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Participatory Budgeting: an innovative experiment

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Hans **Böckler**
Stiftung 

Fakten für eine faire Arbeitswelt.

What is Participatory budgeting? (I)

- A broad definition: PB allows the participation of non-elected citizens in the conception and/or allocation of public finances
- Invention in Porto Alegre, Brazil (1989)
- Imported in Europe (2000-)

What is Participatory budgeting (2)?

In Europe, in order to sever it from other participatory instruments, five criteria need to be added:

1. *The financial and/or budgetary dimension must be discussed; PB is dealing with the problem of limited resources*
2. *The city/region level has to be involved, or a (decentralised) district with an elected body and some power over administration (the neighbourhood level is not enough)*
3. *It has to be a repeated process (one meeting or one referendum on financial issues are not examples of participatory budgeting)*
4. *The process must include some form of public deliberation within the framework of specific meetings/forums (the opening of administrative meetings or classical representative instances to “normal” citizens is not PB)*
5. *Some accountability on the output is required*

A strange phenomena

- In the last three decades, impressive development
- Various methodologies, quite different contexts, opposite ideologies
- What dynamics when one imports a participatory procedure from the South?
- Only a fashion? A global phenomena?

I. The Invention of PB in POA

The framing

- POA: A very specific context:
 - o the city, Brazil,
 - o the PT,
 - o the transition to democracy, the struggle for social justice
- 3 objectives:
 - o Democratizing democracy
 - o Inverting priorities
 - o A good government

A complex procedure

- 4 spaces: executive, legislative, civil society, participatory procedure
- 2 pillars: territorial and thematic
- 3 levels: neighborhood, district, city
- The formal criteria
- A joint management (not only mere consultation or self-management)

The dynamics

- Growing mobilization
- The instrument of the poor
- Effects of distributive justice
- A better government
- The recognition of the outsiders and the empowering of civil society

Some challenges

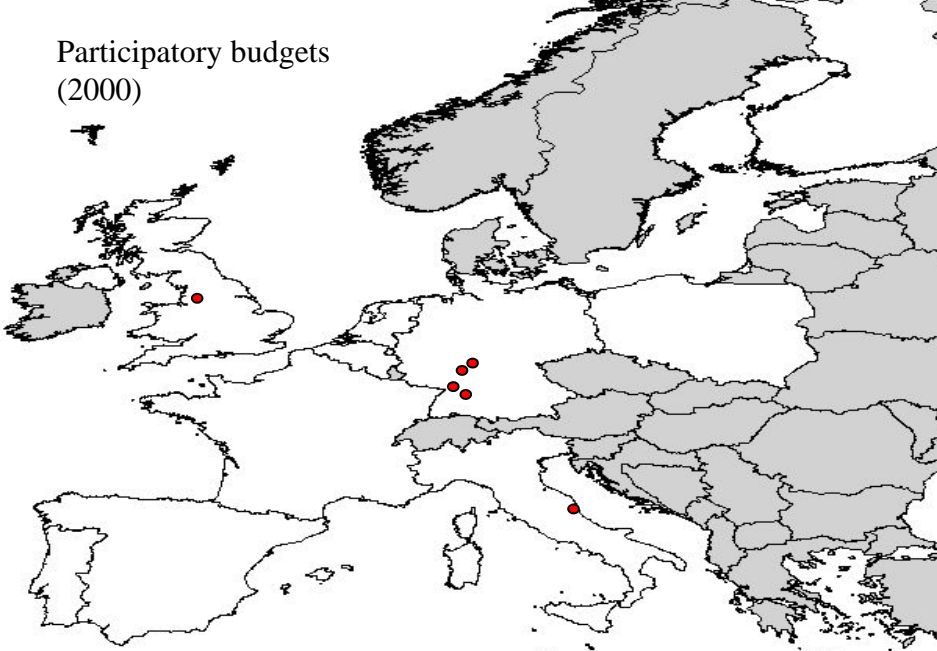
- Diversity of mobilization
- Good government on the long run
- Beyond the local scale: the problem of deliberation
- The risk of cooptation and institutionalization
- Changing politics

The diffusion of PB in Brazil and Latin America

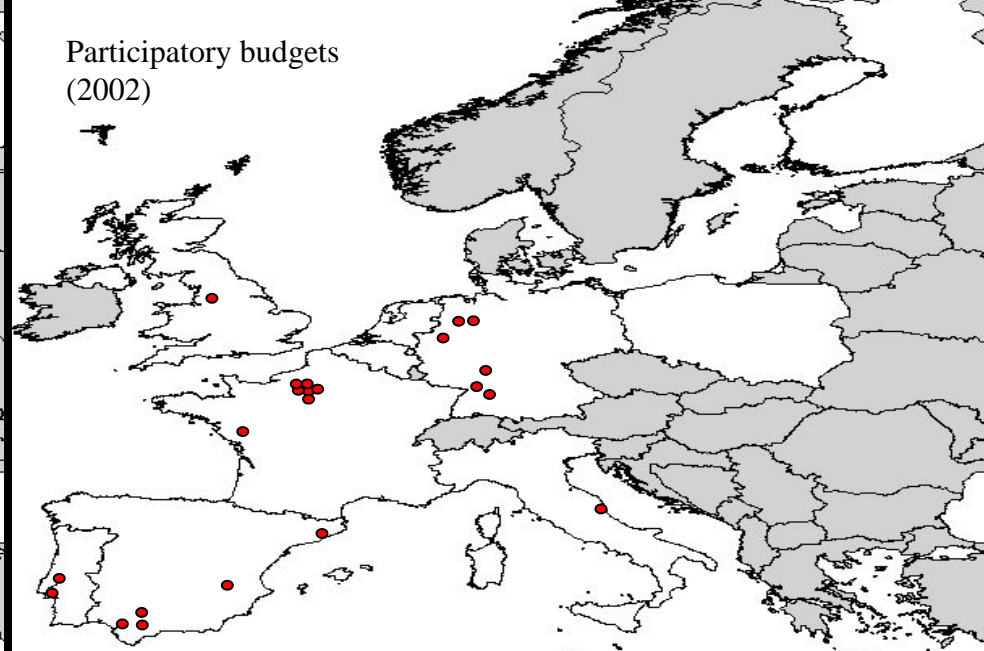
- In Brazil and Latin-America: an impetuous expansion
- Nearly half of the population in Brazil
- 1.200 PBs in Latin America (16.000 cities)
- Local adaptations of the POA procedure, some hybrids

II. PB in Europe

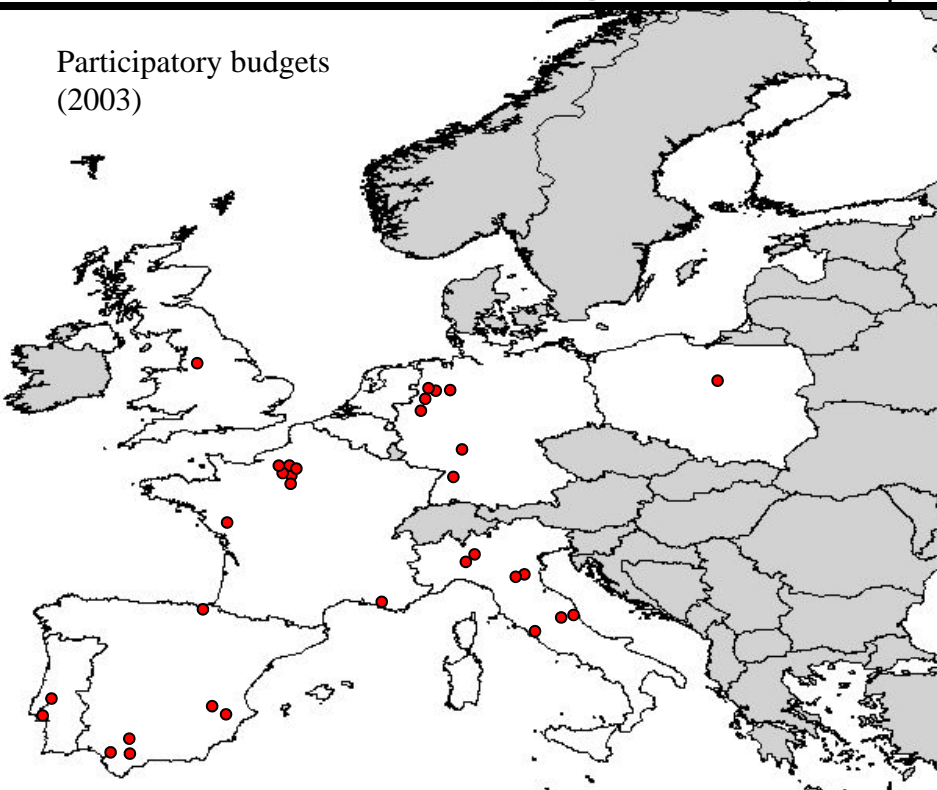
Participatory budgets
(2000)



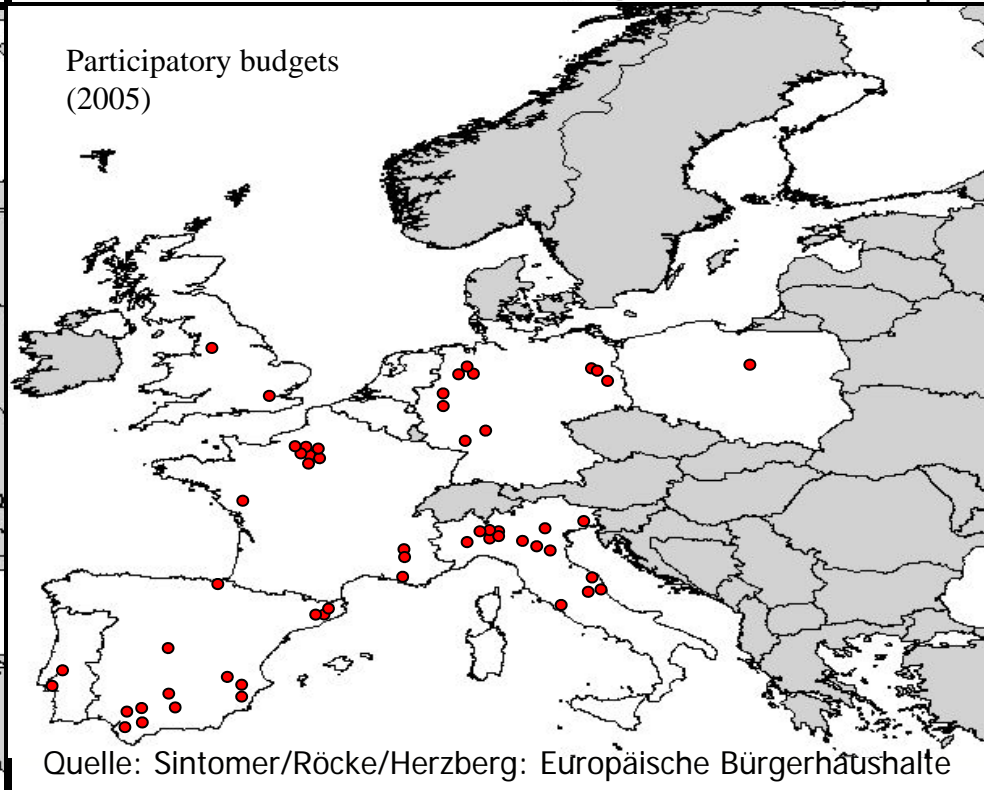
Participatory budgets
(2002)



Participatory budgets
(2003)

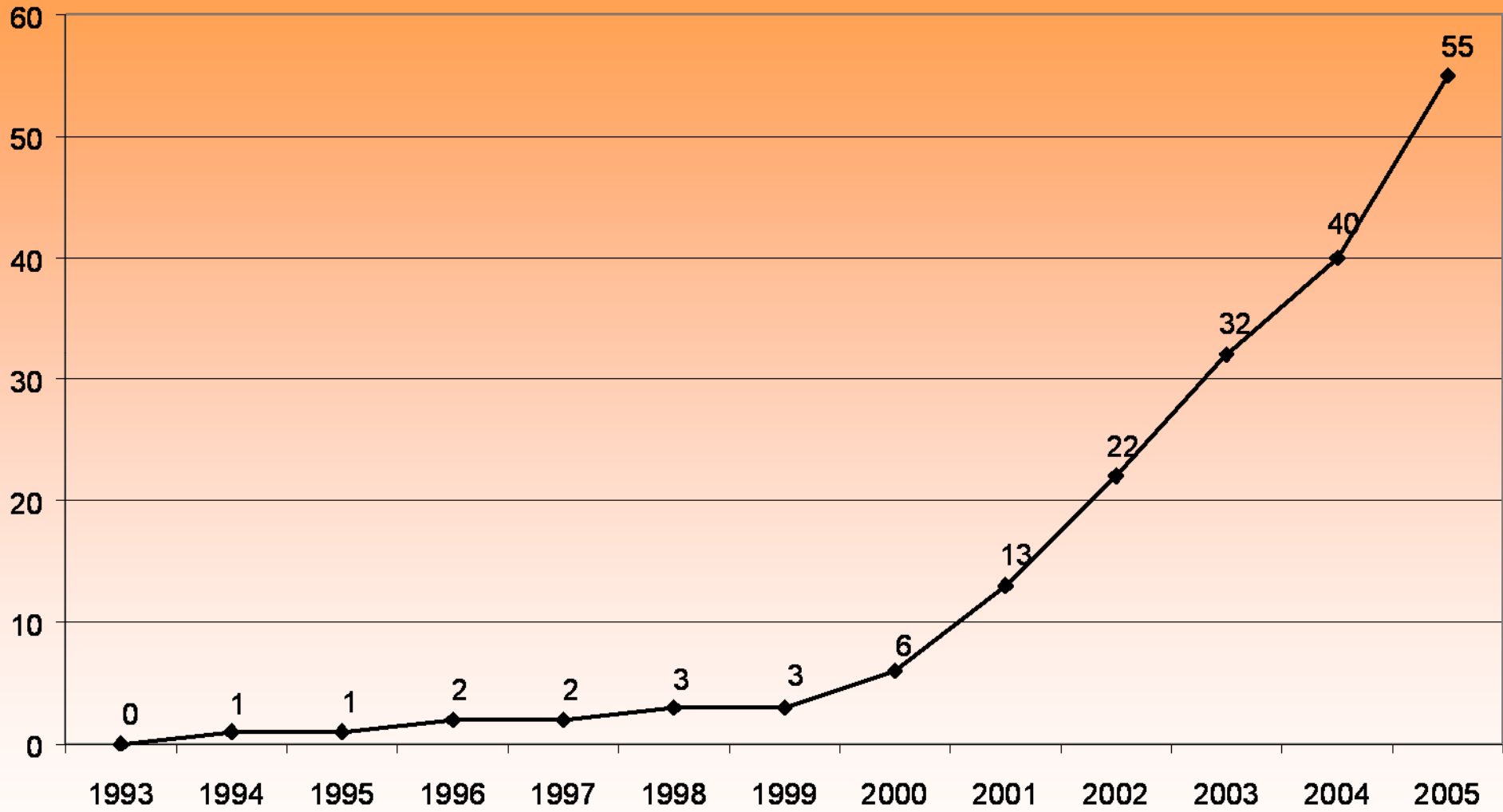


Participatory budgets
(2005)

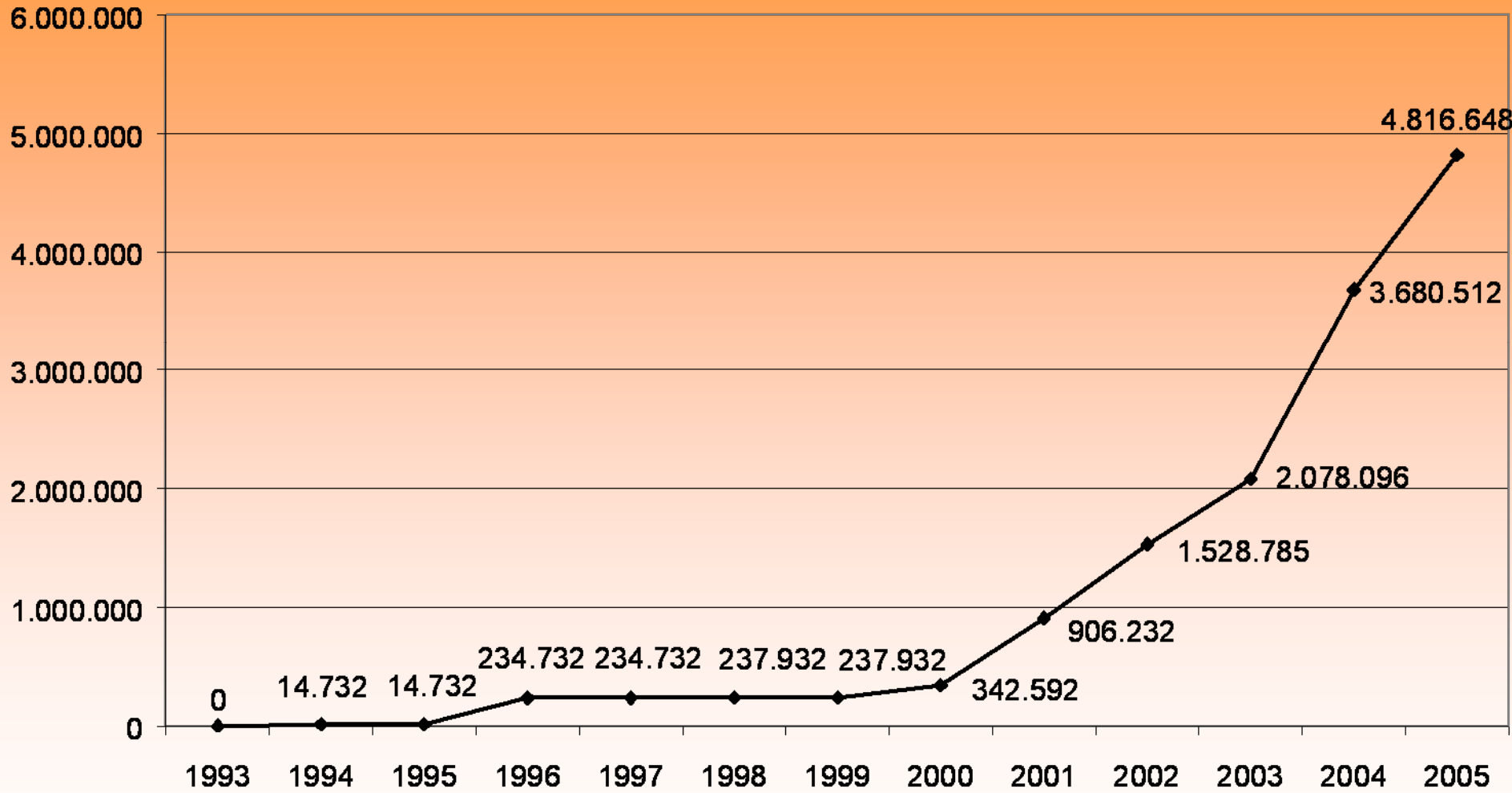


Quelle: Sintomer/Röcke/Herzberg: Europäische Bürgerhäushalte

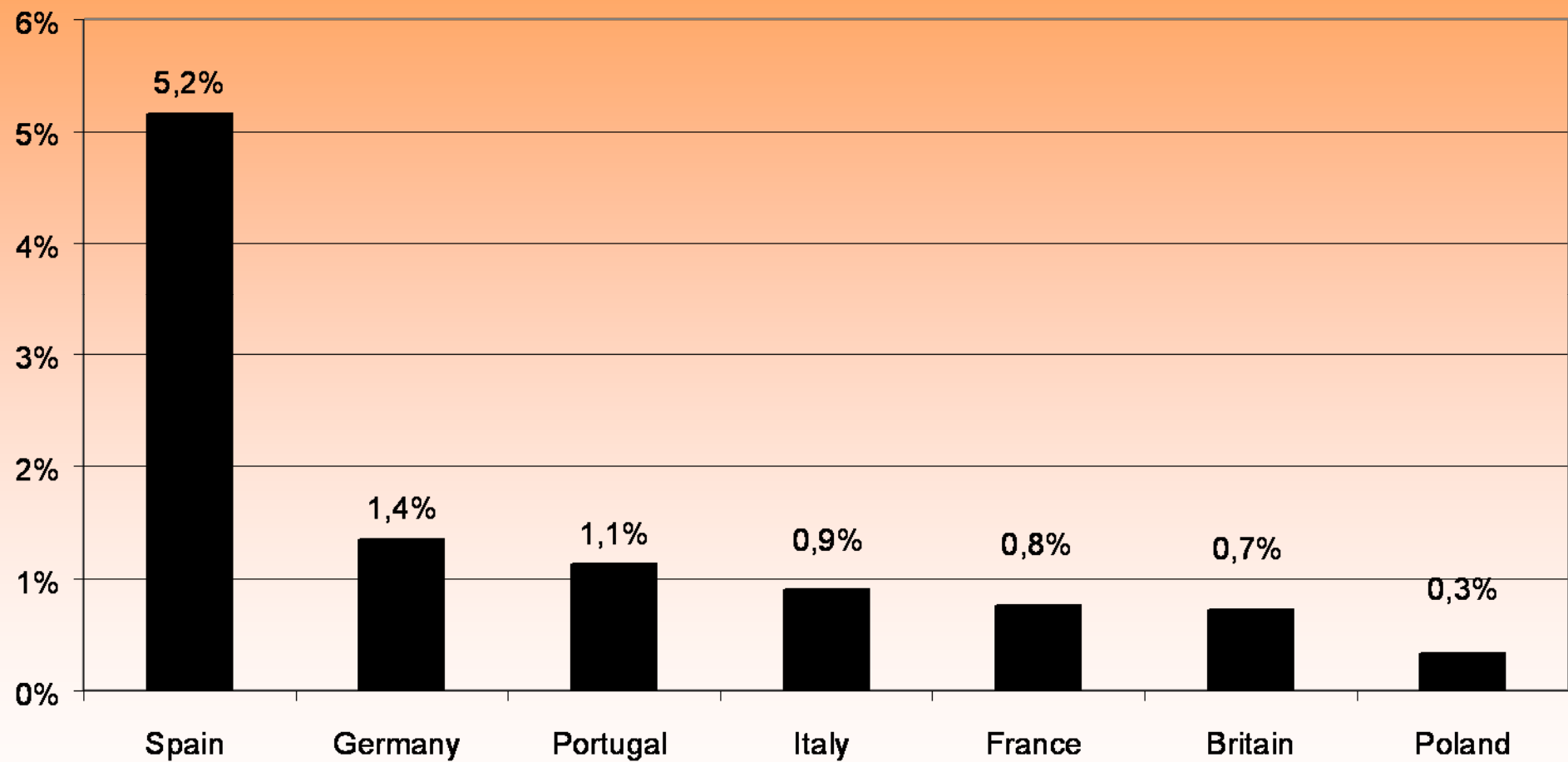
Number of participatory budgets in Europe



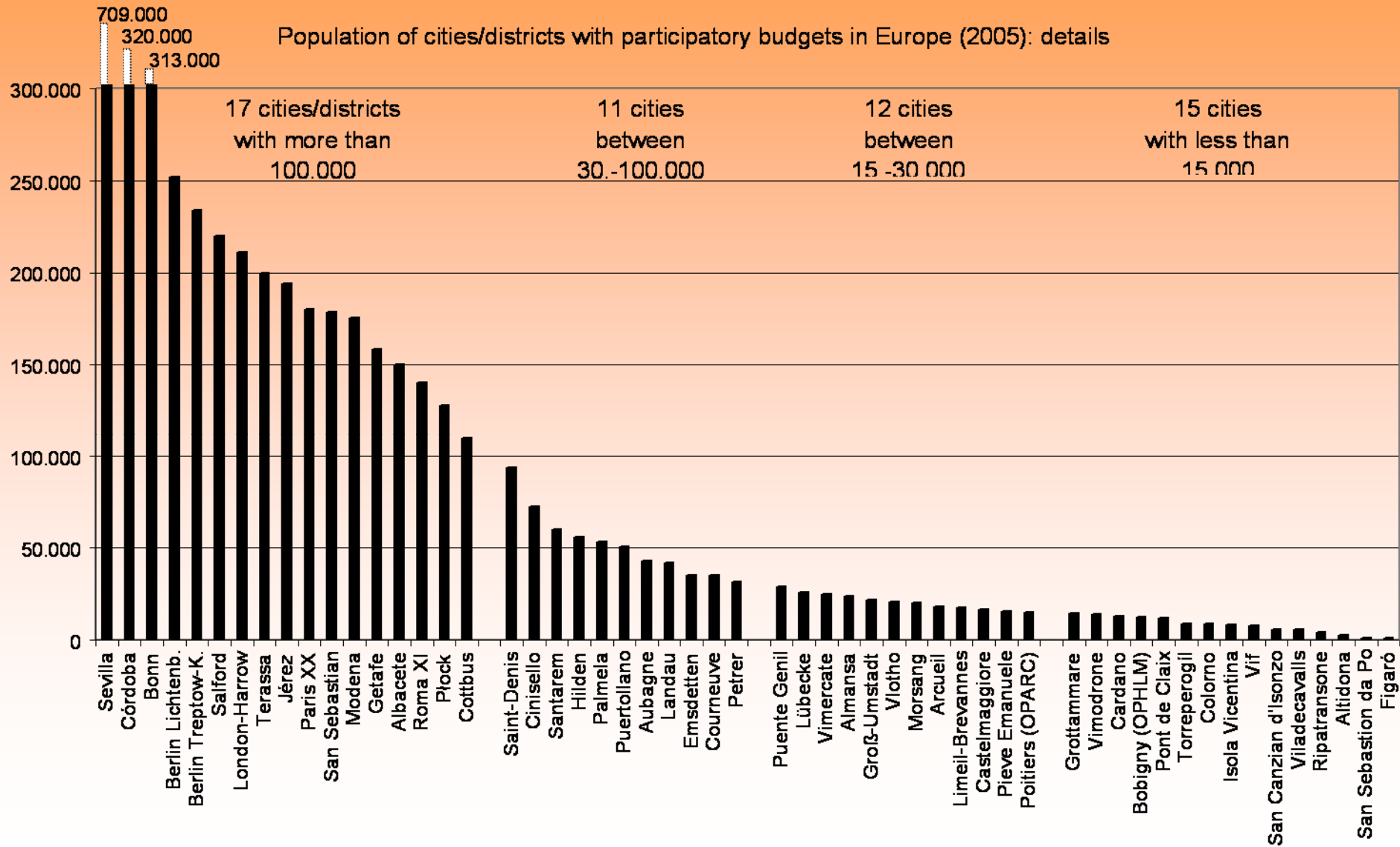
Population of cities/districts with participatory budgets in Europe



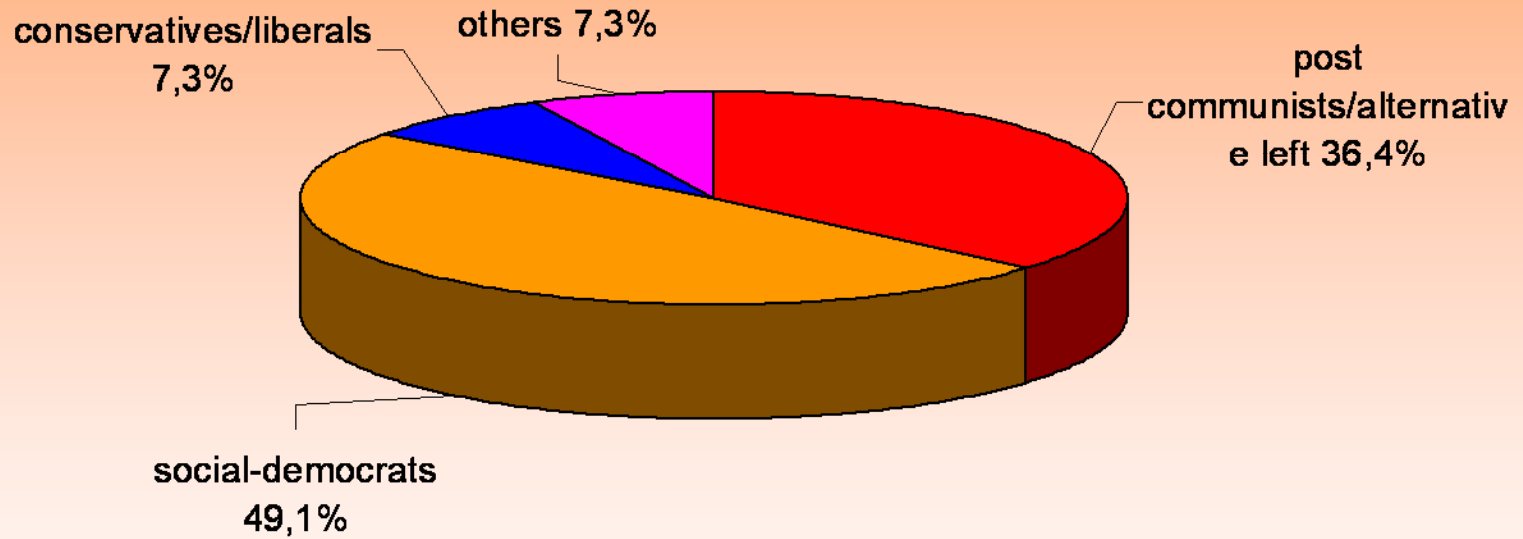
Citizens living in a city/district with a participatory budget as percentage of the population of the country



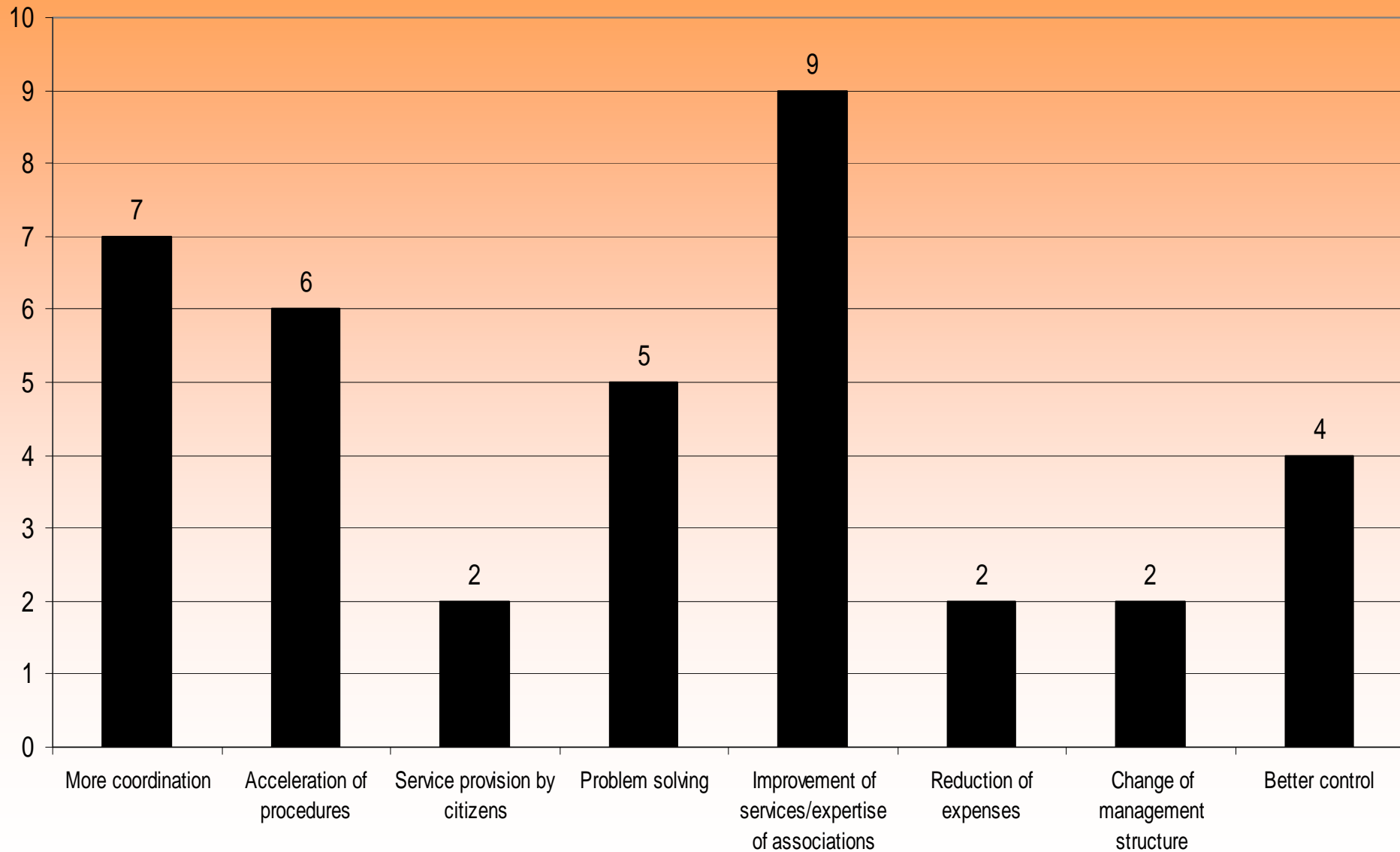
Population of cities/districts with participatory budget in Europe (2005)



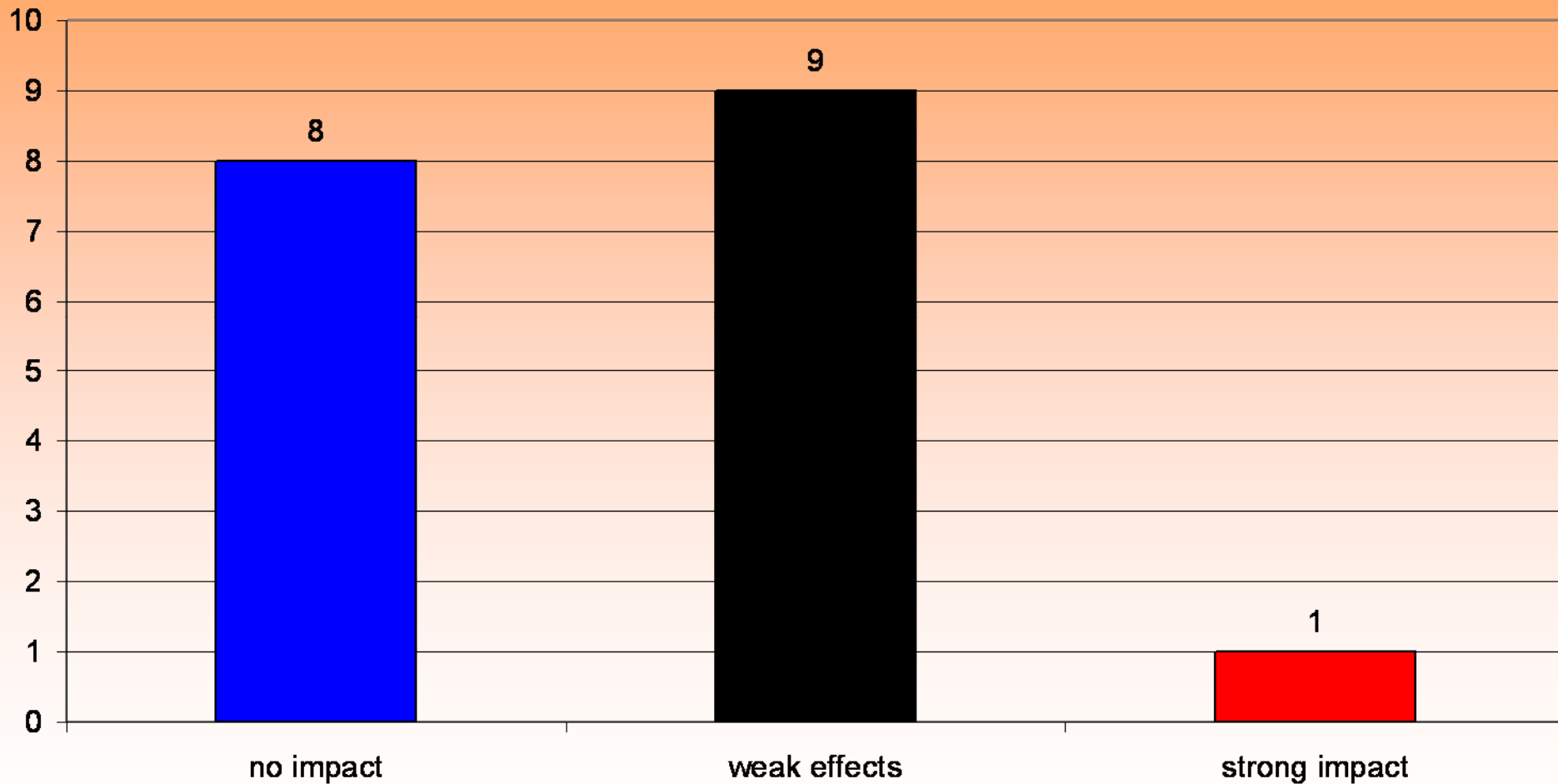
Mayoral political affiliation by party in cities/districts with participatory budget (2005)



Effects of participatory budgets on modernisation (municipal level) in 19 selected cities/districts

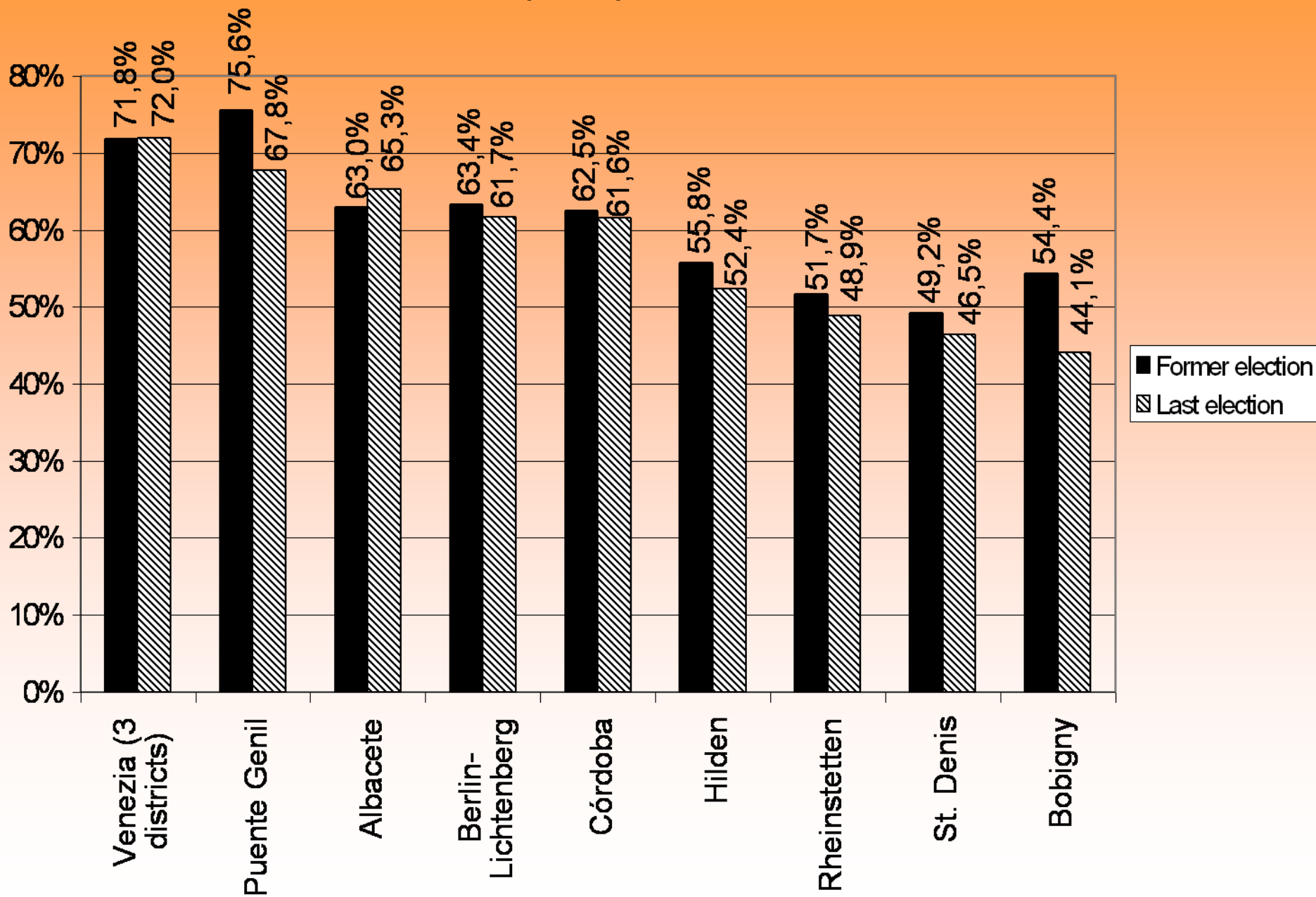


Effects of participatory budgets on social justice in 19* selected cities/districts



* Process in Berlin-Lichtenberg too young for including data

Evolution of electoral participation in 9 selected cities/districts



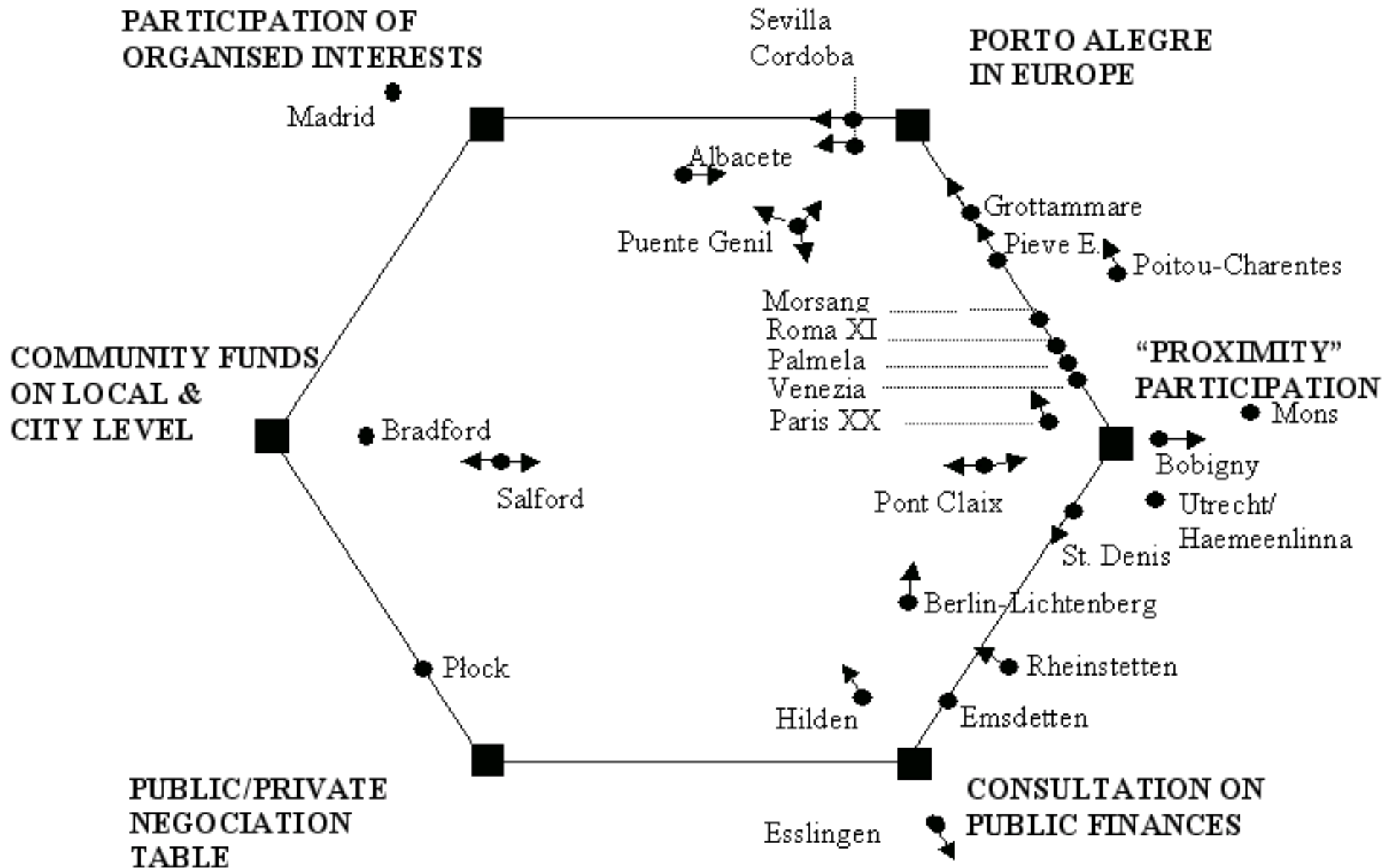
Contrasts with the POA experiment

- Most European experiments are top-down
- Upper fractions of the working class or the middle class are at the center
- Few effects on social justice, few political outputs
- The relation between state modernization and participation is central
- Most European PBs are consultative, only some of them have clear internal rules, the autonomy of civil society is more often limited

The interest of participatory budgeting

- It's money, stupid
- Horizontal discussion between citizens, not only vertical discussions between citizens and officials
- Concrete and potentially far-reaching
- Several challenges
- **The interest of the regional level**

The six procedures of European PB: A map



III.

**Questions to
Marion Ben-Hammo
and Marcello Degni**

What has been imported?

- Why did you choose this instrument instead of others?
- In Europe: from the WSF to the Bertelsmann Foundation, from conservatives to radical leftists, from the new Labour to the OECD. A political project or an new public management strategy?
- Something common between your two experiments? With POA? With other European experiments?

Is it important?

- Housing, building, painting
- A mere communication strategy?
- Concretely, is there really an affinity between modernization of public action and citizen participation?
- Participatory politics and “real” politics

Is it sustainable?

- PB and the long run
- PB and the scale level
- More than a fashion?
- A party project or a consensual project?
- Substantial effects?