Democratic Governance and the Municipal Governments of the Brazilian Workers Party

Goetz Ottman
La Trobe University, Melbourne

Abstract

The Brazilian Workers´ Party (PT) with its successful implementation of the Participatory Budget process in Porto Alegre has become a key reference in reports of international agencies focusing on good public administration and democracy. Currently a cornerstone of the PT´s policy platform, the Participatory Budget process has been promoted widely and is not only being implemented in Latin American municipalities but also in cities with democratic aspirations such as Toronto and Barcelona. Yet, in several municipal administrations in Brazil, the PT´s commitment to processes that lead to a democratisation of public administration are flagging and neo-clientelist practices seem to celebrate a come-back. This paper focusing on the democratic quality of the PT´s municipal administration in Porto Alegre (RS), São Paulo (SP), and Itabuna (BA) gives an overview of recent events and raises important questions regarding the overall direction of the party, governability, as well as the feasibility of the Participatory Budget as a social development tool.

).