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Celina Su

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Beyond Inclusion: Critical Race Theory and Participatory Budgeting

Celina Su

Environmental Psychology and Political Science, CUNY Graduate Center and Brooklyn College, New York, NY, USA

ABSTRACT

Critical Race Theory (CRT) researchers maintain that mainstream liberal discourses of neutrality and colorblindness inherently reify existing patterns of inequality, and that privileging the voices of people of color and the marginalized is essential to addressing issues of equity and equality. Participatory budgeting (PB) aims, too, to include the voices of the marginalized in substantive policy-making. Through a CRT lens, I examine the ways in which the New York City PB process has thus far worked to simultaneously disrupt and maintain racial hierarchies. I pay particular attention to how social constructions of the “good project” shape the discourses around community priorities and winning projects—especially in the areas of security/policing and education. While the New York PB process has successfully reached out to and effectively enfranchised traditionally marginalized constituents, including communities of color, its current focus on districts and the voting phase, alongside limited work on critical praxis, limits the extent to which these newly enfranchised constituents can problematize larger funding formulas and criteria in public budgets.

Beyond Inclusion

In this article, I draw from critical race theory (CRT) to analyze how participatory budgeting (PB)—a process in which community members, rather than government officials, allocate public funds—simultaneously resists and perpetuates racial inequalities deeply embedded in American society. In this case study of participatory budgeting in New York City (PBNYC), PB has successfully broadened notions of stakeholdership and citizenship for many constituents (especially youth and undocumented citizens). Specifically, it has increased their civic engagement by explicitly challenging notions of colorblindness through targeted outreach to marginalized communities, creation of safe spaces for deliberation, and facilitation of discussions to allow for intersectionalities across race, gender, language, and age.

Nevertheless, the process has not necessarily prompted a re-prioritization of budget allocations or changes in power dynamics and racial hierarchies, at least not yet. The facially neutral criteria by which project proposals move forward reward communities with more social or cultural capital; along the way, expedient and feasible projects are selected over

ones that marginalized constituents need and prioritize. A closer look at contested constructions of “good projects” and the popularity of surveillance cameras, in particular, suggests that without an explicit power analysis embedded in the process, PB processes can reify status quo inequalities.

In the remainder of this article, I briefly review the relevant literature on CRT and public policy, and issues of equity in participatory budgeting. I present key findings from PBNYC thus far, focusing on how PB has successfully (re)enfranchised traditionally marginalized constituents. I trace motifs from interviews with budget delegates (those who volunteered to vet project ideas and develop them into full ballot proposals) and allies, analyzing tensions between emerging models of *managed participation* and meaningful participation. I conclude by discussing implications for critical race praxis in PB.

Critical Race Theory and Participatory Democracy

CRT began as a body of legal scholarship examining the ways in which facially neutral, “colorblind” laws perpetuated decidedly unequal access to rights and privileges in American society.¹ For the past three decades, CRT has moved beyond legal scholarship to articulate material, structural, and ideological mechanisms of white supremacy in a range of policy arenas, especially education policy.²

A core tenet of CRT is that despite the fact that race is socially constructed and historically embedded, racism is pervasive and commonplace. Thus, colorblind or facially neutral conceptions of equality will only address the most egregious forms of individual-based racism, rather than structural inequalities between social groups. Dynamics of interest convergence, in which policies or reforms aimed to combat racism or promote equity are usually implemented only when they also serve the interests of white elites, also help to maintain status quo racial hierarchies.³ Bell’s work on *Brown v. Board of Education*, for instance, contended that the landmark US Supreme Court decision for racial desegregation in public schools was structured in such a way that did not seriously threaten dominant interests.⁴ *Brown v. Board of Education* not only failed to break away from patterns of interest convergence, but it also prevented people of color from shaping education policy by withholding financial resources and governance control.

Because most formal channels for policy-making legitimize the voices of the powerful, the voices of the marginalized serve important purposes. CRT contends that the voices of people of color and other intersectional identities—by gender identity, class, and immigrant status, for instance—are unique.⁵ Alongside its firm stance against notions of racial essentialism, CRT contends that the social realities of people of color nevertheless give them experiences and viewpoints that are likely to be different from mainstream, dominant narratives. It therefore becomes imperative that people of color advance their own counter-narratives, often via story-telling modes that fall outside the usual confines of academic discourse.⁶

¹Kimberlé Crenshaw, *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement* (New York, NY: New Press, 1995).

²María Ledesma and Dolores Calderón, “Critical Race Theory in Education a Review of Past Literature and a Look to the Future,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 21:3 (2015), pp. 206–22.

³Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2001).

⁴Derrick Bell, “Brown V. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma,” *Harvard Law Review* 93 (1979), p. 518.

⁵Crenshaw, *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*.

⁶Marvin Lynn, Michael Jennings, and Sherick Hughes, “Critical Race Pedagogy 2.0: Lessons from Derrick Bell,” *Race Ethnicity and Education* 16:4 (2013), pp. 603–28.

Although CRT is most prominent in the educational policy and legal literatures, it has also emerged as a field of inquiry in subject areas as varied as social and cultural geography,⁷ disability studies,⁸ refugee studies,⁹ and public health.¹⁰ In all of these fields, scholars have used CRT to investigate how facially neutral and socially constructed, “objective” criteria might have racially and intersectionally disparate effects, especially when there are institutional or state-sanctioned policies, or evaluative frameworks involved.

A particular challenge lies in articulating meaningful remedies in public policy and essential practices in critical race praxis, in articulating potentially actionable specifics and challenging the ways in which major institutions perpetuate inequalities. In response, scholars have paid increasing attention to the role of popular participation and community organizing in contributing to social justice and change for historically marginalized communities, especially low-income communities of color.¹¹ Active community engagement can help to highlight patterns of inequality and real-life struggles of racial justice that fall below the radar of most policy-makers and academics; help constituents better understand their lived experiences in the context of larger, structural patterns of inequalities; and help people of color and marginalized communities to voice their visions of what good policy might look like.¹² Through active engagement, constituents can mobilize and forward counter-narratives on what ails their communities, and what should be done in response.

Participatory democratic processes like PB, aiming for deeper participation by everyday constituents than elections and representative processes, are particularly fit for a critical race analysis because they aim to actively engage marginalized constituents in ways that dovetail well with core CRT tenets.¹³ Indeed, in past cases of PB around the world, diversity in participation by gender, income, and racial background contributed to the legitimacy, continuity, and redistributive potential of PB processes.¹⁴ In one example, women’s participation was found to be positively associated with high-quality water services in Peru.¹⁵

PB has gained increasing attention as a process integral to racial justice work in the US. For instance, the Movement for Black Lives, a collective of more than fifty organizations

⁷Minelle Mahtani, “Toxic Geographies: Absences in Critical Race Thought and Practice in Social and Cultural Geography,” *Social & Cultural Geography* 15:4 (2014), pp. 359–67.

⁸Anastasia Liasidou, “The Cross-Fertilization of Critical Race Theory and Disability Studies: Points of Convergence/Divergence and Some Education Policy Implications,” *Disability & Society* 29:5 (2014), pp. 724–37.

⁹Elvira Pulitano, “In Liberty’s Shadow: The Discourse of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Critical Race Theory and Immigration Law/Politics,” *Identities* 20:2 (2013), pp. 172–89.

¹⁰Chandra Ford and Collins Airhihenbuwa, “Critical Race Theory, Race Equity, and Public Health: Toward Antiracism Praxis,” *American Journal of Public Health* 100:supplement 1 (2010), pp. S30–S35.

¹¹David Stovall, “Against the Politics of Desperation: Educational Justice, Critical Race Theory, and Chicago School Reform,” *Critical Studies in Education* 54:1 (2013), pp. 33–43; Carmen Lavoie, “Race, Power and Social Action in Neighborhood Community Organizing: Reproducing and Resisting the Social Construction of the Other,” *Journal of Community Practice* 20:3 (2012), pp. 241–259; Celina Su, “Cracking Silent Codes: Critical Race Theory and Education Organizing,” *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 28:4 (2007), pp. 531–48.

¹²Emma Haydée Fuentes, “On the Rebound: Critical Race Praxis and Grassroots Community Organizing for School Change,” *The Urban Review* 44:5 (2012), pp. 628–48; Mark Warren and Karen Mapp, *A Match on Dry Grass: Community Organizing as a Catalyst for School Reform* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹³Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Democratizing Democracy: Beyond the Liberal Democratic Canon* (New York, NY: Verso Books, 2005).

¹⁴Stephanie McNulty, “Barriers to Participation: Exploring Gender in Peru’s Participatory Budget Process,” *The Journal of Development Studies* 51:11 (2015), pp. 1429–43; Benjamin Goldfrank, *Deepening Local Democracy in Latin America: Participation, Decentralization, and the Left* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011).

¹⁵Miguel Jaramillo and Lorena Alcázar, *Does Participatory Budgeting Have an Effect on the Quality of Public Services?: The Case of Peru’s Water and Sanitation Sector* (Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank, 2013).

associated with the Blacks Lives Matter movement, released a platform of six policy demands for racial justice; it named PB as a key component of its “community control” policy demand.¹⁶

Nevertheless, some participatory processes have yielded decidedly mixed results on diversity. A bounty of critical research points at how seemingly public forums often exclude certain groups—the elderly, women, youth, et cetera.—in different ways, and how they often give the limelight to politicians, technical experts, and relatively well-resourced constituent groups.¹⁷ Further, while some scholars have analyzed the inclusion of constituents of African descent in PB (especially in Brazil and Peru), racial equity remains relatively understudied to axes of gender and class in PB.¹⁸ Some have suggested that, as PB has expanded beyond Latin America, its original goals of social justice and inclusion have not gained traction as much as its transparency directives.¹⁹

There is an urgent need, then, to examine the ways in which PB can promote equity in our racially charged political landscape, with sensitivity to context, and a focus on outcomes as well as process. In particular, there remain questions not only on who tends to participate in PB, but whom PB benefits. Prevailing cultural logics and discourses in PB deliberations may shape what is considered ideal, the default option, or normal, and by extension, *who* is considered standard, in racially delineated ways, enacting what Bonilla-Silva calls “racism without racists.”²⁰ As suggested by both CRT studies and analyses of participatory democratic processes, meaningful and inclusive participatory processes cannot be “one-size-fits-all,” and they must be tailored to not just accommodate but encourage distinct narratives (and counter-narratives) by context-specific constituents.²¹ A critical race praxis requires analyses of just how participatory democratic processes aimed at inclusion, like PB, challenge colorblind hegemony in multiracial communities, of which elements are most helpful, and of how such practices can be made even more robust.

Case Study Setting and Methods

In 2011, four New York City Councilmembers devoted a portion of their discretionary funds to PB. By the 2016–2017 cycle, thirty-one of fifty-one Councilmembers participated in PB. PBNYC is co-conducted by district committees, city councilmembers and their staff, the two lead organizations, and a bevy of volunteers. A steering committee, with representatives from the Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP, an organization providing education and

¹⁶Please see *A Vision for Black Lives: Policy Demands for Black Power, Freedom, and Justice*: available online at: <https://policy.m4bl.org/platform/>.

¹⁷Marian Barnes et al., “Constituting ‘the Public’ in Public Participation,” *Public Administration* 81:2 (2003), pp. 379–99; Andrea Cornwall and Vera Schatten Coelho, *Spaces for Change?: The Politics of Citizen Participation in New Democratic Arenas* (London, UK: Zed Books, 2007).

¹⁸Esther Hernández-Medina, “Social Inclusion through Participation: The Case of the Participatory Budget in São Paulo,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34:3 (2010), pp. 512–32; Brian Wampler and Stephanie McNulty, *Does Participatory Governance Matter?* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2011); Gianpaolo Baiocchi, *Militants and Citizens: The Politics of Participatory Democracy in Porto Alegre* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005).

¹⁹Yves Sintomer, Carsten Herzberg, and Anja Röcke, “Participatory Budgeting in Europe: Potentials and Challenges,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32:1 (2008), pp. 164–78; Gianpaolo Baiocchi and Ernesto Ganuza, “Participatory Budgeting as If Emancipation Mattered,” *Politics & Society* 42:1 (2014), pp. 29–50.

²⁰Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006).

²¹Annika Agger, “Towards Tailor-Made Participation: How to Involve Different Types of Citizens in Participatory Governance,” *Town Planning Review* 83:1 (2011), pp. 29–45; Su, “Cracking Silent Codes: Critical Race Theory and Education Organizing.”

technical assistance to PB processes throughout North America), various community-based organizations, and district committees, provide input on rules and strategies along the way. Since 2014, the City Council has also worked to coordinate efforts city-wide, and to host the steering committee.

In the fall of each year, councilmembers host neighborhood assemblies throughout their districts, where thousands of New Yorkers pitch proposals for community projects. Over each winter, some residents volunteer to become budget delegates, conducting feasibility and needs assessments to curate the proposals that will end up on the ballot, and working with city agencies to develop ideas into full-fledged proposals. Each spring, residents vote for the proposals that win funding via PB.

As a member of the research board headed by the Urban Justice Center Community Development Project (CDP), I work with other researchers to hone key research questions, instruments, data collection, and analysis. In keeping with participatory action research principles,²² the research board works collaboratively not only with researchers, but with community members (representatives from community-based organizations, facilitators, and former participants and budget delegates) as well. We worked with community members most impacted by PB, to collectively co-shape research questions and co-interpret findings. Together, we drew upon interpretive modes of inquiry and knowledge production, emphasizing experiential knowledge alongside technical knowledge.²³

In dialogues with community members, both at research board meetings and in the field, we also engaged questions of reflexivity and power. For instance, in co-designing survey instruments during research board meetings, we discussed whether certain questions reflected different implicit research agendas. Some community members asked whether some questions in the original survey drafts benefited researchers' desires for data compatible with large, national data-sets like the General Social Survey, squeezing out questions that addressed their communities' most pressing concerns regarding PB. At such moments, we aimed for impact validity alongside more traditional forms of construct, internal, and external validity.²⁴ We kept in mind explicit uses for the research, even as we also worked to investigate under-studied or under-theorized questions regarding PB and participatory democratic processes. Together, we worked to articulate concrete recommendations for different sets of key stakeholders in the process: *for example*, City Councilmembers, district staff members, budget delegates, and community groups. Our emphasis on usable knowledge also shaped our dissemination plans. For example, some of the earlier interview data with groups working with members of traditionally marginalized populations (that is, the formerly incarcerated, youth, and undocumented immigrants) were included in internal reports and shaped our outreach strategies, but they have not been included in any publications.

The interpretivist study reported here included two distinct phases of inquiry. In the first phase of my inquiry, I draw upon rich quantitative and qualitative data-sets from the first two cycles of the PBNYC process. These data-sets include: survey data from neighborhood assemblies and voting periods, participant observations during neighborhood assemblies

²²See Kasdan and Markman's article in this symposium. See also Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury, *Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice* (London, UK: Sage, 2001).

²³Nina Wallerstein and Bonnie Duran, "The Theoretical, Historical, and Practice Roots of Community-Based Participatory Research," in Meredith Minkler and Nina Wallerstein (eds), *Community-Based Participatory Research for Health* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003).

²⁴Sean Massey and Ricardo Barreras, "Introducing 'Impact Validity,'" *Journal of Social Issues* 69:4 (2013), pp. 615–32.

and budget delegate meetings, and semi-structured interview notes and/or transcriptions with current and past budget delegates.

Each year, the research board collects information on the demographics, civic experiences, and opinions of participants. Between 2012 and 2014, the board collected and analyzed over twenty-two thousand surveys, hundreds of interviews, and observation fieldnotes on both experiences with PB and potential barriers to participation. In 2015, the board collected another twenty-two thousand surveys. Given limited resources, the board analyzed 7420 of the surveys collected in 2015, chosen randomly.

I also draw upon notes and transcriptions from more than seventy semi-structured interviews conducted by other research board members (or their students and assistants) in 2014. Of these, forty-two interviews were conducted with current budget delegates, and forty were conducted with past budget delegates.²⁵ For these interviews, protocol questions included how participants first got involved, what their previous experiences with community efforts were, and what they largely saw as strengths and weaknesses of PB. These interview protocols did not include any questions that explicitly raised issues of race.

Through discussions of these interview data with both researchers and community members, the research board came to prioritize budget delegate experiences as worthy of further investigation.

In the second phase of my inquiry, I conducted twenty-five additional 1- to 3-hour interviews with PB participants and allies, including outreach staff and representatives of all city agencies involved in New York's PB process, in 2014 and 2015. Interview protocols for budget delegates and city agency representatives were developed with the CDP-led research board. The interview protocols for these interviews included questions aimed to address issues raised by the 2013–2014 data, such as how successful proposals are evaluated.

In addition, I attended numerous events to observe deliberations between 2011 and 2015, during both phases of the inquiry. For this article, I coded observation and interview data according to thematic codes, engaging in several interpretive iterations of fieldwork and data analysis to explore themes grounded in the data, such as the role of city agencies in budgeting, and the pursuit of and challenges to equity in PB. I read analytical memos by other research board members, based on the same budget delegate interviews, but I also reviewed original notes and transcripts myself. The names of all fieldwork participants and affiliated agencies or organizations have been withheld for confidentiality reasons.

Broadening Stakeholdership on an Uneven Terrain

New York's PB process has broadened some notions of stakeholdership, engaging traditionally disenfranchised constituents in the city. For instance, the first rulebook dictated that anyone over age sixteen who lives, works, attends school, or is the parent of a student in a district could participate in neighborhood assemblies and project-vetting, and residents over age eighteen, including undocumented immigrants, could vote on the allocations. Enthusiastic youth participation in neighborhood assemblies was instrumental in convincing adults to lower the PB voting age to sixteen, and the participation age to fourteen, in 2012. In some districts, the voting age lowered to twelve in the 2014–2015 cycle.

²⁵See Swaner's article in this symposium for further information on this particular set of interviews.

According to the survey data collected by CDP, constituents from traditionally marginalized subpopulations participated in PB at much higher rates than in traditional elections in every cycle thus far. For example, in District 8, the very poor—those with incomes of ten thousand dollars or less—constituted four percent of voters in 2009 City Council elections but twenty-two percent of PB voters.²⁶ Along lines of race, PB also engaged traditionally underrepresented stakeholders. For instance, eleven percent of PB voters identified as Asian, compared with four percent of 2013 local election voters, and twenty-four percent of PB voters identified as Latinx, compared with fourteen percent of 2013 local election voters.²⁷

Survey data also suggest that strong outreach efforts appear to pay off; low-income and foreign-born constituents were more likely to learn about PB through word-of-mouth or targeted campaigns, rather than online or through governmental-institutional channels. Notably, half of 2014 PB voters had never worked with others on a community issue before. One-third were foreign-born. In one district, over two-thirds of distributed ballots were in languages other than English.²⁸ Strikingly, twenty-three percent of PB voters in 2015 had a barrier to voting in regular elections, largely because of age or lack of US citizenship.²⁹ In many ways, then, PBNYC has succeeded in engaging traditionally marginalized constituents, even as more intensive forms of political participation are usually and paradoxically practiced by those with the most resources.³⁰

Safe Spaces in a Deliberative Public Sphere

PBNYC has broadened stakeholderhood and reached traditionally marginalized communities precisely because it has *not* been colorblind. City Council staff, participating community organizations, and others have made concerted efforts to conduct targeted outreach. The operation's limited resources were largely devoted to contracts with experienced community organizers. These organizers worked with specific demographic groups, such as LGBTQ communities or Spanish speakers in East Harlem. In some districts where a substantial percentage of residents speak languages other than English, neighborhood assemblies were held in those languages, such as Haitian Creole and Yiddish in Flatbush, Brooklyn. Important notices, ballots, and surveys have consistently been distributed in nine languages. Such efforts created "safe spaces" for deliberation, especially by those without the public speaking skills, confidence, and educational background to speak up at more typical public fora.³¹

In addition to strong outreach efforts, well-organized neighborhood assemblies helped to include traditionally marginalized constituent groups in meaningful ways. Many were organized to first give smaller, more homogenous groups (defined usually by age or language spoken) time to deliberate ideas, and then to provide translation and facilitation across groups, with each small group presenting their "top" ideas to the larger assemblies. The combination of the smaller and larger discussions at PB neighborhood assemblies relates

²⁶Alexa Kasdan and Lindsay Cattell, *A People's Budget: A Research and Evaluation Report on the Pilot Year of Participatory Budgeting in New York City* (New York, NY: The Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center, 2012), p. 20.

²⁷Alexa Kasdan, Erin Markman, and Pat Covey, *A People's Budget: A Report on the Participatory Budgeting in New York City in 2013–2014* (New York, NY: The Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center, 2014), p. 19.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 21–25.

²⁹Alexa Kasdan and Erin Markman, *A People's Budget: Cycle 4: Key Research Findings* (New York, NY: Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center, 2015).

³⁰Dietlind Stolle and Marc Hooghe, "Shifting Inequalities: Patterns of Exclusion and Inclusion in Emerging Forms of Political Participation," *European Societies* 13:1 (2011), pp. 119–42.

³¹See Hayduk, Hackett, and Folla in this issue.

well to what critical race theorists Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres call intermediate “free spaces,” where communities of color can recognize their solidarity that “those who have been [socially] raced often experience,” thereby constructing political, rather than essentialist, notions of race, and “enclaves of resistance.”³²

Indeed, budget delegates spoke repeatedly about how the PB process allowed them to engage in discussions with neighbors they may not have met otherwise, and to work with the proverbial “other” in deliberations. They emphasized how PB was deliberative, in that it encouraged the exchange of ideas and compromise. PB’s tenor contrasted with that of electoral politics, even for those already politically active. For one delegate, the combination of working with others unlike herself and working towards binding budgetary decisions gave the PB process a sense of impact lacking in her usual civic engagement: “Every four years, I ... vote ... [but] feeling like this process is ... responsive to community input ... you don’t often feel.”³³

One lesson from the budget delegate interviews lies in the potential for cross-cutting alliances of groups of residents or organizations, who might usually lobby for funds independently. Budget delegates spoke to the ways in which the PB deliberations allowed them to emphasize more than one aspect of their lives and identities—for example, as African-Americans, as Harlemites, as parents, as public housing residents, as sports fans, et cetera.—and emphasize issues of intersectionality, rather than a single identity—by race, gender, or other social axes. More than one interviewee stated that they ended up backing projects they would not have otherwise thought of or supported. Some budget delegates explicitly put aside their original ideas and stated that they would back new project ideas they felt addressed more pressing needs. Diverse participants were not just included; they were encouraged to draw upon lived experiences and to acknowledge multiple identities. This, in turn, might allow traditionally marginalized constituents to engage in “strategic deployment of a political race-consciousness,” and to experiment in new, deliberative democratic practices and develop a broader social justice agenda.³⁴

Problematizing the “Good Project”

Traditionally marginalized constituents have been participating in PB in impressive numbers, but just what democratic exercise, exactly, they are participating in remains understudied. To what extent does the process overall allow these constituents to forward project proposals that weave together counter-narratives, combating dominant cultural logics and discourses of what New York needs? A project process analysis—tracing projects from idea inception, through vetting, selection via popular vote, funding, and ultimately implementation—suggests that, at each stage of the process, certain types of ideas move forward. In interviews, both budget delegates and others involved in the process, including city agency representatives, discussed the underlying logics of successful “good projects,” helping to articulate which projects tended to move forward and why.

³²Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres, *The Miner’s Canary: Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, Transforming Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 95–147.

³³Interview with current budget delegate, 19 February 2014.

³⁴Guinier and Torres, *The Miner’s Canary: Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, Transforming Democracy*, p. 95.

Whose Cultural Capital?

Through the complex process of project proposal and selection,³⁵ constituents negotiate whose ideas should take priority; in addition, the predominant criteria they use to set priorities also appear to shift. When community members first articulate the proposal ideas, they focus foremost on whatever they believe their families, neighbors, and neighborhoods need most. Very quickly in the process, however, the focus of budget delegates, city agencies, council staff, and voters all shift to what is eligible, “feasible,” and “reasonable.”

Granted, some of these dynamics are not just about feasibility; the process as currently designed has actual limits on the types of proposals, and also excludes community participation in project implementation and outcomes. However, even within these constraints, and even with strong outreach and city staff conversant in working with diverse communities, the constituents most able to push their proposals forward, and especially to tweak their proposals to become feasible and not be eliminated because of technicalities, tend to be those with more social capital, legal resources, and certain forms of knowledge and cultural capital.

One former facilitator described how intimidating the proposal process felt. As she put it,

I can't imagine. Even for me, I'm a lawyer and I was an in-house lawyer to city agencies for a while, so I have some experience ... [with] how things run. I was screaming and yelling to anyone who would listen about ... the lack of information, but also the inequity. I was sitting in this lawyer's office at a big white-shoe law firm having a sushi lunch talking about our issues. I thought, this is really unfair because I'm a pretty resourceful lawyer who knows to go to [a specific non-profit] and get a *[pro bono]* law firm.³⁶

According to this former facilitator, the facially neutral criteria of feasibility quickly took precedence over community need and priority, and sidelined the sorts of testimony and evidence—based on lived experiences on which neighborhood areas felt less safe at night, or which schools required dire repairs, for instance—more likely to put forth by traditionally marginalized constituents. Instead, the constituents most likely to forward successful projects were those who tailored (or even created) their projects to fit city agencies' PB project criteria. “I ended up dropping out of PB. ... I was so disgusted with ... [projects] ... being contorted to look like—to be defined as—need for technology. That made me crazy.”³⁷ This detail suggests that the eligibility criteria may tend exclude projects born out of needs. It also suggests these criteria are technical enough so that those with traditional educational and cultural capital can best navigate the process. These criteria are thus best and most easily manipulated by those with legal and bureaucratic connections, skills in logic and discursive framing, and grant proposal-writing skills to “distort” their desires into PB-eligible “needs.”

Such dynamics would resemble a sort of YIMBY (yes-in-my-backyard) politics, in which wealthier, already organized, predominantly white parent groups launched campaigns advocating for technology improvements in comparatively well-resourced schools. Schools appeared to be especially vulnerable to this dynamic because their constituents are often already formally organized into parent groups, and because schools and libraries consistently represented the largest category of ballot items in PB.

³⁵See Su's introduction to this symposium on PB for a fuller description of the process.

³⁶Interview with former facilitator, 21 September 2015.

³⁷*Ibid.*

For example, in the first PB cycle in 2011–2012, ideas submitted through the online platform constituted twenty percent of all ideas proposed in district 39; yet, more than half of winning projects originated in the online platform.³⁸ By contrast, most of that district's neighborhood assemblies (where face-to-face deliberation took place) did not yield any winning projects that year, despite high and active participation. This fits well with findings that city-wide, the PB online platform most engaged white, well-educated, and higher-income constituents.³⁹

Thus, even as PB organizers strive to combat colorblindness in their outreach, later stages of the process become vulnerable to interest convergence, and of limiting the scope of projects funded.⁴⁰ Budget delegates complained that their original project ideas, which spoke to dire community needs, were often sidelined and replaced by questionably needed projects that appeared easy to implement. Predictably, these projects were also those prioritized by city agencies or championed by already powerful groups. They were thus not able to forward counter-narratives so much as choose between options that were already largely developed. For example, one former delegate complained that he had been trained to "think small," and that when he tried to put forward employment ideas, "They say, 'oh no you can't, it's going to be too big!' ... It was shut down! Even by my peers! ... We don't think, we behave small."⁴¹ He continued,

I live in the district. I am a grandfather ... I am someone who is interested in my community. And the number one thing ... is to get work for the people. People need to eat, they need shelter ... We senior citizens need somewhere to gather School children and working people, that's what I'm for, not garbage baskets at the sidewalk and a bunch of other things. And when you suggest a reasonable thing you get verbally shut down.⁴²

To this delegate, the process ultimately "didn't progress anywhere. Where was it going? It was just people debating and speaking about minor things like traffic lights, like garbage pails ... It wasn't progressive."⁴³ This delegate did not suggest that constituents without legal degrees needed to become more informed about budget regulations; rather, his comments question whether budget delegates can be empowered to develop projects that explicitly address substantive community needs and equity as a goal.

In response, some city agency representatives complained that budget delegates seemed "uninformed" or rent-seeking in their project proposals. Nevertheless, in interviews, none of them named actual, PB-related proposals they thought to be unreasonable. However, the *dominant* definition of what was "feasible" narrowed to exclude innovations or new priorities.

³⁸This data came from an analysis of all project proposals, from neighborhood assembly phase to implementation, in the 2011–2012 and 2013–2014 cycles, in districts 8 and 39, conducted by George Nakkas and myself, and reported in George Nakkas and Celina Su, "Visualizing PBNYC: Which Proposals Become Projects? Mapping the Process from Idea to Implementation," Paper presented at the 4th International Conference on Participatory Budgeting in North America, Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, MA: May 2016.

³⁹Kasdan, Markman, and Covey, *A People's Budget: A Report on the Participatory Budgeting in New York City in 2013–2014*, p. 29.

⁴⁰Hollie Russon Gilman, "Transformative Deliberations: Participatory Budgeting in the United States," *Journal of Public Deliberation* 8:2 (2012), available online at: <http://www.publicdeliberation.net/jpd/vol8/iss2/art11/>; Rebecca Abers, "From Clientelism to Cooperation: Local Government, Participatory Policy, and Civic Organizing in Porto Alegre, Brazil," *Politics & Society* 26 (1998), pp. 511–38.

⁴¹Interview with past budget delegate, 6 February 2014.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

One city agency representative went as far as declaring, “We’ll work with what’s feasible,” with what is “already within the framework of the types of projects that we already fund.”⁴⁴

In the NYC context, there is both the possibility of greater redistribution from high- to low-income neighborhoods and greater risk of rent-seeking by white elites in economically and racially diverse City Council districts. Without strong facilitation, an emphasis on needs assessments, and attention to different forms of cultural capital and styles of deliberation, PB runs the risk of privileging participants well-versed in “hegemonic discursive codes” and policy jargon.⁴⁵

To another current budget delegate, the process involves “delegating the work to everybody ... where it *look[s]* like they have power [when] really there’s no power; they just become overworked.”⁴⁶ This dynamic jeopardizes PB’s ability to empower the marginalized, instead enlisting “citizens in measuring, auditing and monitoring ... in a depoliticized technical process that defuses conflicts and treats them as consumers” rather than political stakeholders.⁴⁷

Because the annual cycle ends with a voting process, some budget delegates and facilitators went as far as to suggest that PB can, in some cases, reify a market logic of choice and inequalities. One former facilitator commented that,

I’m in a district with a really fair councilmember ... [with] his eye on equity and need ... In certain districts, I think PB would be a better process if ... community organizers [were] figuring out where the needs [were], and then bringing that to the City Councilmember’s attention.⁴⁸

Without strong critical pedagogy and strong facilitation, PB can sometimes decentralize decision-making without the changes in power dynamics necessary for critical race praxis. The process emphasizes “good projects” in ways that sideline alternative criteria, such as the bodily experience of marginalized constituents, especially people of color, as well as redistribution, equity, dignity, and shared power.

Questioning Causal Pathways in “Public Safety”

A notable example of PB projects potentially reinforcing racial hierarchies, at least according to some constituents, lies in the popularity of surveillance cameras among PB projects, especially in public housing projects. These have won funding every year so far. At first glance, the popularity of surveillance cameras administered by the New York Police Department may be somewhat surprising, given widespread street protests against police violence in the past two years, as well as long-standing complaints about police surveillance, stop-and-frisk policies, and aggressive tactics over decades.⁴⁹ At the same time, the prominence of body, dashboard, and cell phone camera feeds in documenting police brutality in recent

⁴⁴Interview with city agency representative, 18 July 2014.

⁴⁵Celina Su, “Marginalized Stakeholders and Performative Politics: Dueling Discourses in Education Policy-making,” *Critical Policy Studies* 4:4 (2010), pp. 362–83; Tara Yosso, “Whose Culture Has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth,” *Race Ethnicity and Education* 8:1 (2005), pp. 69–91.

⁴⁶Interview with current budget delegate, 10 September 2015, emphasis added.

⁴⁷Hilary Silver, Alan Scott, and Yuri Kazepov, “Participation in Urban Contention and Deliberation,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34:3 (2010), pp. 453–77.

⁴⁸Interview with former facilitator, 21 September 2015.

⁴⁹Brett Stoudt, Michelle Fine, and Madeline Fox, “Growing up Policed in the Age of Aggressive Policing Policies,” *New York Law School Law Review* 56 (2011), pp. 1331–70; Jennifer Jee-Lyn García and Mienah Zulfacar Sharif, “Black Lives Matter: A Commentary on Racism and Public Health,” *American Journal of Public Health* 105:8 (2015), pp. e27–e30.

cases has highlighted the important roles of cameras in bottom-up accountability as well.⁵⁰ How and why have surveillance cameras emerged as perennial, winning “good projects” in PB?

To unpack the causal pathways implicit in contestations over “public safety” and surveillance, I rely on the sort of “stories” emphasized in CRT—partly because some interviewees discussed how race pervaded their PB experiences, and how race could not be neatly analyzed as a discrete variable. I draw more extensive quotations from eleven of the interviews, so that I might delve into their specific experiences in greater depth. When participants raised issues of race in these interviews, I explicitly asked them to expand upon these issues or cite examples. Seven of these interviews were conducted with PB budget delegates of color. Four were conducted with facilitators or community allies in the PB process, three of whom are white.

Participants of color who advocated for surveillance cameras reported that they did not do so in naïve, unquestioning ways; their visions of community safety included greater police accountability and economic support as well as surveillance, and they crucially included bottom-up accountability and access to the data (the video footage) captured by cameras. To them, PB should allow constituents to shape not just *what* programs are administered, but *how*.

Community members who advocated for surveillance cameras also conveyed nuanced takes on “safety” in their neighborhoods. They stated that they needed interventions for their neighbors, who let their dogs defecate in the elevators and did not clean up after them, engaged in petty crimes, or damaged building amenities. They hoped that security cameras would help them to ascertain who was doing what, to hold these folks accountable. One delegate, a middle-aged Black immigrant woman in the Bronx, asserted that:

Right now my main focus is to bring more programs into the neighborhood. Education, education. Jobs, jobs I think that cameras are a necessity in the community because we're a high-level poverty [community] and people tend to do stupid stuff ... when their back [is] against a wall ... Security is bigger than this, cameras.⁵¹

These statements tie micro-, individual-level behaviors to macro-level inequalities, pointing to structural forces such as poverty as root causes of criminal acts. Indeed, some interviewees first discussed these surveillance camera projects as just one small element of a much broader vision of community safety. As one former white male facilitator in his twenties put it:

The whole dialogue with safety [goes] beyond policing, so this leads to a much broader conversation ... tied into the Black Lives Matter campaign, against the one thousand new cops, and all the hundred millions dollars for the however many new police officers and the whole safety beyond police campaign. But there's this assumption that, “Oh yea, PB was going to fund the new cameras that's going to make the whole community safer.” ... Rather than fully funding robust social programs and services, and wrap-around services and community schools that our young people need to actually prevent crime and violence.⁵²

⁵⁰Teju Cole, “Death in the Browser Tab,” *The New York Times Magazine* (2015), 21 May, p. MM18. Thanks to the *New Political Science* editors for this point.

⁵¹Interview with current budget delegate, 10 September 2015.

⁵²Interview with former facilitator, 4 September 2015.

Over time, the jobs programs and other components of more holistic visions for community safety gained less attention in PB, partly because they fell outside of eligibility criteria.

These contestations over “community safety” reflect the extent to which later stages of the PB process did not speak to these residents’ lived experiences, give them the ability to articulate the root problems they wished to address, or analyze the criteria by which their project proposals were judged.

Further, Bronx public housing residents who *did* get cameras expressed frustrations of not being able to access, own, and interpret the camera footage, the data, themselves. They wanted to access footage of police brutality as well as crimes, and they protested the fact that police typically do not review the footage unless major crimes like murders have been captured on tape, and they are often not willing to make any public. One delegate, the immigrant Black woman quoted above, lamented that,

They’re putting [in] all these cameras, we don’t have access, there’s nobody to monitor them on a frequent basis. It’s only when they [have] a big shoot-out of that nature, the camera is being looked into. ... The murders and stuff, we’ll leave that to the professionals which is the cop, but [for other incidents,] when the police is against our people and [our community] has a lot of police brutality. We can get community leaders [to] get an opportunity to view that and form a community to even do a protest if they wanted—a ... peaceful demonstration ... a non-breaking the rules protest. We are not given that opportunity.⁵³

Another PB participant, a Latino man in Brooklyn, commented that:

What happened the year prior—six hundred and eighty thousand dollars was chosen to go into putting up more cameras in the neighborhood ... How does the community feel safe when incidents like this happen and the authorities are the ones committing these crimes against citizens, and there’s no accountability, there’s no transparency, there’s no access to this footage? So we’re being surveilled, you know, public funds are being used to surveil the public, but the public does not get access to this footage.⁵⁴

At its extreme, PB funds can be used to include traditionally marginalized constituents to increase funding for the very same practices that many of them are protesting. This participant continued:

I mean, everybody wants to feel safe—People believe that these cameras are beneficial to the safety of the community, but ... A lot of the people who I spoke to, who voted for these cameras, they themselves told me that if they had known beforehand that there’s no way that we’ll ever get access to this footage—they would never have voted for that.⁵⁵

From a critical race perspective, constituents’ bodily experiences are not interchangeable or neutral, and these materialities must be weighed as essential testimony in designating “good projects,” and in weighing who represents the “community” in deliberations:

I keep on pushing that this has to be community-led ... And it’s a diverse group: Latino, White, Black, Asian ... Because we’re the ones who are living through these experiences, we’re the ones who have gone through all the heartache and pain and if our experience is not [to] the table for discussion ... here our community loses the opportunity to get to the root of a problem.⁵⁶

⁵³Interview with current budget delegate, 10 September 2015.

⁵⁴Interview with former budget delegate, 13 May 2015.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

Further, increasing funds for communities of color will not address institutionalized racism and power dynamics between communities and the state, as much as changing how funds are spent would:

If we just depend on the police to do the right thing ... we're going to be doing circles because ... they [always] go about it with the same formula, the same recipe: they flood the streets with cops ... and that's a recipe for disaster. And if they continue to repeat the same patterns ... then we as a community have to come together ... have to go public about why this isn't going to work.⁵⁷

In interviews, these constituents of color emphasized how they are trying to address root problems very much tied to larger issues of political economy, and of racial hierarchies in American society. This Brooklyn participant, for instance, explicitly tied concerns over policing to gentrification:

So I definitely am not only witnessing but experiencing myself how ... we're being displaced and how long-term residents are being pushed out ... And how a lot of the stuff with the cameras was really about helping to create a bigger division between long-term residents and these new folks that are coming into the neighborhood. I mean, because we feel like we're being overly policed, and it's really to make these new folks feel welcome.⁵⁸

His remarks pointedly question *whose* community safety is most served by PB-funded surveillance cameras.

Based on his experiences, the former white male PB facilitator quoted above asserted that “you can’t ignore the question of race ... in the PB process ... It needs to be about openly shifting ... the economic power dynamic, and making sure that lower-income communit[ies] of color ... have more decision-making power, access to resources.”⁵⁹ Interestingly, his vision of “not just economic justice, but racial economic justice” included mechanisms for quotas for people of color among budget delegates and facilitators, and that “the process gets deepened, radicalized, allowing black delegates to form a caucus if they want to.”⁶⁰ These remarks suggest neighborhood assemblies may not be sufficient safe spaces for people of color and traditionally marginalized constituents. For them to mount successful project campaigns, greater attention to safe spaces later in the process may be helpful as well.

Discussion

PBNYC has engaged and, in some cases, re-enfranchised traditionally marginalized constituents in a local political process. This constitutes a genuine triumph. Formerly incarcerated youth of color I interviewed, for instance, testified to the terror they felt in speaking to school principals during site visits to research project proposals, since they had been used to state institutions as solely policing, surveilling, and punitive.⁶¹ PB was transformative for them because it enabled them to, for the first time, forward their own contributions and expertise as well.

Nevertheless, the experiences of PBNYC budget delegates and their resulting projects pinpoint ways in which inclusion is a necessary but insufficient step toward racial equity.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Interview with former facilitator, 4 September 2015.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Interview with former budget delegate, 11 March 2013.

Together, the testimonies above form counter-narratives that challenge “feasibility” as the main criterion for “good” PB projects, explicitly tie on-going community needs to issues of political economy outside of PB’s current contours, and center the material conditions of people of color in characterizing the need to help shape *how* and *why* specific projects are chosen and implemented.

The racially disparate impacts of policy processes—even participatory ones, like PB—are inextricably intertwined with the underlying criteria used along the way. While city officials forward the current dominant logics of “feasibility” and “reasonableness” as objective criteria for good projects, they are nevertheless socially constructed to value certain types of knowledge and expertise over others. This can result in increased *managed participation*, rather than truly meaningful empowerment. This is a more subtle dynamic than overt discrimination; indeed, during public briefings and meetings with city agencies, agency representatives consistently conversed with budget delegates with patience and respect. Nevertheless, the current process has the effect of disparaging certain types of constituents and criteria—including community need—in racialized ways. In this way, community members can advocate and vote for surveillance cameras as a perennial PB ballot item, without ever explicitly mentioning race in deliberations.

Whereas some budget delegates emphasize the ways in which concrete, overlapping interests helped them to form cross-cutting alliances, others warned about losing focus on the larger structures that perpetuate inequalities. Some activists and scholars have dubbed an emphasis on mutual support as “intersectionality lite,”⁶² arguing that a truly intersectional approach would force deliberating groups—like budget delegate teams—to adopt new analytical lenses on community issues, starting from the lived conditions and bodily experiences of those most affected.

Indeed, the PBNYC case highlights profoundly intersectional dimensions of participation, especially by race and class. The intersections here go beyond the fact that native-born, white residents report higher incomes than other residents,⁶³ and that higher income, higher educated residents may have the social networks and legal skills to more easily navigate bureaucratic regulations in municipal budgeting. They pointedly underline how race continues to serve as a fundamental “modality in which class is ‘lived,’ the medium through which class relations are experienced, the form in which it is ... fought through.”⁶⁴

After all, in both education and community safety (the two PB project categories where budget delegates repeatedly raised issues of race) policy, policy-makers draw upon racialized lines of public discourse to justify neoliberal welfare retrenchment policies and status quo class inequalities. In popular debates on the “racial achievement gap” in education, a “culture of poverty” discourse helps to shift public scrutiny away from egregious inequalities in school funding.⁶⁵ In conversations on community safety, popular tropes around “criminality” and “broken windows” similarly shift the unit of analysis from structural forces to individuals.⁶⁶

⁶²Aren Aizura, “Trans Feminine Value, Racialized Others and the Limits of Necropolitics,” in Jin Haritaworn, Adi Kuntsman, and Silvia Posocco (eds), *Queer Necropolitics* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), p. 129.

⁶³See, for instance, Sam Roberts, “Gap between Manhattan’s Rich and Poor Is Greatest in U.S., Census Finds,” *New York Times*, 18 September 2014.

⁶⁴Stuart Hall, “Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance,” in Houston A. Baker, Jr., Manthia Diawara, and Ruth H. Lindeborg (eds), *Black British Cultural Studies* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 55.

⁶⁵Gaston Alonso et al., *Our Schools Suck: Students Talk Back to a Segregated Nation on the Failures of Urban Education* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2009).

⁶⁶Kate Driscoll Derickson, “Urban Geography 2: Urban Geography in the Age of Ferguson,” *Progress in Human Geography* (2016), pp. 1–15, available online at: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0309132515624315>.

The resulting policies—punitive measures according to performance on high-stakes testing in education, and punitive fines for small infractions in policing—also work to help local governments to generate revenues in the face of austerity economics. As an example from Ferguson, Missouri (the working-class, predominantly African-American town where Michael Brown was killed by police officer Darren Wilson), court fines and fees added up to \$2.63 million dollars and the second-largest source of the town's revenues in 2014.⁶⁷ In a town with a population of roughly twenty-one thousand, the Ferguson municipal court issued arrest warrants for 32,975 nonviolent offenses that year, mostly driving-related.⁶⁸ Such intersectional dynamics highlight how, in a political economy of racial capitalism, equity work—such as PB work—must address neoliberal logics and white supremacy in tandem.⁶⁹

In working toward critical race praxis, PB organizers must re-center racial economic justice not just in targeted outreach, but in subsequent phases of the process as well. This especially holds true after the neighborhood assembly phase, when budget delegates negotiate with one another and with city agencies in evaluating the feasibility and contested merit of each proposal. Deliberative fora, such as those organized during the neighborhood assembly and budget delegate phases, could be woven into the vote phase as well. Budget delegates' experiences also suggest that access to data is fundamental in helping budget delegates to develop counter-narratives that emphasize the perspectives of people of color, reveal the discriminatory effects of facially neutral, colorblind criteria, and work toward alternative logics and bottom-up accountability.

Since the first cycle in 2011–2012, many of the districts have consistently adopted the use of an equity matrix and trained facilitators during the budget delegate phase, and this has helped some budget delegate teams to focus on community needs in their PB work. These practices are crucial. In one district, several of the winning ballot items seemed to come out of nowhere during the budget delegate phase; they couldn't be tied to any of the more than eight hundred ideas proposed during the neighborhood assembly phase.⁷⁰ At first glance, this might seem alarming, as if budget delegates were creating new proposals to serve themselves. In reality, they had called low-income schools in the district, canvassing them on their top priorities, despite the fact that these schools did not have well-resourced and -organized parent groups like the district's wealthier schools did.⁷¹ In this case, the delegates acted as a countervailing force for equity and critical race praxis.

Critical race praxis in PB would not only include but foreground the issues of those marginalized by city policy—in land use and financialization, policing, schooling, et cetera.—and rely most on the “perceptions, experiences, and counterhegemonic practices” of people of color to articulate the criteria upon which good projects should be judged.⁷² Critical praxis

⁶⁷Civil Rights Division, *Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department* (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, 2015).

⁶⁸See the Missouri Courts Judicial Branch of Government, *Table 95: Municipal Division, FY 2013, Warrants Issued and Warrants Outstanding* (Jefferson City, CO, 2014), available online at: <https://www.courts.mo.gov/file.jsp?id=68845>.

⁶⁹Lester Spence, *Knocking the Hustle: Against the Neoliberal Turn in Black Politics* (Brooklyn, NY: Punctum Books, 2015); Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

⁷⁰Many thanks to George Nakkas for his sleuth work, careful tracing, and thoughtful analysis of projects in the 2011–2012 and 2013–2014 cycles, from ideas to funding and implementation. Nakkas and Su, “Visualizing PBNYC: Which Proposals Become Projects? Mapping the Process from Idea to Implementation.”

⁷¹Interviews with former facilitators, 20 February 2015, 4 September 2015, and 21 September 2015.

⁷²Lynn, Jennings, and Hughes, “Critical Race Pedagogy 2.0: Lessons from Derrick Bell,” p. 154.

thus involves allowing community members to define the rules that govern them, as well as proposing ideas and deciding between articulated choices.

The experience of participating in public budgeting has educated, empowered, and even outraged constituents to demand more, and to hold government more accountable. These constituents are now engaged not only in debates regarding local discretionary expenditures, but also regarding the municipal budget overall and substantive policy arenas—policing, affordable housing and land use, schools—as well. Because the PBNYC-eligible funds remain rather limited, many of the most interesting and profound outcomes thus far take the form of spillover effects. For instance, from 2011 to 2013, parents and students were upset about putting PB discretionary funds toward school bathroom stalls, which felt like basic needs. The PB process mobilized them around this issue; in 2014, the Department of Education doubled its allocation for school bathrooms. This was explicitly because of PB.⁷³

As budget delegates asserted, PB eligibility rules and the associated pots of money must be expanded; PB cannot operate meaningfully as a marginal exercise in the city budget. To truly pursue racial equity, PB must enable participants to trouble the larger logics in which municipal budgeting and related policy regimes (including schooling and policing) operate.

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Notes on contributor

Celina Su is Marilyn J. Gittell Chair in Urban Studies at the CUNY Graduate Center and associate professor of Political Science at Brooklyn College. She has served on the PBNYC citywide steering committee since its inception in 2011.

⁷³Brad Lander, A Progressive, Responsible, Transparent Budget for New York City, *New York City Councilmember Brad Lander*, (2014), 26 June, available online at: <http://bradlander.nyc/blog/2014/06/26/a-progressive-responsible-transparent-budget-for-nyc>.