

Workplan for a post-doctoral research project

**Participatory budgeting and financial referenda.
Theoretical considerations and a comparison between urban polities
in Brazil and Switzerland**

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1 Abstract and key words

The overarching question of this research project is: How to institutionalize the participation of citizens in budget decisions in order to favor reflectivity? The research interest is motivated by the fact that participatory mechanisms are increasingly proliferated around the globe while fundamental institutional questions remain open. The research project consists of two elements: firstly, institutions of direct democracy will be analyzed in order to better understand the mechanisms of self rule and the production of reflectivity. Secondly, a number of urban polities in Brazil and in Switzerland will be analyzed empirically to nourish the theoretical considerations and to allow for a practical conclusion for participatory practices in Brazil, Switzerland and beyond. The geographic choice is based on the fact that the arguably most important institutional innovation in the field of participatory democracy of the last decades started in Brazil, while Switzerland has the richest track record in the use of processes of direct democracy overall. This research project will permit a stay of 24 months at the Universidade de São Paulo, the most renowned university in Brazil and will be the basis of a postdoctoral lecture qualification.

Key words: Financial referenda, participatory budgeting, urban polities, federalism, Brazil, Switzerland.

2 Research plan

2.1 Problem to be addressed

Processes of direct democracy are being implemented in more and more countries around the world.¹ Accordingly, scientific research has expanded considerably.² Scholars who favor the use of processes of direct democracy argue that these mechanisms contribute to the integration and stabilization of polities,³ that they allow for a more complete socialization of

¹ An overview on the spread and use of processes of direct democracy is offered KAUFMANN, BÜCHI & BRAUN (2008), *Guidebook to direct democracy*. The most comprehensive database is provided by the Centre for Research on Direct Democracy. It can be accessed under www.c2d.ch. For an assessment of different databases refer to MITTENDORF (2007), *Databases for (empirical) research on „direct democracy“*.

² General studies: MÖCKLI (1994), *Direkte Demokratie*. LUTHARD (1994), *Direkte Demokratie*. ROTH (1994), *Demokratie von unten*. KIRCHGÄSSNER, FELD & SAVIOZ (1999), *Die direkte Demokratie*. SETÄLÄ (1999), *Referendums and democratic government*. JUNG (2001), *Die Logik direkter Demokratie*. SCHILLER (2002), *Direkte Demokratie. Eine Einführung*. SCHILLER (2002), *Direkte Demokratie. Forschung und Perspektiven*. PAPADOPOLOUS (2001), *How does direct democracy matter?* GROSS (2002), *Das Design der direkten Demokratie und deren Qualitäten*. FREY & STUZTER (2003), *Direct democracy*. JUNG (2005), *Grundsatzfragen der direkten Demokratie*. GROSS (2007), *The design determines the quality*. SCHILLER (2007), *Direct democracy and theories of participatory democracy*.

Studies with a specific geographic focus: ALTMAN (2008), *Collegiate executives and direct democracy in Switzerland and Uruguay*. AUER & BÜTZER (2001), *Direct democracy*. BOVO (2008), *Mechanisms of direct democracy in Brazil*. EWERT (2007), *Potentiale der direkten Demokratie in Litauen, Slowenien und Ungarn unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der politischen Kultur*. FREITAG & WAGSCHAL (2007), *Direkte Demokratie*. HERMANN & LEUTHOLD (2007), *Zwischen Konsens und Polarisierung*. KRIESI (2005), *Direct democratic choice*. MÖCKLI (2007), *Direkte Demokratie in den Gliedstaaten der USA*. PÄLLINGER, KAUFMANN, MARXER & SCHILLER (2007), *Direct democracy in Europe*. VATTER (2007), *Direkte Demokratie in der Schweiz*.

Studies with a historic focus: AUER (1996), *Les origines de la démocratie directe en Suisse*. ADLER (2006), *Die Entstehung der direkten Demokratie*.

Studies with a policy focus: GEBHART (2002), *Direkte Demokratie und Umweltpolitik*. SCHNEIDER (2004), *Vom Nutzen von Volksabstimmungen*. BÜHLMANN, SAGER & VATTER (2006), *Verteidigungspolitik in der direkten Demokratie*.

Studies with a focus on the local and subnational level: BÜTZER (2007), *Direkte Demokratie in Schweizer Städten*. HAUS, HEINELT, EGNER & KÖNIG (2005), *Partizipation und Führung in der lokalen Politik*. KÜBLER (2002), *La métropole et le politique*. KÜBLER (2005), *La métropole e le citoyen*. KÜBLER (2006), *Lokalpolitische Strukturen und Prozesse*. KOST, (2005), *Direkte Demokratie in den deutschen Ländern. Eine Einführung*. LADNER & BÜHLMANN (2007), *Demokratie in den Gemeinden*. MAGIN & EDER (2007), *Direkte Demokratie in den Bundesländern*. MATTHEWS (2006), *The people's machine*. SCHILLER (1999), *Direkte Demokratie in Theorie und kommunaler Praxis*. SCHILLER (2007), *Direkte Demokratie auf Bundesländer- und Kommunalebene*. SUPERFLEX (2006), *Selforganisation*. TRECHSEL (2000), *Feuerwerk Volksrechte*. WEIXNER (2002), *Direkte Demokratie in den Bundesländern*.

³ BUTLER & RANNEY (1994), *Referendums around the world*. CRONIN (1989), *Direct democracy*. SUSKI (1993), *Bringing the people in*.

the citizens, and that citizens are better informed and even more happy with their lives.⁴ Furthermore, it is argued that processes of direct democracy have positive effects on the macroeconomic situation of a polity,⁵ that they reduce the levels of public debt and expenditure and increase the effectiveness of public administrations.⁶ Critical authors argue that processes of direct democracy weaken the representative institutions, that they open the door for demagoguery and the tyranny of the majority. They advocate that these institutions slow down the political process and, by doing so, increase costs both for public and private actors.⁷

While some of the effects of processes of direct democracy remain contentious in light of empirical evidence and depend on factors beyond the immediate reach of the state, it can be argued from a normative point of view that these institutions play a pivotal role in the reproduction of a sustainable polity.⁸ This research project intends to explore some of the institutional aspects of processes of direct democracy. The fundamental point of departure is

⁴ FREY & STUTZER (2000), *Happiness, economy and institutions*, p. 918 ff. STUTZER & FREY (2000), *Stärkere Volksrechte – zufriedener Bürger*, p. 1 ff. FREY & STUTZER (2002), *Happiness and economics*.

⁵ FELD & SAVIOZ (1997), *Direct democracy matters for economic performance*, p. 507 ff. FELD & SAVIOZ (1998), *Vox Populi, Vox Bovi?* KIRCHGÄSSNER, FELD & SAVIOZ (1999), *Die direkte Demokratie*, p. 100 ff. FREITAG & VATTER (2000), *Direkte Demokratie, Konkordanz und Wirtschaftsleistung*, p. 579 ff. FELD & KIRCHGÄSSNER (2002), *Direkte Demokratie in der Schweiz*, p. 88 ff. VATTER (2002), *Kantonale Demokratien im Vergleich*. FELD & SCHALTEGGER (2005), *Die Wachstumsschwäche der Schweiz*. FELD & KIRCHGÄSSNER (2007), *On the economic efficiency of direct democracy*, p. 108 ff.

⁶ FELD & KIRCHGÄSSNER (1998), *Die politische Ökonomie der direkten Demokratie*. KIRCHGÄSSNER, FELD & SAVIOZ (1999), *Die direkte Demokratie*, p. 76 ff. FELD & KIRCHGÄSSNER (2001), *Does direct democracy reduce public debt?* p. 347 ff. FELD & KIRCHGÄSSNER (2001), *The political economy of direct legislation*, p. 331 ff. NOVARESI (2001), *Discipline budgétaire*. SCHALTEGGER & FELD (2001), *On government centralization and budget referendums*. VATTER (2002), *Kantonale Demokratien im Vergleich*. VATTER & FREITAG (2002), *Die Janusköpfigkeit von Verhandlungsdemokratien*, p. 53 ff. VATTER & RÜEFLI (2003), *Do political factors matter for health care expenditure?* p. 301 ff. MATSUSAKA (2004), *For the many or the few*. FELD, FISCHER & KIRCHGÄSSNER (2006), *The effect of direct democracy on income redistribution*. SCHNELLENBACH, FELD & SCHALTEGGER (2006), *The impact of referendums on the centralisation of public goods provision*. MOSER & OBINGER (2007), *Schlaraffenland auf Erden?* SCHALTEGGER & FELD (2007), *Behindert die direkte Demokratie eine erfolgreiche Konsolidierungspolitik?* FREITAG & STADELMANN-STEFFEN (2007), *Wahl- oder Abstimmungs-demokratie?*

⁷ OLSON (1982), *The rise and decline of nations*. BORNER, BRUNETTI & STRAUBHAAR (1990), *Schweiz AG*. BORNER & STRAUBHAAR (1994), *Die Schweiz im Alleingang*. BODMER & BORNER (2005), *Ist die direkte Demokratie mitschuldig an der wirtschaftlichen Stagnation der Schweiz?* p. 150 ff. FREITAG, VATTER & MÜLLER (2003), *Bremse oder Gaspedal?*

⁸ RAUSCHENBACH (forthcoming), *Mit direktdemokratischen Verfahren zu postkonventionellen politischen Kulturen*. Siehe auch: LUPA & JOHNSTON (2001), *Are the voters to blame?* FELD & FREY (2002), *Trust breeds trust*. FELD & TYRAN (2002), *Tax evasion and voting*. FREITAG & SCHNIEWIND (2007), *Direktdemokratie und Sozialkapital*. KIRCHLER (2006), *Steuerehrlichkeit setzt Vertrauen der Bürger in den Staat voraus*. HUG & SPÖRRI (2007), *Referendums, trust and tax evasion*.

that processes of direct democracy are only effective if they allow for reflectivity. Reflectivity is defined as the ability to establish (self) awareness by questioning all relevant factors. It is assumed that reflectivity can be increased by implementing mechanisms of feedback. On the one hand, processes of direct democracy need to be institutionalized in such a manner that they trigger clear results to the citizens. On the other hand, citizens need to be able to exploit these pieces of feedback by feeding their experiences back into the political game – not only in the context of specific policy-issues but also in the general institutional framework. In this research project, that question will be analyzed in the specific context of budget decisions of urban polities in Brazil and Switzerland. The selection of this specific context is based on the following reasons:

- Budget decisions entail clear feedback in terms of costs to the citizens (in the form of taxes) and benefits (in the form of the provision of public goods) triggered by specific votes and therefore represent a showcase for processes of direct democracy.
- The choice for urban polities is motivated by the fact that more and more people live in urban settings and that more effective instruments for their political organization and sustainable development are needed.
- The geographic choice is based on the fact that the arguably most important institutional innovation in the field of processes of direct democracy in the last decades was started in Brazil under the name of participatory budgeting. While there is already quite some literature on participatory budgeting, it is assumed that some of the fundamental issues of their institutionalization have not yet been fully addressed. It is assumed that the rich experience in processes of direct democracy in Switzerland could prove inspiring. Simultaneously, as the institutions of processes of direct democracy remain under constant change, it is also assumed that Switzerland can learn from Brazil.

It is possible that at a later stage of this research the geographic scope might be expanded to a sample of cities in the European Union or in the United States.

2.2 Status of scientific debate

As this research project intends to dwell on different bodies of literature, the status of the scientific debate will be presented as follows: Participatory budgeting (1), financial referenda (2), federalism (3) and empirical studies on deliberative democracy (4).

(1) Participatory budgeting: there is quite a wide range of literature on the participatory budgeting, starting with literature on practices in Brazil.⁹ In particular with the World Social Forums, initially held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, the mechanisms of participatory budgeting were proliferated to other parts of the world.¹⁰ This resulted in a number of handbooks, guiding both activists and municipalities in setting up processes of participatory budgeting.¹¹ Even institutions such as the United Nations and the World Bank are now looking at participatory

⁹ ALVES (1980), *A força do povo*. ABERS (1997), *Inventing local democracy in neighborhood organizing and participatory policy-making in Porto Alegre*. SOUSA SANTOS (1998), *Participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre*. ABERS (2000), *Inventing local democracy*. DIAS (2000), *Na encruzilhada da teoria democrática*. BENEVIDES (2001), *Orçamento participativo e socialismo*. GENERO & SOUZA (2001), *Orçamento participativo*. PIRES (2001), *Orçamento participativo*. ZIMMERMANN (2001), *Innovation in der brasilianischen Verwaltung*. GUERRA (2002), *Citizenship knows no age*. MENEGAT (2002), *Participatory democracy and sustainable development*. SÁNCHEZ (2002), *Orçamento participativo*. SANTOS (2002), *Democratizar a democracia*. TEIVAINEN (2002), *The World Social Forum and the global democratisation*. ARVITZER & NAVARRO (2003), *A inovação democrática no Brasil*. BRANDFORD, KUCINSKI & WAINWRIGHT (2003), *Politics transformed*. CIDADE (2003), *Fazendo política*. CIDADE (2003), *Quem é o público do orçamento participativo 2002*. PONT (2003), *Hoffnung für Brasilien*. MARQUETTI (2004), *Building a new form of local state*. WAMPLER (2004), *Expanding accountability through participatory institutions*. MARQUETTI (2005), *A typology of participatory budgeting experiences*. MARQUETTI (2005), *Characteristics of Brazilian cities experiencing the participatory budgeting*. ABERS & KECK (2006), *Muddy waters*. ARVITZER (2006), *New public sphere in Brazil*. BAIERLE (2006), *A era dos convênios*. COELHO (2006), *Democratization of Brazilian health councils*. HERZBERG (2006), *Der Bürgerhaushalt von Porto Alegre*. LEUBOLT (2006), *Staat als Gemeinwesen*. RABOUIN (2006), *Réinventer la démocratie*. ANDERSSON & LAERHOVEN (2007), *From local strongman to facilitator*. RIOS & INSUA (2008), *A framework for participatory budget elaboration support*. STUMPF GONZALEZ (2008), *Novas formas institucionais de participação na democracia brasileira*. CARVALHO, TEIXEIRA, ANTONINI & MAGALHÃES (undated), *Orçamento participativo no estado de São Paulo*.

¹⁰ Africa: LIPIETZ (2008), *Building a vision for the post-apartheid city*.

Asia: HELLER, HARILAL & CHAUDHURI (2007), *Building local democracy*. LEVINE et al. (2008), *Generating sustainable towns from Chinese villages*.

Europe: ALLEGRETTI & HERZBERG (2004), *Participatory budgets in Europe*. FRANZKE & KLEGER (2006), *Kommunaler Bürgerhaushalt in Theorie und Praxis am Beispiel Potsdams*. WEISE (2007), *Bürgerhaushalt in Berlin*. LIEBERT & TRENZ (2008), *Reconstituting democracy from below*. MÄRKER & NITSCHKE (2008), *Bürgerhaushalt als Rahmen einer Beteiligungskultur*. SINTOMER, HERZBERG & RÖCKE (2008), *Participatory budgeting in Europe*. UITERMARK & DUYVENDAK (2008), *Citizen participation in a mediated age*.

USA and Canada: FUNG (2004), *Empowered participation*. FUNG & FAGOTTO (2006), *Empowered participation in urban governance*. RABOUIN (2006), *Réinventer la démocratie*.

¹¹ BERTELSMANN STIFTUNG & LAND NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN (2004), *Kommunaler Bürgerhaushalt*. HERZBERG (2005), *Bürgerhaushalt in Grossstädten*. PB-UNIT (2008), *Participatory budgeting*.

budgeting.¹² Beyond the description and analysis of the mere mechanisms of participatory budgeting, a number of further issues are addressed in literature: the deliberativeness¹³ of participatory budgeting as well as the contribution of such practices to the constitution of elements of civil society,¹⁴ the potential of electronic technologies in facilitating participatory budgeting.¹⁵ It is not possible to condense the learning from all experiences with participatory budgeting given the limited space available here. Nylen provides, however, a summary of six lessons from his survey on participatory budgeting in Brazil. They can be summarized as follows:¹⁶ while participatory budgeting practices are relevant to the ills of elitist structures, no unrealistic expectations should be created. Participatory institutions are “schools of democracy” and enhance the introduction of more non-elite activists into the otherwise elitist world of representative democracy. It is crucial in designing participatory institutions to emphasize relevancy, efficacy, realism and nonpartisanship and motivate the commitment of the administrators.¹⁷

¹² UNITED NATIONS (2008), *People matter*.

¹³ AVRITZTER (1999), *Public deliberation at the local level*. BEAUMONT & LOOPMANS (2008), *Towards radicalized communicative rationality*. BEAUMONT & NICHOLLS (2008), *Plural governance, participation and democracy in cities*. BAIOCCHI (1999), *Participation, activism and politics*. BECKER (2001), *Der progressive erweiterte Staat*. BÜHLMANN (2007), *Direkte Demokratie und politische Unterstützung*. CABANNES (2004), *Participatory budgeting*. DAGNINO (2002), *Sociedade civil e espaços públicos no Brasil*. GOODIN (2008), *First talk, then vote*. SOUZA (2007), *Local democratization in Brazil*. LÜCHMANN (2002), *Possibilidades e limites da democracia deliberativa*. MELO & BAIOCCHI (2006), *Deliberative democracy and local governance*. MENEGAT (2002), *Participatory democracy and sustainable development*. ROSENBERG (2007), *Deliberation, participation and democracy*.

¹⁴ BARNES et al. (2008), *Designing citizen-centred governance*. BINGHAM, NABATCHI & BORINS (2008), *Innovations in government*. BOSCHI (1999), *Descentralização, clientelismo e capital social na governança urbana*. CORNWALL & COELHO (undated), *Democratizing public engagement*. NOVY & LEUBOLT (2005), *Participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre*. O’LEARY (2005), *The new governance*. RANKIN, SCHWARTZ & YOUNG (2008), *The effect of honesty and superior authority on budget proposals*. SOUZA (2007), *Local democratization in Brazil*. WAMPLER (2007), *Can participatory institutions promote pluralism?*

¹⁵ ANTTIROIKO (2006), *Contextualising local e-democracy*. AVRITZTER et al. (2006), *The pole of training*. MÄRKER & SALZ (2005), *Public budget dialogue*. PINTAUDI, MOLÈS, PEIXOTO (2006), *Experimentation in local e-democracy*. PRATCHETT (2006), *Making local e-democracy work?* ROEDER, POPPENBORG, MICHAELIS, VIRAPATIRIN (2006), *The empirical base of the White Book*. WELP (2006), *Different experiments in perspective*.

¹⁶ NYLEN (2003), *Participatory democracy versus elitist democracy*, p. 145 ff.

¹⁷ BAIERLE (2003), *The Porto Alegre thermidor*. BAIERLE (2005), *Lula’s swamp*. BAIERLE (2005), *Porto Alegre em transe*. BAIERLE (2008), *Whittling down the potential of participatory budgeting?* BAIOCCHI (1999), *Participation, acitivism and politics*. DIAS (2000), *Na encruzilhada da teoria democrática*. EISING (2005), *Möglichkeiten und Grenzen von Bürgerbeteiligung in der kooperativen Demokratie*. FIGUEIREDO & LAMOUNIER (1996), *As cidades que dão certo*. GOLDFRANK (2008), *The difficult but not impossible diffusion of participatory budgeting*. LAUGA (1999), *Demokratiethorie in Lateinamerika*. MILKMAN, CHUGH & BAZERMAN (2008), *How can decision making be improved?* MONTERO (2005), *Brazilian politics*. MUZELL (2006), *Porto Alegre 2007 budget*. PINTAUDI (2008), *Presupuesto participativo en Brasil*. SOUZA (2001), *Participatory*

(2) Fiscal referenda: The literature on fiscal referenda is predominantly produced by authors from the field of political economy. They are mainly interested in questions such as how financial referenda increase or decrease public spending, tax levels and public debts.¹⁸ Furthermore, there is quite some interest in the question of how financial referenda affect political institutions, in particular if state structures tend to be more decentralized or more centralized.¹⁹

In the field of political science, the following references should be mentioned: Trechsel and Serdült provide a complete overview on all institutions of direct democracy in Switzerland on the cantonal level for the period of 1970-1996. Their analysis is a showcase of the diverse, complex and dynamic nature of financial referenda.²⁰ Freitag and Vatter highlight the importance of the extent to which citizens are granted the right to financial referenda.²¹ Mannhart Gomes concludes from a juridical point of view that financial referenda are provide citizens with an important and practical mechanism to decide on specific items.²²

(3) Federalism. While the literature on federalism in general²³ and on federal institutions in Brazil²⁴ and in Switzerland²⁵ in particular is no longer manageable, the literature which

budgeting in Brazilian cities. STUMPF GONZALEZ (2008), *Novas formas institucionais de participação na democracia brasileira.* WAMPLER (2000), *Private executives, legislative brokers and participatory publics.*

¹⁸ FELD & KIRCHGÄSSNER (2001), *Does direct democracy reduce public debt?* FELD & MATSUSAKA (2000), *Budget referendums and government spending.* SAUSGRUBER & TYRAN (2005), *Testing the Mill hypothesis of fiscal illusion.* FELD & MATSUSAKA (2000), *Budget referendums and government spending.*

¹⁹ SCHALTEGGER & FELD (2001), *On government centralization and budget referendums.* FELD, KIRCHGÄSSNER & SCHALTEGGER (2003), *Decentralized taxation and the size of government.* SCHNELLENBACH, FELD & SCHALTEGGER (2006), *The impact of referendums on the centralization of public goods provision.* FELD, SCHALTEGGER & SCHNELLENBACH (2007), *On government centralization and fiscal referendums.*

²⁰ TRECHSEL & SERDÜLT (1999), *Kaleidoskop Volksrechte.*

²¹ FREITAG & VATTER (2006), *Initiatives, referendums and the tax state.*

²² MANNHART GOMES (2007), *Das Verwaltungsreferendum in Bund und Kantonen.*

²³ GREVE (1999), *Real federalism.* HIRSCHER (1999), *Krise und Reform des Föderalismus.* MEIER-WALSER & CROISAT (1999), *Le fédéralisme dans les démocraties contemporaines.* MÜCKL (1999), *Subsidiarität.* RAUSCHER (2000), *Subsidiarität.* WACHENDORFER-SCHMIDT (2000), *Federalism and political performance.* BLINDENBACHER & KOLLER (2003), *Federalism in a changing world.* STURM & ZIMMERMANN-STEINHART (2005), *Föderalismus.*

²⁴ NEVES (2000), *Grenzen der demokratischen Rechtsstaatlichkeit und des Föderalismus in Brasilien.* WACHENDORFER-SCHMIDT (2000), *Federalism and political performance.* ARRETICHE (2001), *Federalismo e democracia no Brasil.* ARRETICHE (2003), *Federalismo e relações intergovernamentais no Brasil.* SOUZA (2003), *Federalismo e conflitos distributivos.* ARRETICHE (2005), *Quem taxa e quem gasta.* FALLETI (2005), *A sequential theory of decentralization.* MELO (2005), *O sucesso inesperado das reformas de segunda geração.* SOUZA (2005), *Brazilian metropolitan regions.* ARRETICHE (2007), *The veto power of subnational governments in Brazil.*

addresses the relationship between processes of direct democracy and federal structures is rather scarce. It is, however, this issue which is of particular interest in this research project, as the federal structures define to a large degree the relevant competencies and resources for local budget decision making processes. Furthermore, both mechanisms, federalism and processes of direct democracy, rely on the principle of self rule,²⁶ which makes it interesting to explore how the two mechanisms interact and favor each other. It is mainly the area of fiscal federalism, from which insights into the questions here may be expected.²⁷ One of the major concerns in debates of fiscal federalism is the question of how different fiscal structures affect centralization or decentralization, an issue also arising in debates on referenda.²⁸ The constitutional decision for or against centralizing public goods entails a trade-off between the benefits of internalizing regional externalities and the costs of a common pool problem that can best be solved by fiscal federalism.²⁹ When deciding how to structure taxes, the Mill hypothesis comes into play, as tax burdens from indirect taxation are underestimated because indirect taxes are less visible.³⁰ This issue also needs to be considered in the context of local budget decisions, as it is not always clear where the resources come from. However it can only be assumed that resources are allocated according to the real preferences if the costs of the decision are made transparent.³¹

HELLER, HARILAL & CHAUDHURI (2007), *Building local democracy*. MAGAR (undated), *Book review for: SAMUELS (2003), Ambition, federalism and legislative politics in Brazil*.

²⁵ BASTA FLEINER & FLEINER (2000), *Federalism and multiethnic states*. NEUGEBAUER (2000), *Föderalismus in Bewegung*.

²⁶ STAUFFER & TÖPPERWIEN (2000), *Balancing self-rule and shared rule*.

²⁷ OATES (1999), *An essay on fiscal federalism*.

²⁸ STRUMPF, OBERHOLZER-GEE (2002), *Endogenous policy decentralization*. CERNIGLIA (2003), *Decentralization in the public sector*. FELD & SCHALTEGGER (2005), *Voters as a hard budget constraint*.

²⁹ MYERS (1990), *Optimality, free mobility and the regional authority in a federation*. PANIZZA (1999), *On the determinants of fiscal centralization*. BESLEYA & COATE (2003), *Centralized versus decentralized provision of local public goods*. SØRENSEN (2004), *The case of international tax coordination reconsidered*.

³⁰ SAUSGRUBER & TYRAN (2005), *Testing the Mill hypothesis of fiscal illusion*.

³¹ MELLO (2002), *Public finance, government spending and economic growth*. PEREIRA & MUELLER (2004), *The cost of governing*. MARQUETTI (2006), *Democracia participativa, performance fiscal e distribuição*. SHAH & SHAH (2006), *The new vision of local governance and the evolving roles of local governments*. KALIKAKIS, GOUSCOS, VASSILAKIS & GEORGIADIS (undated), *An approach for re-engineering the taxation process to support participatory decisions on tax budget allocation*.

(4) In its beginning, the concept of deliberative democracy was predominantly debated from theoretical points of view.³² In the meanwhile, there are a number of studies available in which arguments of the theory of deliberative democracy are being tested empirically.³³ These studies show that theories of deliberative democracy do not only have normative value but actually help to explain reality. They show, however, that these theories need to remain conceptually open (e.g., to alternative forms of communication, such as strategic communication) and use insights from various analytical approaches (such as psychology and rational choice) to better understand antecedents and outcomes of deliberative processes, while at the same time preserving its integral components (such as rational arguments).³⁴ Interestingly, the findings derived from the empirical application of deliberations have not yet been integrated into the traditional discourse on processes of direct democracy. This research project intends to unite these discourses. In addition to that, there is another strand in the context of deliberation which this research project intends to dwell on: the innovation of new institutions³⁵ to allow for more effective deliberations, such as “deliberative poll”³⁶ and “deliberation day”.³⁷

³² The notion of deliberative democracy has been introduced by BESSETTE (1980), *Deliberative Democracy*, p. 102 ff. who dwelled on MADISON (2005), *Sixty-three*, p. 339 and HAMILTON (2005), *Seventy-one*, p. 382 f. For a general introduction on the theories of deliberative democracy: LÖSCH (2005), *Deliberative Politik*, p. 151 ff. BESSON & MARTÍ (2006), *Introduction*, p. xiii ff. For debates referring to Habermas’ model of deliberative democracy: SCHMALZ-BRUNS (1995), *Reflexive Demokratie*. CHAMBERS (1996), *Reasonable democracy*. ELSTER (1998), *Deliberative democracy*. PALAZZO (2002), *Die Mitte der Demokratie*. ERIKSEN & WEIGÅRD (2003), *Understanding Habermas*. JÄGER & BALTES-SCHMITT (2003), *Jürgen Habermas*. GUTMAN & THOMPSON (2004), *Why deliberative democracy?* MASTRONARDI (2007), *Verfassungslehre*.

³³ STEINER, BÄCHTIGER, SPÖRNDLI & STEENBERGEN (2004), *Deliberative politics in action*. BÄCHTIGER (2005), *The real world of deliberation*. HABERMAS (2005), *Concluding comments on empirical approaches to deliberative politics*. EHRENSPERGER (2006), *Die Allgemeine Erklärung der Menschenrechte als Modellfall der Deliberation*. LEDUC (2006), *Referendums and deliberative democracy*. BÄCHTIGER, STEENBERGEN & NIEMEYER (2007), *Deliberative democracy*. ESTERLING, NEBLO & LAZER (2007), *Means, motive and opportunity in becoming informed about politics*. FREITAG & SCHNIEWIND (2007), *Direktdemokratie und Sozialkapital*. WAGSCHAL (2007), *Diskurs oder Machtpolitik*. JENSSEN (2008), *Deliberative democracy in practice*. THOMPSON (2008), *Deliberative democratic theory and empirical political science*.

³⁴ BÄCHTIGER, STEENBERGEN & NIEMEYER (2007), *Deliberative democracy*, p. 494.

³⁵ FUNG (2003), *Deliberative democracy, Chicago style*. FUNG (2004), *Receitas par esferas públicas*.

³⁶ FISHKIN (1991), *Democracy and deliberation*, p. 64. FISHKIN (1995), *The voice of the people*, p. 162.

³⁷ ACKERMAN & FISHKIN (2003), *Deliberation day*, p. 7.

2.3 Research questions

The overarching question of this research project is:

- How to institutionalize the participation of citizens in budget decisions in order to favor reflectivity?

This general question will be addressed with a number of specific questions:

- What are budget decisions?

This definitional part clarifies the nature of budget decisions. It delineates them from other matters, such as regulatory decisions. Furthermore, it outlines the full spectrum of issues involved, which includes not only the question of how resources are spent, but also how they are collected. This section will be supplemented with an excursus on the research of artificial intelligence. By doing so, a theoretical link between theories of reason and the concepts of processes of direct democracy and federalism will be established. This part will provide a systematic catalogue of the institutional issues relating to budget decisions.

- Why do citizens participate in budget decisions?

This section sheds light on the historical circumstances of the introduction and development of participatory mechanism in budget decisions. The narrative explanation for participation is completed by normative considerations, which allows one to link the topic with political theory, in particular with the theory of deliberative democracy. Overall, this section will provide the normative references of how to evaluate mechanisms of participation.

- How is participation in budget decisions in urban polities in Brazil and Switzerland institutionalized?

This empirical section provides a comparative perspective on urban polities in Brazil and in Switzerland, analyzing the mechanism of citizen participation in budget decisions along the structural and normative references elaborated in the earlier sections.

- What is the learning for the institutionalization of the participation of citizens in budget decisions?

Dwelling on the the empirical comparison as well as on the theoretical consideration, a deeper understanding of the mechanisms and their strengths and weaknesses will be achieved and recommendations shall be provided on how reflectivity can be favored.

2.4 Conceptual foundations and methodological approach

The conceptual foundations of this research project are the theories of deliberative democracy. These theories are currently the most powerful and innovative conceptual foundation in the research of democracy. Due to their normative grounding, they allow one to go beyond the mere empirical description of political processes and provide criteria for how to evaluate a given situation and in which direction it may be further developed. From a conceptual point of view, theories of deliberative democracy, such as the version of Jürgen Habermas, have the advantage of being explicitly based on a moral philosophy (e.g., ethics of discourse) and on a theory of society (e.g., theory of communicative action). Due to their explicit theoretical foundation, theories of deliberative democracy can easily be tied with other theoretical concepts, as I have shown in my doctoral thesis by linking them with developmental psychology. In this research project, it is my intention to further substantiate the importance of processes of direct democracy for deliberations by arguing with theories of artificial intelligence. Beyond theoretical considerations, theories of deliberative democracy are increasingly implemented in empirical studies, as shown in section 2.2. This research project contains comparative case studies and therefore will also pursue this strand.

The methodological approach will be characterized by two hermeneutical circles. The first one relates to theoretical considerations, which will be derived from a number of interdisciplinary areas, such as philosophy, political theory, political science for direct democracy, participation, federalism and political economy. Here, the aim is to explain mechanisms of reflectivity and self-rule. Departing from the philosophy of reason of Welsch³⁸, a continuation of Habermas' theory of rationality, the structural features of deliberations will be laid out, as they are supposed to produce reasonable, or at least fair decisions. These structural features will be further exemplified by theories of artificial intelligence³⁹ and then related to the

³⁸ WELSCH (1996), *Vernunft*. WELSCH (1998), *Rationality and reason today*. WELSCH (2000), *Reason and transition*. WELSCH (2000), *Reason, traditional and contemporary or why should we still speak of reason after all?*

³⁹ PFEIFFER & BONGARD (2007), *How the body shapes the way we think*.

political institutions of processes of direct democracy and federalism. A similar approach has been chosen by Pfeiffer and Bongard to illustrate and explain intelligent management structures in companies.⁴⁰ To explain the motivational side of self-ruling mechanism, theories of political economy and rational choice will be dwelled on. It is expected that this hermeneutic circle will produce a more profound understanding of the importance of the mechanism of reflectivity and self rule and of the logic of their interplay in the context of processes of direct democracy and federalism.

The second hermeneutical circle concerns the comparative analysis. The comparison of Brazilian and Swiss cities will be based on case studies and will be mainly qualitative. The case studies on Brazilian and Swiss urban polities will analyze in particular the following elements:

- History of participation, in particular the participation in budget decisions,
- Legal framework of participatory mechanisms and their institutional design,
- Federal structures in which the urban polity operates,
- Fiscal set-up of the urban polity.

These elements will be analyzed in a coherent fashion. Firstly, the elements will be considered separately according to their scientific discipline. The analysis of the history of participation will be based on conventional historical methods, complemented by concepts of social and political movements.⁴¹ The legal framework will be analyzed from a point of view of constitutional law.⁴² The federal structures in which the urban polity operates will be analyzed both from a constitutional law point of view as well as in light of theories of federalism. The fiscal set-up of the urban polities will be analyzed with theories of political economy and rational choice. Secondly, these elements will be related with each other according to the principles of multiple-method research design, as laid out by Fielding and

⁴⁰ PFEIFFER & BONGARD (2007), *Building intelligent companies*. Siehe auch: DIENEL (1992), *Die Planungszelle*. STÜTTGEN (1999), *Strategie der Komplexitätsbewältigung in Unternehmen*. MALIK (2008), *Strategie des Managements komplexer Systeme*.

⁴¹ POLLETTA (2002), *Freedom is an endless meeting*. PETRAS & VELTMEYER (2004), *Social movements and state power*. POLLETTA (2006), *It was like a fever*.

⁴² MASTRONARDI (2003), *Juristisches Denken*. MASTRONARDI (2007), *Verfassungslehre*.

Fielding.⁴³ When accepting the case for interrelating different approaches to the same phenomenon, one accepts a moderate relativistic epistemology, one that justifies the value of knowledge from a different approach, rather than elevating one approach. Taking a triangulation or multiple-method design is to engage into a continuity of data-gathering and analytical efforts. The synthesis from the different elements and their respective approach will also be guided by theories of interdisciplinarity.⁴⁴

The two hermeneutical circles will finally be interwoven to produce the concluding findings as well as to formulate future research questions.

⁴³ FIELDING & FIELDING (2008), *Synergy and synthesis*. Refer also to: ARMIJO, FAUCHER & DEMBINSKA (2006), *Compared to what?* CRONIN et al. (2008), *The analytic integration of qualitative data sources*.

⁴⁴ FINKENTHAL (2001), *Interdisciplinarity*. BRUNNENGRÄBER (2004), *Interdisziplinarität in der Governance-Forschung*. HENNING et al. (2004), *Interdisziplinäre Sozialforschung*. HOLLAENDER (2004), *Interdisziplinäre Forschung*.

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