceptual element as examples of incorporating deliberative (active citizen) participation into traditionally one-way (passive
citizen) processes. The questions that can be asked cover the topics of evaluation, engagement, and inclusion: How inclusive is the deliberation in participatory budgeting? How much is future participation encouraged in participatory budgeting? Which conditions encourage meaningful participation and which do not? These are important considerations for the fields of public administration and political science, relevant to the steps of the participatory budgeting process where deliberative participation would likely occur (3 through 6: deciding, finalizing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluation).

Participation has some downsides. Like collaboration, more is not always or necessarily better. Depending on the preexisting environment and available resources for training citizens or holding the participatory budgeting process on a flexible schedule for those who have to work, more intense or deliberative participation may not be feasible or appropriate. There will always be a segment of the constituents that do not care to participate for whatever reason, but this does not mean that the option should not be explored or studied as a core element of the participatory budgeting process. Some of the literature suffers from an assumption that developed, “democratic” countries do not need better participatory processes; this assumption ignores the fact that there are disadvantaged people and neglected neighborhoods in every country, the problems that participatory budgeting aims to help solve. One of the main arguments against deliberative democracy arguments is that they naively assume equality in participants inside and outside of the deliberative space; this argument ignores the prescriptive nature of deliberative democracy arguments that, rather than assume equality, call for it to be aimed for as a standard in public deliberation. This requires adept facilitators, whether they are public officials or collaborating nonprofit organizations.
Deliberative participation is a relatively broad and well-studied concept in the literature. It also intersects with some of the other elements. The governance environment may have some impact on the intensity, scope, and inclusiveness of participation mechanisms used in participatory budgeting (Cabbanes, 2004, p. 37). Nonprofit organizations may facilitate participation, participate themselves as delegates (p. 42), or as individuals. How participatory budgeting is implemented in a certain country or city may also depend on the relationship between local elected representatives and nonprofits (Bergh, 2011, p. 551). Technology may be used as a participatory mechanism (Oates, 2003, p. 31-34; Griffin, Trevorrow, & Halpin, 2006; Miori & Russo, 2011, p. 43). Co-prioritization is a more specific, complementary mechanism of participation, which will be discussed next.

3.3 Co-prioritization

Co-prioritization is a type of co-production. “User and community co-production appears to have been one of the best-kept secrets of public management and governance over the past few decades. It has always been important, but rarely noticed, never mind discussed or systematically managed” (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012, p. 1136). The co-production literature assumes that people are more than passive, selfish recipients of services: they are critical success factors (essential to making a service work by adhering to its requirements), thinking people who have knowledge that service providers do not, resources with time and energy to put into helping others, asset-holders with diverse capabilities, legitimators and testimonial providers who “can promote the value of the services they receive so that other citizens are more likely to work closely with those services and agree to their funding”; and, most importantly, they “can engage
in *collaborative rather than paternalistic relationships* with staff, with other service users and with other members of the public” (emphasis theirs, Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012, p. 1122).

Co-production’s main themes include equality and reciprocity in a long-term relationship between citizens and government (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012, p. 1121; Sancino, 2016, p. 413). The co-production conceptual definition focuses on three main points: collaboration between public agencies and citizens, citizens are co-producing the services they receive, and the use of participation as a mechanism of co-production (Brandsen & Honingh, 2015, p. 428). Pestoff (2012) builds on this point by explaining the different types of relationships that can develop in a process (p. 1109). An interdependent relationship is one where the organization cannot produce a service without some customer input (p. 1109). A supplementary relationship is one where clients can substitute the service provider in some activities (p. 1109). Finally, a complementary relationship is one where clients perform secondary or peripheral tasks and there is a clear division of labor (Pestoff, 2012, p. 1109). Citizens may have different motivations for participating in co-production, but they should be encouraged with an offering of material, social, or normative value (Pestoff, 2012, p. 1110). Getting involved should be easy and the service should be enduring; it should “have an immediate impact on the life, life chances and quality of life of the persons and/or families receiving them”, which guarantees high interest (p. 1110-11).

Bovaird & Loeffler (2012) argue that co-production in the United States is a part of the communitarian movement, which favors “direct forms of participation in socially valuable activities,” which is connected to the analysis of social capital and the role of nonprofits in mobilizing citizen involvement in co-production (p. 1123). Co-production has also been found to
have “a rich history in the United States,” partly due to volunteerism and partly due to it being used as an alternative to privatization, especially in Europe (Verschuere, Brandsen, & Pestoff, 2012, p. 1093-94).

According to Sancino (2016), co-production is a “paradigm” that focuses on “community outcomes”, defined as “democratically agreed collective public outcomes that occur in a territory over which a local government has statutory authority to act” (p. 411). He sees co-production outcomes occurring at different levels of society (individual, organizational, network) as well as in different sectors (public, nonprofit, private) (p. 411). Therefore, these outcomes are the result of three different kinds of activities: co-production among professionals and individuals, peer-production among self-organizing communities of individuals, and inter-organizational collaboration, which occurs as formal or informal partnerships, networks or consortia among public, private, and nonprofit organizations (p. 411). Within this paradigm Sancino argues that local government should play a meta-coproduction role (p. 411).

Bovaird & Loeffler (2012) categorize participatory budgeting as a type of co-production they name co-prioritization (p. 1124), where government cooperates with participants (including private and nonprofit organizations) in making policy decisions (Verschuere, Brandsen, & Pestoff, 2012, p. 1086). Participatory budgeting (as co-prioritization) can contribute to public value through direct and indirect value to participants, social value (creating social cohesion or support for social interaction), and political value (supporting the democratic process) (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012, p. 1126-27). There is no more literature exploring or focusing on the new concept of co-prioritization.

Co-production has been found to improve the quality of service delivery and save the costs of public service (Verschuere, Brandsen, & Pestoff, 2012, p. 1093; Loeffler & Bovaird,
While co-production may be riskier than regular service provision, it offers potential improvements in outcomes (i.e. changing behavior and preventing future problems) (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012, p. 1119). Barriers to co-production include lack of power of the community, lack of capacity of the community, lack of mechanisms (like participatory budgeting) for the community to use, lack of funding, and difficulty generating evidence of the value provided by the process (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012, p. 1119; Loeffler & Bovaird, 2016, p. 1015). Drawbacks include the strengthening of “insider/outsider dynamics, when this type of service provision is only accessible to specific social groups,” the rhetoric of certain co-production processes is more inclusive than the reality of them, the overrepresentation of privileged (wealthy, educated, non-minority) participants in processes, and ambiguous accountability (who should be held accountable if participants are part of the process?) (Verschuere, Brandsen, & Pestoff, 2012, p. 1094; Brudney & England, 1983, p. 64).

The co-production literature presents co-production as an alternative to, a supportive tool of, and an innovation soon to replace traditional methods of government outreach. It aims to change the established view of the citizen or client as a passive recipient of services to a view of citizens and clients as active producers in and of themselves. The literature argues that incorporating citizens into the development of services and the implementation of processes can and does add value, both to the participants and to the wider community. The questions that can be asked range from the topics of theoretically defining co-production in the context of participatory budgeting to empirically describing the process in practice (Sancino, 2016, p. 412-13). Some research questions that can be developed using the co-production element are: How co-productive should participatory budgeting be? At which stages in the participatory budgeting
process does co-production occur? What are examples of most and least co-productive participatory budgeting processes in practice? These are important considerations for a variety of fields, including public administration, political science, and nonprofit organizations, relevant to the steps of the participatory budgeting process where co-prioritization would likely occur (3 through 6: deciding, finalizing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluation).

Co-production and co-prioritization, despite being more specific concepts, have some connections to the other elements. Like new governance scholars, co-production scholars note the need for the development of skills in public managers for them to be able to effectively collaborate with participants and facilitate the process (Loeffler & Bovaird, 2016, p. 1015). Collaboration, specifically between government and participants, is a significant part of co-production processes (Brandsen & Honingh, 2015, p. 428). So is participation; deliberative participation is a mechanism that is often used in co-production processes (Verschuere, Brandsen, & Pestoff, 2012, p. 1089). Co-production spread through nonprofit organizations after 2000, with scholars mostly exploring their role as mobilizers of citizen involvement (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012, p. 1123). Verschuere, Brandsen, & Pestoff (2012) argue that technology is under researched, despite the fact that it “matters in an instrumental and institutional sense, especially in the information age” (p. 1091). Technology, which we will discuss next, can facilitate or enhance co-production practices, depending on the affordances of the existing institutional environment (p. 1091).

3.4 Technology: E-Participatory Budgeting and the Digital Divide

Technology is always a consideration in the implementation of 21st century government processes, even if it is not as widely discussed in the academic literature. Technology as it relates
to public administration and specifically participatory budgeting manifests in at least two streams of study: e-government (specifically e-participatory budgeting) and the digital divide. The e-government literature is concerned with developing innovative ways of using and creating technology to improve government services and decisions while the digital divide literature is concerned with the disparity in internet access and literacy between people.

Technology is often used in processes to remove barriers to participation and combat social exclusion so that people who may not have the access or literacy needed to take advantage of e-government or e-participation processes can still participate and make their voices and needs heard (Asgarkhani, 2005). Some information communication technology (ICT) options include: “web-based public information kiosks, electronic citizens’ forums and electronic voting” (Oates, 2003, p. 31). ICTs can support certain activities: obtaining information (websites); engaging in deliberation (email, online discussion forums and lists, chatrooms); and participating in decisionmaking (e-voting via the internet or a voting station, electronic referenda) (p. 31-34).

Another way of removing barriers to participation using technology is text messaging people for their ideas on certain relevant topics in order to incorporate that feedback into democratic processes (Griffin, Trevorrow, & Halpin, 2006). The use of ICT to support the participation of the public in government processes has been referred to by many names: e-government, e-participation, e-service, including e-participatory budgeting (or ePB) in the case of participatory budgeting.

ICT can be used in participatory budgeting to involve “groups of people that would not, or could not, normally engage in face-to-face PB, such as youths, busy professionals, rural communities, people with disabilities,” etc., turning traditional participatory budgeting into electronic PB or “ePB” (Miori & Russo, 2011, p. 43). The ICT provides access, convenience,
innovation, and transparency, but may be subject to manipulation “by political elites, extremists or more technologically sophisticated users,” requiring “active oversight by moderators” (p. 43). Considering that there is little evidence that ePB improves participatory budgeting processes, Miori & Russo argue that the best solution is to integrate physical and digital participatory budgeting in a such a way that ePB supports traditional participatory budgeting (p. 43).

Even if a technology is applied to a participatory budgeting process that meets all the best practice and administrative standards (innovative, reusable, open-source), the initiative still needs: resources (human, financial, and temporal); consistent, active participation; two-way communication and sincere government managers who are willing to listen to nontraditional constituents (Griffin, Trevorrow, & Halpin, 2006, p. 68; Miori & Russo, 2011, p. 56; Oates, 2003, p. 32-34, 36-37). There are also considerations that may be barriers to using ICTs in participatory budgeting if they cannot be addressed: privacy, security, and how to deal with problematic (racism, hate, terrorism) speech on the ePB platform (Oates, p. 32-34).

One major barrier to ePB is the digital divide. The digital divide is the disparity in internet access and literacy between people (Asgarkhani, 2005; “Digital divide,” 2016; Gasco, 2005, p. 685-686). Griffin, Trevorrow, and Halpin (2006) describe it as “an existing, and possibly widening, gap between “information haves and have-nots, knowers and know-nots, doers and do-nots”…It is the rift between those who have access, knowledge and skills to use information and communication technologies (ICTs) and those who lack access, skills and so on” (p. 64). Foley (2004) describes how even the construction of internet infrastructure is implemented in a way that exacerbates existing inequalities: “Historical precedent suggests that expansion of telecommunications infrastructure focuses on the development of the most lucrative markets, thus excluding people and places that are least profitable” (p. 139).
The digital divide is detrimental to political participation, as more and more information necessary for participation is being put online and government increasingly uses the internet and social media (i.e. Twitter) to interact with the public (Lutz, n.d.; Wihbey, 2013). Some scholars argue that the use of ICT may have little impact on participation “with the social divide being mirrored by the digital divide. Providing new channels of engagement will have little effect on democratic renewal. Cyberspace will become ‘normalised’ to be the place where normal political activity is undertaken” (Griffin, Trevorrow, & Halpin, 2006, p. 63, 64). There may always be a divide between the high, medium, low and non-users of the internet (Foley, 2004, p. 140).

Social exclusion can be exacerbated by a lack of information and communication, so a lack of access to the internet may not cause social exclusion but it does have the potential to exclude people (Foley, 2004, p. 140). In other words, the digital divide can exacerbate existing socioeconomic divides. The characteristics of social exclusion are: non-participation in economic and social activities, isolation, and a perceived lack of opportunity (p. 140). Less participation in economic activities can make cost a crucial factor in investing in internet access for socially excluded communities: “Cost of Internet access is a more significant factor in areas with a high proportion of socially excluded households that have lower levels of disposable income...computer costs, access costs and telephone call charges are a more significant barrier” (p. 140). Economic barriers aside, internet access does not increase the use of government information; Foley finds that participants find the topics of job opportunities, training and education, and healthcare most useful (p. 144). Perhaps government information is not used because local government information tends to be poor quality (Foley, 2004, p. 145; Lee & Huang, 2014, p. 54).
Through the technology lens, participatory budgeting can be analyzed as a way to engage citizens suffering from the digital divide and evaluate how technology is used to bridge the digital divide or update the process to make it more appealing to the tech savvy but politically disconnected. The questions that can be asked cover these topics: engagement; limitations and barriers; and describing what new technology was used in a given process. Some research questions that can be developed using the technology element are: Is technology used to engage participants in participatory budgeting? Why or why not? What technology is used? What technology is appropriate to use (considering community skill & resources)? These are important considerations for a variety of fields, including public administration, e-participation, e-government, the digital divide, and nonprofit organizations relevant to each step of the participatory budgeting process.

The digital divide literature and the e-government (including e-participation and ePB) literature have some overlap but offer distinct views on participatory budgeting and connections to the other elements in the framework. Digital divide scholars are focused on how the digital divide both reflects and exacerbates existing socioeconomic divides. This reflects issues of representation covered in the previous sections on participation and co-prioritization. The reason the digital divide is such an important concept is because it impedes participation (Gasco, 2005, p. 686). Marginalized groups can gain valuable resources from increased political participation, such as knowledge about services available to them, ways to get their voices heard, and valuable skills in ICT literacy. The government can also benefit from their increased participation because it will have a better understanding of their unique needs, which is especially useful in neighborhoods that are primarily occupied by marginalized people. Initiatives (sponsored at the federal level and implemented at the state and local levels) to increase internet access and
literacy also become more salient because they enable marginalized groups to contribute their knowledge and experiences to the wider community, enriching it.

E-government scholars are focused on describing initiatives where new technology was used or created in order to increase participation by the public. This can be analyzed as a mechanism of new governance as well as co-prioritization. Another link to new governance is thinking about implementing technology in participatory budgeting given the environment the process will be operating in. Whatever technology-related decision managers make in participatory budgeting, awareness of the digital divide and their community resources and technology literacy levels will enhance that decision. Nonprofit organizations can also play a role in ePB processes through collaboration and facilitation. In making decisions on participatory budgeting, government managers should not focus on having the newest technology available, but rather continue to use traditional methods to reach people without access to the internet while using technology to facilitate the process, such as reaching people through their phones.

3.5 Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofits often play a significant part in the implementation of participatory budgeting processes. For example, in New York City nonprofit organizations partner with the City Council to help reach and engage participants in the process, host neighborhood assemblies, and provide technical assistance (New York City Council, n.d.; The Participatory Budgeting Project, 2016). Nonprofit organizations have been an important part of society for centuries all over the world, including the Middle East and Africa (Edwards, 2014, p. 33-42). The boundaries of the nonprofit sector are fluid (p. 23), so here they are defined on the vaguer end of the spectrum. For the purposes of this framework, the term *nonprofit organizations* includes the organizations that fit
the requirements for nonprofit tax exemptions, community based organizations, advocacy organizations, interest groups, grassroots organizations, religious organizations, international nongovernmental organizations, professional associations, social movements, and civil society organizations.

In describing nonprofits’ relationship with citizens, the nonprofit literature is largely positive. Nonprofits have been argued to be centers of socialization for participation and civic engagement (Clemens, 2006, p. 208). Oates (2003) argues that the presence of single issue groups shows that citizens are “alienated from the formal political institutions and the current democratic process, and concerned that their voices are not being heard or their views properly represented” (p. 33). They can be the catalysts for social change and shifting power dynamics (Clemens, 2006, p. 213; Dodge, 2010, p. 384). They are often organized to empower minority communities (Hall, 2006, p. 43-45). When providing services through government contracts, it is often nonprofits that citizens see as the face of “care” (p. 215).

Nonprofit organizations have different types of relationships with government, from confrontational to collaborative (Hendriks, 2006; Clemens, 2006) which may change over time. Nonprofits have mostly been supported by government and politicians over time from both ends of the political spectrum; for liberals nonprofits are ideal partners to government that can mobilize citizens around a political issue, while conservatives acknowledge the innovation that nonprofits create to solve social problems (Frumkin, 2002, p. 17-19).

It is possible that nonprofits’ impact on civic engagement may not be as large as much of the literature makes it seem. Advocacy groups have been found to under-advocate for intersectionally disadvantaged groups and advocate more for advantaged subgroups and majority issues (Strolovitch, 2008). With the rise of hateful and antidemocratic groups, it has been
acknowledged in more recent literature that nonprofits can encourage hostility and separatism instead of deliberation and engagement (Clemens, 2006, p. 211-12). It is also possible that funding streams may subject nonprofits to manipulation, impeding advocacy efforts (p. 213-14).

Through the nonprofit lens participatory budgeting can be analyzed as an example of the role of nonprofits in civic life. Nonprofits often act as a bridge between the government and citizens and in participatory budgeting that role does not appear to change. Nonprofits provide administrative support to government managers as well as social support to citizen participants. The importance of nonprofit organizations cannot be overlooked when studying a process like participatory budgeting which may incorporate their participation as a matter of course. The questions that can be asked cover the role of nonprofits in the process and their relationships with the citizens, with the government managers, and with each other. Some research questions that can be developed using the nonprofit element are: What is the role of nonprofits in the participatory budgeting process? What should their role be? More specific questions include: What kind of relationship do the nonprofits have with the participatory budgeting participants? With the government managers? With each other? These are important considerations for a variety of fields, including public administration, collaboration, and nonprofit organizations, relevant to each step of the participatory budgeting process.

Nonprofit organizations, like technology, have various connections to the other elements of this framework. Under new (collaborative) governance, the preexisting relationships between managers and nonprofit organizations are part of the environment of a participatory budgeting process. As mentioned throughout this paper, nonprofits can facilitate deliberative participation and the use of technology in the process in a variety of ways. As for co-prioritization, the role of nonprofits in participatory budgeting has been argued to be part of the co-production process at a
different level: citizen participation can be considered the micro-level while nonprofit participation is the meso-level (Pestoff, 2012, p. 1107). The term *citizen* may include nonprofit organization employees as individuals, but here the term *nonprofit participation* refers to organization-organization relationships (i.e. collaboration). Pestoff offers another dimension to thinking about co-production: individual acts versus collective action (p. 1107). Co-production at the individual level are usually ad hoc, spontaneous, informal acts done in public or at home (p. 1108). At the collective level, co-production are formally organized or institutionalized activities done with others (p. 1108). This distinction can help researchers begin to explore why a participatory budgeting initiative may become institutionalized or be cancelled.

4. Discussion and Implications

The literature explored in this paper are more focused on describing how participatory budgeting initiatives are implemented than analyzing how well the process is achieving equality for underrepresented groups, improving neglected neighborhoods, and turning citizens’ judgments of government into more positive and engaged thoughts. There is a lack of studies that attempt to evaluate participatory budgeting in the way Baiocchi & Ganuza (2014) propose: by entering the “black box” of this process to find out how it is coordinated between governmental and nongovernmental actors (p. 34). Most studies take a world-wide view, looking at participatory budgeting trends in multiple regions (i.e. Europe and Latin America), mostly still focusing on Brazil.

The roles of technology and nonprofit organizations are underdiscussed and underexplored in the literature. Going back to the three examples of participatory budgeting, these elements are neglected or altogether ignored in descriptions of participatory budgeting in
practice. In the New York City example, a researcher can tell nonprofits are part of the process, but does not know what their role is. Technology is not mentioned. In the Rome example, technology is only discussed because it was used as the main mechanism in the process. Nonprofits are not mentioned. In the Sweden example, neither technology nor nonprofits are mentioned. In each example, however, there are attempts to explain or suggest how the participatory budgeting initiative is performing on traditional public administration topics: participation, decision-making, and implementation.

Participatory budgeting scholars that discuss technology in participatory budgeting do so as part of studies in ePB, where technology is the main mechanism of decisionmaking. Technology is an element worth looking at in participatory budgeting processes that do not use ICT as the main decisionmaking mechanism. Technology may be used to recruit participants (i.e. social media, text messaging, website updates, emailing), keep participants engaged through each step of the process, train participants in how to navigate the process (i.e. PowerPoint, website), facilitate decisions (i.e. software, e-voting), and inform participants of the results of the process (i.e. website updates, social media). The role of nonprofit organizations in participatory budgeting is only discussed in passing in the literature. Nonprofit organizations assist government managers in participatory budgeting processes in a variety of ways (i.e. collaborating, hosting assemblies, facilitating) at each step of the process.

Exploring the role of technology and nonprofit organizations in the participatory budgeting process can provide some insights on best practices in the field and the impact of these two elements on the process, participants, and outcomes. Including these two elements in future studies on participatory budgeting can help us illuminate more of what happens in this black box, as well as provide some more causal mechanisms of a process’ success or failure. This analytical
framework (see Figure 1) can assist researchers and practitioners in studying, evaluating, improving, and building participatory budgeting processes. Some ideas for future research using the framework are introduced.

**Figure 1. Framework to Study Participatory Budgeting**

4.1 How Can We Measure Each of the Elements? A Summary of Participatory Budgeting Variables

From the preceding literature review, variables for each element as well as variables that span multiple elements can be extracted. Each area of literature has its main topics of focus that can be operationalized for empirical study as well as considered for theory building. Each
element of participatory budgeting discussed here can be studied individually, but this framework looks at how some of the main variables from these elements may interact in interesting ways over the course of a participatory budgeting process from start to finish and beyond. This section summarizes each element’s individual variables and the next section discusses the overlapping variables.

There are seven variables included within the collaborative governance element: features of the collaborative relationships involved in the process (i.e. length, actors included) (Bingham, Nabatchi, & O’Leary, 2005), the political environment of the process (i.e. whether managers are encouraged to collaborate and be open) (Bingham et al., 2005; Brautigam, 2004), the training of managers in the conflict resolution skills needed to manage the process (Bingham et al., 2005; Griffin, Trevorrow, & Halpin, 2006; Miori & Russo, 2011; Oates, 2003; Loeffler & Bovaird, 2016; Brandsen & Honingh, 2015), the cultural environment (whether citizens are generally empowered to interact with government) (Bingham et al., 2005), how the decisions in the process are implemented (Bingham et al., 2005), whether the process has become institutionalized (Griffin et al., 2006, p. 67; Fung & Wright, 2001), and the short and long-term impacts of the process in the participating districts (Bingham et al., 2005).

There are five variables included within the deliberative participation element: the level of participation (i.e. information, consultation, active) (Miori & Russo, 2011), the equity of the process (whether people in disadvantaged groups are engaged, represented, and treated equally in the process) (Bingham et al., 2005; Bergh, 2011; Griffin et al., 2006; Lune, 2002; Cabbanes, 2004; Fung & Wright, 2001; Wiklund, 2005; Hendriks, 2006; Verschuere, Brandsen, & Pestoff, 2012; Brudney & England, 1983; Foley, 2004), the scope of the process (neighborhood or city level) (Cabbanes, 2004; Baiocchi & Ganiuza, 2014), whether the participation is direct or
indirect, and whether the process reflects the normative standard of deliberative democracy (i.e. autonomous participants, power neutrality, practical problem) (Wiklund, 2005; Hendriks, 2006; Fung & Wright, 2001).

There are eight variables included within the co-prioritization element: the level of co-production (individual, organization, or network) (Sancino, 2016), sectors involved in the process (public, nonprofit, business) (Sancino, 2016), the kinds of participants in the co-prioritization activities (professionals and individuals, peers, or interorganizational) (Sancino, 2016), the type of action (individual, collective) (Pestoff, 2012), the value to participants (social, political) (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012), barriers to the process (lack of power, capacity, funding, mechanisms, ambiguous accountability) (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012; Verschuere, Brandsen, & Pestoff, 2012; Brudney & England, 1983; Griffin, Trevorrow, & Halpin, 2006; Miori & Russo, 2011; Oates, 2003), whether the process saves money (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012), and the type of co-productive relationship between managers and participants (interdependent, supplementary, complementary) (Pestoff, 2012).

There are three variables included within the technology element: whether a digital divide exists where the process is being implemented (Lutz, n.d.; Wilbey, 2013; Foley, 2004; Griffin, Trevorrow, & Halpin, 2006; Asgarkhani, 2005; “Digital divide,” 2016; Gasco, 2005), what technologies are used in the process, and the purpose of the technologies used (facilitation, participatory mechanism).

There are three variables included within the nonprofit organizations element: what type(s) of nonprofits are collaborating with the managers or facilitating the process, what role nonprofits play in the process, and the type of relationship between the local nonprofits and government (i.e. collaborative, confrontational) (Hendriks, 2006; Clemens, 2006).
4.2 Ideas for Future Research: The Importance of Relationships among Elements

Using the whole framework to better understand participatory budgeting requires an integration of knowledge from multiple related fields. Each field has a detailed understanding of at least one element, but leveraging that knowledge to understand how multiple elements interact within the participatory budgeting process is where the value of the whole framework presents itself. Applying the entire framework will likely result in new information scholars and practitioners may not anticipate being salient to their study. Relationships between two or more components could be as important to understand participatory budgeting as understanding the role of individual elements.

This framework is meant to shed light on the intersection of these various areas of literature and illustrate how they can work in tandem to analyze a unique process that continues to evolve. Some research questions that can be developed using the whole framework are: What is the role and relative importance of each element in a specific case? How do nonprofits, technology, and co-prioritization interact in the participatory budgeting process? Does the inclusion of nonprofits and technology impact certain public administration outcomes (i.e. institutionalization) in participatory budgeting? How? These considerations allow scholars to study the participatory budgeting process from start to finish and connect empirical observations to theory in a way that encompasses more of the nuances of the complex process.

Collaborative governance overlaps with all of the other elements through the following variables: whether nonprofit organizations are collaborating with managers in the process, whether there are preexisting collaborative relationships between nonprofits and managers, where managers are facilitating and providing the appropriate space for deliberative
participation, how the external environment of the process impacts the quality of participation (Cabbanes, 2004), whether collaboration is part of the co-prioritization process (Loeffler & Bovaird, 2016; Brandsen & Honingh, 2015), and whether technology is used as a mechanism of collaboration.

Deliberative participation overlaps with three other elements (including collaborative governance) through the following variables: the role of nonprofit organizations in participation (as facilitators or individuals), the impact of manager relationships with nonprofits on implementation (Cabbanes, 2004; Bergh, 2011), if and how technology is used as a participatory mechanism (Oates, 2003; Griffin, Trevorrow, & Halpin, 2006; Miori & Russo, 2011), and how technology is used to maintain participation throughout the process.

Co-prioritization overlaps with three other elements (including collaborative governance) through the following variables: whether nonprofit organizations mobilize citizen involvement in the co-prioritization activities (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012), whether technology facilitates or enhances the process (Verschuere, Brandsen, & Pestoff, 2012), and whether technology is used as a mechanism of co-prioritization.

The elements of technology and nonprofit organizations overlap with all of the other elements. The last overlapping variables of technology are: whether the digital divide impacts deliberative participation (Gasco, 2005), whether it impacts co-prioritization, and how nonprofits collaborate in and facilitate ePB processes. The last overlapping variable of nonprofit organizations is whether they participate in co-prioritization at the meso (organizational) level (Pestoff, 2012).
5. Conclusion

The first research question for this paper is: How has participatory budgeting been conceptualized? In each element of the framework, the literature on participatory budgeting is largely focused on describing specific initiatives in practice. The literature lacks theory building and analysis studies that attempt to unpack the process at each stage or make arguments on which variables are important and what impact they have on outcomes of interest. The collaborative governance and deliberative participation literature appear to be starting to ask those types of questions, but there do not seem to be any studies that attempt to answer them. The second research question is: What are its core elements? As mentioned before, there are some elements that are recurrently included, but nonprofit organizations and technology remain largely in the background of studies on participatory budgeting, if they are mentioned at all. Understanding what roles nonprofit organizations and technology play in participatory budgeting processes and how their associated variables interact with the other conceptual elements in this framework will help us understand better: 1) How participatory budgeting is done, i.e. which actors are involved and what mechanisms are used at various steps of the process to facilitate it (or perhaps what not using certain mechanisms can do to reduce the success of a process); 2) How to improve participatory budgeting processes so that participants are better included and their preferences better implemented; 3) What underlying mechanisms can make a participatory budgeting process successful from the planning stage to implementation and beyond. This requires more research on the roles of nonprofit organizations in participatory budgeting, the role(s) of technology in participatory budgeting, and the interaction of one or both of these elements with the more traditionally studied elements of the framework.
Therefore, this new framework was built on the existing literature on participatory budgeting, but attempts to identify and propose potential solutions for some of the theoretical and analytical shortcomings. The elements of nonprofit organizations and technology are not new concepts in and of themselves, but including them in studies on participatory budgeting can provide more information on the mechanisms driving the evolution, success, and failure of these processes. Participatory budgeting practice continues to innovate, so scholars studying it can benefit from a fresh perspective on variables to look for, particularly since they affect and are intertwined with other variables that have been traditionally studied.

Scholars or practitioners may find trying to apply the whole framework somewhat daunting, since it includes many variables and requires some competence in multiple disciplinary perspectives. However, one of the main advantages of a framework like this is the focus on the big picture and the potential to understand participatory budgeting in a more comprehensive way. Here are a few strategies to get started: 1) Study one element first and incrementally add other elements in subsequent studies; 2) Try your instrument (i.e. survey, interviews) in a smaller pilot study so that the data is manageable and the instrument can be adjusted to be appropriate for the specific case under study; 3) Do a study on one familiar element (new governance, democratic participation, or co-prioritization) and one overlooked element (technology or nonprofits). These are only a few initial ideas and other researchers may find alternatives that better fit their own research agenda. The most important thing is to be open to try several elements of this integrative framework and use it to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of participatory budgeting in different settings.

For practitioners attempting to launch or improve participatory budgeting initiatives, here are some considerations: 1) How can local nonprofits help improve and sustain participation? 2)
What technology (or technologies) can make the process easier for participants? If a new software is being used as part of the process, what kind of training needs to be provided for participants? 3) How will you let participants know what outcomes resulted from their efforts? These questions may be included in an integrative strategy for the implementation of specific participatory budgeting initiatives. They can guide the process of designing, implementing and evaluating certain elements or to obtain an overall sense of a program.
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