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O'Hagan, Angela; MacRae, Claire; Hill O'Connor, Clementine; Teedon, Paul

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Participatory Budgeting (PB), Community Engagement and Impact on Public Services in Scotland

Authors: Angela O'Hagan, Claire MacRae, Clementine Hill O'Connor, Jennifer Broadhurst and Paul Teedon

Glasgow Caledonian University

WiSE Research Centre, Glasgow School for Business and Society (Social Sciences, and Risk subject groups); the Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health; and the School for Engineering and Built Environment.

Abstract

Since the early 1980s the concept of Participatory Budgeting (PB) has developed in various forms internationally and subsequently has been adopted and adapted into local policy and political contexts. Yet, the underlying objective of PB remains the same, to empower local communities to have a direct say in how and where public funds can be used to shape public services and their delivery (Gomez et al., 2016). In seeking to integrate community participation into local resource allocation decision-making, via this policy, requires a transformation of the relationship between citizen and state. In the implementation and delivery of PB, local government must engage in equality analysis so to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Thereby, this paper aims to combine the framing of mainstreaming equalities through the PSED in the development of PB activities.

This article contends that the institutional engagement and analysis required, to effectively integrate the requirements of equality legislation into PB processes, requires a transformational approach. Equality processes appear to exist in parallel with PB activity rather than being operationalized as integral to the objectives and character of PB activity at local level. This article proposes that PB and the PSED share a transformative intent and potential but that this is undermined by siloed thinking on equalities reflective of compliance and enduring discriminatory behavior and practices. The paper concludes with propositions for extending the conceptual links between equality and community empowerment, and thereby participation in local financial decision making in practice.

Introduction

Since 2014 there has been an institutional step-change in the involvement of communities in the deliberation processes of resource allocation at a localised level through the introduction of Participatory Budgeting (PB) (Allegretti & Herzberg, 2004; Harkins and Egan, 2012). Developments to introduce and sustain PB have been described as part of an "ambitious agenda of community empowerment and democratic innovation" whereby Scotland has "enthusiastically joined the global participatory budgeting movement" (Escobar et al. 2018, p.314, 311).

PB aims to empower local communities to have a direct say in how and where public funds can be used at localised levels to shape public services and their delivery (Gomez et al., 2016; O'Hagan et al., 2017). Core to this policy is increased connectivity, trust and participatory democracy for communities (Gonclaves, 2014). Yet, distinct challenges exist in the implementation, theorising and design of PB in achieving its policy objectives (O'Hagan et al., 2017) in a context of shrinking resources and public service reform. Core among these challenges is the integration of equality as a principal objective and driver for the allocation of funds and equitable engagement from community groups in the PB process.

Current academic debate tends to focus on the design, implementation and delivery of PB. For example; the role of PB in the co-production and co-design of public services (Barbera et al., 2016); the use and design of PB to legitimise local government democratisation (Moir & Leyshon, 2013; Swaner, 2017); the participation of citizens in the PB process (Kim & Schachter, 2013; Montambeault, 2016; Weber et al., 2015; Im et al., 2014); and the dissemination of PB and voting conduits (Gordon et al., 2017). Whilst PB has been limited exploration in relation to 'specific' equality groups such as women and young people but the consideration of equality analysis as part of the PB model is largely underdeveloped.

This paper addresses this gap in literature by focusing on the extent to which PB activities have mainstreamed equality analysis in the institutional framing of PB and in the operational processes. It takes a particular focus on the extent to which equality analysis has informed and shaped how PB is being operationalised in Scotland. It considers the application of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to address participation and representation in PB processes (i.e. equality in the bidding, allocation

of funds and equity of voice in the deliberation and participation of PB) by women, women of colour, ethnic minority, disabled people, and different age groups. This paper draws on research conducted between October 2015 and June 2018, including interviews with community representatives, elected members and local authority representatives, focus groups with community members and attendance at participatory budgeting events across 20 local authority areas, focusing on 6 selected cases.

Conceptualising equality in Participatory Budgeting in Scotland

Definitions of participatory budgeting (PB) take a broad sweep across concepts of democratic renewal (Sintomer et al. 2008) and as a 'means of redistributing wealth' (Rumbul et al. 2018) as in Porto Alegre. As a 'democratic, participatory institution' Touchton and Wampler (2014, p. 1442) characterise the aim of PB as a way to 'enhance governance, citizens' empowerment and the power of democracy, creating a virtuous cycle to improve the poor's wellbeing'. For others, including (PB Partners, and Rumbul et al. 2018), PB is a disruptive intervention or technology. This is based in the operationalisation of PB being "the participation of citizens in the decision-making process of budget allocation and in the monitoring of public spending" (Peixoto, 2012).

Since the early 1980s the concept of PB has developed internationally, taking a variety of forms as it has been adopted and adapted subsequently into local policy and political contexts (Ganuza and Baiocchi, 2012; Sintomer et al.2008; Rumbul et al., 2018). The variance in PB as it has transferred from Puerto Alegre in Brazil to Europe has been considerable. In Brazil PB was constructed to support democratisation and policy for social justice to be articulated in local communities (Sintomer et al., 2008). In Europe and elsewhere where governments have been relatively stable and participative democracies are fairly typical PB has taken various guises. For example, in Australia a form of PB, as a deliberative mini-public, was developed as a tool to better engage citizens (Thompson, 2012). In China, as part of the PB process, the local People's congress deliberates budgets with government officials demonstrating participatory democracy (Zhu & Zhang, 2016). Likewise in France and Spain models have been developed which reflect the principles of PB but are devised locally to reflect the cultural and political requirements of each country (Hadjimichalis & Hudson, 2007).

Scotland's approach to PB synthesises with other European countries and international experiences. The introduction of PB to Scottish local government represents a step-change in the management of public finance within the wider context of public service reform and recent reviews of the effectiveness of local governance, and a distinctive turn in Scottish public policy to re-focus on place and community (Christie, 2011). This is illustrated by the intention to increase the inclusion of local communities in mainstream budget decision-making and enhance the potential within communities to instil a sense of ownership, trust and connectivity (Scottish Government, 2014).

These shifts are premised on a reprise of a place and community-based approach following the Christie Commission review in 2011; embedded within the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015; and reflected in the Scottish Government National Performance Framework (NPF) and Local Governance Review. PB is considered potentially "an important tool in responding to key public sector reform messages within the Christie Commission" (Harkins and Egan, 2012, p.2). Furthermore, the wider political context in Scotland is considered to have been reinvigorated through the political opportunity of the 2014 independence referendum that enhanced popular engagement in political campaigning with a strong overtone of community renewal and governance reform; (Escobar et al. 2018; O'Hagan et al. 2017).

In addition to these political narratives, the discourse on social justice and equality has been prominent in Scottish public policy since the early years of devolution, with a tendency to conflate the two at the expense of understanding the dynamics of structural constraints and discrimination and experiences of poverty (McKay and Gillespie, 2005; O'Hagan, 2016). According to Harkins and Egan (2012), analysis of social policy showed "widespread support for community empowerment and for enhanced localism, transparency, pluralism and voluntarism". PB fits with these values and principles. Therefore, inherent in the Scottish approach to adapting and implementing PB is a dual characterisation of PB as a mechanism for empowering local decision making, *and* to engage local communities in the decision-making processes of public spending.

Escobar et al. (2018) have described the iterative development of PB in Scotland as having progressed through successive generations. The first generation of PB in Scotland between 2015-2017 was implemented through modified established small grant procedures to introduce the concept of PB and build familiarity with the concept and capacity among local authorities and communities. The second generation from 2017, is defined by the direction from the Scottish Government confirmed in a formal Framework agreement with the local authority association COSLA for local councils to allocate at least 1% of council budgets using participatory methods (Scottish Government, 2017). The political and financial commitment of institutionalising PB into local government and communities is apparent. The Scottish Government has framed its policy on PB through policy and legislative provision for community empowerment and since 2017 the funding stream and related activities have been referred to as Community Choices (Escobar et al. 2018)[1].

Since 2014 the Scottish Government has invested over £4.7 million in a range of measures to support the introduction and development of participatory budgeting PB in Scotland. This includes the development of a national knowledge exchange network and website; funded training and consultancy for public authorities and communities through PB Partners; support to introduce digital voting mechanisms; this evaluation study and a wider evaluation programme; an international conference in 2016; learning events and publications; and a recently introduced facilitator training programme[2].

O'Hagan et al. (2017) suggested theorising these developments as a progression from transactional (disbursement of small grants from a limited pot) to transformational (embracing the fundamental principles of PB, see Harkins and Escobar 2015)

[1] In 2015, the Community Choices Fund was introduced as a means of direct financial support and match funding to public authorities and community organisations to support local activity and services. The third call for applications to the Community Choices Fund saw an allocation of an additional £1.5m for 2017/18 to be split between public authorities and community organisations for activities to promote and advance PB.

[2] Overall, PB activities in Scotland have attracted: £1.5m match-funding from local authorities from 2014/15 bringing the public investment to £6.2m since 2014. In 2016/17 there were 122 PB events across Scotland, with over 39,000 people voting for 1,352 projects (Escobar et al. 2018, p.319)

whereby the relationship between the citizen (local resident) and the state (local government) is recalibrated. For the transformative potential to be realised however, there requires to be a transference of power from state to citizen, and for the institution of the state to transform its understanding and responsiveness to the diverse experiences of local residents and how they are impacted and formed by intersecting characteristics of gender, race, disability and class – embracing the requirements of equality legislation.

Operationalising equality in Participatory Budgeting in Scotland: Public Sector Equality Duty and PB

The Equality Act 2010 was formulated as a part of a transformative turn (Hepple, 2011) in equality legislation, which sought to illuminate institutional processes and practices as essential in advancing equality. The Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), it contains, were designed and conceived to secure the "purposive" advancement of equality, securing organisational change through a proactive focus on progressing outcomes and to foster good relations. The Equality Act 2010 has been heralded as an 'innovative development in equality law' (Conley and Wright, 2015), given its intention to introduce legislation that is responsive to the needs and interests of citizens and reflexive legislation that has the potential not only to engage citizens but for them to be able to hold "organisations, institutions, and the state to account" (op.cit., p.55).

Hepple (2011) considered the vision behind the Act and the PSED as "comprehensive and transformative equality", whereby the institutionalised and organisational practices are the central focus for change. It follows then that any new policy, process or framework should apply the requirements of legislation – such as PB. In considering the key principles of PB, and its origins, it is clear that it intended to foment a more inclusive and equal approach to allocating budgets across services and communities (Ganuza and Baiocchi, 2012; Sintomer et al.2008). Parvin (2017) stated that for communities to engage in democratic and deliberative processes individuals should be presented with the opportunity to participate and consequentially they are able to take up that opportunity. As a policy instrument the intention of PB is to develop citizen participation to improve or enhance democratic processes locally (Pateman, 2012). Fundamental to this is the inclusivity and representation of the

wider community in deliberative and participative democracy (Michels, 2012) reaching out to individuals referred to as 'hard to reach' (Lightbody, 2017).

Previous research, including Michels (2012) and Pateman (2012) concludes that women, young people and cultural minority groups are often under-represented in participatory democracy at a localised level. Michels (2012) explains that this may be a consequence of the levels of engagement required in terms of time, resources, verbal and intellectual exchange expected by participants in deliberative and participatory forums. Michels (2012) concludes that those local authorities seeking to reduce the potential challenges of inclusivity should promote engagement across groups often under-represented. Lightbody (2017) engages in a detailed discussion of the structures of exclusion and the challenges in overcoming barriers to access, participation, and equality of outcomes. Structural inequalities are often replicated and potentially reinforced in community engagement processes and that some of the barriers people face are caring responsibilities; time; confidence in the process; inequalities in income, wealth and social position along with language barriers and lack of confidence.

In a finding that chimes with those set out later in this paper and questions the suggestion that existing groups are a pre-requisite for PB, Lightbody (2017) highlights how "dominant characters can discriminate against some people during community engagement, specifically women, minority ethnic groups, young and old people and people with disabilities.". It is these established norms of formal and informal institutions that an equalities mainstreaming approach aims to dismantle, by identifying and challenging discriminatory practices and outcomes, consulting with communities, and aiming to build more cohesive communities.

Participatory forms of governance can often lead to exclusion rather than engagement with particular groups (Michels, 2012; Pateman, 2012; Waylen, 2015; Lightbody, 2017). Adman (2011), in recognising the theoretical assumption that participation should encompass different social and socio-economic groups, posits that understanding the 'reasons behind group differences in participation' is paramount (Adman, 2011; pp380). And so, it is important to explore whether Scottish local authorities in their operationalising of PB have considered these dimensions in participatory forms of governance.

A key concern is the ways in which, if at all, the requirements of PSED and the intentions of PB align in practice and in common cause to tackle inequalities. In compliance with the Duty, public bodies are required to produce equality outcomes which should be formulated through engagement with the community, specifically to address inequalities experienced by particular individuals and groups whose characteristics of gender, race, disability, family status and other protected characteristics may result in unequal or different experiences from others.

According to Harkins and Escobar (2015) there are ten key principles that set PB up as;

- a long-term endeavour
- requiring strong leadership, time and resource
- independently facilitated
- enabling an authentic representation of community interest
- a new and distinct approach
- having to utilise existing community groups
- being clear as to what form of democracy it will take
- recognising the challenges in engaging socially excluded citizens
- having realistic expectations of community representation
- allocating reasonable funding to a limited number of projects.

These principles implicitly are concerned with including citizens and to secure representation from local communities. The original, and indeed the current, propositions of PSED would appear to align with the aims and intent of PB as it is operationalised at local authority level, with the shared concern for eliminating disadvantage and fostering good relations. However, there is no explicit objective to address existing discriminatory dynamics and expressly to advance equality of participation by addressing the barriers of gender, race, disability and class in securing political equality as well as concepts of equal representation encapsulated in the PB principles. These interdependencies are recognised however in the wider debate on equality and participation which forms the basis of this research.

It appears that PB has not traditionally been constructed as a device for the advancement of gender equality or other groups with protected characteristics and pre-

vious examples of PB practice have been criticised for their lack of gender analysis and absence of a focus on improved equality of engagement and participation (Pateman, 2012; Lavan, 2008). In Netherlands, for example, even when public institutions did make certain efforts to include a wider demographic from the local population, the majority participants continued to be older, better educated, white men (Michels and De Graaf, 2010). In her assessment of PB within the wider context of participatory democracy, Pateman (2012) highlights the historically unequal participation by women in budgetary decision-making, including from its origins in Porto Alegre. Women were less involved in the budgetary decision-making processes and where women were participating, it tended to be in relation to welfare and social policy (Pateman 2012) and 'gender issues' not being considered integral to participatory budgeting processes.

This article is based on a perspective of political equality whereby "every member of the demos should be entitled to effective participation and equality in voting" (Dhal, 2006,9, cited in Celis and Mugge, 2018, p.199). The key objective was to explore whether emerging PB practice was engaging with the equalities dimensions of local participation, in how gender and other intersecting characteristics of race, disability and class were being mainstreamed into local PB decision-making process and in the practices of local authorities in relation to PB. Specifically, research questions sought to explore how the Public Sector Equality Duty within the Equality Act 2010 was being applied in PB processes, and the extent to which identifying and responding to equalities considerations was integral to the design and operationalising of PB. From our proposition that both PB and the mainstreaming approach of PSED have transformational potential, our overarching question is to what extent were and are local authorities and local PB activities using the PSED as a positive platform to leverage change in structural inequalities.

Background to Research and Methodology

This article draws on a wider project funded by the Scottish Government conducted between October 2015 and June 2018. That research project had the broad aim of evaluating participatory budgeting activity in Scotland. The underlying objective of this research was to explore the development and implementation of PB, and its principles, and the extent to which PB aims to address enduring and underlying ine-

qualities. It focused on identifying evidence of impact in four key areas - local services, communities, and democracy. The evaluation was also directed to consider how current and emerging practice is 'tackling inequalities'. Our proposition is that the requirements of PSED to consult and engage communities, identify and mitigate inequality of discrimination and foster good relations map on to and align with the objectives of PB.

In this article we consider evidence of activity to engage with, and support, participation in the localised PB activities from particular groups falling within the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. A specific focus of the observed local activities and the institutional approaches has been the extent to which inclusion and the advancement of equality of participation and representation has been integral to the strategy and activities of local authority.

The evaluation project adopted a multi-method research approach which included interviews and focus groups held with community representatives, elected members and local authority representatives. This was in addition to researchers attending participatory budgeting events across 20 local authorities between October 2015 and June 2017. The team conducted:

- 5 interviews with community representatives;
- 20 interviews with local authority representatives responsible for PB and elected members;
- 2 focus groups with community representatives; and
- 11 participatory budgeting events across 4 local authority areas.

Also between February and June 2018 additional and follow up interviews with local authority representatives were conducted to explore the introduction of the 1% allocation of mainstream budgets. Initially, local authorities were selected based on a range of criteria to ensure a spread of experience in PB, urban and rural mix, varied funding allocations and policy framing. This approach aimed to explore the potential diversity across Scottish local authorities demographically and to explore any variations in the definitions and implementation of PB structurally whilst considering equality analysis and the extent to which PSED implementation has featured in managing or creating inequality.

Evidence of PB Addressing Inequality: Research Findings

Investigating the integration of equality as a principal objective and a driver for allocating funds as part of PB processes revealed a number of key research findings. Such findings relate to the ways in which 'tackling inequalities' is interpreted as a policy objective, and how advancing equality is operationalised in the context of the Public Sector Equality Duty. This section presents those findings in relation to the original principles of PSED, the extent to which existing structural inequalities are being addressed, and how effectively PSED is being used as 'reflexive' legislation.

The General Duty requires public bodies to eliminate unlawful inequality, advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations. Elements of these requirements were implicit in the early evidence of practice but with very limited reference in strategic documents, policy framing, or operational direction emerging from the evaluation. There is limited evidence of mainstreaming equalities through the formal requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and PSED.

Initially PSED and its complementarity with Community Choices was not a part of Scottish Government guidance until evidence from the evaluation research highlighted this gap (O'Hagan et al., 2017). Findings from the early stages of the evaluation process revealed that PSED was not regarded as either a positive, enabling platform, or that compliance with its requirements was an essential component of PB practice. At the point at which local authorities engaged in the initial training there was no direct reference to the PSED or equalities legislation. In fact one consultant explained "*the number of times you see a policy paper about PB and it's got a line at the bottom saying equality implications, none. It's just bizarre to my mind".* This suggests that there has been some level of equality analysis. Yet, research findings indicate the opposite as indicated throughout this paper.

There is a clearly scepticism across communities on the premise that PB is addressing, or indeed considering, inequality. As one community representative explained:

> *"How does that (PB) impact on equality? It doesn't. It creates inequality. It actually, I would say, accepts a level of inequality because it accepts that people need services, like your kids need to get away. It accepts that and it tolerates that. It doesn't challenge*

anything about the lack of services and the levels of inequality in Glasgow and in society. It accepts it. It doesn't challenge it. It doesn't question it." (Community Participant)

Similarly, findings suggest that equality was not a prevalent frame in the policy drivers for PB, with a passive approach suggesting that somehow equality dimensions do not require being explicit. 'Community' engagement or development appears to be taken as a sufficient proxy for equality interest, irrespective of whether there is equality analysis of the local community.

Fostering good relations?

Local authorities adopted similar models, frameworks and processes in the implementation and delivery of PB. Engagement by communities in the small grants process processes and events to tender for PB funds provided opportunities to foster good relations. Monies awarded ranged from £50 to £5,000 and PB events were well attended and, generally, received positive feedback. At early PB events local authorities funded all projects presented by groups at the community event. And so, early evidence suggests that, to a point, early community engagement with PB has led to re-establishing and/or strengthening relationships between communities and local government via the financial support awarded. An elected member explained that in areas of high multiple deprivation *'there are not a lot of resources'* to support '*a lack of confidence, depression, alcoholism and other social problems'* and so small PB projects '*can give people a lifeline'.* This demonstrates the ways in which PB can foster good relationships whilst simultaneously addressing social disadvantage.

Yet, while small pots can be a way to build trust over time and build capacity in preparation for mainstreaming activity, for others there has been a view that the grants-based process has led to more competition for smaller pots of money. This has caused conflict in some communities.

*"And then they're asking more and more of the voluntary sector and now they're pitching us against one another physically, so it's a gladiatorial ring." (*Community Representative)

Furthermore, in critiquing the widely utilised PB model in Scotland it was suggested that inequity led to individuals being marginalised and disadvantaged due to the inflexibility of PB processes. The extent to which the PB process engages individuals protected under the Equality Act 2010 is limited. The current model of PB and deliberative democracy utilised by Scottish local authorities presents challenges to increasing participation and equality. There are clear efforts to ensure inclusivity for all community members, for example, ensuring that PB events are easily accessible to people experiencing poverty and:

> *"who don't necessarily have the bus fare, or would have issues with childcare, maybe caring responsibilities, not able to stay away too long for health issues or whatever so we need to make it (PB event) on their doorstep" (Local Authority Elected Member, 2)*

The structure of the PB model has been criticised on the basis that the events, the tendering process and communication can lead to the exacerbation of inequity in the process for those accessing resources or seeking to be involved in local priority setting through PB. An action-research project led by Glasgow Disability Alliance (GDA, 2017), with disabled people across the city has reaffirmed these criticisms, and contended that disabled people may be even further isolated and excluded from local decision making processes when the structural and procedural barriers to their participation are not considered.

From some community perspectives PB has been a negative experience thus failing to foster good relations. One community representative explained:

> *"I don't think that (PB) has done anything to encourage or support the people to be more vocal about what's happening in the community, I imagine it has probably put a lot of people off. I think it's a real shame as I think it's detrimental to the whole process."* (Community Representative)

For some, the PB process, including the post-award evaluation and reporting, can be overly cumbersome, especially in relation to the small sums awarded from limited pots although this may change with the ensuing 1% allocation. Clarity and con-

sistency are required across the PB processes including calls for bids, eligibility and bid selection criteria; transparency in selection criteria and processes; and parity of voting eligibility. Greater clarity is also required with regards to the relationship between additional activity carried out by the community and funded by local authorities, and activity and functions previously provided by the local authority and now being funded on a more limited level through community activity. This varied across communities, as did the resolution of these issues by local authorities. There was evidence of learning by experience and applying this to 2nd and 3rd generational PB.

Evidence revealed that processes and models of PB are generic and have not been informed and formulated by equality analysis or from a starting point of stimulating expanded participation from under-represented groups. Some speculate that this is a capacity issue:

> *"there isn't the capacity… intellectually there is the capability but there isn't the knowledge and competence and capacity, widely. There are within some individuals, they get it but… and for others it's a tick-box exercise. I think in terms of the more instrumental approach, that's also been a bit of a trick that was missed by the Scottish Government…."* (PB Consultant)

There are clearly issues around conceptual understanding and application, with regular references to fairness as a proxy for equality; the substitution of inequality for poverty and socio-economic disadvantage; confusion between equity of resources and the process, and awareness and understanding of the structural inequalities and discriminatory dimensions that manifest and recreate themselves in the participatory sphere

Advancing equality of opportunity?

The diversity of application for funds and subsequent allocation can help to advance equality of opportunity. PB can support existing local government initiatives and policies to alleviate poverty and disadvantage within communities. There was evidence to suggest, albeit limited, that children and young people, vulnerable adults, women and ethnic minorities were engaged in project applications. For example, applications were in the areas of education (for school equipment or school trips), environ-

mental (to improve the outdoors of a community) and mental health group activities (to support those in the community facing mental health issues) and from specific women's and ethnic community groups. This list is not exhaustive but demonstrates how PB projects can help to address inequality and disadvantage. For example, within the area of children and young people one local authority elected member explained that:

> *"If we are actually looking to influence the wider services more, the fact that some of this (PB) money might be supporting a particular activity like a homework club, something like that at a primary school where there are kids maybe when they go home there's no space for homework or they're maybe more of a carer than their parents in the house"* (Local Authority Elected Member,)

And so, PB processes can support and manage existing inequalities and be drivers for change. Based on the evidence to date - the practice of equality impact assessment and analysis of participation and engagement - beneficiaries, such as women, appear to be a significant area for development:

> *"The Women's Centre, WEAVE domestic abuse project, the Jeely Piece Club, these are all driven by women who have looked around and thought 'bloody hell' we've got to do something about this; nobody is helping us; councilors certainly aren't helping us' they (women) were the ones that drove change."* (Local Authority Elected Member)

The intersections of sex, gender, race, class, age, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation and place are not evident in the design and delivery of many PB activities, with the result that 'tackling inequalities' approaches are lacking in multi-dimensional policy. For example, a local councilor in Glasgow explained that challenges to outreach remain:

> *"We are seeing an increasing number of people from different groups coming to Glasgow, refugee communities, asylum communities, but also a growing number of Chinese in the city and they (the Council) have a lack of input from the BME community generally (in PB). In*

any kind of voluntary sector projects in the west end, for example, they are not represented. They tend to have their own organisations run and self-organised." (Local Authority Elected Member, 1)

PSED is not widely regarded as either an enabler in the process or that PB also supports the implementation/compliance with public sector equalities duties in the form of extended consultation, mitigation of inequalities and the fostering of good community relations. Subsequently, the proactive use of the provisions to advance equality and foster good relations was not evident to any great extent. This suggests that the PSED is an under-utilised lever for local authorities and public bodies to ensure a more inclusive approach to their PB activities. PB can support existing projects by empowering individuals to tackle inequalities for women by providing the support and structures required to drive transformation within communities. Highlighting the opportunities not only of PSED compliance but also of the advancement of equality and enhanced effort to tackle inequality, is a clear opportunity for the Scottish Government.

When developing a framework for PB, supported with the requirements of the PSED, local authorities could maximise the alignment between the Community Empowerment Act and the drive for mainstreaming equality to deliver more equal and inclusive outcomes. Involvement in the PB process not only engages individuals in deliberative participation in the allocation of mainstream budgets but also should provide opportunities for communities to help shape policy to tackle inequality. In moving towards the 1% it is important that finance teams within local authorities consider the PSED as part of the decision-making process when allocating funds.

Focus on socio-economic disadvantage – geographic or thematic?

Across local authorities there was evidence of both geographical and thematic approaches to target PB funding. For the most part equalities concerns, as encapsulated in the protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010, have largely been considered in the context of socio-economic disadvantage, and here again a place-based approach to policy dominates in part through the use of deprivation indices and locality planning. For example, in Glasgow it was suggested that when the 1% is finalised:

> *"Now it wouldn't be £1million for Hillhead and £1million for Springburn and Robroyston obviously there is going to be a balance in there, like Hillhead is a smaller population, much lower deprivation indices, all of that kind of thing. And its not straight up 'you just get £1 million regardless of circumstances of the area. Because ultimately, we want to be directing it towards addressing it on equality and that isn't addressing equality if we do it like that"* (Local Authority Elected Member)

So, it was suggested that a location-based approach was most appropriate to start the process but that this would be deliberated as part of the preparation for the enactment of the 1%. In 2018, Glasgow City Council (GCC, 2018) agreed a pilot across four city wards with a budget of £1million to be allocated through participatory processes. More generally, this means that in moving forward to the 1% requirement, local authorities may select a different approach (i.e. thematic, geographic) than previously adopted in earlier iterations of PB.

Equalities monitoring and analysis

Overall there are limited equalities monitoring of PB activities, with some monitoring data captured at voting events which makes it challenging to quantify participation from members of the community. There were some examples of equalities analysis where data has been generated and analysed across protected characteristics and this was being used to inform approaches to community engagement and participation. Examples include a thematic project in Edinburgh on tackling hate crime in partnership with the local authority and Policy Scotland and other projects in Edinburgh specifically designed to engage young people. Fife, the Ayrshires and Edinburgh have involved local schools in these approaches. Thematic projects to support local mental health projects and wellbeing have also formed part of activities in the Ayrshire councils and Aberdeenshire.

There is a recurring acknowledgement amongst officers and elected members, of under-representation in engagement, participation, voting, and receipt of funds particularly among Asian, Black and Chinese members of the community. Similarly, these deficiencies have been highlighted as areas of concern by ethnic minority and community organisations. PB activities are not (yet) breaking established exclusions

experienced by people of colour and other communities, such as the newly integrating communities of refugees and asylum seekers and migrants. There is a prevailing complacency in relation to reaching non-white communities and individuals, *"obviously, our population is predominantly white Scottish but certainly made every effort to involve as many people as possible"* (Local authority officer interview)

While there is limited evidence of participation by new and established migrant communities, for the most part it has been very localised and limited to one or two groups, and in some cases through places of worship. There has also been a limited level of participation from disabled peoples' organisations (DPOs), with one example from Glasgow events, and no other self-identifying DPO leading proposals/bids at local events. A number of proposals have included requests for resources that may be used by disabled people, including older people.

While it may be unrealistic to seek 'balance' or 'representativeness', according to Lowndes et al. (2001), different methods of participation are necessary to reach different groups. There is limited evidence of local authorities in Scotland actively formulating and pursuing different methods of participation to ensure women, and a diversity of women, participate in PB activities. There are isolated efforts to promote the process to particular 'communities' such as local Black and minority ethnic residents and established groups; thematic strands such as mental health and wellbeing; and age-specific strands of activity with discrete focus on older or younger people.

Focusing the discussion of findings on gender equality as an illustrative example, a snapshot analysis of PB activities that took place in Winter/Spring 2017 revealed an enduring criticism of PB is potentially being replicated. Our findings shown in Table 1 below are consistent with reflections from Pateman (2012) on PB in Porto Alegre, and comparative analysis by Sánchez Miret and Bon i Geli (2018) of PB in Spain, Uruguay, Dominican Republic and Portugal. They (Sánchez Miret and Bon i Geli2018); Pateman, 2012) warn of the potential for PB and participatory processes to replicate existing gendered constraints and the orientation of PB activity as what can be described as an 'add women and stir' approach. An overview of participation in events, and value and numbers of bids led by women and men, reveals similar results to Pateman's assessment and the country comparisons by Sanchez and Bon i

Geli that women tend to predominate in local welfare, care and family related activities, while men are more prevalent in sport, economic development, and land use activities.

Table 1.

Area	Women led	Amounts W	Men led	Amounts M
Local Authority 1	29	92,327.91	22	49,711
Local Authority 2	5 3 14	3,955 13,331.99	11 8	7,200 9,785
Local Authority 3	5	48,012	5	66,179

Table 1 is an illustration of data accumulated during winter/spring 2017/18 providing a snap shot of local authorities. 56 out of 102 bids were successfully led by women to a value of £318,126.90. 46 were successfully led by men to a value of £191,686. Generally, in these PB events, men were awarded 60% of the amount women led bids received. Women leading bids for local care and welfare needs do receive community support as do bids led by men demonstrating that at this level there is no direct discrimination against the women who are participating.

When we consider underlying issues in relation to the barriers that women, particularly black, older, disabled women might experience, the environment of local government and community engagement reveals another, and considerably more negative, reality. In a focus group of women engaged in PB activities as local government and civil society workers, local community members, and local community councillors, they revealed a range of discriminatory experiences.

> *"Women are talked down and talked over"*
> (Woman community councillor)

> *"Men are all about sports and equipment while women are presenting childcare and education, health, social care. When we asked for funding for ESL classes for Asian women in this part of the city, the*

(men) holding the budgets suggested we fund cooking classes instead. When we said that wasn't exactly what we were after and only reinforced the women in the home, we were told 'perhaps they'd like to make bunting for the local gala then.' (Local development officer)

The women referenced repeated examples of limited and poor integration and intersectional analysis by local authority officers and other development functions, as well as the consistent use of derogatory language used to describe women, including women talking as 'yapping' and how they are mimicked in meetings. Women officers expressed some of their experiences in relation to male colleagues as being told, for example, " I am *'fed up listening to this feminist stuff'"* when asked to consider gender. This same official described how *"'one guy won't engage…turns his back on me in meetings. I wouldn't feel safe chapping his door."*

A local authority officer described how "*they (male colleagues) don't realise how much of the patriarchy they are. In their heads they're right on, [and] they just don't get it.'* For a woman community councillor from the West of Scotland, other cultural norms combine to create discriminatory conditions such as "'*There are strong cultural norms and barriers. For example, the `Orange Order want to maintain their control and exclusion of others.'* Existing inequalities have the potential to be exacerbated as part of the PB process due the lack of acknowledgement or application of equalities legislation in PB. Introducing such provision could help to alleviate discriminatory practice and reduce inequity within communities.

Conclusions

The extent to which the implementation of PB in Scotland has been seized as an opportunity to advance equality is limited. Arguably, a deficiency in how PB has been operationalised by Scottish local authorities is the absence of the Equality Act 2010 and specifically the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty in formulating PB as strategic intervention in tackling inequalities. This is predominantly in the structural constraints of gender, race and disability, and their intersecting impacts on the lived realities of people's lives.

Whilst evidence exists of implicit, rather than explicit, processes to the meet the PSED the lack of formalised processes to encapsulate inequalities is apparent. The lack of direct reference to equality legislation outcomes as part of the PB agenda is of concern. Evidence suggests that there is the potential to exacerbate inequalities rather than mitigate or manage those emulating from PB processes.

While a strong social justice narrative framing with a focus on 'tackling inequalities' has shaped the Scottish Government policy approach and some of the wider discussion on the adoption of PB in Scotland (Harkins et al, 2018). PSED has not been an active element of PB activity nor have equality objectives shaped PB activities in general. There are some notable exceptions with mental health, older age and isolation, engagement of young people featuring as thematic activities. However, integrating equality analysis and objectives explicitly has not been central to the approach to date despite implicit efforts by local authorities. In framing PB as potentially transformative of the relationship between local communities and councils, this paper concludes with propositions for extending the conceptual links between equality and community empowerment, and thereby participation in local financial decision making in practice.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Further clarity and direction from Scottish Government and clarity from public authorities on their strategic direction is required in relation to the strategic interest in transformation – including transfer of power – in local decision-making processes in community participation. This is particularly relevant to the ensuing 1% allocation of local authority mainstream budgets. PB has primarily been located within the area of community engagement and development within local authorities utilizing funds identified for PB (i.e. community choices, match funding). Indeed the move towards the 1% allocation of mainstream budgets means that finance officers could be expected to accept a prevailing, critical role in the deliberation process of resource allocation for PB. In doing so, experts involved in the process need to have the skills required to effectively integrate equality analysis into decision –making processes. Young, old, disabled, women and minority groups need to be part of a wider discussion not only in encouraging participation, but as part of the quality analysis as part o

the deliberation in the allocation of the 1% for PB. The 1% provides an opportunity for local authorities to shift from a transactional model to transformative in PB.

Similarly the policy context and enabling legal and policy drivers including Open Government Partnership, Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, Public Sector Equality Duty, the new Fairer Duty are all intended to promote equality and wellbeing at local levels could be more clearly linked. At present, the dominant approach of PB in Scotland can be characterised as transactional rather than transformational. In order to effect a transformation in relations between communities and local authorities, there requires a clear recognition of existing power imbalances between communities, citizens, civil society and that these power relations must change. Further clarity of purpose and communication from the Scottish Government may help maximise the transformative potential both of PB and PSED with clearer and more consistent guidance on equality analysis in policy making, including PB.

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